



BUMPER EDITION!

# CUTLET

nos. 7 & 8

THE NEWSLETTER OF LAMBETH NALGO

30 NOVEMBER 1981

## EARLY RETIREMENT DEADLINE APPROACHES

Agreement on restructuring has been reached in only two of the Directorates affected by the current round of "Voluntary early retirements". Frenzied negotiations continue in other Directorates as the Council's deadline of December 7 approaches. The Council originally said that all Directorates would provide restructuring proposals by October 20. Only four - DF, DMS, DCEPS and DTP - did so. The rest followed at various times; the last, for DSS, were not received until November 20, the original date set for completion of negotiations. The Executive protested strongly at Management's delay in providing proposals, and their extreme reluctance in some Directorates to enter into proper negotiations on them. Council Leader, Ted Knight then agreed to put back the deadline to December 7. He also agreed weekly meetings with Branch Representatives to try and sort out difficulties.

### BDD: 66 ALREADY RETIRED

There were 295 applications, from all Directorates other than BDD. The 66 people who took early retirement there, under what was apparently the same scheme, have already been released although agreement on restructuring is far away.

Negotiations have been completed in DTP and DCS. The latest position in Directorates is reported below. Due to

the very short timetable, this may have already changed. There will further reports in the next Cutlet. The Branch voted to accept the early retirement scheme at the Branch Meeting on June 25 at Ferndale Sports Centre. The meeting voted against voluntary severance or redundancy for the under 50s, but for early retirement or redundancy for the over 50s. The decision to accept early retirement was made against the advice of the EC, who warned that it was a redundancy scheme and that it would be extremely divisive, because the interests of the people going are not the same as those of the people staying.

### VOLUNTARY REDEPLOYMENT

Some applicants have been turned down by the Council. To help out some of these people, the E.C. agreed on November 16 to a one-off voluntary redeployment exercise to eleven posts in Rates and

one in DALs. They were to be advertised on a special circular. When the circular appeared on November 20, more posts - in Housing, Public Services and Social Services - had appeared on it, only some of which had been approved by Shop Stewards Committees. The Branch did not agree the wording of the circular, nor the time scale for applications, despite Management's implication otherwise. The results of the exercise are not yet known, except that it has caused a lot of anger and confusion and that it is unlikely that the Branch will agree a similar exercise in the future. The main drawback is of course that, under these circumstances, the post of the person who volunteers for redeployment is deleted.

### MANAGEMENT SERVICES

Nine people in DMS applied for Early Retirement and no-one has been turned down. The restructuring proposed has been very limited, although the most significant could come with the appointment of a new Director. After receiving the proposals we had to wait three weeks for the first meeting with Management where we made a number of proposals most, if not all of which, were extremely modest. The delay seemed an even bigger waste of time when Management were not prepared to concede anything. At the two meetings we have had so far we were lectured to in a bludgeoning, patronising and sometimes offensive way. In spite of that we agreed the proposals for one section to enable four members who were experiencing serious difficulties

**Wednesday  
December 9  
ANNUAL  
GENERAL  
MEETING  
4.30pm  
Assembly Hall**

# Restructuring-progress reports

CONTINUED

to retire without further delay.

There is no agreement yet on the rest, even though our proposals would only reduce the total savings by about 3½%. However, we have moved forward a little after Management have shown a degree of flexibility over some of our proposals.

## TOWN PLANNING

Management's original proposals were that all five applicants would be allowed to retire. However they wanted to delete six posts - including a Group-leader post that had been vacated by normal retirement earlier this year.

The first meeting of members objected to the proposals but the second voted to hold a ballot. Members were then balloted on the Management proposals and NALGO's draft response, which required the re-establishment of posts vacated through means other than early retirement and an undertaking from Management to "sit round the table" to discuss the working of the Directorate.

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The result of the ballot (72% return) was that Management proposals were rejected and NALGO's conditions supported. Management then agreed to the conditions. The Branch Convenors Committee has now blessed the revised scheme and all five should shortly be released.

## AMENITY SERVICES

Agreement has been reached on only one post out of 19. There is deadlock in all other areas - agreement to Management's proposals would mean substantial cuts in some services.

## HOUSING

Proposals were not received until November 11th and Stew-

ards met Management two days later. Agreement has been reached in some sections but there are difficulties in many others. The position is complicated by the impending GLC Transfer.

## SOCIAL SERVICES

Managements proposals were not received until November 20th, just two weeks before the deadline for completing negotiations. Their proposals were very sketchy and the Shop Stewards immediately demanded further information. They are attempting to ensure that unnecessary disappointment to applicants is avoided, but the Council's timetable seems impossibly tight. All applicants from some sections, such as Day Nurseries and Adult Homes, were refused. Other applicants are only to be allowed to leave if NALGO agrees to massive "re-organisations". For example, Management proposed that the number of Area Offices be reduced from eight to six, but did not say how they proposed to do this.

## PUBLIC SERVICES

There were 58 applications including seven of the thirteen first to third tier Officers. Management's pro-

posals were to restructure the whole Directorate. Although the proposals were received early, there has been only slow progress due to their extraordinary attitude it would have cost the Council less to implement NALGO's proposals in their entirety than it has for each two weeks that negotiations have dragged on.

Tentative agreement had been reached on 20 posts but Management then threatened to stop these people going until NALGO agreed their proposals for all the rest.

## CONSTRUCTION SERVICES

Agreement on the release of 46 applicants was reached in a fairly short time, mainly due to the declining capital programme. Twenty-six retired on November 13th, the rest are due to leave shortly.

## FINANCE

Restructuring proposals were received on October 20th. There were 25 applications including the Director and two Assistant Directors. The Council originally turned down 14 applications, but agreement has now been reached to allow several of these to go. Applicants from the Rates Office must await the outcome of the current voluntary redeployment exercise.

# Courses for women

Many women who go on a TUC course for union reps find themselves vastly outnumbered by men. But the TUC has now started to provide courses for women only.

The emphasis of the courses is on building confidence, sharing experiences and gaining practice in basic skills like handling grievances, taking part in meetings, giving reports or drawing up a motion.

The courses are open not only to women stewards but also to women members who feel that

they might like to become more active in the union. Hopefully the course will lead to more women standing as stewards. There are several of these five day courses in London in the New Year. The two nearest are at Goldsmiths College, Lewisham (five Fridays from February 5th) and Tavistock Square, London WC1 (five Fridays from January 21st).

Contact Bob Lane, Education Secretary, on 274/7722 Ext 2208 for further details.

# What future for Lambeth?

As another 200 people prepare to pack their bags and retire under the early retirement scheme, Director of Finance, Jack Halligan - himself retiring next month, has warned the Council that it could still face sacking up to 1500 more workers next year.

Quoting "informed sources", Halligan told the Policy and Resources Committee on October 20th that a further cut of £21M was likely from next years rate support grant. He recommended that the Council immediately introduce an across the board voluntary severance scheme, and other job saving measures.

However, the Council rejected most of his advice, stating that it would wait until the grant is announced before it decided what to do next. This will be early in January.

## ELECTIONS NEXT YEAR

Clearly the fact that there are local elections next May will influence the Council's thinking on next year's budget as much as anything. The option of raising the rates yet again has been dismissed by Ted Knight who, conscious of the unpopularity the rates issue has brought him, thinks the ratepayers have suffered enough.

Normally that would lead to only one alternative - to make the cuts that the Government requires. But Ted Knight has other cards up his sleeve. One idea is that the Labour Group should resign before the election to force the opposition to do its own dirty work (imagine the havoc that Councillor Robin Pitt and his friends could wreak

in Lambeth in just a few months).

He has also suggested that the Council would continue in office and make a budget with no cuts and no rates increases. This would put Lambeth Council - and Lambeth NALGO - on a collision course with the Government once more.

## SDP/LIBERALS TO TAKE OVER?

The most likely outcome of the election, however, is that the SDP/Liberal Alliance will sweep to power in Lambeth, and they have already stated that they will inevitably have to make drastic cuts in jobs and services.

## ON THE WINGS OF SCARMAN

All in all it seems that little short of a miracle can save us from massive redundancies and cuts in services next year. The recently published Scarman Report on the Brixton troubles, although making wishy washy judgements on the political and social backgrounds to the riots stated that to ignore these factors "is to put the nation at peril". Perhaps that - and his experiences as the Government's special emissary to Merseyside - will lead Michael Heseltine to have a change of heart and plough more resources into the Inner City. That is the only hope left.

## WHAT CAN WE DO?

The early retirement scheme, in terms of an exercise in reducing manpower, has only been a mild success for the Council.

However, it has clearly demonstrated that even this small number leaving can have a marked effect on key areas of the service - to such an

extent that a substantial number of applicants have been turned down.

It has also led in some areas to disagreements amongst our own members over arrangements for taking on duties of the people who are going. Clearly the re-introduction of this scheme, or the introduction of a voluntary severance scheme, would put the Branch into the invidious position of negotiating jobs and job opportunities out of the window - as well as leading to more disagreements and acrimony amongst remaining staff.

In the end these measures, save only moderate amounts of money; the present round of voluntary early retirements will save, at the most £3M next year such measures will not in themselves prevent compulsory redundancies if cuts of the order of £21M are made.

## REDEPLOYMENT BY TRANSFER

The Council has put before us an idea for "redeployment by transfer" which, in conjunction with a complete freeze on recruitment would mean that staff are redeployed from "low priority areas to high priority" areas compulsarily. They are saying that this could remove a few staff from the "firing line" in the short term.

If we reject this - and other measures that the Council might present to us, we will clearly be saying that we are determined to resist further attempts to cut jobs and services, if necessary by taking industrial action. It is not an easy choice to make but, miracles aside, choose we may have to, and soon!

Brian Martin

# Actions in Housing Vacancies cut HAC opening

The Housing Advice Centre is only open four days a week at the moment because six out of twenty-one Housing Adviser posts are being held vacant and staff are refusing to cover the extra work.

The Council has not filled an adviser's post this year. When staff said that they could not and would not do the work of all the vacancies, Management's response was to propose a cut in opening hours. They suggested that the HAC should be open two hours less every day and thus lighten the workload by cutting two hours interviewing time.

HAC Staff rejected this proposal as a thinly-disguised attempt to further run-down the Centre.

They decided instead to refuse to open to the public on Tuesdays. Action started on October 6. Staff spend the day catching up on work which they cannot do when the HAC is open because they are interviewing.

## DETERIORATION

They hope that this action will draw attention to the way in which the Council is allowing the service to deteriorate. Housing problems are on the increase due to the appalling economic situation and more and more people are coming to them for advice. Last year, HAC Staff advised 37,000 people on housing and related problems.

The dispute has repercussions on other sections in Housing because the HAC is the

entrance to the main building. Despite this, the Council has done little to attempt to resolve the dispute. The situation is going to get worse soon because two people are leaving under the early retirement scheme.

## Allocations action stepped up

Members in the Housing Allocations Section have recently stepped-up their no cover action which they have been taking over a vacant AP3 post.

The post deals with the processing of nominations to the GLC Mobility Scheme for tenants whose address begins with the letters A-K. No nominations for tenants in this group have been processed since April.

## CALLOUS

We believe Management's stand on this issue to be callous and that they are treating the rights and genuine aspirations of the tenants with contempt. Such an arbitrary decision by Management to refuse half of the tenants (A-K) access to nominations whilst permitting the rest (L-Z) the freedom to move is despicable.

For seven months Management refused to budge. No-cover action is now being taken over another two vacancies. This means that there are no nominations to the GLC Scheme or the Inter Borough Scheme being processed.

## Letters to the editor

### SINISTER DANCE?

At the Branch E.C. of the 16 November an emergency motion was passed instructing the Social Committee to cancel the disco dance that was being arranged to follow the AGM.

Various arguments were advanced as to why this sinister dance should be cancelled, ranging from the fact that the poster advertising it was considered to be sexist and fascist to the view that to hold a dance would trivialise the debates.

Who are the E.C. trying to kid? They don't want a dance after the AGM because it might encourage people to attend.

Only 80 to 100 people remained at the end of the last AGM out of a branch membership of over 4000.

Is there any justification in

trying to maintain this status quo? Is this really the way to ensure that Branch Officers, rules and policies are truly representative.

Jack Organ, Social Secretary

### LEFT-WING TITILLATION!

I understand that a telegram was sent to Bill Pitt from the Branch congratulating him in winning a seat in Parliament. However, I and members represented object most strongly to the childish comments made about him in Cutlet No.6.

We also believe "Cutlet" could be put to better use than titillation for the left wing members of the Branch.

Mick Wise, DCEPS steward

All correspondence should be sent to Jackie Lewis, c/o NALGO office, 6A Acre Lane.

## CAROL SERVICE

Thursday 17 December, 1.00 pm  
Room 119, Lambeth Town Hall

Accompanied by the  
Salvation Army.

Everyone Welcome!

# Registrars action still solid

Registry Office Staff have been taking industrial action since May over a national regrading claim.

Initial action included refusing to perform weddings on Saturdays and refusing to wear the formal dress expected (but not paid for) by the employers.

The action has since been escalated. Brian Easey, the shop steward in the Registrars Office, explains the background to the dispute.

It was with some trepidation that registrars started their first ever national action on May 5.

None of us really expected the overwhelming support that has been given to the action by registrars up and down the country; nor did the Registrar General or the local authorities.

## FIASCO GRADING COMMITTEES

The dispute is over a regrading claim submitted in 1976. Long years of reasoned argument and negotiation got us nowhere. At last, after being rudely dealt with by the employers at two fiasco grading committees, registrars turned to industrial action.

The action has been escalated several times. Registrars are refusing to deal with all postal applications for birth, death or marriage certificates. They are returned to the sender with a form referring them to the General Register Office.

## REVIEW REJECTED

The Council will lose money through this. In a full year they would lose about £6-7000 which added to the £3000 they are likely to lose through registrars not attending church marriages could total

£10,000. This may not be a large sum compared to Lambeths budget but it is more than enough to pay the full cost of the regrading claim for the 14 registration officers who work for the Council. It should also be remembered that rates only contribute about 14% of registrars salaries, with most of the remainder coming from fees.

The employers, however, are still unwilling to meet the claim. They have suggested a review of the work of registration officers but this has been rejected. The previous review, on which the claim is based, took nearly five years to complete and has not been implemented.

## SYMPATHETIC

In Lambeth the reaction of the public has been mainly philosophical. When the reasons for the dispute have been explained to them they have usually been sympathetic and been kind enough to wish

us well. A NALGO official notice, situated strategically in the entrance hall, informs the public that industrial action is being taken.

The reaction of Lambeth Council has been non-existent. Some may think this surprising, particularly since the Council last year provided the citizens of Lambeth with probably the finest Register Office accommodation in London

Other Councils have written to the employer's Secretary of the National Joint Council stating that meaningful negotiations should be resumed and the dispute ended.

## NO OTHER COURSE

Registrars in Lambeth are united as never before in full support for the action being taken. They know that there is no other course, unless we are prepared to give in and continue to be the cinderellas of the local government service.

# PENWITH BRANCH STRIKE IN SUPPORT OF CHAIRPERSON

The 100 members of Penwith NALGO have been on all-out strike since October 22nd in support of their Branch Chairperson who is threatened with compulsory redundancy.

## COMPULSORY REDUNDANCY

Penwith Council has decided to wind up its Architects Section and offered the four staff redeployment by competitive interview. The decision was not only to privatise architectural service but a thinly disguised attempt to continue the first compulsory

redundancy in Penwith. The person affected is Alec Maund, the Senior Architect who happens to be the Chairperson of the NALGO Branch.

## DONATIONS

The strikers received £20 per week for the first month of their action but are now on full strike pay, which is 56% of their total pay. The E.C. voted unanimously on November 16th to make a donation of £50 to their strike fund. BDD members have also collected £18.

# SCARMAN REPORT : NO MORE MONEY FOR BRIXTON

The long awaited Scarman Report on the Brixton Riots was published on Wednesday, November 25 to instant acclaim from the police, the Government and the media. But Council Leader Ted Knight called it a bitter disappointment.

His biggest criticism is that the report doesn't call for more resources to be put into the area. Infact, Scarman says that "it would be inappropriate for me to make specific suggestions or proposals in the field of Government financial or economic policy". The other main criticism is that Scarman categorically says that institutional racism does not exist in Britain and suggests that racial prejudice in the police force is limited to a few officers

## UNIVERSITIES ACTION

Nearly 20,000 people - non-teaching staff, lecturers and students - joined the day of action against cuts in University spending on Wednesday November 27th. Every NALGO University Branch in the country was represented at the demonstration and lobby of MPs. Representatives from all the University Unions, including NALGO, NUS, AUT and NUPE met Sir Keith Joseph, Secretary of State for Education at the House of Commons on the same evening. Rita Donaghy, Chairperson of NALGO's National Universities Committee, said afterwards that Sir Keith had refused to accept the trade union case and that he "appears to be hell-bent on turning the clock back in Universities to the 1950s when only those from advantaged backgrounds could afford a university education".

on the Streets. Ted Knight said "Frankly, this conclusion will be laughed at by the Black Community in Brixton".

### HESELTINE'S REMARK

Scarman's refusal to recommend the input of more resources into Brixton follows Michael Heseltine's remark to Council representatives when he met them after the April riots. Heseltine said "My cabinet colleagues don't like you. They would not trust Lambeth with more money anyway. If I went back and told them I had conceded more resources to Lambeth, they would have me certified".

### MEANWHILE

Meanwhile, what has happened to the people who were arrested during the riots? According to the Brixton Legal Defence Group, 51 of the 346 defendants from the April riots have had their cases disposed of. One was acquitted and two had no evidence offered against them. Over 65% of the defendants were

black..Of the July cases, 32 of 140 cases have been disposed of. None were acquitted.

### PATRICIA GIAMBI

One particular worrying case is that of Patricia Giambi, an Italian woman living in Brixton who was arrested during the April riots. The police discovered that she was living in the same house as someone on whom they had a political file. They put four and two together, and Patricia was fingered as one of the "foreign agitators" who, according to the Daily Mail et al, had organised the riots.

### DEPORTATION

She was sentenced on September 17 to 28 days in Holloway to be followed by deportation after police claimed that anarchist found in her room meant that she was a potential danger to national security. The "evidence" consisted of photographs of bookshelves and a poster carrying the slogan in Italian, "Bread, Love and Struggle". Fortunately, Patricia won her appeal against deportation.

## ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Non-cooperation with any future early retirement exercises,abolition of Youth Opportunities schemes and a 35 hour week for all,are just three of the subjects up for discussion at the Branch AGM on December 9

There are elections for branch officers and major items of branch policy to be determined.You should be there!

Altogether there are fifteen policy motions and four proposed rule changes to be debated.One or two,such as civil defence,pay policy and trade union rights of Palestinians,have appeared on AGM agendas before, but at least one is rather unusual.Jack Organ is proposing that 'this meeting should cease at 8pm and the fancy dress dancers and disco at present waiting outside should be invited in'.

Agendas are being circulated this week.Note that those who can last out till the end of the meeting are rewarded with food and drink!

## DECEMBER 9,4.30pm

Published by the Lambeth branch of NALGO,6A Acre Lane,SW2.Editor:Jackie Lewis.  
All correspondence should be sent to the Editor,c/o NALGO Branch Office,6A Acre Lane.