



HARRIET HARMAN, M.P.

REPORT - FEBRUARY, 1983

1. The result of the Bermondsey by-election is clearly very bad news, not only for Labour nationally but particularly for Labour in Southwark. Whilst we must work to ensure that we re-capture the seat in a general election, the size of the Liberal majority cannot allow us to be complacent. Nor must we panic! But must hold our nerve and our policy ground.

However, between now and the General Election, Simon Hughes and the Liberals will clearly be seeking to consolidate their position and use Bermondsey as a bridgehead in Southwark. They will, no doubt, be hoping to enlarge their base in Dulwich as well as Peckham and it is inevitable that Hughes will use his position as M.P. to attack the Council - without drawing attention to the government imposed financial restraints on the Council.

It is, therefore, particularly important that we redouble our efforts locally. I hope to have a discussion with the Officers about this. But I shall be further pruning my commitments outside the constituency in order that I can be seen as a really effective local voice for Labour. The Council will, no doubt, be drawing up their own plans to deal with the new situation.

2. Leonie Foulkes has taken the opportunity of my maternity leave to compile an analysis of Parliamentary Questions I have tabled, constituents' cases taken up and Early Day Motions (Parliamentary resolutions) that I have signed. The details are set out below.

EARLY DAY MOTIONS INITIATED

Support for Building trades unions campaigning against sub-contracting

Safety in the Building Industry

Teacher Training Courses at Dartford Site of Thames Polytechnic

House of Commons Creche

Opposition to Pensions Clawback

Defence of South London Hospital for Women

Protection for Part-time Workers

Concern about Delays in investigating complaints about the Police

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EARLY DAY MOTIONS INITIATED Cont'd

Concern about Police Actions in Sheffield

Concern regarding Police-Public Relations in Hackney/Stoke Newington
Death of Colin Roach

EARLY DAY MOTIONS SIGNED

Disabled Married Women and the Household Duties Test

Nuclear War Weapons and Bases - Opposition to civil defence regulations

The Truth Game - condemning refusal to show

Apartheid - condemning death sentence on ANC members

Call to abolish VAT on sanitary wear

Baby Seals from Canada

Removal of the 5% Surcharge on the unemployed

Opposition to Racial Discrimination against Sikhs

Accountability of Security Services in a Democracy

British Nationality - call to revoke fees increase

Support for Greenham Common Peace

Opposition to proposed closure of Tadworth Hospital

Call for Instruction Book for Guidance of Metropolitan Police Force to be published

Call for withdrawal from Membership of the European Economic Community

Call for Public Inquiry - Cartridges

Move of Greenham Common Protestors from open prison

Support for Nuclear Weapons Freeze

Opposition to closure of Initial Teacher Training Courses at Huddersfield Polytechnic

Support for Liverpool Welfare Rights Centre

Concern about DHSS Manning Levels

Concern about Staffing at DHSS Offices

Poor Law (Operation Major)

Support for Water Workers Dispute

Breach of Accountants Rules - Serpell Committee

Opposition to US Military Aid to El Salvador

Opposition to Closures in Paper Industry

Support for Daws Hill Peace Camp

Support for Durham Miners

Opposition to Loans and Tax Relief for Bank and Arms for Argentina

Support for Inquiry into Police Actions at Lewisham

Defence of jobs at Timex, Dundee

Opposition to Wasteful Government Arms Expenditure



CASES TAKEN UP FOR CONSTITUENTS SINCE STARTING
THE ADVICE SURGERIES IN OCTOBER, 1982

HOUSING	167
IMMIGRATION	27
DHSS	24
ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH/ NOISE PROBLEMS	8
EDUCATION	7
POLICE	7
COMPLAINTS FROM PEOPLE IN PRISON	7
TAX PROBLEMS	5
NHS	4
LEGAL	5
TRANSPORT/ROADS	4
TELEPHONES	3
PLANNING	2
EMPLOYMENT	2
*OTHERS	34

306

*Included in the "Others" category are cases involving Tenants Associations, Civil Liberties, Rent rebates, Street Traders' Licenses, Children in Care, etc., etc.

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PARLIAMENTARY QUESTIONS PUT DOWN
NOVEMBER, 1982 - FEBRUARY, 1983

	<u>Question to</u>	<u>Subject</u>
W	Attorney General	Guidelines issued by Board of Judicial Studies to Trial Judges
W	Secretary of State for Home Department	Details of Applications for Citizenship
W	Secretary of State for Home Department	Further Question on applications for citizenship to the end of December, 1982
W	Attorney General	Death of Danny Barrett in Belfast
W	Attorney General	Applications for civil legal aid. A series of 8 questions relating to different categories of legal aid applicants. (For LAG)
W	Secretary of State for Health & Social Security	Payment of Unemployment Benefit - Comparisons between men/women and geographically, i.e. Southwark Peckham and England & Wales as a whole. (For Women's Signing On Campaign)
W	Secretary of State for Health & Social Security	Child Benefit Scheme of Whitehall Investment Consultants
W	Secretary of State for Employment	Number of unemployed construction workers compared as between Peckham and UK as a whole
W	Secretary of State for Home Department	Number of persons prosecuted in Magistrates Courts in England and Wales for offences under Protection from Eviction Act 1977
O	Secretary of State for Northern Ireland	How many rounds of plastic bullets had been fired in Northern Ireland in a period of six months

Note:

- W Questions for written answer
O Questions for oral answer

HARRIET HARMAN



HARRIET HARMAN, M.P.

REPORT - MARCH, 1983

1. HEALTH

- a) I am continuing to support the campaign against the closure of St. Giles Hospital. I have written to the Secretary of State for Health and Social Security opposing the closure and am trying to get our front bench spokesperson on Health to join me in sponsoring an Early Day Motion opposing the closure. I have been liaising closely with the Community Health Council on this issue.
- b) The South London Hospital for Women is threatened with closure. Together with local Labour M.Ps and Joan Lestor, our Parliamentary spokesperson on Women's Rights, I have been supporting the campaign opposing closure.

2. TRANSPORT

It is rumoured by "sources" within London Transport that the new bus route from Peckham to Elephant and Castle, which we have been campaigning for, is now a real possibility.

We are keeping up the pressure on the Department of Transport, LT and the GLC on this issue and are working closely with the Southwark Transport Campaign.

3. WOMEN

- a) I have been doing quite a lot of work on Women's issues and have, therefore, done a full written report to the two Women's Sections, both of which I will be meeting in the near future.

If there is anybody who would like a copy of this report please let me know.

- b) The European Court of Justice has ruled that our equality legislation does not comply with the standards of equal opportunity laid down by the Treaty of Rome.

The Government's response to this ruling has been to propose an Order which would weaken our equality legislation still further!

I have been working with women's organisations to build opposition to this Order and to explain why we will be voting against it.

- c) I have been assisting the House of Commons Creche Campaign which was initiated by the Unions representing the people working in the House of Commons.

...../

4. I have accepted a large number of local speaking engagements including: Southwark Age Concern, South London Legal Action Group, Cambridge Literacy Scheme, TGWU South London Co-ordinating Committee and the Camberwell Society.

I am also due to go on a visit to Carter Street police station!

5. IRELAND

I have assisted the May 7th Committee, which has come up against the ban on organisations concerned with Ireland using Trafalgar Square. I have made representations to the Minister about this restriction of free speech.

6. I was very glad to hear that Mr. and Mrs. Murray (formerly of the Britannia public house) have won their appeal against the refusal of their license. It was also very good news to hear that Mrs. Murray was acquitted on the charge of allowing her pub to be used for drugs.

The Labour Party consistently supported the Murrays and it is very good to know that they have been vindicated.

HARRIET HARMAN

29.3.83



HARRIET HARMAN, M.P.
 Member of Parliament for Southwark Peckham

House of Commons,
 London, SW1A 0AA
 Tel: 01- 219 3000
 01- 219 4218

REPORT TO PECKHAM LABOUR PARTY WOMEN'S SECTIONS

SPRING 1983

1. WOMEN'S SIGNING ON CAMPAIGN

The GLC have now produced an excellent leaflet in support of the Women's Signing On Campaign, explaining the advantages of women signing on.

On the back of the leaflet there is a blank panel for writing in a local contact number. It might well be that the local Unemployed Centre are already distributing these leaflets with their name in the blank panel, but if they have not done so, it might be a good idea to get a batch of the leaflets with the Labour Party Women's Section address printed in the contact box and distribute these leaflets both to help the campaign and identify the Labour Party with the campaign, and also involve more members in the Women's Sections.

2. PART-TIME WORK

The Common Market have drawn up a directive on equal rights for part-time workers which would apply to all the countries in the Common Market, but the British Government is opposing the draft directive in order not to have to give equal rights to part-time workers in this country.

Together with Joan Lestor, Labour spokesperson on Women's Rights, and Janie Buchan, a member of the European Parliament, I have been campaigning to press the Government not to oppose the draft directive. If the Government succeed in their opposition to the draft directive, or if they water it down so much that it is almost useless, it will be vital to ensure that equal rights for part-time workers is part of Labour's Manifesto commitments.

3. EQUAL PAY FOR WORK OF EQUAL VALUE

The European Court of Justice have ruled that our Equal Pay Act does not live up to the standards of equality laid down in the Treaty of Rome and the British Government are, therefore, obliged to amend it. But in an effort to get round the European Court's ruling, the Tories have introduced an Order which is worse than useless. Jo Richardson and I will be voting against the Order in order to make it quite clear that it does nothing to help improve the pay of women at work, and we will be pressing to ensure that this is included as one of Labour's Manifesto commitments.

4. WOMEN AND PEACE

I have been liaising with the Southwark contact of the Greenham Camp Women and with Peckham CND about International Women's Day for Disarmament. I will be taking part in the March, which will take place on May 24th. It will be starting at the "Kings Arms" at Peckham Rye, at 11.00 a.m., and I hope there will be a good turn out from the Labour Party Women's Sections.

I am taking part in the festival to promote the new publication "Over Our Dead Bodies - Women against the Bomb" which will be taking place in Central Hall, Westminster on April 16th.

5. ASIAN WOMEN'S CENTRE

I have been actively involved in trying to help the workers in the Asian Women's Centre to keep their Refuge going. The service provided by the Centre for Asian Women is absolutely vital. European women are very vulnerable to male violence, but Asian women are even more vulnerable because of their language problems and other cultural problems which make it very difficult for them to leave home. I have arranged a delegation to the GLC in order to urge them to continue funding the Refuge.

6. ABORTION

The Labour Abortion Rights Campaign have asked us to let them know if an anti-abortion campaign is launched in our constituency as they are anticipating that this might happen. In readiness they are preparing "model" letters for us to write to the local papers in the event of any such campaign starting up.

Is Peckham Labour Party affiliated to the Labour Abortion Rights Campaign? If not we ought to be!

7. CRECHE CAMPAIGN

The Unions representing the workers at the House of Commons have for a number of years now been pressing for a creche. I have, at their request, been helping with publicity for the creche campaign and have done a number of TV and radio interviews (with Harry!) on the question of the need for a creche in the House of Commons.

8. MATERNITY GRANT

Following a request from the Maternity Alliance, I made representations to the Chancellor of the Exchequer to make a substantial improvement in the maternity grant in the Budget. The maternity grant has remained unchanged for 13 years and is now worth about £5.00 at 1969 prices. Unfortunately, our representations were of little avail!



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29.3.83



House of Commons,
London, SW1A 0AA
Tel: 01- 219 3000
01- 219 4218

HARRIET HARMAN, M.P.

REPORT - APRIL, 1983

1. Election Campaign

At the time of writing this report the Local election results (outside London) have yet to be declared. But whether it is in June or October, a General Election is not far away and our election work must be a priority. I believe we should, as during the bye-election, have a positive campaigning approach which concentrates on putting over our policies on issues which most directly affect people in Peckham -

- (a) Jobs
- (b) Housing
- (c) Living Standards
- (d) Peace

Again, I believe we should make our Election material simple, direct and well laid out and we must ensure that every household receive leaflets as well as the election address. The political situation is more volatile now and nothing can be taken for granted.

2. Unemployment

I arranged a press conference at the Unemployed Centre to send off the People's March who are going from Peckham. I will be speaking at the "town's meeting" on June 1st to build for the welcome of the March back to London.

3. Peace

I am attending the March, in Peckham on May 24th for Women's Day for Disarmament. Together with Jo Richardson, I have initiated a motion in the House of Commons to be sponsored by all Labour Women M.Ps, welcoming the activities on May 24th.

4. Police

The Police Bill will fall if we have a June election as it has not yet completed its way through the House of Commons. The Parliamentary Labour Party has maintained a fierce opposition to the extended police powers in the Bill and is committed to repealing it if it is passed. I have spoken against the Bill in Parliamentary debates and am chairing the meeting on the Bill in North Peckham civic centre on May 9th.

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5. Wards

I have taken the opportunity of going to Barsett Ward to warmly welcome them into Peckham following the constituency boundary changes. I have also visited St. Giles and Consort Wards in the past month.

6. Housing

Housing matters continue to be the major problems in my surgeries. I had a useful meeting with Tony Ritchie (together with Peter Troy, Roy Kennedy and Leo Foulkes, who help at the surgeries) about dealing with housing cases. I hope we have worked out a way of getting a quicker response from Council officers - although that of itself will not solve the chronic housing problems in Peckham!

I will be attending a meeting of East Nunhead Tenants & Residents Association on 10th May.

7. Local meetings

I have taken to publishing my diary of local public meetings and sending them to Ward secretaries and party officers. If any member would like a copy could they please let Leonie Foulkes know (219 4218)

8. Immigration

I went to see the Immigration Minister at the Home Office about a family of Greek Cypriots who are being deported. I think the deportation will be delayed - although they are still being refused the right to remain permanently.

9. Asian Women's Refuge

Following the discussion at the last GC, I led a delegation to urge the GLC Housing Chair, Tony McBrearty, to keep the refuge open. I think the refuge has been saved.

10. Privatisation

I came second in the ballot for private members motions, which means I can initiate a debate in the House of Commons. I have chosen the subject of Privatisation - particularly of oil and natural gas.

11. Data Protection Bill

I'm on the Committee for this Bill which raises important civil liberty issues.



HARRIET HARMAN, M.P.

REPORT - JUNE, 1983

Facing the Facts

In the aftermath of the election we must face up to the facts. Labour, nationally, has just suffered a devastating defeat. Labour's traditional base of support in the population is declining with the collapse of our manufacturing industries and with the enormous economic and social changes that are taking place. We have lost many of the arguments on key areas of policy. We have surrendered much of the ideological ground to the Tories. We are now further back than at any time since 1931. And we did not then recover until after 14 years and a world war. Unless the party pulls itself together we could face a similar period in the political wilderness.

Labour can recover

I am optimistic that we can, and will recover. But our recovery depends on our recognising how much ground we have lost and how grave the dangers for the future are. We will never win another election if we sit back and wait for either international capitalism to collapse or Margaret Thatcher to slip on a political banana skin. For the Tories are re-writing the political map of this country - and in this they are aided by the SDP/LIB Alliance. There is no automatic guarantee that socialism will become popular as the economic situation worsens - it could lead to an increase in the strength of extreme right wing ideas, or, if we are not seen as a credible alternative, people might look to the LIB/SDP, now only 2% behind us in the popular vote. It is a bitter irony that although 80% of the population fare badly under the Tories and although what we represent is in the interests of the overwhelming majority of the population - we could only persuade approximately 29% of those who voted, to support Labour. And if we are brutally honest, of that 29% many stood by us out of loyalty rather than because they want socialism.

Re-appraisal of Labour's strategy

What Labour needs is an honest and self-critical examination of what has gone wrong. That means a real dialogue right across the party as a whole. I do not believe that there is any section of the party which is above criticism. It must be said that Jim Callaghan's attempt to re-write the Manifesto commitment on polaris was a scandal, but we cannot blame the mistakes of decades and a long term process of decline on a few leaders.

I believe that the Manifesto on which we fought the election was, broadly, aiming in the right direction. It is not the message which is wrong, but the messenger.

Rebuilding Labour into a mass party

We need a new generation of leadership to help in the task of rebuilding Labour as a mass party. That means we must be a :-

Campaigning party We must continuously speak for the needs of the community on both national and local issues - rather than Labour simply being an electoral machine geared to ask for votes once every few years.

To be a mass party, Labour must be a broad church. It is no contradiction to argue that we must be a socialist party with socialist objectives and that at the same time, we must bring into our ranks those who though not currently explicitly socialist, fear for their future and want change. To do this we must end the situation whereby constituency activists and Members of Parliament talk in terms that only the activists can understand.

We must broaden Labour's appeal. We must not only reflect people's fears and their problems - we must also reflect people's aspirations and their desire for change. There is no contradiction in Labour being the party of the skilled workers, who own their own homes - as well as the unemployed person in a council flat. We have tried to present to the electorate a shopping list of policies - without conveying the vision of why we want those policies and what sort of society they are designed to achieve. People have a very clear idea of Thatcher's ideal society. But do even Labour voters have a clear image of society as it would be after 2 terms of Labour rule?

Unfreezing the party

What I have said in this report will not find favour with those on the hard right of the party, who think we must move to centrist policies in order to regain the electorate and who blame a clique of constituency activists for our defeat. Nor will my comments find favour with those of the ultra-left who blame it all on a handful of leaders. It is wrong to pose the debate as either principles or power.

I believe it would be quite wrong to abandon our socialist aims because of this election defeat. Nor is it a question of choosing between power or our principles. The task of socialists is to win power to put into effect our socialist principles and radically to transform Britain. It is also quite wrong to resort to simplistic scapegoating. The party has become frozen into a situation whereby we judge each other more on where we stand within the party, rather than how we aim to appeal to and win over the vast majority of people who remain outside the party.

What I believe we must now do is

- express a clear sense of strategy on the practical
implementation of our socialist policies
- give a vision of what a socialist Britain would be like

and we must do that by actions outside, in the community, rather than merely discussions between ourselves.

HARRIET HARMAN

23.6.83

HARRIET HARMAN, M.P.
Member of Parliament for Southwark Peckham



House of Commons,
London, SW1A 0AA
Tel: 01- 219 3000
01- 219 4218

REPORT - JULY, 1983

1. Nearly every week the Government announces major new cuts. London will be particularly badly hit. The Government sees the South East as well-off, in terms of health services, and therefore is going to make the SE Thames Health Authority bear the major brunt of the millions of pounds of health cuts. I am working with the local Committee on the idea of producing an inventory of our local services, so that the Government cannot get away with its consistent false claims that the cuts do not affect patients.

The campaign to save St. Giles Hospital continues. On 17th July there was a well-attended public meeting which I chaired. And Paula Moore, Chair of the Council's Social Services Committee, led a delegation to a junior health minister. It was quite clear that the minister is completely indifferent to the suffering caused by health cuts. I managed to get a question in the House of Commons to Kenneth Clarke the senior Health Minister, and I asked about St. Giles. He said they are still considering whether to agree to the closure plans.

2. Housing

- (a) I am still being besieged by housing problems - both in my surgeries and letters and 'phone calls. I fear that unless we get our message across to tenants about government cuts, the failure to provide decent housing, at reasonable cost, will prove disastrous for Labour. The situation is likely to worsen dramatically as the government steps up the penalties for "over-spending" councils such as Southwark. The government have already begun "rate-capping" in Scotland. They introduce separate Bills for each local authority which forces that council to reduce its rates. They pick a particular reduction for each local authority. No doubt the government will soon seek to introduce a "Southwark Bill." I do not yet know the precise timetable for this. The aim of these Bills is not only to reduce public expenditure. It is also a brilliant divide and rule tactic. The government hope to set Labour councillors arguing amongst themselves, to set council workers against tenants, to set tenants against the council and council workers against the council. We must not let that happen!
- (b) I called a meeting of the Labour representatives most directly involved in Gloucester Grove, an estate which has many problems. I believe the meeting was very useful. It is vital that the tenants are kept fully in the picture about what the council is doing, and what it would like to do, but is not able to do because of government cuts.



- (c) I am arranging for a researcher to write a report on my first 1,000 housing cases. The aim of the report will be to analyse the cases, advise me what else I can do and make suggestions which can form the basis of discussion between me and the party and the council.

3. Women

I have written a separate report for the women's sections. If anyone wants a copy, please let Leo Foulkes (219 4218) know. Jo Richardson, MP and I have been looking after "women's issues" in Parliament since Joan Lester lost her seat in the General Election - until a new women's spokesperson is appointed in the autumn.

4. Black people

- (a) At the request of "Unity" the organisation of young black people using premises in Peckham High Street, I called a meeting of all the agencies involved in their funding, to try and ensure the question of suitable premises is sorted out.
- (b) Peckham Self Help (Melon Road) I've arranged for Mary Rogers, who works at the GLC, to ensure that this organisation gets proper funding for its activities.
- (c) I paid a very enjoyable return visit to the Domino Match organised by Peckham & Dulwich Caribbean Association. Pat Palmer (Southwark Black Peoples Association) came with me and we distributed membership cards.

5. I will be visiting the GMCs of Dulwich and Bermondsey Labour Parties to report on parliamentary developments and offer to put forward their views on local matters in Parliament. It is important that we have a Labour voice in Parliament for both Dulwich and Bermondsey despite the fact that they have a Conservative and Liberal M.P.

6. Membership and Affiliations

- (a) Danny McNamara, trade union liaison officer, and I are writing to TU branches thanking them for helping in the election and urging them to affiliate.
- (b) Pensioners - I would be very grateful if a couple of pensioner members of the Peckham Party could work with me (and Vicky Naish, membership officer), to go round lunch clubs and bingo sessions to thank pensioners for voting Labour and ask them to join the party. Could any volunteers ring Leo Foulkes on 219 4218.



7. Law, Order & Justice

Arthur Davidson, MP, our Shadow Attorney General, lost his seat in June, so I have been helping out with legal matters in parliament until a new Shadow Attorney-General is appointed in the autumn. We have been protesting about cuts in legal aid for criminal cases. I made my first appearance on the front bench - on the Car Tax Bill (a consolidation measure). I was the only Labour member of Parliament in the chamber at the time!!

8. I will be on holiday for the last 2 weeks in August and the first week in September.

HARRIET HARMAN

4th August, 1983

July '83

HARRIET HARMAN, M.P.
Member of Parliament for Southwark Peckham



House of Commons,
London, SW1A 0AA
Tel: 01- 219 3000
01- 219 4218

REPORT TO WOMEN'S SECTIONS

SUMMER 1983

1. Besides the obvious consequences of the scale of Labour's Election defeat in June, we have suffered badly through the loss of women M.Ps, who would have been an important addition to the Parliamentary Labour Party.

Joan Lestor, who was Labour's spokesperson on women lost her seat, as did Helen McElhone, Shirley Summerskill and Ann Taylor - the only other woman M.P. with a small baby.
2. It is a very bitter blow that good feminists such as Patricia Hewitt and Kate Hoey failed to get into Parliament because of the size of the landslide.
3. We have, however, gained Clare Short, who is the new M.P. for Birmingham Handsworth and Margaret Beckett for Derbyshire - who was a junior Minister in a previous Labour Government until she lost her seat at Lincoln.
4. It is very important that we keep the post of women's spokesperson within the PLP and ensure that the vacancy left by Joan Lestor, M.P. is filled. No appointment will be made until after the leadership and shadow cabinet elections in October. But I have (together with Jo Richardson) made it quite clear within the PLP and the women's organisation within the party, that we see this job as vital.
5. In the meantime, Jo and I have been co-ordinating action on women's issues through the new PLP women's committee. This committee has been advertised to the PLP and is, therefore, now "Official."
6. The Government tried to introduce an Order on Equal Pay in June. Joan Lestor had previously led opposition to this order last session because it was merely a public relations exercise, would not comply with the European Court's ruling that we must improve our equality laws and would do nothing to narrow the huge gap between men's and women's pay. Jo and I lobbied to ensure the PLP would oppose the Order and this was agreed. The Government Minister who introduced the Order made it quite clear that he did not agree with equal pay and the debate was a fiasco. We have since heard that the Government withdrew the Order when it went to the House of Lords after the Commons debate. We are hoping that they have lost their nerve following media criticism of the way they have dealt with this.
7. The Government plans to bring in a new Family Law Bill. It would allow you to get a divorce within one year of marriage rather than 3 years as at present. (Though the 3 year rule is more honoured in the breach than in the observance!) But it also contains provisions to restrict maintenance.

The National Council for Civil Liberties, One-Parent families, Rights of Women and Legal Action Group are all most concerned that the effect of the bill will be to further impoverish single parents and their children. I therefore spoke up against the Bill in Parliament, on radio and T.V. and in the papers. I hope to go on the committee for the Bill when we reach that stage.

8. At Prime Minister's question time I raised the lack of supervised play provision for children in school holidays. This caused uproar among the Tories. Thatcher said "let them use swimming pools" and that Local Authorities should make provision - to which the Labour benches protested that she was cutting local authorities' funds. I liaised with "Out of School Alliance" and then spoke on LBC and Capital Radio.
9. A judge in Birmingham Crown Court made some outrageous remarks about a woman victim's previous sexual experience and the harmful effects on the incident on the rapist, when sentencing to probation a man who admitted indecent assault at knife point and attempted rape. I have taken up the matter with the Lord Chancellor and spoke on the radio deploring the judge's comments.

HARRIET HARMAN

July, 1983

Sent to: Mabel Goldwin, Amanda Barnes (20 copies each)
RACS
Women's Advisory Committee, TGWU, Region N^O.1
Chair & Secretary, Peckham Labour Party
Joyce Gould

5/8/83 .



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2. It is a very bitter blow that good feminists such as Patricia Hewitt and Kate Hoey failed to get into Parliament because of the size of the landslide.
3. We have, however, gained Clare Short, who is the new M.P. for Birmingham Handsworth and Margaret Beckett for Derbyshire - who was a junior Minister in a previous Labour Government until she lost her seat at Lincoln.
4. It is very important that we keep the post of women's spokesperson within the PLP and ensure that the vacancy left by Joan Lestor, M.P. is filled. No appointment will be made until after the leadership and shadow cabinet elections in October. But I have (together with Jo Richardson) made it quite clear within the PLP and the women's organisation within the party, that we see this job as vital.
5. In the meantime, Jo and I have been co-ordinating action on women's issues through the new PLP women's committee. This committee has been advertised to the PLP and is, therefore, now "Official."
6. The Government tried to introduce an Order on Equal Pay in June. Joan Lestor had previously led opposition to this order last session because it was merely a public relations exercise, would not comply with the European Court's ruling that we must improve our equality laws and would do nothing to narrow the huge gap between men's and women's pay. Jo and I lobbied to ensure the PLP would oppose the Order and this was agreed. The Government Minister who introduced the Order made it quite clear that he did not agree with equal pay and the debate was a fiasco. We have since heard that the Government withdrew the Order when it went to the House of Lords after the Commons debate. We are hoping that they have lost their nerve following media criticism of the way they have dealt with this.
7. The Government plans to bring in a new Family Law Bill. It would allow you to get a divorce within one year of marriage rather than 3 years as at present. (Though the 3 year rule is more honoured in the breach than in the observance!) But it also contains provisions to restrict maintenance.

The National Council for Civil Liberties, One-Parent families, Rights of Women and Legal Action Group are all most concerned that the effect of the bill will be to further impoverish single parents and their children. I therefore spoke up against the Bill in Parliament, on radio and T.V. and in the papers. I hope to go on the committee for the Bill when we reach that stage.

8. At Prime Minister's question time I raised the lack of supervised play provision for children in school holidays. This caused uproar among the Tories. Thatcher said "let them use swimming pools" and that Local Authorities should make provision - to which the Labour benches protested that she was cutting local authorities' funds. I liaised with "Out of School Alliance" and then spoke on LBC and Capital Radio.
9. A judge in Birmingham Crown Court made some outrageous remarks about a woman victim's previous sexual experience and the harmful effects on the incident on the rapist, when sentencing to probation a man who admitted indecent assault at knife point and attempted rape. I have taken up the matter with the Lord Chancellor and spoke on the radio deploring the judge's comments.

HARRIET HARMAN

July, 1983

OCT. 83

HARRIET HARMAN, M.P.

Member of Parliament for Peckham



House of Commons,
London, SW1A 0AA
Tel: 01- 219 3000
01- 219 4218

MP's SURGERIES

1. The present system is that I have three surgeries a month. One in the North of the Constituency (Walworth Town Hall) in the evening; one in Lansbury House in the evening and one in the Camden Tenants' Hall on the Camden Estate in the afternoon. There is no appointment system - so people are seen in the order they arrive. On average about twenty new "cases" are brought in at each surgery. This can mean about forty people, as people bring their friends or relatives with them to the surgery. Surgeries average about 3½ hours, but can last up to 5 hours.
- X 2. Roy Kennedy helps out with the Walworth Town Hall surgeries, Mary Ellery helps out with the Camden Tenants' Hall surgeries and Peter Troy helps out with all the surgeries and assists in taking down details of the problems. Without the help of these three over the last year, surgeries would be quite impossible to run and the Party as a whole owes them a great depth of gratitude.
3. But I have prepared this paper (with the help of Mary, Peter and Roy) because I am unhappy about the surgery "service" and would be grateful if there could be discussion about it in the Party.
4. I am not happy about holding a surgery in Lansbury House. Through no fault of those Party members who put so much work into Lansbury House, the premises are draughty and dilapidated. To have up to forty people sitting waiting in a cold room for up to three hours is just not acceptable - particularly in Winter. Many of them are old, ill, or have small children and their memories of coming to a surgery must be grim. I am also worried about the stairs. They are hazardous for elderly or infirm people. I know there is strong feeling that surgeries should be held at Lansbury so that people can get to know it and so that people can be given a clear impression that it is a Labour MP's surgery. And I know it causes confusion to chop and change surgery places. But on balance I feel that the premises are not fit for a busy surgery attended by members of the public and that we should move to the Town Hall in Peckham for one surgery a month.



Identification with Labour could be built by always having Labour leaflets at the surgery. Perhaps we could do a special once-off edition of "Peckham Labour News" explaining about the Party in Peckham to be given to all those who attend surgeries.

5. I think there should be regular involvement of Peckham Councillors in the surgeries.
 - (a) The surgeries are so large now that people sometimes have to wait over three hours to be seen. This is unacceptable, particularly as they will probably have been waiting in benefit offices or housing offices for hours on previous occasions. We should aim to make coming to a surgery a positive experience - not an ordeal of queueing. If the surgery was dealt with by me and a team of Councillors and Party members, not only would people have to wait less time but we could give people more time and attention.
 - (b) The overwhelming majority of problems concern the Council - mostly housing. If I work alone on these cases it looks like the Council is the problem and I am the solution. What we should demonstrate is that I and the Councillors work together as Labour representatives to solve the problem.
 - (c) Most of those who come with Council problems have not yet been to see their Councillor as they do not know about them. At a time of government attacks on local democracy, we should be demonstrating that local Councillors are important - not giving people the impression that all they need is an MP.
 - (d) Councillors will be more in touch with day to day developments on the Council than I am.
 - (e) It might be helpful in some instances for the Councillor to be involved in the follow-up on a case so that they could take the matter to a Committee if necessary.
 - (f) I would be better able to deal in detail with the increasing number of benefit and immigration problems which directly concern central government departments.



6. A number of Labour MPs, and Simon Hughes in Bermondsey, run their surgeries as a team effort and I have not heard any complaints about this approach. I wrote to the Labour Group of Councillors about this, but it got caught up at the Election time and has never been discussed in groups. I know that Councillors are already overburdened but I think that it is important that we do the work together. I would suggest that therefore there is a rota of Councillors for each surgery (say Friday Ann Newington helping in the Walworth Road surgery, Lydia and Councillors for the Camden TA surgery, etc.). Plus, of course, continuing to involve Peter, Mary and Roy on a permanent basis.

HARRIET HARMAN MP

October 1983

HARRIET HARMAN, M.P.
Member of Parliament for Southwark Peckham



MP REPORT

OCTOBER - 1983

House of Commons,
London, SW1A 0AA
Tel: 01- 219 3000
01- 219 4218

1. Rampart Engineering

The Company (now owned by Chubb) has made fire extinguishers in Peckham since the beginning of this century. They currently employ 200 people, most of whom live locally. They are fully organised in ASTMS and AUEW (Engineering section). Rampart is profitable, has a well respected trade name and a good product. But Chubb announced earlier in October that they wanted to move the Rampart name and make the fire extinguishers in their factory in Wales. It is not a question of Rampart in Peckham being a lame duck. It is just that they could make more profit in Wales (particularly with the help of government re-location grants) and so they intend to abandon Peckham and the workforce whose work has contributed to their profits. I contacted the Unions and the Greater London Enterprise Board (part of the GLC) and the Southwark Trade Union Resource Centre as soon as I heard about the planned closure. I have expressed my full support to the workforce in their opposition to the closure, and arranged publicity to try to assist in the pressure they are trying to put on Chubb. The Shop Stewards have produced, and the workforce have endorsed unanimously, an alternative plan to save jobs and make Rampart in Peckham more profitable. In my visits to the factory I have met many strong Labour supporters - but none of them are members. I believe that the Party locally should express its support to the workforce and discuss actions to back up our support.

2. Parliament

The new session has begun and the Parliamentary Labour Party is in much better spirits following the Leadership elections, Conference and our increased standing in the opinion polls. There is a climate of serious concern to keep that forward momentum.

3. Committee work

I spoke in opposition to the Prevention of Terrorism Bill and I am on the Parliamentary Committee considering the Bill. I also hope to be on the Committee considering the Government's reactionary Bill on divorce. Those two Bills will involve a considerable amount of work but I believe they are very important.

/Women....



4. Women

Jo Richardson MP has been appointed our new Women's Rights spokesperson, and I look forward to working closely with her.

5. UHT Milk

There was a lobby of parliament by over one thousand milk men and women opposing the new proposed EEC imports of UHT milk, which will cause the collapse of doorstep deliveries and our fresh milk industry. I made contact with the Peckham milkmen who came on the lobby, and am shortly to visit their depot (at 6 am!) to discuss further campaigning locally on this issue.

6. New Bus route: Elephant - Peckham

After considerable lobbying, the GLC have included this new route in their bid for funds from the Department of the Environment.

7. No.63 Bus Route

I am working with the Gloucester Grove Tenants and the Glengall Residents to ensure that if the Trafalgar Avenue Canal Bridge collapses, the 63 bus will go down St George's Way, not Glengall Road.

8. Mental handicap

I visited Tuke School for the Mentally Handicapped in Peckham and also went to a general meeting of the Southwark MENCAP of which I am a patron.

9. Neighbouring GMCs

I went to do a report to Bermondsey GC last month and will be going to Dulwich this month.

HARRIET HARMAN

November 3 1983



MP REPORT - NOVEMBER 1983

House of Commons,
London, SW1A 0AA
Tel: 01- 219 3000
01- 219 4218

1. Proposal for a Housing Campaign

Of all the public services, Housing has suffered the most cuts. The Council has been forced by the Government to increase rents and rates. This has a terrible impact on an area like Peckham, where most people are Council tenants. But, despite local people having to dig deeper in their pockets, the shortfall is still enormous. This means a virtual standstill on new building and delays on vital repairs and major maintenance. Building workers are unemployed and land lies empty, surrounded by corrugated iron. And most tenants blame the Council for the worsening situation, because the Labour Council is the landlord. Of course, not all the problems are caused by Government cuts. Many problems have existed for years. But Government cuts make it almost impossible to solve many of the problems.

2. It is in the interests of all sections of the community in Peckham to work together to put maximum pressure on the Government on the question of spending cuts -

- * Tenants - Suffer lack of repair, increasing rents and rates and less chance to move.
- * Building workers - Building workers employed directly by the Council (direct labour) are under threat. And thousands of skilled building workers in the private sector are out of work.
- * Local commercial firms - Shrink, because the Council buys less from them and rates are forced up.

3. Labour needs to lead a local campaign which will unite all whose interests lie in maintaining and increasing Council spending on housing.

4. It is important to mobilise people before the next round of planned cuts and to involve them in resisting the cuts - rather than simply asking them to protest after the cuts have taken place. I have set out, below, an outline campaign for discussion in Wards and in the General Committee of the Party.

5. Tenants' Associations

Every Tenants' Association should be involved through an approach by the local Councillors and the officers of the Ward which the Estate is in. Every tenant should be informed, perhaps by joint action from the Ward and the TA, about what actions the Council has in hand, and what further plans would cost. Tenants will feel part of the campaign if they know how much of the money which Southwark Council is asking the Government for will come to their Estate, and what that will mean in practical terms of repairs/improvements, cleaning and caretaking services etc. That way, Tenants' Associations and tenants will have a vested interest in the Council's claim for Government grant next summer. Southwark Group of Tenants' Associations should also be involved.

6. Trades Unions

The Trades Council, and every trade union connected with the Building industry (both Council employees and private sector employees) should be involved in the campaign to increase Government grants to Southwark. The trade union officer of the Party would have a major role in approaching the officers of trade union branches concerned, to discuss their involvement in the campaign, producing joint leaflets, arranging joint meetings at branches, etc.

7. Other organisations

Voluntary organisations working with the homeless in Southwark ought also to be involved. As should those whose organisation is concerned with housing for the elderly (Southwark Pensioners Action Group and Age Concern) and housing for the mentally handicapped (Southwark MENCAP) and the physically handicapped (Southwark Disability Association). Each of these organisations could be encouraged to arrange a meeting for their members with the Councillors, to discuss the prospects and problems which face Council housing. All these organisations and their members could, in turn, be encouraged to put pressure on the Minister and officials in the Department of the Environment to increase the money which the Government grants to Southwark.

8. Peckham Labour News -

Could carry a major article on housing in every issue leading up to the Council's grant application to the Government in the summer so that all Party members are fully informed of what the Council is asking for, how Southwark has already contributed to those central funds, what the grant would enable the Council to do in practice.

9. Party Branches

Wards will have a major role to play in liaison with tenants' associations, special newsletters, local meetings, questionnaires etc

10. The Council -

Must keep Party branches and local organisations fully informed at every stage of the build-up to the grant application. The Council could be asked to respond with suggestions about what role it and its District Committees could play in the campaign.

11. MP's role

As part of the campaign I could table a series of questions to Ministers, exposing the worsening situation; table an "Early Day Motion" (a Parliamentary resolution); issue a series of press statements on housing and produce a report on my housing cases (which is still being prepared!).

12. The campaign could culminate with a major public meeting next summer, coinciding with Southwark's grant application to the Government, which all the organisations mentioned in paragraph 5, 6 and 7 above could help build. Speakers could include Neil Kinnock (or Eric Heffer, Shadow Housing spokesperson), a Building trade union representative, Councillor Tony Ritchie (Chair of Housing) and a Tenant's representative.

13. Coordination of the campaign

I suggest the Peckham Party initiates the campaign (Bermondsey and Dulwich Parties should be informed of the campaign). The Party officers and the Executive Committee should be responsible for coordinating the campaign and reporting to the GC on progress.

HARRIET HARMAN

30th November 1983



ANNUAL REPORT 1983

1. The emphasis of my work in the past year has been to give priority to work in the constituency. I think this is crucial for two reasons. Firstly, because the problems facing people locally are growing. Secondly, I have been MP for Peckham for only sixteen months and I am still therefore building my links with individuals and organisations locally.
2. Work with the party locally.
I have produced a written report once a month which is circulated to branches and G.C. members. In addition to attending G.C. meetings, I try to ensure I make regular visits to branch meetings. Please let me know if your branch is going to discuss something particularly important so that I can make a point of attending. Also, I am happy to join local leafletting, membership drives etc. - so please keep me in touch.
3. The Council
As MP, it is important for me to campaign with the Council against the Government cuts. Liaison between me and the Council needs improving and I will shortly be meeting Alan Davies, the Council leader, to discuss how I can be kept fully in the picture on the problems the Government is creating for the Council through rate capping, civil defence orders etc. My role is most useful in working with the Council against the Government, and I have tried to avoid "taking sides" in matters in dispute within the Labour Group.
4. The GLC and ILEA
Through the campaign to prevent abolition, I have been working closely with the GLC and ILEA. The GLC are helping provide back-up for my housing report - a report on my first one-thousand constituency housing cases, which should be completed this year.
5. Parliament
 - (a) I am an active member of the London Labour Group of MPs. But I am getting rather aggravated by the group's failure to speak out publicly on issues which affect Londoners. However, the group is too important to give up on - we must speak for the many London constituencies which have Tory or Alliance MPs. So I am relentlessly proposing activities for the group to undertake.
 - (b) I am working closely with Jo Richardson MP, our women's spokesperson, through the PLP Women's Committee, which was set up on my initiative. We have decided that the two main issues to be highlighted are low pay of women and child-care facilities.
 - (c) I regularly speak in debates and put questions to ministers - including the Prime Minister.

/continued...

6. The Press

I make efforts to get the opportunity of speaking out through the newspapers, Radio and Television. Most of the press is totally biased against Labour but it is, nonetheless, important to try to put Labour's views across. This is particularly important as Simon Hughes, Bermondsey's Liberal MP, is a very skilled publicist. I avoid making any statements about internal Labour Party politics, but stick to attacking the Government. I have managed to get regular coverage on TV, Radio, South London Press and the Mirror.

7. My insistence on making local work a priority has meant that I have had to turn down a huge number of invitations to speak round the country. I have also declined to run for the women's section of the National Executive Committee and numerous other positions which have been suggested. But I am sure it is right to help build the party locally rather than find myself on dozens of different national committees. I have, however, remained on the Executive of the Labour Coordinating Committee, of which I am now Chair. The LCC has just launched a campaign to re-build the links between the trade unions and the Labour Party both at local and national level. Not only is the Government attacking trade union/Labour links, but there have been suggestions from within the Movement that the historic link should be "reviewed". This would be disastrous both for Labour and the Trade Union Movement. The ties should be strengthened - not weakened.

8. Finally, I would like to pay tribute to all the party members locally who I have worked with over the past year. And I hope we can go into 1984 as a united, outward-looking, campaigning party, which really speaks up for the interests of working people in Peckham.

HARRIET HARMAN

FEBRUARY 21st 1984