

workers POWER

A SOCIALIST
ALTERNATIVE
FOR LONDON

LSA
LONDON SOCIALIST ALLIANCE

London elections 4 May 2000

**Stop
the
Tube
sell-off**

**Save
our
schools**

SACK THE TORIES
NOT OUR
TEACHERS
SAVE HACKNEY
DOWNS SCHOOL

**Fight
police
racism**



**End
low
pay**

**Defend
council
housing**

RICH STREET 14

“If Labour can't help us
what is the party for?”

Rover Longbridge worker

VOTE KEN

for London Mayor

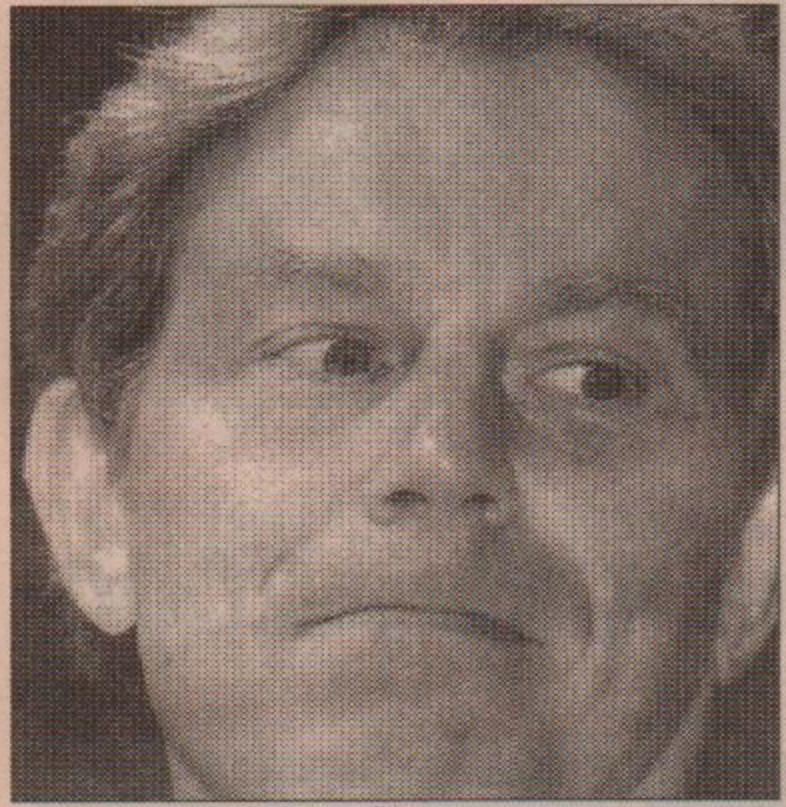
VOTE LSA

**London
Socialist
Alliance**

for London Assembly

LONDON: THE SOCIALIST ALTERNATIVE...

Labour's rotten record



TONY BLAIR'S New Labour is the party of broken promises.

■ It promised a new deal on transport - it has given us chaos on the privatised railways. Profit before safety led to the Paddington train crash last year. Now Labour wants to privatise the London Underground.

■ Labour promised to save the NHS. Instead it has handed hospitals over to private companies, under Private Finance Initiative schemes. Waiting lists shot up this winter to a staggering 1,118,700. In London last year 57,000 patients had their operations cancelled - an increase of 12 per cent on the previous year.

■ Blair promised us "education, education, education". But Labour has undermined comprehensive education. Now education minister David Blunkett says his promise to end selection "was a joke". Meanwhile, schools are starved of cash and teachers' pay is under attack.

■ Labour promised to end poverty - yet it cut single parents' benefits, it increased pensions by just 75p, and introduced a minimum wage so low that in Britain today over one in three children are born into poverty. Meanwhile the rich are paying less tax than ever.

■ Labour said it was against racism. Now Home Secretary Jack Straw is busy whipping up a frenzy against asylum seekers. Frank Dobson defends the racist Met Police and - one year on from the Stephen Lawrence Report - the Met is as racist as ever.

■ Labour says it wants a "new partnership" between bosses and workers. In practice that means governing for the bosses and attacking workers and their unions. Labour has kept the Tory anti-union laws. It will not lift a finger to save jobs at Rover, Ford or Honda.

■ Labour says it stands for Londoners. But it is giving away council homes to private landlords. So London is becoming a playground for the super-rich: when our kids grow up where will they live?

■ Thousands of working class people in London are fed up with this shameful record. That is why so many backed Ken Livingstone for mayor. But Tony Blair rigged the ballot to stop Ken.

■ That is why the London Socialist Alliance is standing in this election. A vote for Livingstone and the LSA could will stop Blair's project in its tracks.

How to cast your vote - see page 4

Homes for all - not just rich yuppies

London's housing is a tale of two cities: everywhere they are building yuppie lofts and luxury flats. But for ordinary people the housing choices are bleak.

Soaring house prices means that only the well paid can afford to buy - and then only a shoebox.

Meanwhile councils are rushing to privatise what's left of council housing. Across London they are handing over estates to housing associations. The excuse is that councils cannot borrow money to pay for repairs and new homes.

That is a scandal. Labour is refus-

ing to let councils borrow the money - but it is prepared to write off £22 billion the councils owe before it hands over our estates to unaccountable private landlords.

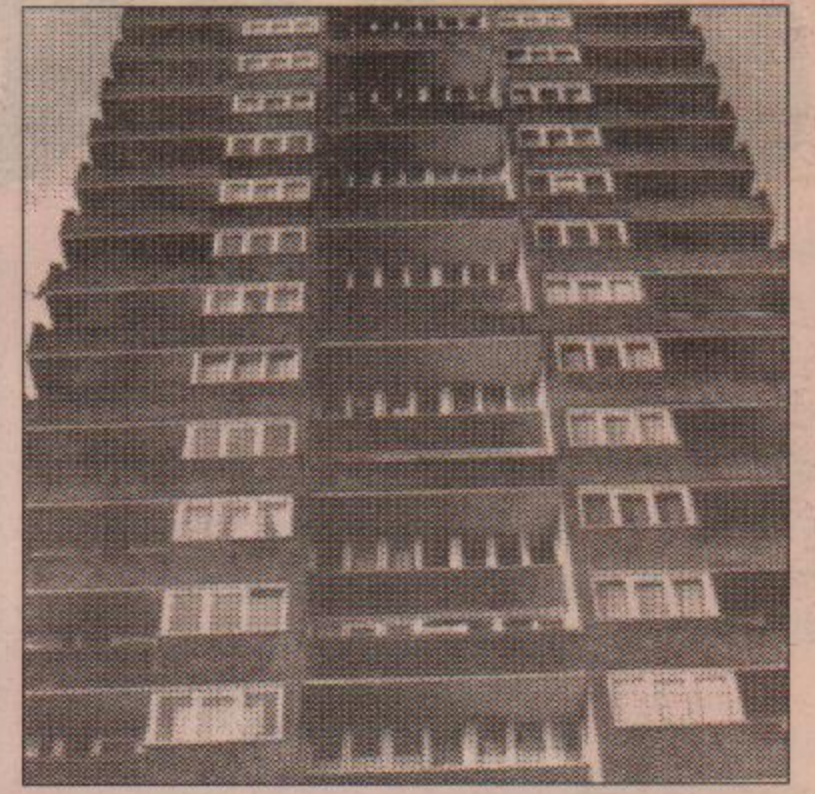
They say tenants' rights won't be affected: it's a lie. When estates are transferred, you lose secure tenancies and have only "assured tenancy". Housing associations evict 70% more families than council landlords.

Under housing associations the rents are soaring - and unlike with the council, you cannot vote them out.

We say: stop the transfers now. Return all council estates to council landlords. Estates should be run under tenants' control.

The new London Development Agency should put housing at the top of the agenda. We need thousands of cheap new council homes and a massive programme of spending to renovate existing estates.

We should confiscate the empty dwellings of the rich and nationalise the land of the super-rich parasites who make millions from freehold rents.



POLICE

End racist policing

BRIAN DOUGLAS was stopped by police in Clapham on a drugs search: police batons killed him - but the cops who did it walked away. Stephen Lawrence was killed by a racist mob in Thamesmead. The killers walked free because police refused to track them down. Sarah Harris went into Stoke Newington police station alive. Two days later she was dead in Homerton hospital, with massive bruising. Ricky Reel was found dead in the Thames after being chased by racists. Police refused to investigate the case as murder.

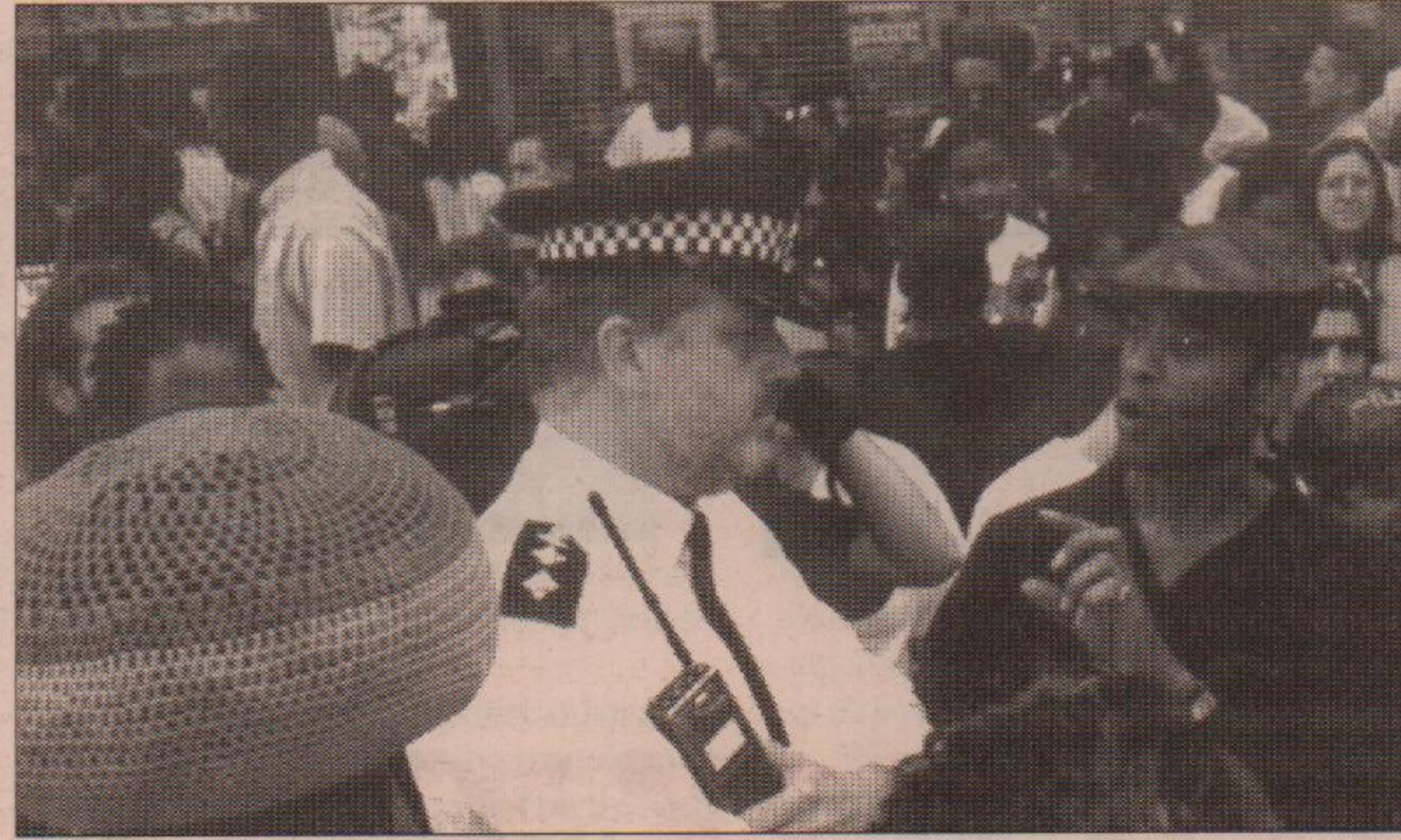
All these victims were black. They are victims of the racism that runs through London's police like a cancer.

The Metropolitan Police are institutionally racist. That was the judgement of the Stephen Lawrence report, which told a tale of police collusion with the murderers and indifference to the Lawrence family's fight for justice.

But now the police are fighting back. In parts of London they are effectively on strike as far as fighting street crime goes. The subtle message is - if you want anti-racist policing, you will have to have street crime. That is what the Met commissioner means when he says that the Lawrence report "hit morale".

With one in four Londoners coming from ethnic minorities, no wonder police racism is an issue in this election. But Labour's Frank Dobson sides with the police and the racists on every count.

Dobson echoes the Met's claims the attacks on police racism are hampering the fight against crime. Frank Dobson's first campaign visit after his rigged victory in the Labour selection contest was to New Scotland Yard to back the police.



In contrast, London Socialist Alliance candidates have allied themselves with all those fighting racism and police harassment.

That is why we call for disarming the police of the guns, truncheons and CS gas and helicopters they use to terrorise our communities.

No one wants to see working class

communities ravaged by crime. But the root cause of crime is the profit system, that tells working class people they must live on poverty incomes while the rich live luxury lifestyles.

The Greater London Assembly will have a new committee to oversee policing. It will be stuffed with magistrates and appointed big-wigs. It will have no

operational control over the police. Police accountability will be a sham under that system.

But the London Socialist Alliance can use the new committee to put the police under working class scrutiny - and use the Assembly to denounce every incident of police racism. It can bring together and fund the community monitoring projects - and make the Assembly itself a focus for anti-racist campaigns.

Most of all, LSA members of the Assembly will organise support for black community self defence against racist attack and police harassment.

Ultimately the police remain part of the state machine that exists to defend the profit system - together with the racism and the anti-working class justice system that goes with it. The alternative is a socialist society in which working class communities police themselves - with a different kind of policing that drives out anti-social crime from our communities but also attacks the real criminals: the corporate murderers who run the railways, the nuclear power plants, the arms trade and the City banks.

Kate Ford, Socialist Alliance candidate and Hackney teacher says: "Making the police accountable is an illusion. What we need is a community struggle against police harassment and court injustice - whether directed against black youth, striking workers or asylum seekers. The unions and the Labour Party should support all those who resist police racism. When black people organise self defence against racist attack we support them and build solidarity across the whole working class. Faced with the racist Met we say - Self Defence is No Offence!"

Dobson's drugs hypocrisy

The "war on drugs" is not working. Half a million people a week take ecstasy. Cannabis - which is far less harmful than tobacco or alcohol - is used by people from all walks of life. Even a police-backed charity and the Tory Telegraph last month called for the decriminalisation of drugs. But Labour will not listen.

The LSA fights to

decriminalise drugs. Legalising drugs would wipe out the drug barons at a stroke and stop young people being harmed by poisoned backstreet drugs.

It would end the criminalisation of young people who are harming no-one.

The super-rich snort coke with impunity at their dinner parties. Only the working class suffers from the war on drugs.

EDUCATION

All our kids deserve first class schools

Blair came to power saying "education, education, education": now we know why he said it three times - there's a three tier education system in London.

For the rich: the private schools. For the middle class there is selection - wether through grammar schools or through the backdoor methods of interview and posh catchment areas.

For the majority, if Labour's David Blunkett gets his way, there will just be education dustbins.

LSA candidates Kate Ford and Christine Blower are teachers who've spent years dedicated to improving the education of inner city students.

Ford says: "Teachers are sick of new Labour's betrayals on education. It's not just underfunding; it's not just Labour's broken promise to get rid of selective

education. It's the Big Brother mentality that sends inspectors in to bully schools for 'failing' when the real problem is lack of funds and lack of resources.

"And it's the league table system that tells working class kids their schools are third-class".

New Labour controls the very councils that are failing our children. They've run out of people to blame and now they want performance related pay to divide teachers and unions defending education standards.

Ford says: "We need a London-wide education authority under the control of students, parents and teachers. We need massive investment to raise standards - and an end to all selection, by exam, interview or postcode.

WORKPLACE RIGHTS

£7 an hour or no council contracts!

Millions of London workers earn poverty pay. We work long hours for peanuts - and our workplace rights are often minimal.

The new London Assembly will have few real powers to change things in the workplace - but socialists are determined to use the Assembly to fight for better pay and conditions.

The current minimum wage is a joke. When it was brought in, bully-boy employers just forced workers - especially in London's catering, hotel and entertainment industry - to sign away their rights.

The new London Assembly should refuse to sign contracts with any firm that does not meet minimum standards on pay, conditions, health and safety and equal opportunities.

Any firm paying less than £7 an hour minimum an any firm that doesn't recognise trade unions should be banned from working for the new Assembly. And we will demand a 35 hour working week with no loss of pay.

The Labour government will say that's illegal - and the employers will rush to the courts.

But socialists are determined to give London workers a better deal. We will turn the new Assembly into an organising centre for those fighting for better pay, conditions and union rights.

Ultimately these rights will be won by workers' action: strikes, occupations, solidarity action for those victimised by anti-union bosses - that is the way to end poverty pay and stop the management bullies in their tracks.

Stop Labour's Tube sell-off!

EVERY LINE is misery line on the London Underground. The Tube has the highest fares in Europe. Broken escalators, signal failures, stations closed due to lack of staff - these are everyday facts of life.

Above ground it is even worse. Traffic moves slower now than it did 100 years ago. Traffic pollution is ruining our health. The private railway network is a disgrace.

If any single issue sums up the atrocious quality of life in the capital city today, it is the state of the transport system. That is why it is a key issue in these elections. Everyone agrees that drastic action is needed. But what are the options on offer?

Frank Dobson and New Labour want a Public Private Partnership (PPP). That means backdoor privatisation. Private firms will finance work to renovate the Tube and build new lines - but the taxpayers will be in hook and them for decades.

Instead of an integrated transport network, privatisation offers only more chaos and lack of accountability.

And as privatisation on the rail shows, profit is always put before safety. Transport workers' jobs and conditions are cut and the service deteriorates in the meantime.

Privatisation kills: look at Southall and Paddington. If we let them sell the Tube to private finance, it is only a matter of time before disaster hits the Underground.

But is Ken Livingstone's policy of raising the cash through bond issues any better? Only insofar as the tube will not be broken up and part-privatised. But the banks - who will buy the bonds - will charge a handsome inter-



Livingstone addresses RMT meeting against tube privatisation. Also on the platform is LSA candidate Greg Tucker.

est rate, which in turn will keep the ticket prices high and tubeworkers' wages low.

This is why Ken, like New Labour, is only promising a fares freeze.

There is another way to run London's transport. We should tax the rich - and in particular the City of London bankers who could not make their billions without public transport ferrying in workers every day.

These rich capitalists do not pay a penny towards its maintenance. By taxing the rich, the Tube could be overhauled, new lines built, the long-suffering commuters given an integrated transport system.

As for fares: they could be halved at a stroke and, over time, abolished.

Even in the short term, taxing the rich and distributing the money via subsidies could provide free travel for pensioners, disabled people, students and the unemployed.

Livingstone's answer is not enough.

He wants to charge outer London car users a fiver a day to drive into the centre. We all want to reduce traffic congestion, but not to punish individual drivers who have no decent public transport options.

Labour has no intention of giving us the transport system we need. It will not even hand over control of the Tube to the new quango - Transport for London - until privatisation has been completed.

Since the Paddington disaster, 4 out of 5 people have supported re-nationalisation of the rail. But Labour will not listen: it governs for the bankers and the privateers, not the working class majority.

We say nationalise public transport now with no compensation to the privateers.

Workers' control of public transport

London needs a cheap, clean, efficient and fully integrated transport system.

Rail companies like Thames Trains who were partly responsible for last autumn's Paddington disaster, South West Trains who have sacked their drivers' union safety rep and Connex who force their drivers to work their rest days should, should be nationalised without a penny's compensation.

The same goes for the private bus companies.

The mayor should set up an all London body for transport, with delegates from transport workers, passengers and working class communities who use the system.

Together we should draw up a workers' plan for London transport.

Environmentally sound methods of transport, like river buses, and safe cycle routes could be put in place. Only workers control will bring the transport system we need.

A rigged assembly

The Greater London Assembly will have few real powers.

It can reject the mayor's budget but it can only propose its own alternative with a majority of two-thirds.

The budget covers police, fire & emergency, transport and development. But Home Secretary Jack Straw can intervene to protect spending for police and fire. Transport minister John Prescott has powers to ringfence transport spending. And the Audit Commission - stuffed with Tony's cronies - has the power to scrutinise spending.

So the GLA's combined budget of £3.6bn will be largely earmarked for spending on what Blair's ministers want - not what Londoners vote for.

And there is little accountability. In the areas where the Mayor has powers, there will be an advisory committee - often with a majority simply appointed from magistrates, businessmen, or unelected quangos like the Corporation of London.

Just to run this new gravy train for Blair's mates in big business will cost council tax payers £36m.

If socialists get a majority in the new Assembly we will rip up that structure and demand total control over spending. We will abolish unelected committees.

We will replace the proposal for "mass consultation" with committees elected by mass conferences of delegates from unions, tenants' bodies, parents' associations and community groups. We will drive unelected businesspeople and Tony Blair's rich friends out of London government.

In every struggle we will use the Assembly as an organising centre: every striker, every victim of racism, every campaigner against poverty and oppression will have somewhere to go to get resources and support.

A socialist mayor and a socialist majority in the GLA on their own will change very little. Socialism comes from below: from the struggles of ordinary working people - not from elections and resolutions in councils or parliament.

But we can use these elections to expose the corruption and profiteering at the heart of Blair and Dobson's plans for London - and spell out the socialist alternative.

▼ **Why we need a workers' government - page 4**

Tax the rich!

The new London Mayor will have £3.5bn to spend. That is peanuts compared to the scale of London's problems. To build the homes we need, to end London's transport chaos, to provide a civilised city environment instead of today's Victorian squalor will cost billions of pounds.

But where will we get it? Dobson says: use private finance. Livingstone says: go to the City for "bonds" - ie long-term loans.

But both answers leave working class taxpayers lining the pockets of the City and promise minimal real improvements.

We say: Tax the rich! In London there should be a steeply progressive council tax that reduces payments for the majority but hits the super-rich hard. There should be a steep wealth tax: on corporate profits, on stock-market gains - and there should be an end to tax fiddling by big business.

Any firm threatening to quit London in response should be nationalised.

Save our health service

The NHS in London is falling apart. We've seen twenty years of bed closures, hospital closures and casualty closures. As a result our health is getting worse.

GP surgeries are overcrowded and, in many cases, just crisis centres. Mental health service cuts leave hundreds of disturbed people to wander the streets.

Low pay means London's hospital's cannot find the nurses they need to staff the wards: privatisation means ancillary staff are worked like slaves and forced to cut standards.

In the Budget, Chancellor Gordon Brown pressed the panic button, promising an extra £6 billion for health over three years. But economists say the NHS needs £20 billion more.

London's hospitals and health centres need far more than the sticking plaster offered by Gordon Brown.

To solve London's health crisis we need three things:

■ A massive boost to NHS pay and the return of all health services to public ownership.

■ A massive boost to NHS funding - paid for by taxing the rich and nationalising the drug companies.

■ Working class control of health strategy, with elected health authorities.

"If elected, I will campaign to take control of London's hospitals out of the hands of the unelected quangos and put them under control of health workers and service users," said LSA candidate Kate Ford.

LSA candidate Candy Udwin is a Unison shop steward who's been victimised for defending UCLH hospital against cuts and ward closures. Her New Labour opponent in Camden and Barnet is her own personnel manager! That says it all..

EVENTS

Workers Power Lambeth & Southwark meetings. All meetings at Bread and Roses, Clapham Manor Street, 7.30pm (Clapham North tube.)

■ **Wednesday 12 April: One year on from the fascist bombs - fighting racism and homophobia**

■ **Wednesday 26 April: Destroy the IMF - Turn Prague into Seattle**

■ **Tuesday 9 May - Livingstone, London and the LSA - where do we go from here? (subject to confirmation - ring 0181 981 0602 for details)**

Workers Power London North East meetings

All meetings at Samuel Pepys, 289 Mare Street, E8, 7.30pm

■ **Wednesday 12 April - Asylum seekers welcome here**

■ **Wednesday 26 April - Stop Labour's attacks on state schools**

LSA EVENTS

■ **Central London Rally: Thursday 13 April 7.30pm Friends House (opposite Euston Station)**

■ **Thursday 27 April, 8.00pm Comedy Fundraising Benefit, Hackney Empire, Mare St, E8**

Firefighters

Eleven firefighters at Homerton were suspended for fighting increased overtime. If elected London Socialist Alliance will fight for the unconditionally reinstatement of the Homerton 11 - and address the real issue: the cuts in fire service provision.

We will re-open all the Fire Stations closed since the GLC was abolished and implement a 35 hour week for firefighters and end attacks on their working conditions.

Can we trust Livingstone?

Workers Power supports Ken Livingstone for London mayor. The millions who will vote Livingstone on 4 May will be voting against Tube privatisation and against Blair's bosses' government.

But Livingstone's "Red Ken" reputation is not deserved. Even in the 1980s he ducked out of a real fight to save the GLC.

Today he plays into Dobson's hands on policing - calling for more bobbies on the beat. His bonds solution for the Tube will still leave the bankers to rake off millions from taxpayers.

And Livingstone is also trying to build a cross-class coalition of trade union and Labour members with middle class backers and even "progressive" capitalists.

Livingstone standing alone - with no party and no list for the Assembly - will be accountable to no one.

To those who vote Livingstone we say voting London Socialist Alliance is the only way to ensure the biggest protest against Blair - and ensure that there are people to hold Livingstone to account once he is elected.

Why we need a workers' government

Capitalism means misery for millions

LABOUR'S LEADERS spit on the word "socialism". They say it's outmoded; that it leads to class confrontation where there should be harmony; that it doesn't work.

But it's capitalism that does not work. The profit system demands that jobs are axed, skills squandered, lives ruined and communities blighted - just to please the shareholders of major companies.

Capitalism is the rule of the multinational corporations. And capitalism is what you'll get if you vote Labour, Liberal, Green or Tory at this election.

Socialists stand for a radical shift of wealth and power to the working class. Socialism means London run by the working class people who do all the work but, today, get few of the rewards.

But socialism won't just come from voting. A socialist majority in the London Assembly would be hide-bound by the powers of the courts, the police, the Audit Commission - who would challenge and block every measure taken to redistribute wealth and property from the rich to the poor.

And a socialist majority in Parliament would get the same treatment. Behind the scenes, the rich and powerful know that Westminster is just a talking shop. A socialist government that challenged the power of big business would be sabotaged from the beginning by the unelected powers that really run Britain: the police, the army, the courts, the Monarchy and the top civil servants.

That's why we're fighting for a different kind of government.

We need a workers' government based on delegate councils, directly accountable to the people who elected them. That government would abolish the police and the armed forces and replace them with a workers' militia drawn from our own communities - not the barrack room bullies who run the police and armed forces today.

A workers' government would nationalise the main private monopolies and the banks - without compensation to the rich institutional shareholders who own them.

Industry would be run under workers' control. Public services would be designed to meet the needs of the service users - and funded by a steep wealth-tax on the profits and property of the rich.



A workers' government would immediately write off the debts that are strangling third world countries.

It would draw up a democratic plan for the economy to channel resources into building the amenities working class people need.

It would throw open the internet and all modern technologies to the mass of the population.

It would subsidise food, transport and housing so that everyone could have - as of right - the same quality of life that today is reserved for highly paid yuppies.

A workers' government in Britain alone could not solve all our problems: the threat to our environment is global - and so is the power of the global capitalists that stand in our way. That's why a workers' government would immediately have to spread the struggle world-wide.

The capitalists will not stand by and let us take control without a fight: that's why we are revolutionary socialists: we will have to bring down the capitalist rulers using mass action and a general strike. We will have to take on and smash the armed might of the capitalist state - and replace today's sham democracy with real democracy - the

rule of workers' councils.

To win, we need to be organised for action. We don't need a party like "old Labour" - designed to win elections and spout vague socialist promises.

Socialism comes from below: that's why we need a party of struggle - a revolutionary workers' party that can lead today's strikes, campaigns and protests but link them to the central goal of working class power.

Many voters on 4 May will vote for the London Socialist Alliance and Ken Livingstone to teach Blair a lesson.

Many would like to go back to "old Labour". But old Labour too attacked the working class, betrayed the miners and the printers, colluded with police racism and with the power of big business.

We say: don't stop half way. Join the fight for a revolutionary alternative to Labour. Join the fight for a socialist alternative to the profit system. Let's build a movement that can wipe out the chaos, waste and human misery of capitalism and build a future without unemployment, war and environmental destruction.

Join the London Socialist Alliance! Join Workers Power!

Class fighter, socialist and proud of it

London is a city of dramatic contrasts. Massive wealth sits alongside grinding poverty.

For the rich there are the skyscrapers and offices of the City, the multi-million pound homes of Belgravia and Notting Hill, the luxury hotels of Park Lane.

But for the vast majority, London is a city of hard work, gruelling journeys, stress, traffic, pollution, expensive housing and services that just get worse and worse.

Millions work long hours for low pay. Job insecurity is rife.

Twelve out of London's 33 boroughs are among the poorest in Britain.

Homelessness, run-down estates, violence and poverty breed desperation and despair. The police, the government agencies, schools and workplaces are shot through with racism - even official reports have admitted that.

These extremes - wealth and poverty, privilege and injustice - are bound up together. They are the results of an economic system - capitalism - where production is for profit, not to meet human need.

As long as wealth and power is in the hands of a minority, the rest of us will be ripped off and stopped from

having any real say in running our lives.

The elections to the Greater London Assembly give us a chance to challenge the ruling elite.



Kate Ford, Workers Power's candidate on the LSA list, explains why she wants your vote on 4 May

We can turn the Assembly into a weapon of struggle against them - a way of exposing and confronting their power.

Because it is only by taking their wealth into public hands and using it for the common good that this city can be turned into a decent place for all its people.

A vote for the London Socialist Alliance will put a team of dedicated activists into the Greater London Assembly. They will use their position in the Assembly to support all the campaigns and struggles going on in

London today. If I am elected to the Greater London Assembly, I will fight for Workers Power's socialist action programme for London.

I will, like all LSA candidates, refuse to draw the £35,000 a year wage and donate everything above the average workers' wage to the workers' movement.

Kate Ford is a candidate on the LSA central list.

For a copy of the Workers Power Action Programme, contact the address below or visit www.workerspower.com.

How to vote on 4 May

You get four votes: two for the mayor and two for the Assembly.

- Vote Livingstone for Mayor.
 - Vote for your local Socialist Alliance Candidate (see below)
 - Vote for London Socialist Alliance in the political party list
- The London Socialist Alliance local candidates are:
- Haringey & Enfield: **Weyman Bennett**
 - Camden & Barnet: **Candy Udwin**
 - London NE: (Hackney, Islington, Waltham Forest) **Cecilia Prosper**
 - Brent & Harrow: **Austin Burnett**
 - City & East: **Kambiz Boomla**
 - West Central: **Christine Blower**
 - Lambeth & Southwark: **Theresa Bennett**
 - Wandsworth & Merton: **Sarbani Mazumdar**
 - Bromley & Bexley: **Jean Kysow**
 - Havering & Redbridge: **George Taylor**
 - Hillingdon & Ealing: **Nick Grant**
 - South West (Hounslow, Kingston & Richmond) **Danny Faith**
 - Greenwich & Lewisham: **Ian Page**
 - Croydon & Sutton: **Mark Steel**
- The central LSA list is headed by **Paul Foot** and includes **Kate Ford**.



GET ORGANISED! PHONE 020 8981 0602

www.workerspower.com

Workers Power is the British Section of the League for a Revolutionary Communist International. We are part of the London Socialist Alliance. For a full list of meetings and events during the campaign phone the number above or look at the website. Fill in the coupon (right) if you want to join Workers Power.

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