



CUTLET

NUMBER FIVE

THE NEWSLETTER OF LAMBETH NALGO

15 OCTOBER 1984

'Nobody goes until re-organisation agreed', says Council

The Council's offer of early retirement has now been accepted by 247 of the 350 original applicants. But the Council now says that it doesn't want to let any of them leave until the re-organisation of their departments has been agreed with the union.

The Council's proposals were outlined to branch representatives last Friday, 9 October, at a meeting with Councillors Ted Knight, Jock McPherson Quinn and Derek Prentice, and with senior management. This followed the near-unanimous decision of members at the Quarterly Branch Meeting to refuse to discuss any proposals for re-organisation until a proper procedure for consultation has been agreed; many members had expressed anger and concern at attempts by local management in some areas to railroad through departmental re-organisations without any consultation with the unions.

The main point of the procedure that the Council has outlined is that re-organisation has to be agreed before staff will be allowed to leave, and they want agreement by mid-November. They will give us details of their proposals at the beginning of next week and expect us to discuss and negotiate what will in many cases be substantial re-organisations, affecting our jobs and the services, in three or four weeks.

PRESSURE

This procedure is radically different from that adopted in the Borough Development Department, where staff were released for early retirement before re-organisation proposals were discussed. The new approach immediately puts pressure on those of us who are staying to agree to "scissors and paste" re-organisations to allow the early retirees to go.

We shall have to demonstrate once again that we will not be divided and ruled. We must ensure that the best interests of staff and services are served by any re-organisation which takes place, even if this means delaying the retirements for a few weeks.

DELETED POSTS

The Council also indicated that it will be 'flexible' about the post which has to be deleted when a person takes early retirement. They are now saying that any 'comparable' post can be deleted instead of the early retiree's post. The comparable post need not necessarily be in the same section,

division or even directorate.

EXECUTIVE RESPONSE

The Branch Executive Committee will be discussing these proposals and their implications on October 20. Shop stewards have been asked to seek members views before then.

Members should be wary of any re-organisation schemes which carve up a retired person's duties amongst a few select individuals who may receive juicy upgradings for their troubles. More often than not it is a minority of members who receive the upgradings - and it is not usually the basic grade staff who are actually expected to do the extra work.

PRENTICE PLAN LIVES ON?

The Council's proposals are to be based on existing directorate structures and not on the "Prentice Plan" reported in Cutlet No. 4. Councillor Prentice's plan for a drastic overhaul of council structure, involving the merging of directorates and the sacking of six directors, is currently being studied by a working party of Labour councillors. The plan is supposedly "only for discussion" (perhaps for the Labour manifesto for next year's elections). Cynics have however suggested that there is some similarity between the six directors who are taking or have taken early retirement and the six directors who would be required to leave under the "Prentice Plan".

COUNCIL THREATENS TO EVICT BRANCH

Just one year after spending several thousand pounds on the transformation of the old Public Safety Office at 6A Acre Lane into the branch office, the Council has decided that it can't afford the rent and told us to move out.

Mike Waller and our two full-time staff, Molly Dale and Ruth Marshall, have been offered a small, dingy room in the Town Hall basement as an alternative. The room is presently used to store catering equipment.

This shortsighted, mean and spiteful act is being perpetrated by none other than Councillor Jock McPherson Quinn, who in 'real life' pretends to be a left-wing member of the AUEW national executive. Mike Waller has told Councillor Quinn that he and his staff are not moving from 6A Acre Lane, and certainly not into a dingy cupboard in the Town Hall basement. Our facilities were hard won and long overdue when they were provided last year. We will fight very hard to keep them.

NALGO against Nukes

NALGO AGAINST NUKES (NAN) are meeting on Tuesday October 27 to plan activities for the year and to learn more about challenging nuclear weapons and power. The meeting is at 12.30 in Room 125 at the Town Hall. If you want more information about NAN, phone Dave Rosenfeld (DEHCS) on 622 6655 x231 or write to NAN c/o the Branch office at 6A Acre Lane.

BACK CUTLET

Cutlet is now back after a long break due to sickness, holidays and general editorial fatigue. We hope to bring it out weekly in future, every Friday. Contributions would be most welcome. Send your news to: The Editor, c/o NALGO Branch Office, 6A Acre Lane, or ring Jackie Lewis on 274 7722 x 2949.

Negotiations start for GLC transfer

On April 1 next year, Lambeth Council will take over the responsibility for the management of all the GLC estates in Lambeth. Over 16,000 properties and 600 workers, including 200 'white-collar' staff, will be transferred.

This transfer of GLC properties has been fought by Lambeth and seven other boroughs since it was first dreamed up by Horace Cutler's GLC regime. However they have now been obliged to accept the transfer by an Act of Parliament. In order to cope with the extra properties — and staff — DHPS and DCS are being restructured. The Council presented their proposals to us at the beginning of September and the consultation process has been going on throughout these directorates since then.

The transfer will also have an effect on other directorates, particularly on sections of DOF, DMS, DALs and DAS. The Council is proposing changes in these departments but it is not yet certain what the impact will be.

Negotiations on the new structure have not got beyond the information-seeking stage in DHPS. The Council's proposals have been completely rejected by DCS and management are said to be 'having a rethink'.

PARITY CLAIM

The branch has submitted a claim for parity with the conditions of service of GLC staff as a condition for accepting the transfer of GLC properties into our members area of work.

The claim is for the following improvements: — a 35 hour week; extra leave; luncheon vouchers for outposted staff; implementation of the improved maternity/paternity rights

agreement; and a special home-to-office mileage rate. We have also asked that the present threat to the facilities afforded to the branch (including office accommodation and time off for stewards) be lifted. We also want an agreement on the introduction of new technology.

The Council has yet to respond to our claim.

HOUSING 'BLANCMANGE'

A recent meeting of tenants representatives, unions and councillors to discuss the GLC transfer ended in uproar when unions were described as being "obstructive and unhelpful", housing workers were "petty bureaucrats" and the Housing Directorate was termed a "wobbly blancmange factory"

These colourful remarks were made by various tenants leaders who went on to say that the proposed new decentralised structure "doesn't go far enough" to meet the tenants demands for 'accountability' of housing staff, and that it would still leave "too many layers of management between the neighbourhood housing officer and the Director and Chairman."

Housing stewards insist that they have offered to meet tenants representatives before to discuss criticisms, but this offer has not been taken up. Meanwhile it has been suggested that the way to get round the problem of 'accountability' would be to designate all 600 housing workers 'Director' and to grade them all the same, say AP5.

Carisbrooke ultimatum rejected

Social Services members voted at a mass meeting yesterday morning to reject Council attempts to force the move of Carisbrooke Training Unit into Blue Star House.

The Council has now issued an ultimatum that the move must go ahead on November 6, despite the fact that: —

- staff at Carisbrooke who are threatened with redeployment or redundancy have not yet been found other jobs
- no money is available to provide adequate training facilities in B.S.H.
- staff at B.S.H. are already overcrowded, have poor working facilities and are being worked around against their will.

In July, after the Carisbrooke workers had occupied their workplace for a week against possible closure, the Council gave various promises and assurances about finding adequate facilities elsewhere. All of these 'promises' have now been broken.

The directorate meeting promised to give full support to whatever action Carisbrooke and B.S.H. workers might have to take to prevent the move going ahead on the present conditions. Members should, therefore, not be involved in taking on any work which is in any way connected with this move. Meanwhile, negotiations are continuing, with the members demanding that the Council come up with something better than its present insulting offer.

Computer action wins vacancies battle

Industrial action by members in the Computer Division has forced the Council to agree to the filling of two vacancies.

Machine operators in the Division have been working under a lot of pressure, churning out one "priority job" after another, and because of vacancies in the section, some work could not be done. When they found out that some directorates wanted to send work out to private agencies, the operators decided that enough was enough, and began a 'work to rule'. They worked at the minimum speed of 10,000 characters per hour specified in their job descriptions, whereas some of them had previously been working at speeds of up to 14,000 characters per hour. They also told management that they would not handle any work returned from outside agencies - work which would still need to be fed into the computer.

The machine operators have shown again that the 'no-cover' policy can be really effective in demonstrating to the Council that work won't get done without the staff to do it.

CND DEMONSTRATION ..CND DEMO

The world has never been nearer to nuclear war than it is today. The great powers are locked into a nuclear arms race. International tension is high. Now there are plans to introduce a new range of nuclear weapons into Europe, designed for fighting and "winning" a nuclear war. Britain is actively involved in this madness — the Government has agreed to site NATO cruise missiles here and are planning a massive new nuclear weapons system for Britain — Trident.

TOGETHER WE CAN STOP THE BOMB

- The demonstration to "Start the steps to survival" includes demands to: —
- * STOP the siting of cruise missiles in Europe, which makes us a prime target
 - * CANCEL the contract for the £5,000,000,000 Trident programme in Britain
 - * FULLY SUPPORT those councils who declare nuclear-free zones

The march assembles at Victoria Embankment, 11.30 - 12.30 on October 24, and goes to Hyde Park. There is a festival in Hyde Park from 12.00 am.

A contingent from this branch, with the NALGO banner, is meeting as follows:

11.30 — Cafe at the National Film Theatre, South Bank

12.30 — Corner of Savoy Street and Embankment (under Waterloo Bridge), for the march departure

2.00 — King and Queen, 13 Edgware Road (near Marble Arch) - for the late and thirsty