



QUEEN ANNE'S GATE
LONDON SW1H 9AT

22 September 1987

Dear Tim,

The Prime Minister passed to me your letter of 23 July, with which you enclosed one from a lady in Hackney about her experience of living on an estate in that Borough. I agree with the Prime Minister that the lady's experiences are appalling.

I decided to obtain from the Metropolitan Police their observations on the points made by your correspondent, and you may be interested to see the enclosed reply from the Deputy Assistant Commissioner of the area, which includes the estate on which this lady lives. It makes depressing reading, *about*

the present situation, but also points clearly to the way out. In most places the political obstacles to progress are not so great, but in Hackney and several other London boroughs they stay very severe.

Tim Janman, Esq, MP

*Yours,
Doris.*

From: THE PRIVATE SECRETARY

HOME OFFICE
QUEEN ANNE'S GATE
LONDON SW1H 9AT

22 September 1987

Dear Andy,

In the margins of Cabinet in the last week of July, the Prime Minister mentioned to the Home Secretary a letter she had received from Mr Tim Janman MP covering one from a lady in Hackney complaining about intimidation on estates. The lady was hoping to move to Thurrock (Mr Janman's constituency). The Prime Minister replied to Mr Janman on 23 July.

The Home Secretary decided to obtain from the Metropolitan Police their observations on the general points made by Mr Janman's correspondent and an account of the particular problems they face in policing estates in Hackney and the way in which they tackle this task. You may be interested to see the enclosed reply from the Deputy Assistant Commissioner of No 2 Area, which includes the estate in which this lady lives.

Yours sincerely

Nick Sanderson

N C SANDERSON

P.S. The Home Secretary is also sending a copy of the report to Mr Janman.

P A Bearpark, Esq.



METROPOLITAN POLICE

2 Area (East) Headquarters
City Road Police Station
4-6 Shepherdess Walk
London N1 7LF.

Tel. No. 488 - 5161

25 August 1987

Rec'd 1/9/87

R.E. Smith Esq.,
F3 Division,
Home Office,
Queen Anne's Gate,
London SW1H 9AT

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Dear Mr. Smith,

INTIMIDATION ON ESTATES

I refer to your letter of 7 August 1987.

Many of the feelings and experiences related by [redacted] in her letter are I regret to say not untypical of those suffered by many of the residents in the London Borough of Hackney, not only those living on housing estates.

The Borough has been described as the poorest in the country and there can be no doubt that many residents live a life of despair and even hopelessness. Unemployment in the Borough is the highest in London with 40% of the under 19 age-group being out of work. A number of established companies have ceased to operate within the Borough and new industry appears to be reluctant to come to the area. The Dockland Development is within a few miles but there has been very little, if any, knock-on effect within the Borough. A large proportion of the Borough's 190,000 population are either first or second generation immigrants and 27% are retired.

68% of the Borough's population reside in Council accommodation, much of which is concentrated on housing estates. The condition, quality of life and prevailing atmosphere varies considerably and on many estates an air of disinterest and apathy is apparent, with an obvious lack of community spirit and neighbourliness. Many of the estates have been badly designed from a crime prevention viewpoint, with burglaries being easy to effect, and the dark passageways and corridors providing a haven for the robber and sex attacker.

The foregoing combine to create an uneasy and despairing environment for many residents where the fear of crime is high. In a recent survey commissioned by the Force 58% of the respondents in the survey area, which included the Borough of

Hackney said they felt unsafe walking alone after dark. Although [redacted] paints a gloomy picture, I am afraid to say the estate on which she lives is not regarded by police as being a 'problem estate'.

Faced with the scale of the problems that exist within the Borough, senior officers of the two divisions concerned, Hackney and Stoke Newington, must deploy their resources according to local priorities. In both cases this includes prevention and increased detection of burglary, robbery and misuse of drugs. To deal with all the problems on all the estates would virtually require a permanent police presence which in resource terms simply cannot be afforded. Nonetheless, each Beat on both divisions including that on which [redacted] lives, has a Home Beat or permanent Beat Officer attached to it who when on duty will patrol only that particular Beat. This is supplemented by officers on shift duties who will patrol on foot or in vehicles when available. Each division also employs dedicated teams of officers which are deployed to concentrate on specific crimes and/or locations, and on some estates one or two officers are permanently attached. This latter type of policing, however, is manpower intensive and can only be afforded on the most difficult estates.

The apathy and disinterest referred to above is reflected in the difficulty encountered in establishing and maintaining Neighbourhood Watches and is also experienced with Crime Prevention in general and when investigating crimes. Against this background it is pleasing to note the number of burglaries on residential premises in 1986 fell slightly to 5,553. Robberies and snatches of personal property are crimes of particular concern in the Borough and anti-robbery campaigns recently commenced on both divisions. Although the operations, which involve an increase in street patrolling, are in their infancy, the initial results are encouraging.

Senior officers are aware that many of the problems are outside their control and therefore participate whenever possible with other bodies in a multi-agency approach to solving some of these. Some of the local agencies, however, are reluctant to become involved with police. The local branch of the National Union of Teachers have a policy of non co-operation with police which prevents officers from entering many schools within the Borough. You will be aware that the intransigent attitude of the local council has resulted in the failure to implement a Consultative Group within the Borough, although I am hopeful that the Consultative Group will be formed in the very near future, although it is unlikely that the Council will participate at this stage.

[redacted] paints a grim picture of life within the London Borough of Hackney, which unfortunately cannot be regarded as exaggerated. Officers on both divisions will continue to pursue local objectives to prevent and detect crime, and liaise with

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other agencies as far as is possible and attempt to improve the quality of life for the residents of the Borough but there are very real difficulties.

I referred above to the anti-robbery campaign we have been operating recently. - You will be interested to know that during the six week period of such a campaign in one division in the Borough, a total of 149 offences for street robbery or theft from the person - referred to colloquially as 'mugging' - were reported. In 143 of such cases the victims, predominately white or of Asian appearance, described their assailants as black(s); in two cases as a mixed group of white(s) and black(s) and in four cases as white(s). This was during a period when additional police officers were deployed specifically to combat this type of offence and when an overall reduction of 25% in the number of such offences over previous periods was achieved!

The fear of crime is a very live issue in an area where so many social and environmental problems have combined to produce an atmosphere of disinterest and apathy verging on despair.

I am sorry to have painted such a cameo of gloom but I do hope the information provided will be of some help. If I can be of any further assistance please do not hesitate to contact me.

*Your sincerely,
G.W. Jones*

G.W. JONES
Deputy Assistant Commissioner

The fresh face of the capital's politics

Margaret Hodge, leader of Labour councils in London, wants to lead a revolution in the way left-wing local government delivers services.

CHRISTIAN WOLMAR talks to the pretender to Ken Livingstone's crown

'THE DAYS of flying banners from town hall windows and hoisting up red flags on the roof are over,' says Margaret Hodge. Indeed, as the left-wing that took over most London Labour councils in 1982 abandons the posturing politics that created the notorious 'London factor', it seems that in London only the buses — and Ken Livingstone — are still red.

Brent and Hackney, for example, are about to drop plans to appoint nuclear-free zone co-ordinators. Even in Haringey, where the left is at its hardest, Labour councillors last week rejected a financial strategy that would have led to almost certain disqualification, and this week the leadership resigned. A measure of the shift that is taking place in London council politics is that Bernie Grant MP, still a Haringey councillor, abstained on the vote and has already been dubbed a 'right-winger' and 'class traitor' by those who voted for illegality. As a result, left and right, hard and soft, are becoming irrelevant labels. There are only two camps now, the dogmatists and the pragmatists, and the pragmatists, led by Mrs Hodge, are in the ascendant.

Mrs Hodge, who is leader of Islington Council and of the Association of London Authorities which links London's Labour boroughs, confesses now that the councils had been banking on a Labour victory to a much greater extent than they previously admitted. Its failure to materialise has made the fence razor sharp. Either the Labour councillors decide to stay in power, making cuts, or they retain political purity as they head off to the obscurity of surcharge and disqualification. The great majority are tumbling off on to the pragmatist side. This time the crisis is for real. Since the imposition of ratecapping in April 1985, the councils have run rings round the Department of the Environment, increasing services and especially staff numbers rapidly. The battle against ratecapping in 1985 (based on the naive tactic of delaying setting a rate in order to 'put pressure on the government') was a sham and exposed as such. The councils always knew that they would be able to avoid making cuts by using a series of financial measures now known as 'creative accounting'. To be fair, they might not have known quite how far creative accounting would take them. Camden, for example, has increased spending by 27 per cent in real terms over the past two years, despite ratecapping.

But now the party realises the record

player has been smashed up to stop the boogying. The idea of ignoring the financial constraints and pursuing expansive and expensive policies was doomed by the general election result. Nicholas Ridley, the combative Environment Secretary, had already started to undermine the banks' confidence in the councils' creative accounting schemes in the spring by twice stressing that the government did not stand by local authority debt. This led to the cancelling of several schemes to raise money through the sale and lease back of council buildings.

Several of the councils' budgets for the current year were based on optimistic assumptions about savings and raising money through creative accounting schemes. Some councils have been unable to produce either, producing instead, at

'The left is in danger of becoming the most reactionary force in British politics...'

last, the real cry of 'Wolf!'. Camden, the market leader in cuts, chopped £10 million from its £138 million budget in July after failing to set up a lease and lease back scheme — although the notorious deal in which the council sold its parking meters *did* go through — and more spending on bed and breakfasting the homeless, now set to run at £20 million, double the amount expected.

The town halls are already buzzing with talk of rent rises, recruitment freezes, efficiency savings and restricting the acceptance of homeless people. While the councils will muddle through this financial year, with the sacrifice of a few political egos, the gaps next year are awesome.

Give us more rope!

Creative accounting has enabled the councils to run two budgets: a legal one, conforming to government limits, and a real one, using the creative accounting devices. As these are now being closed off, both by the government and by councillors themselves who realise that they cannot sustain the series of one-off devices for a further five years, the ten London ratecapped councils mostly face gaps of between £40 million and £60 million, around a quarter of their budgets. Even those which have had the ratecap removed — Islington, Newham and Brent — have simply been given more rope with which to hang themselves under the grant penalty system, since 50 per cent rate rises are no longer conceivable after the electoral disaster in Waltham Forest and Ealing.

Had the left's policies brought about a clear improvement in council services, its next move would be easier. But with some exceptions, like

Islington's excellent programme of modernising estates and increasing home helps and under-fives nursery places, it is hard to see what the extra staff and resources have achieved. As Tony Dykes, leader of Camden Council recently put it in a local Labour Party newsletter: 'Since 1982 our staffing has grown by 2,000 people [all but 500 are white collar workers], and we have regraded thousands of staff upwards since 1985. Yet no member of the Labour Group maintains that services are 2,000 staff better or x per cent growth better.'

With Steve King's resignation this week as Haringey's leader, the London council leaders are all lining up behind the pragmatic banner and are ready to make cuts. The main strategist is Margaret Hodge, whose acute political brain is hidden behind a soft, almost too nice, image. The left-wing credentials that have kept her as leader of Islington since 1982 derive almost exclusively from her long support for high-spending policies. Otherwise, she is in a different political tradition from the 1968 generation of ex-hippies and ex-Trotskyists who dominate London's left. Her background is more conventional, her style less haranguing.

Within days of the general election, she was working on a paper that sets out a strategy of survival for the left boroughs over the next five years. 'There were three possible options: defiance, mass resignation or staying in power to ensure that the cuts were as painless as possible. In 1985, we were right to try to resist ratecapping. The trade unions looked strong because of the miners' strike, Liverpool's defiance the previous year appeared to have paid dividends and Labour in the town halls was a strong forum of opposition. But defiance today would be hopeless. We would never manage to extract any concessions out of the government and it would result in the government taking control of local services.

'Mass resignation ultimately is the same as allowing our opponents to run the councils. Remaining in power may mean having to make unpleasant choices but at least we can ensure that priority is given to maintaining the services for those most in need.'

Mrs Hodge favours radical thinking about how to manage council services. 'The left is in danger of becoming the most reactionary force in British politics because there is a view that any new thought about what we are doing is seen as a threat to political purity.' She suggests that rather than merely adding increments to each council department's budget each year, all spending should be questioned. 'We must start with a blank piece of paper. Services that were developed during the '60s and '70s may not now be appropriate.' But she was unable to name any that sprung to mind and that's the problem. Council officers are used to batting for their own corner and whatever service is earmarked to be axed

miraculously becomes the most vital function of the council.

She accepts criticism of the left's failure to improve the basic, unglamorous services — housing management, social services, dustbin collection. She admits that the left-controlled councils were too pre-occupied with campaigning and defying the government to pay much attention to the day-to-day services. 'There's only 24 hours in a day, and there was a limit to what we could do. We have had successes, like our imaginative approach to helping people being thrown out of the long-stay mental hospitals and our "going local" offices have doubled the rate of housing repairs. But we have to be honest, and one of the reasons why Thatcher has been able to exploit the unpopularity of the services is that we are seen as bureaucratic, inefficient, unresponsive and paternalistic by many of those people who are most dependent on what we provide.'

'I'm not caving in'

The key to Mrs Hodge's new approach is to make 'our services so valued, like the National Health Service, that people will help us defend them. What we have to ensure is that at the end of five years, local government is in a sufficiently healthy state to be able to respond to what we are working towards — a Labour government putting its policies into practice. To do that, we have to look through the other end of the telescope. We've tended to act as politicians in a rather theoretical domain, protesting about cuts instead of examining what we actually provide.'

The policy shift underlying all this, which Mrs Hodge is reluctant to articulate precisely, is dropping 'jobs' from the 'save jobs and services' slogans which have become the ritual incantation of both councillors and their workforces for the past five years.

There are two big blocks of opposition which the pragmatists will have to overcome to achieve any of this. The first is the dogmatic left, which though weak among councillors — the reality of public office turns most councillors into pragmatists with remarkable speed — is strong in London constituency Labour parties. Already opponents of the cuts are organising in Haringey, Islington and Camden, using the same *Briefing* label which helped the left to power in these councils.

Mrs Hodge hits out at the 'growing movement in London which says the left councils are caving in'. She says that they have no answer when they are asked about their alternative policy, except to 'campaign'. 'I no longer know what the word means. If it means we want to change public opinion, then we are not going to do that by chewing each other's ankles off in ward meetings. In London there have been impossibilist demands put up by activists, often from people who work for the council and they have used the party itself as a mechanism to force councillors to take decisions they know are wrong. This has got to stop. The negotiations must return to their proper place, the negotiating table.'

Which takes us on to the main obstacle for Mrs Hodge and her allies: the unions. NALGO has had a running battle with the left-wing councils, calling a series of damaging strikes in Hackney, Islington, Lewisham and even, within months of the left taking over, in Ealing and Waltham Forest.

Yet Mrs Hodge is confident that the unions will join her unglamorous revolution. 'If we don't provide high quality popular services, then, with the threat of privatisation, there won't be any jobs

New Statesman 18 September 1987'



Stefano Cagnoni/Report

The service revolution

Soon after the general election, Margaret Hodge warned that 'Labour councils will soon face what people term "difficult choices", and services must come before jobs'. Now, before Labour's national conference, she elaborates on what this means. In effect, it is her prospectus for a local government 'service revolution'.

FRANK COUSINS TGWU PEACE AWARD

The Transport and General Workers' Union invites applications for the Frank Cousins Peace Prize.

The aim of the scheme is to assist with research, travel or to promote peace disarmament and/or arms conversion. The

Applications, from individuals or organisations, should be made on a separate application form, detailing the exact way in which the award will be judged by a panel comprised of representatives of both personalities from the labour and peace movements.

Applications should be sent to:

Regan Scott
Secretary to the Award Panel
Transport and General Workers' Union
Transport House
Smith Square
London SW1P 3JB

The closing date is 30 October 1987

anyway. This suggests that there is a real convergence of interests between us.' But she accepts that that convergence is easier to identify in the long term than now. Mrs Hodge speaks of 'changes in working practices that mean people will have to be more flexible, such as two people doing the job that three did previously.' That kind of argument is not received with spontaneous socialist optimism by the council workforce.

In Camden, the biggest-ever NALGO meeting in the branch's history voted decisively in July to reject any deals with the council over the cuts. The inability of the pragmatists to put an adequate argument as to why the workforce should co-operate was striking. The Camden councillors were warned that they risked overspending this year's budget and panicked by immediately freezing recruitment and by a ban on renewing temporary posts. The unions' response was confrontational and, as one normally moderate NALGO member put it, 'there's bound to be a strike soon because the councillors have been so petty and they seem to have no principles at all. The atmosphere here is dreadful.'

Conflict is inevitable elsewhere, too. The Labour councillors, particularly the new left-wing university-educated breed, guilty about their lack of working-class credentials, have always found management of the workforce a daunting task. Nothing *en route* to becoming a councillor prepares them for coping with hard-bitten union negotiators, always ready to embark on a strike that risks damaging irredeemably the left's street cred. Now some of these councillors whose cherished plans have foundered on union intransigence are chomping at the bit waiting to pounce on their own workforces. Unless Mrs Hodge and her allies hold these zealots in check, there will be 'excesses' of the reforming spirit.

The unions nationally, meanwhile, appear blissfully unaware of the impending crisis. NALGO, for example, takes the attitude that it is a federal union and that it is up to individual branches to make up policy. Camden, it seems, has shown the way.

The tragedy is that this time the cuts will really hurt the people that matter, those whom Labour is supposed to be helping and protecting. So far, the cuts are merely figures on bits of paper, but leaving homeless people on the streets as Camden plans to do, or cutting back on education grants as Brent is suggesting, causes real hardship. If the councillors had only taken on the responsibilities of managing their authorities with as much enthusiasm as they had for their foreign policy initiatives on South Africa and Ireland, then they would be in a stronger position to cope with the crisis. As they failed to improve services at a time of growth, it seems fanciful to expect them to do so in a period of retrenchment, doubly so because of the obdurate refusal of the unions to have any vision beyond the short-term interests of their workforce. For Mrs Hodge's optimism to be borne out, there needs to be a change in the hearts and minds of councillors (which there has been), unions, council officials, Labour Party committees and the workforces (which there hasn't). A change of mind from Labour's front bench in parliament, whose attitude towards the left councils has helped create their siege mentality, might also help. Perhaps it would be easier to ask God to give us a nice summer. □

Double d

The Pope meets Aids patients

San Fransisco this week: AND

LUMSDEN describes the mor

paralysis which his visit will ne

MATCHING ACCESSORY to the p is now the yellow glove. You wear the police wear the gloves. So it was on 1. the White House when ACT UP ('A to Unleash Power') sat on Pennsylvania blocking traffic and all wrapped up in tape. 'Your gloves don't match your see it on the news', demonstrators chanted at the fuzzi.

Reagan had just been booed at a Aids fund-raiser hosted by Liz Taylor of the West was giving his first 'positi what his own Surgeon General, C. E. calls the most urgent US health cr paper was all about mandatory testin or another group for the virus. Liz ha her hands, Koop was 'embarrassed'.

The Surgeon General wants the go appeal for condom use, which is no le Donald Acheson, government ch officer over here, has already obtain that Acheson only got his way by hav lean on the Prime Minister in a Tues (Julia Langdon, *London Daily News* is trying to perform a similar f 'Reagan hasn't even read Koop's rep Dan Bradley, head of Federal legal s Carter and the first presidential app say what J. Edgar Hoover wouldn't

ACT UP is the newest and most York response to the President's CND-like because its tactics are med disobedience, and Rainbow coalitio it includes straights, gays, bla Hispanics, all the city's afflicted.

The Reagan Administration is pa fear of being open about homosexu Irangate has a 'pink connection'. 'S pleaded guilty this May to conspiri the US government over a \$2 mill contras co-operation with Ollie No

Channell is a sometime aide to winger Terry Dolan — the 'no I'm I'm not homosexual' founder of Conservative Political Action Com seems was, and shook Republica with his death from Aids la Channell's outfit's 'top leaders an subordinates were homosexual men National Public Radio (9 April), been 'consulting' payments bet companions' of top staff.

The odious profusion of closet c American politics, church and stat into the light. People are claiming Hart hetero-debacle is perverting th sessational journalism British-style *Washington Post* was digging int secretly-homosexual Republican before Hart fell.

My guess is that what they talk