



# CUTTLET

THE NEWSLETTER OF LAMBETH NALGO

22 JUNE 1981

## Branch Meeting postponed

The Special Branch Meeting to discuss the issues of voluntary redundancy has been postponed until Thursday June 25, because there was no suitable venue for the meeting this week.

The Ace cinema is having holes drilled in it and the seats ripped out as the first stage of its conversion into a roller-disco. This was not known until a few days ago and, at such short notice, the only place to hold the meeting was St. Matthew's Gardens (opposite the Housing Advice Centre).

Branch officers and convenors, meeting on Monday night, felt that it would be difficult for everybody to hear and participate in this serious debate in such an environment. An added consideration was the presence of the world's press in the Town Hall for the Scarman Inquiry, some of whom might have been keen to overhear our debate.

The motion from the Executive will be the same as was circulated on the note for the last meeting.

## Victory to residential workers in vacancies battle

Workers in Lambeth's childrens homes have forced the Council to unfreeze all vacancies in the homes and to attempt to fill 40 vacancies immediately. The residential workers have achieved this by taking effective industrial action, around the policy of no cover for vacant posts, which threatened the closure of several childrens homes within days and nearly shut one home within 24 hours.

There are currently 120 vacancies out of 520 posts in homes, and staff are having to work very long hours to keep them open. They told the Council that, unless they received an assurance about the filling of vacancies, they would start action from Monday 15 June. They received no assurance. On Monday they started action by refusing admissions and refusing to do overtime. By Tuesday night there were no staff for the home in Calais Street and several others would have been closed by Wednesday night. The whole of Wednesday was spent in negotiations, the agreement was put to a mass meeting of the residential workers and they called off the action.

## NALGO recommends 7.3 per cent pay offer

Our negotiators are recommending acceptance of the employers offer of 7.3% and some restructuring of the lowest grades in settlement of the 1981 pay claim.

The offer, made at a meeting of the National Joint Council Executive Committee on 17 June, is as follows:

- 7.5% increase on the pay bill
- approximately 7.3% on all spinal column points (scp)
- approx. 0.2% for restructuring
- 7.5% on allowances (e.g. standby and sleeping-in payments)
- deletion of current provisions for Clerical 1, Technical 1, AP1 and Typists, Machine Operators and Tele-

phonists grades

- introduction of two new scales:
  - Scale 1: scp 1 to scp 11 with no bar at point 7
  - Scale 2: scp 11 to scp 14
- deletion of the minimum point of grades Clerical 2, Technical 2 and AP2 (scp 14) with effect from 1.7.81

Full details of the offer will be circulated to members as soon as they are received by the branch.

The National Local Government Committee will be recommending acceptance of the offer to delegates from local government branches at a group meeting on July 7, which will decide whether the offer will be accepted.

# Conference '81

THIS REPORT SUMMARISES THE MAJOR DECISIONS MADE AT NALGO'S ANNUAL CONFERENCE LAST WEEK (8-12 JUNE) IN BLACKPOOL. LAMBETH'S DELEGATES WERE SIMON BERLIN, CHRIS GUNTER, BOB LANE, JACKIE LEWIS, BRIAN MARTIN, JENNY NYMAN, MIKE TICHELAR AND MIKE WALLER. A FULLER REPORT OF THE GOINGS-ON WILL BE GIVEN BY THE DELEGATION AT A LATER STAGE.

## Confrontation on cuts

NALGO is now committed to a stronger fight against the cuts and a campaign of action which could lead to confrontation with the Government.

This follows the passing of two motions from the Scottish District Council, the first of which instructs the NEC to give full official support to members taking industrial action in support of their employers stand against government cuts and states that NALGO "upholds its right to take action to defend the services and jobs while recognising that such action may fall outwith the Government's or court's definition of a trades dispute".

## Political campaign

The second motion, concerning the proposed actions of the Secretary of State for Scotland, George Younger, against Scottish councils which he has deemed 'overspenders', won near unanimous support. Under new powers, Younger is to clawback £53million from Lothian Council, which will mean at least 4,000 redundancies. In East Lothian, 70% of the rate support grant is being clawed back. Heseltine has threatened to adopt similar draconian powers to use against councils in England and Wales, unless they fully comply with his demands to cut spending. The motion states that "any campaign must now include a more active involvement in the political campaign against the Government's present strategy". The motion also instructs the NEC to seek joint action with the Labour Party in co-ordinating the activities of trades unions and Labour Groups in fighting the cuts, and give full support to joint action by authorities and their constituent trades unions. A distinct feeling of 'Geja vu' seized the Lambeth delegates at this stage as we had been putting forward similar arguments last year - but with little success. Scottish members will need all the support that they have been promised.

## NALGO goes unilateral

NALGO is now committed to supporting a policy of unilateral nuclear disarmament and to a campaign within the

Labour movement for a transfer of resources from military expenditure to more socially useful purposes. The union is also to affiliate to the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament.

## Unemployed members

NALGO has at long last opened its door to those unemployed people who have been members of the union at some time. Conference rejected a plea from the NEC to refer the question of unemployed membership to them for consideration, deciding that the matter could not wait for another year before any action was taken. Unfortunately, amendments which would have enabled schoolleavers to become members, and given unemployed members some real chance of making an input, were lost.

## Striking advances!

Some major changes in NALGO's official industrial action procedures were approved by Conference as they voted to accept the NEC's proposals set out in its white paper 'INDUSTRIAL ACTION'. There was, however, considerable criticism from branches on some points and an amendment was passed which could enable branches to instruct members not to cross a picket line. The new procedure means that branches can now hold a ballot before asking the NEC to approve industrial action, and that one-day strikes and demonstrations can be made official without ballots.

## Bigger action levies

Branches will now be able to levy local subscriptions of up to 50% of monthly subscriptions if the sole purpose of the additional local levy is to finance current or future industrial action approved by the NEC.

## Labour affiliation ballot

NALGO will be balloting all members within the next year on the question of affiliation to the Labour Party, with the result to be declared before next year's conference. This is something of a surprise move, but there was a clear vote in favour of the ballot despite NEC opposition.

The union is to circulate material giving the arguments for and against affiliation before the ballot.