



CUTLET

no.4

THE NEWSLETTER OF LAMBETH NALGO

27 JULY 1981

Deputy Prentice goes gunning for top bosses in big shake up!

If you're graded PO1 or above then WATCH OUT because Councillor Derek Prentice has got plans for you. Or rather, he's got plans for doing without you.

Councillor Prentice, Deputy Leader of the Council, has just produced a report which says that the Council has far too many 'chiefs' in relation to the number of 'indians'. To solve this, he suggests that a lot of the chiefs should be induced into leaving. He proposes that six of the present directors and about a quarter of second and third tier officers should go.

CONTROLLERS

His plan is to reduce the number of directorates to six. There would be a 'controller' in charge of each who, according to Prentice, "although ultimately responsible for all of the services under them would be freed from the day-to-day management detail of running a department".

The controllers would be appointed by making all the directors redundant and then reappointing certain of them as controllers on the same salary. Certain others would be offered other jobs at reduced salaries. Those directors interested in early retirement/voluntary redundancy would be encouraged to take it. "Similar principles", says Prentice, "could be adopted to establish the new reduced 2nd/3rd tier structure and organisation for the new Departments".

A total of 20 Directors and Assistant

Lambeth unemployment

Unemployment in Lambeth reached 15,190 in June, an increase of 63% since June 1980.

There are only 388 registered vacancies, a fall of 46% since June 1980.

Directors (1st and 2nd tier) and "at least 60 3rd tier" management posts would go, saving about £1 million.

SIX DIRECTORATES

The six new 'controllerates' would be:

TECHNICAL SERVICES: consisting of Borough Development and Town Planning. (Well, bless my soul, you may ask, isn't that the same as the old DODS, which the Council split up under its Special Review Committee?)

HOUSING SERVICES: Housing and Construction Services

FINANCIAL SERVICES: Finance

CENTRAL SERVICES: DALs and Management Services

COMMUNITY SERVICES: Social Services and Amenities Services. (Strange bedfellows

these - imagine Henry Gilbey running an old people's home or Robin Osmond telling stories to children in the park) **ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES:** Environmental Health and Consumer Services, and Public Services. (David Thompson was last seen disappearing down a manhole in Clapham saying that he was going to gen up on the borough's sewerage system)

The Prentice plan has been studied by the Labour Group. They did not reject it but have actually agreed to hold a special meeting to consider it.

MEANWHILE.....

Meanwhile David Thompson has been reported to have reached the epicentre of the borough's sewerage system. The next Cutlet will reveal whose house near Brockwell Park this is under.....

Joint action with tenants forces opening of day centre

Joint action by NALGO members and tenants has helped to persuade the Council to open Kennington Park Day Centre as a proper day centre for the elderly and not just as a luncheon club.

The purpose-built centre on the new Penwith Manor Estate was due to open in May as a full resource for the whole day with transport provided for disabled people. Staff, including a manager, cook and several care assistants, had been appointed. A list of people wishing to attend had been drawn up.

FURTHER CUTS

But the centre did not open as planned. At the June meeting of the Social Services Committee, a package of further cuts was proposed by the Committee Chairperson, Sheila Stace. One of her proposals was that the Kennington Park Centre should open only as a luncheon club. This would

have meant the club being open for only two hours a day, no facilities for the disabled, no centre for the elderly to use at other times of the day. It would also have meant a complete waste of the £163,000 that it cost to build and equip the centre. The Social Services Committee deferred the proposal to the Labour Group meeting on July 13th.

JOINT ORGANISING

Before then NALGO organised with the tenants in contacting all Labour Councillors, lobbying, publicising the proposed cut and picketing the meeting itself. Members in the adult services section, on NALGO advice, refused to set up the centre as a luncheon club only. The Tenants Association got up a petition.

After the tenant's chairperson had addressed the meeting, the Labour Group voted to open the centre as a full resource as soon as possible.

Carisbrooke workers end occupation

Workers at the Social Services Training Unit at Carisbrooke ended their workplace occupation on Friday, 10 July. As a result of their 5-day sit-in, the Council has had to think again about an immediate sale of the unit.

The Training Unit will not be put up for sale until an alternative work place has been found. Any proposals for a new training unit will now be jointly agreed by Council and staff. Carisbrooke members are to be fully consulted about the proposed alternatives, and the facilities of any new unit are to be comparable to those existing at present.

The Council has also agreed to implement a regrading agreement for training staff - a matter which has been outstanding for almost a year.

WHAT WE HAVE GAINED FROM TAKING ACTION

We took action only after all else had failed. Well-reasoned arguments and documents to Management explaining the effects of cuts on training and the implications of the loss of the training unit had all been ignored. They were not even answered, let alone discussed.

Faced with the prospect of the disposal of the training unit "within a matter of days", there was no alternative but to prevent the sale taking place. Now, at least, the Council has accepted the need to consult us fully.

The disposal of the training unit was seen

as the thick end of the wedge. With the workplace gone and the staff split up, forced redeployment and redundancies would be that much more difficult to resist. Carisbrooke members have now shown that we are not prepared to take things sitting down and that any plans for our future will not be decided for us but with us.

COUNCIL LIP-SERVICE

The occupation also highlighted the effects of cuts on all aspects of social services care. Training staff feel strongly that the Council needs to pay more than lip-service to certain crucial areas - particularly equal opportunities policies and the field of residential care.

The Council has said that it cannot guarantee that there will be no further cuts in the training budget. Training unit members are well aware that in the next round of cuts we could again be hit hard.

FIGHTING BACK

But we have shown our preparedness to fight back and have shown one way of resisting the worst effects of any cuts. Most importantly, we have shown that by taking action, and by taking it quickly, the Council may not find it quite so easy to force through its cuts.

The Social Services Training Unit may only be a small section with two dozen members, but if we can take action then so can other larger workplaces. And they can win.

Who's next ???

Carisbrooke NALGO members

Councillors about this in the near future.

Incidentally, Car Allowances are being reviewed at the moment - NALGO's claim for increases - submitted back in January and turned down that by the Employers, has gone to arbitration, and the result is expected soon.

Weighting

Our negotiators told the employers on July 8 that they intend to submit a claim for increases in London Weighting and fringe area allowances. Fast work this, since the increase is due to be paid from July 1. The next meeting at which negotiations are to take place is not until October 1. In the meantime, you can be assumed that the employers will be putting your money to good use.

Chairperson Bill fights off Shirley

Branch Chairperson Bill Pitt has achieved a certain notoriety in the last few weeks as the person who stands between Shirley Williams and the House of Commons.

CROYDON ROW

For it is Bill who is at the centre of the row over who should stand as the Social Democrat/Liberal candidate in the forthcoming Croydon North West by-election. He has stood as the Liberal candidate in the constituency in the last three elections, coming in third each time. He intends to fight this election too and has so far resisted attempts by the Social Democrats, David Steel and the leader writers of the Daily Mail to get him to stand down in favour of Shurley or somebody who is a 'national figure'.

CLAPPING

Bill is well known to those diehards who have struggled through Branch mass meetings during the last two years. He has a reputation as a firm, if erratic, chairperson with a rather liberal way of interpreting standing orders. Many will remember his remark, after a speech had received considerable applause, that "if you persist in clapping for so long, I will have to restrict the speakers time limit".

BAD BENN

Good luck to Bill, but let us hope that he engages in an election campaign based on the policies of the alliance (that is, if they care to cook some up between now and the election) and not on the "reds under the bed, Benn is a baddie" basis of Woy Jenkins in Wodkaland.

STOP PRESS.....STOP PRESS.....

A Liberal and a Social Democrat won the two seats on the Council in last week's by-election in Bishops Ward, Vauxhall.

Athletics

Hurry.....the last date for entries to the Lambeth NALGO Athletics Day is July 31st. The day is intended to be fun for competitors of all ages and abilities. Events include sack races, under fives, and three legged races as well as sprints, medium distance races.....there will be one for you! Ring Molly (274/7722 Ext 2858) for further details and an application form.

SERVICE CONDITIONS NEWS

Car allowances

The Council has had the bright idea that it can save money by restricting the payment of car allowances. Apparently, those people who receive an essential user allowance who do not claim a certain minimum mileage per year are being considered for 'demotion' to casual users. The Branch has objected to this most strongly.

The purple book states that 'Essential users are deemed to be those whose duties are of such a nature that it is essential for them to have a motor car at their disposal whenever required'. It makes no mention of any arbitrary mileage limits.

It is hoped to have a meeting with