

RED★CLERK★



RED CLERK IS THE MONTHLY PUBLICATION OF CPSA DHSS SOUTH EAST LONDON BRANCH.

DEMOCRATICALLY ELECTED...



John Macreadie.



Chris Kirk.

...BUT N.E.C. CALLS RE-RUN!

RED CLERK.

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London Branch.

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ELECTION RE RUN

CPSA members elected John Macreadie because they wanted a change - a General Secretary who would fight for members' interests and deal with their problems. They wanted a clean break with the years of failure under the old leadership of Alistair Graham and John Ellis.

John Macreadie was prevented from taking office by the Right-Wing dominated National Executive Committee who went to the press with lurid stories of 'ballot-rigging' in order to justify keeping the members' choice out of office.

Now the report on the election by the Electoral Reform Society (ERS) has been published. It shows that the allegations of 'ballot-rigging' were totally false - It exonerates John Macreadie and the hundreds of CPSA reps and Branch officials who conducted the ballot.

The main findings of the report were:

1. There was no ballot-rigging.
2. There were no complaints against John Macreadie.
3. The majority of Complaints were of a 'minor nature'.
4. Where there were irregularities 'human failing' was almost exclusively the cause.

Given the above facts, members would think the result of the election would be allowed to stand. The Returning Officers, (a firm of accountants) have decided there should be a re-run election. The reasons given are:

1. The 'unusually large number of objections.
2. The 'wide publicity' of objections.
3. Members in 21 Branches 'did not have an opportunity to vote.

The first two reasons are just silly. The 'wide publicity' was generated by the winners' opponents spreading untrue stories of ballot-rigging. The 'large number' of complaints were canvassed for and solicited by these same people. What matters is the content of the complaints, not the number.

The 21 Branches with 'no opportunity' to vote are not mentioned in the ERS report at all. No details are available as to which Branches they were, or the circumstances in each case and nature of the problems as to why they did not vote.

For these reasons we are to be thrown into a second election and the paralysis caused by not having a General Secretary will continue.

In the re-run I will certainly be voting for the candidates elected in June: John Macreadie and Christine Kirk. They were elected fair and square. They are our General Secretary and General Treasurer.

R.Williams.
Branch Secretary.

Try the old re-run scam,
Ellis, my son...
You can always count on
the boys from Fleet Street
to give you a hand...
... I did!



Alistair Graham.

General Secretary
and General Treasurer Elections
Statement from President
with
Reports of
Electoral Reform Society
and
Returning Officers

'E.R.S.' Report.

- pay '87.

Over the years low pay has become institutionalised in the Civil Service. Since 1980 our wages have fallen 20% below wages of comparable workers outside the Civil Service.

Every year prices go up and our wages go down. In recent years the NEC, although committed to fight over pay, has failed to launch any campaign involving members in action and consequently we've seen our pay claim diminish without even consultation.

With this years Pay Conference coming up on 27th Nov. 86, our branch held a meeting on 29th Oct. to decide the pay claim and strategy we want our Union to take up.

PAY CLAIM '87

The pay claim our branch has decided to take to National Conference centres around the following elements:

1. A minimum wage of £115 per week.
2. A cash increase of £20 per week.
3. Abolition of incremental scales to establish a 'rate for the job'.
4. 6 weeks annual leave.
5. A 35 hour week.

STRATEGY

Because of the previous inactivity of the NEC this year we decided to take a motion to conference laying down a set programme of action to achieve our claim.

The strategy to include selective strike action and sanctions (within areas not already operating withdrawals of goodwill such as overtime bans), building support and confidence for ALL-out strike. Also the motion carried commits the NEC to seek like action in other Civil Service Unions for a previously agreed joint Pay claim.

REGIONAL PAY

An idea put forward by the Treasury this year is that of a regional pay system. Far from eradicating low pay, the effect of such a system would be to institutionalise poverty wages by offering lower pay to civil servants in areas of high unemployment.

In another motion passed we instructed the NEC not to take part in talks with the Treasury on this issue, any such pay system would divide and weaken our Union.

The NEC must launch an awareness campaign, in conjunction with other Civil Service Unions, aimed at building maximum opposition to regional pay should the Treasury seek to introduce it.

DELEGATES TO PAY CONFERENCE

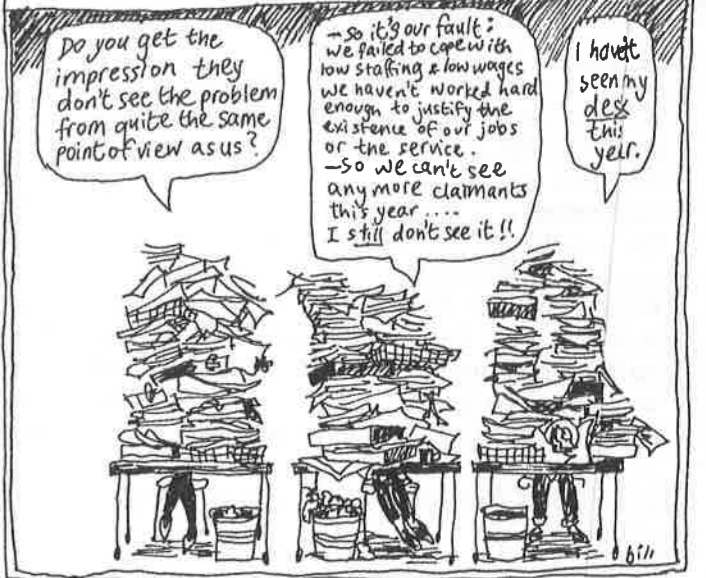
P.Rush - T.O'Dell - R.Williams.



CARTOON BY BILL

CRISIS AT THE DHSS BUT WHAT IS THE SOLUTION?

...THE STORY SO FAR... MANAGEMENT HAVE HONED THE STAFF DOWN TO A SKELETON WORKFORCE, SUCCEEDED IN KEEPING WAGES MINIMAL, AND NOW, NOTING THE CHAOS ENSUING, RALLIED THEIR BRAINS TO DISCOVER WHAT NEXT TO CUT BACK ON TO RESTORE SOME SEMBLANCE OF EFFICIENCY... THE ANSWER OF COURSE IS CLAIMANTS!!! (No claimants means no starting means no wages) (???)



YOUR BRANCH.

BRANCH OFFICERS:

SECRETARY: ROB WILLIAMS. (GREENWICH)
CHAIR: GUY BROADBENT. (SOUTHWARK)
ASST. SEC: KEVIN EDEN. (KENNINGTON PARK)
VICE CHAIR: YUSUF YUSUF. (CAMBERWELL)
ORGANISER: PETE RUSH. (CAMBERWELL)
TREASURER: TIM O'DELL. (OVAL)
EDITOR: MICKI LOEBNER (OVAL)

BLACK MEMBERS ADVISORY COMMITTEE:

CHAIR: BRUCE FENTON. (KENNINGTON PARK)

If you have any problems at work, no matter how small, remember - let your Union rep know!



BEC REPORT - OCTOBER

This month's BEC meeting began with a discussion on Camberwell AO's dispute - see the 1st pages of this Journal.

Most offices in our Branch came out on a one day strike in support of the Kensington strike. Reps from Oval, Camberwell, Kennington Park, Greenwich, and Hither Green reported that their offices had successfully closed for the day.

SPEAKERS at the meeting:

An organiser from the Youth Trade Union Rights Campaign spoke on their March for Jobs in October and asked us to sponsor a marcher. We made a donation of £20 and a collection was taken.

Two strikers from the Silentnight dispute also spoke. The strike is now in its 16th month! The strikers are determined to win back their jobs but are now in desperate need of financial help. They urged CPSA members to join the campaign to boycott Silentnight beds. Our Branch donated £50 towards the strike fund.

A donation of £50 was made to the Anti - Apartheid Movement as they are now facing bank -ruptcy.

MOTIONS

A motion brought by Kennington Park to censure John Raywood (General Treasurer) and Geoff Lewtas (Section Secretary) for stopping John MacCreadie from addressing a Section 3 day school in September, was discussed and passed.

The long awaited ballot on the Political Fund has now again been postponed to February 1987.

Maternity Packs have now arrived in the Branch and will be in the offices shortly. Any women members requiring information on maternity leave, pay, etc. should see their reps for details.

The campaign for workplace cancer screening goes on, the problem of funding being the main obstacle at the moment. Further investigation is being made by the Branch.

£ 200 CLUB

OCTOBER WINNERS

1st.Prize £43.80 - A. MacFarlane (O).
 2nd.Prize £29.20 - D. Hughes (S).
 3rd.Prize £14.60 - T. Precious (P).
 4th.Prize £ 7.30 - A. Mallet (S).
 5th.Prize £ 7.30 - A. Latif (C).
 6th.Prize £ 7.30 - R. Nyhus (P).

Profit to the Branch £36.50.

JOIN THE 200 CLUB - SEE YOUR REP.
 FOR DETAILS.

RANK AND FILE

CPSA and SCPS members at Oval AO have been on strike since Wednesday 12th Nov. to stop the outstationing of work from the office. For some time now management have been looking for a solution to the crisis of DHSS offices in inner city areas. While the number of people forced to claim benefit has increased massively, staffing levels have come no where near matching the vast number of claims. Last year management were forced to concede extra staff after ind. action in London offices: Now rather than



recognise the need for extra staff, their strategy is to take work away from the traditionally more militant London offices and set up scab offices in the Home Counties.

Un-unionised, lower paid workers have been recruited in Chatham and Broadstairs as a first stage in what management describes as a radical move to transfer the bulk of supp.ben. work out of London.

Following Battersea CPSA and SCPS members decision 2 weeks ago to fight outstationing at their office with all-out strike action, workers at Oval AO voted to join Battersea in opposing what will inevitably lead to massive job losses in inner city DHSS offices and decimation of any service to the claimants in those areas.

The one-day strike by Kennington Park, Peckham, Camberwell and Greenwich Park was a boost to the strikers but clearly extensive action across McDonald's area is necessary to stop outstationing.

.. affiliations

Below is a list of the Branch's current affiliations. If anyone wishes to know more about any of these bodies, or has any other suggestions for affiliation please contact Rob Williams on 305 0564 or Kevin Eden on 735 8855.

Amnesty International
 Anti-Apartheid Movement
 Campaign for freedom of information
 Campaign to protect and improve Transport in London (C.A.P.I.T.A.L.)
 Child Poverty Action Group
 Greenwich Community Council
 Greenwich Trades Council
 Inner Nutshell (Inner London Branch Journal)
 Labour Research Department
 London Hazards Centre
 London Asbestos Action Campaign
 Lambeth Trades Council
 Lewisham Trades Council
 N.H.S. Unlimited
 Save Rose and Brian Campaign
 Southwark Trade Union News
 Southwark Trades Council
 South London Campaign against Social Security Cuts.

NO RACIST LAWS!

OCTOBER SAW THE INTRODUCTION OF VISAS FOR VISITORS TO BRITAIN FROM INDIA, PAKISTAN AND BANGLADESH. VISITORS FROM GHANA AND NIGERIA WILL ALSO SOON NEED VISAS.

Americans, Europeans, Australians, even white South Africans will still be able to visit Britain without visas. Obviously these visas are racist, if you're white you're welcome, if you're black you're not.

The visas have been introduced supposedly to cut queues at Heathrow, the very queues caused by racist customs officials interrogating black people trying to visit the country, - white people generally just walk through.

They will mean people having to get visas from British Embassies before they can come to Britain. Working for the Government, we can guess the problems involved; an Indian wishing to visit a sick relative will not just be able to get on a plane but could spend months waiting for a visa.



The introduction of visas was greeted with a barrage of racist filth in the Tory press. The scab 'Sun' talked about 3,000 Bengalis 'flooding' Heathrow (86,000 people pass through Heathrow every day!) and the 'liars - the whoppers Asians tell at Heathrow'. Racist graffiti in East London took up these sort of headlines and a Mosque was attacked as a direct result of the Press's campaign.

The rest of Britain's immigration laws are racist too. The facts about immigration are that more people leave Britain each year than arrive and over half of all immigrants are white. Obviously immigration is not the problem, what governments, Tory and Labour, are worried about is the colour of peoples' skin. Merlyn Rees a Labour Home Secretary invented 'patriality' - You could become British if your father or grandfather was British, i.e. if you're white in over 99% of cases.

Thatcher spoke of the danger of being flooded by people from different cultures. This is rank hypocrisy. Britain, European countries, America, banks and big business have been responsible for shattering cultures and ruining economies in Africa, Asia, all over the world; the yearly interest on money Ethiopia owes the banks comes to more than Band Aid managed to collect in its 'Feed the World' campaign.

These new visas are just the latest in a succession of racist laws implemented by consecutive governments:- Labour introducing immigration laws under the Wilson government and following this up under the Callaghan government with the disgusting 'virginity tests' and the Tories with their Nationality Act and now the visas. Thousands of people have been deported, including a baby of two, as a result. Within our Union branch we have supported anti-deportation campaigns such as the 'Save Rose and Brian' campaign, but also we should be clear -

ALL IMMIGRATION CONTROLS SHOULD GO.
 THE PROBLEM IS NOT IMMIGRATION,
 BUT RACISM. RACISM THAT THE TORIES
 PLAY ON AND LABOUR WON'T TAKE ON.

Immigration Controls =
 Racist Controls.



Letters:

South Africa

Dear Editor,

In respect of your article on South Africa, to bring the message of boycotts/sanctions and links closer to home, I believe you should present an article on sanctions and how each of us can get involved with boycotting goods etc, from South Africa and Namibia.

I also believe that whilst the articles were excellent, like all other reports on South Africa, they forget to mention the South African illegal occupation of Namibia, its funding of UNITA troops in Mozambique against the MPLA, their covert action it uses in destroying railway lines, schools, hospitals etc, in Zimbabwe, Zambia, Botswana, Angola, and even Kenya!

Yours,

Kevin Eden
Branch Asst. Secretary.
Kensington Park ILO.

Editor: All letters, articles, and contributions welcome.

Kensington DHSS Strike

Dear Editor,

We would like to thank members of South East London Branch for their support during our strike at Kensington ILO.

CPSA and SCPS members have now returned to work having gained a victory over our racist management. Everyone now realises we do have some power and confidence is very high.

Earlier, with the strike spreading, and with solidarity action throughout London, Bloomsbury AO had agreed to an all out strike in solidarity. Now management has been forced to guarantee a return to work at Charles Hse for Shirley-one of the suspended CPSA members. She will return, managers agree, as soon as their enquiries are complete (at most 2 weeks). We have also been promised a weekly review of the DHSS's internal investigations - a big change from the situation of total secrecy which was the case before the strike. Further promises have been made concerning the other CPSA member involved, whose arrest and subsequent suspension by management provoked the strike.

He now remains suspended, but now on near full pay. Some activists wanted to press for his full reinstatement, but a majority thought the gains already made were enough.

It is important that these gains are built on now we have returned to work. The suspended member's case must still be fought.

Yours fraternally,
S. Chandley.
Kensington ILO.

Editor:

Just three days after calling off their strike, CPSA and SCPS members learned that the suspended member had been charged by the DHSS with conspiracy. A protest march to DHSS headquarters is planned together with a levy. A vote of no confidence in management was passed and there is a go slow and a withdrawal from negotiation procedures. Unfortunately, returning to work without immediate reinstatement has taken the pressure off management.

'Duped' of Camberwell...?

Comrades,

Over the years I have attended many General meetings of our Branch, where motions, submitted by Broad Left supporters were passed calling on our General Secretary to be paid the average wage of a CPSA member.

Now Broad Left's very own John Macreadie was fairly elected as General Secretary but now totally ignores BL policy and states he will forego his £10,000 pay rise but continue to accept the very untypical CPSA members wage of £16,000 pa. We now have a deafening silence from BL supporters on this issue. A re-run of the election is now to happen so I for one would like to know what is BL's position on pay for our General Secretary? Is it the average wage of a CPSA member as BL supporters tell us or is it £16,000 as John Macreadie (BL Candidate) tells us? We have the right to know before an election. As an ordinary CPSA member I feel duped by BL and I wonder what other policies really mean. Does 6 weeks annual leave mean 5 weeks, does £110 minimum wage mean £85?

Come on BL - Do not say it if you do not mean it!

Yours Fraternally,
Brian Burdon
Camberwell AO 17/10/86.

Editor:

With the re-run election taking place this month everybody within the Branch will have ample chance to read John Macreadie's election address, hear John at public meetings in London and ask any Broad Left members what the policies of the Broad Left are.



On MacDonald's Farm...

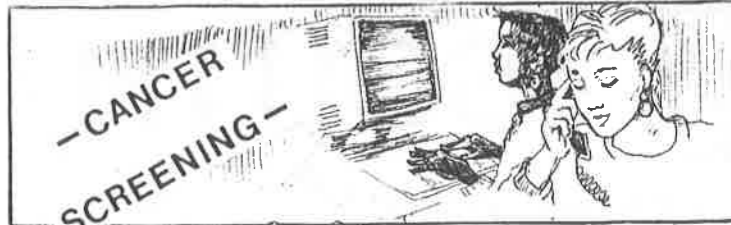
Since August 18th the public counter at Camberwell AO has been closed following an attack on the counter by 100 or so claimants frustrated at the lack of service being provided. The situation had been steadily deteriorating since June when the bulk of staff and all the casepapers had been moved out to another office at Borough, three miles away. Since then management's only attempt to resolve the problem has been to take 12 members of staff off the payroll when they refused to re-open the counter, giving them 20 minutes notice of their intention. Faced with this level of intimidation the 12 members sat themselves down outside the manager's office, making it clear they were prepared to undertake other duties but not to put themselves in what they and all other members at Camberwell considered a dangerous situation.

Faced with the fact that members of both CPSA and SCPS were united in their resolve that the counter should not reopen until the questions of the service to the public and security had been solved, management backed down after 4 days and reinstated the members' pay. Whilst management now accept that staff should not have to work in unsafe conditions, the basic problem of the level of service provided for the public remains unsolved. It should be clear even to them that the present system where people can only contact the office by writing to a PO Box no. or trying to get through on an overloaded switchboard, is intolerable. They appear to be taking the somewhat cynical view that whilst the counter remains shut they can redeploy staff to reduce the arrears of work thus easing the pressure for more staff. - At Oval AO management have now closed the counter to the public until after xmas!

Meanwhile at Battersea ILO in neighbouring S.W. London Branch, we see another attempt by management to get around the problem of providing adequate staff. Faced with a backlog of some 2,000 ENPs what do they do? Provide more staff? No, they take the cases to a 'ghost' office at Chatham staffed by undertrained new entrants.

Members at Battersea seeing this for what it is, a direct attempt to break the campaign for more staff, refused to have anything to do with this and walked out on strike when the vans came to remove the cases.

What is behind these moves by management? The answer is clear - They aim to break our campaign on staffing, reduce the Unions ability to protect and improve the conditions of members and scrap any service to the public. This was clearly spelt out by MacDonald the Group Manager at a meeting with Lambeth councillors, MPs and voluntary organisations on 3rd Nov. when he stated the problem was not one of more staff...



For some time now, it has been the policy of CPSA to press management to provide work-place cancer screening facilities for our women members. 2-3,000 women die every year from cervical cancer, which if diagnosed early is actually curable. Department management has responded callously by stating that any provision must be on a no-cost basis, i.e. that they are unwilling to pay.

In our own Branch (as we reported in last month's journal) we have met with just this response. Management has flatly refused to consider funding the on-site cancer screening facilities provided by the Womens National Cancer Screening Campaign (WNCCC) even though the cost, spread over several offices, would be minimal. Strangely they have pointed to this very campaign in their arguments to avoid the need for funding. They have said that since there is a campaign underway coordinated by the Sunday Mirror, their own involvement is unnecessary. However the Sunday Mirror has in fact linked with the WNCCC to provide mobile screening units which unfortunately are not provided free of charge.

Whilst continuing to press management to fund office cancer screening, we will be asking them to at least look into the provisions available in this area for NHS screening.

Funding may of course have to be undertaken by our Union branch and at the November BEC meeting we will be raising the issue again.

...but one of the 'quality' of those staff. He stated the problem was one of low quality staff making lots of mistakes. His answer is to move the bulk of DHSS posts out of inner city areas to areas around London where he can get 'high quality recruits'. Of course he failed to mention the financial motive behind this i.e. cheaper offices, lower wages, or the deterioration in service, nor that he hopes those green filled sites will be harder for the Unions to organise.

Faced with possible moves in this direction we must put clear demands. These must be that adequate staff and premises are provided where they are needed, in the areas we are supposed to serve. If this is done the problem of violent attacks on staff and offices will reduce. Unless we keep the pressure on for these demands management will continue to treat the symptoms rather than the root problem.

