



Support for February week of action

700 jobs to be axed by Wandsworth

ALL OUT ON ONE DAY STRIKE

Stewards voted at a Special Executive Meeting on January 5 to support the "week of action" called by several of the Lambeth manual unions for the first week in February.

Proposals drawn up by the Industrial Action Committee, including holding a one-day strike on February 4, were accepted and are being put to the Special Branch Meeting on January 20.

Members of the Lambeth branches of the Transport and General Workers Union (TGWU) and of the construction unions in the Direct Labour Organisations have decided to go on strike for the week. The dust workers, TGWU members, have said they will not claim for extra work to shift the backlog.

RECALL CONFERENCE

The Local Government in Crisis steering group has given support for the week of action and is organising a march and rally on February 4. Both will be discussed at a recall conference this Saturday, January 17.

PUBLICITY

The main emphasis of the week is to be on active campaigning against cuts. Publicity material is being prepared and "events" are being organised.

Action plans

Plans for the week of action are already well under way in some sections. Most will go ahead whatever the outcome of Tuesday's branch meeting.....

Consumer Services.... members are planning a 'work-in' for the week when they will be campaigning both inside and outside of the consumer advice centres but will be advising members of the public as required. They have been paying into a special fund to finance the weeks activities.

Day Centres....workers and clients held a meeting on Tuesday to discuss forms of action during the week. 1981 is International Year of the Disabled.

All Council services in Wandsworth were halted yesterday, Wednesday 14, by a 24 hour strike called by Wandsworth NALGO in protest at the announcement last Friday that 700 jobs are to be axed by April.

The strike was supported by nearly all NALGO members, and most members of the manual unions refused to cross NALGO picket lines. Even non-members are reported to have stayed away.

The Council announced last week that they will axe 400 white-collar staff - including assistant directors - and 300 manual jobs. The Tories have already axed 1000 jobs since they took over from Labour in May 1978. In this latest round of cuts the Social Services Department will lose 202 posts, technical services 150, recreation 150, housing 90, administration 50, finance 26, planning 13 and development 5. Four luncheon clubs and a day centre for the mentally ill are marked for closure.

Over a thousand people demonstrated outside the Town Hall on Tuesday evening as Councillors arrived for a special meeting to approve the cuts. NALGO members from Lambeth, Lewisham and Hammersmith and Fulham were also present to show support.

CAMPAIGN OF INDUSTRIAL ACTION

The 24 hour strike, which was given the backing of the National Emergency Committee, is the first step in a campaign of industrial action adopted unanimously at a mass meeting on Monday. The meeting, which was addressed by NALGO General Secretary, Geoffrey Drain, voted for a programme including selective strikes, a complete overtime ban, no cover for sickness or leave, non co-operation with Councillors and an immediate all-out strike if any members are victimised for taking action. The actions are to be taken in the absence of any clear commitment by the Council that there will be no enforced redundancies.

Action plans continued

Libraries Division.....members voted at a meeting last Friday to go on strike for the week, shutting all the Libraries, to bring home to users that library services are often the one of the first areas to be cut.

Members will be outside the libraries all week, handing out leaflets and a factsheet on library cuts in other areas. They are also contacting the local organisations who use the outreach services to gain support.

Other sections such as Housing and Borough Development have action plans in early stages at the moment.

Lambeth levies 20p supplementary rate

Lambeth Council has had to levy a 20p supplementary rate to cover the £11.2 million deficit projected for the end of March.

The supplement will average £50 for householders and £140 for small shops. The GLC face the largest bill - the supplementary for County Hall works out at £1.2 million. Council and GLC Tenants will have to pay an average of £4.50 extra per week.

The decision to levy the rate was made by the Labour Group after the District Auditor told them that they could not borrow against next years income to finance this years spending. This would lead to the Council running out of money during February.

Several other authorities have also levied supplementary rates - notably Camden, who needed only to levy a 6p supplement to cover a deficit of £20 million.

1,000 jobs to go in Labour council

Labour controlled Barnsley Council in Yorkshire, which has levied a 6p supplementary rate, is to axe 1000 jobs out of a total of 11,000. The Council hopes to save £8 million this year by cutting jobs through voluntary early retirement schemes for white and blue collar staff.

The Chairperson of the Personnel Services Committee said "The authority is still endeavouring to maintain a policy of no compulsory redundancy in consultation with the unions but if manning levels are not reduced as a result we shall have to look again at our options".

Sales court case fails

The first legal test of the Housing Act 1980 proved an anti-climax last week as a county court judge refused to lay down a timetable to force Lambeth to complete the sale of a Council house within six months.

Ian Mather, of 51 Downton Avenue, Streatham, had received an acknowledgement of his "right to buy" before the case came to court although not within the four weeks laid down by the Act. Judge McDowell said that the Council was at fault for taking too long to reply but doubted whether the ruling was necessary as the Council has already admitted the delay.

Ian Mather is to be a Tory candidate in the 1982 borough elections and was backed in his case by Lambeth Conservatives.

Mr Mather's solicitor refused to comment when the judge asked "I wonder whether this is not a political exercise",

Only an oblique reference was made in court to the branches industrial action, although press reports did include mention of the dispute and the branch position on sales.

POLICE RAID GLC SALES SQUAT

The occupation of Kilner House, Kennington Park Estate was ended last Friday after a pre-dawn raid by over 500 police armed with crowbars and sledgehammers, and using a lorry to break through the corrugated iron fence around the block.

The 98 day occupation, organised by the London Squatters Union and the London Tenants Organisation, was in protest at the GLC's plan to sell the 60 flats.

DIRECTOR SUSPENDED

Jack Halligan, Director of Finance has been suspended pending an enquiry. The Council has said that the suspension relates to "a matter of corporate management".

BARCLAYS BANK

A public meeting sponsored by Brixton Churches with speakers Ted Knight, and David Haslen (Secretary of the 'End Loans to South Africa' Campaign). Monday 19th January, 8.00 p.m. at St Matthews Meeting Place.

Special Branch Meeting

10.30 am Tuesday 20 January

Ace Cinema
