



MP REPORT

JANUARY 1984

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

1. HAPPY NEW YEAR!

I hope everyone had a good break over Christmas. It is encouraging to see that over the country as a whole Labour's popularity is beginning to rise again. So long as we all concentrate on campaigning actively on the issues that people are most concerned about, we can be sure that trend will continue. People will judge us by our actions rather than by our words. We need to work closely with trade unions locally and with community groups, creating alliances with all those who are suffering the terrible effects of the Tory government. The need to hold the Euro MP seat in this area will be an important task leading up to June. And we face an immediate challenge in the shape of the by-election in Burgess Ward (Bermondsey) following the resignation of Labour Councillor Ron Slater.

2. HEALTH

The Labour NHS Campaign Ambulance is coming to Southwark on February 10th (by invitation from Dulwich Labour Party). It will be outside outside Sainsbury's in Rye Lane, Peckham, from 10.30 am to 12.30 am. I hope as many party members will be there to get petition signatures, leaflet, talk to shoppers etc.

(1) Camberwell Health District (This covers six of Peckham's eight wards). A health emergency campaign has been set up and I spoke at the inaugural meeting. It was attended by over two hundred people. Rather a high number of them were from the local SDP, who are obviously going to try to exploit the health issue. It is interesting to note that the SDP are not opposed to private medicine and they are not opposed to contracting out to private companies of vital health services, such as cleaning, catering and laundries. They are also not committed to the scale of public expenditure necessary to save and improve the service. It is very important that Labour is seen to be setting the pace in defence of the Health Service locally.

Jointly with the relevant unions, the Community Health Council and the Labour members of the District Health Authority (DHA), I have been fighting a bitter battle against the DHA's attempts to run down and privatise the laundry service. This would mean lower standards of hygiene and lower wages for laundry workers (already on only £1.64 per hour!). We have lost the first round but the battle is still on.

Stuart Holland and John Fraser (Lambeth's Labour MPs) and I had a full briefing from the chair and senior administrators of the DHA. They are clearly determined that the major challenge which they must meet is to carry out the Tory cuts. Our urgings that they should speak out and campaign to defend the service rather than cut it, fell on deaf ears. Stuart, John and I will be working together on cuts in this DHA.



(2) Lewisham and North Southwark Health District. (This covers two of Peckham's eight wards).

A Health Emergency Campaign has been set up in this area too. The chair of this Health Authority also sees his role as administering the cuts rather than defending the service. This District faces up to 40 per cent cuts over the next eight years. This will bring the service to its knees.

I have been working very closely with the Nurses Action Group at Guys Hospital and with groups of Senior Doctors who are fighting the cuts.

(3) I did a programme on BCC Radio, London which was half on health cuts and half on child care. I will also be speaking at a public meeting later this month to continue the campaign to save the South London Hospital for Women.

3. EDUCATION

January

* ILEA Day of Action, 24th ~~February~~ *January**

(1) The meeting of Peckham Labour Governors, which I called was a success with over thirty governors from seventeen schools attending. Agreement was reached on actions to improve representation of Labour members on school governors, co-ordination of Labour governors and campaigning. Following the meeting all the Governors wrote an open letter to the Education Minister, which was well publicised in the local press.

(2) Many Peckham schools are having parents' meetings about the threat to ILEA and I have been invited to attend a large number.

4. HOUSING BENEFIT

Having caused chaos and hardship by introducing Housing Benefit in place of rent and rates rebate, the Tory Government is now making matters worse by planning to cut housing benefit this year. I issued a press statement condemning this before Christmas, which was in the South London Press. I will be liaising closely with the Southwark Council who, jointly with Lewisham and Greenwich, are launching a campaign against the Housing Benefit cuts. And I am also working with the Southwark Council for Voluntary Service Housing Unit on it.

5. NUCLEAR POWER AND NUCLEAR WEAPONS

I have put down a long series of parliamentary questions on the leaks at Sellafield (Windscale), and on the assumptions behind the government's civil defence plans, and I will publicise the answers.

5. WOMEN *produced*

(1) I ~~promised~~ *produced* a report on the pathetically low number of women on the powerful Government Departmental Advisory Committees.



(2) Together with Jo Richardson MP (our women's spokesperson) I am still lobbying to ensure that the Parliamentary Labour Party votes against the Government's new Matrimonial Bill (which would further impoverish single parents and their children).

7. RAMPART ENGINEERING

You will remember that this engineering firm in Peckham Grove faced total closure and over two hundred redundancies. Following a united campaign from the unions, the Greater London Enterprise Board, the Council and myself - and particularly the Southwark Trade Union Support Unit - the firm will stay open and some of the jobs will be saved.

8. CUTS IN COUNCIL BUDGETS (rate-capping)

I hope to work closely with the Council to expose the effects of the government plans on local services and jobs. I hope to get full briefings from the officers on this after the NALGO dispute is settled.

HARRIET HARMAN

10th JANUARY 1984



MP REPORT - JANUARY 1984

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

1. BENEFITS

The Ombudsman has reported on a case I referred to him of a woman who claimed that the Camberwell DHSS Office had been guilty of mal-administration. The Ombudsman's report to me upheld the claim and criticised the DHSS Office. I ensured that (a) there was widespread publicity about the case as it shows what a bad deal claimants get, and (b) by coordinating with Civil Service Unions before the publication of the report, ensured that the blame for the bad service was laid largely at the Government's door for increasing the number of those forced to claim benefits, while cutting the number of benefit staff to deal with those claims. It was reported on the front page of the South London Press.

2. GP DEPUTISING SERVICE

I am helping in a tragic case of a 5-month-old Peckham baby who died of diarrhoea because of the failure of the local doctor's deputising service to arrive on time, and to recognise how ill the baby was. I am working with the parents to investigate fully the events that led up to the baby's death, to ensure that the truth is uncovered and to get the situation changed, to prevent such a tragic occurrence happening again.

3. GOVERNMENT CUTS IN COUNCIL SPENDING

I sent an open letter on the Rates, Jobs and Council Services to all business and community organisations, and some trade unions in Southwark. I said I would be opposing the Rates Bill, because (a) we need good Council services, (b) the Government should increase not reduce grants to local councils, and (c) it is Central Government policies, not local rate bills, which are causing job loss. I also stressed what a burden "domestic" rates on households have become, because of government policy. If anyone would like a copy of the letter please contact Leo Foulkes, 219 4218. The letter was publicised in the South London Press and South East London Mercury.

4. UNION BAN AT GCHQ

The SDP are suggesting "no strike" clauses to get round the Government's disgraceful union ban at GCHQ. I am totally opposed to "no strike" clauses - which would no doubt spread from Defence workers to Health, Electricity, Airport workers etc. I have written articles opposing "no strike" clauses in Labour Weekly and City Limits and have raised the matter in the Tribune Group.

5. IMMIGRATION

I am trying to help a large number of constituents who are having trouble with the Home Office. The attitude the Government are taking is quite disgraceful, and representations to allow people to stay here or to allow their relatives to join them here are overwhelmingly being refused.

6. PRIVATE OLD PEOPLE'S HOMES

Whilst the Government is putting the squeeze on local authority Old People's Homes, the private sector is flourishing. The number of private Old People's Homes has mushroomed and their owners are demanding larger and larger sums from the DHSS. Despite the large

/continued....

number of Government inspectors available to hound single parents and other claimants, there is virtually no procedure to prevent Old People's Homes expropriating people's benefits which should be paid to the resident old persons. This was first raised with me by a constituent whose father is in a Bournemouth home and I have taken up the whole matter with the DHSS minister.

7. HOUSING

(1) Gloucester Grove - I have recalled the meeting of Labour, GLC, Council, and tenants' representatives that we held last summer to discuss the urgent problems of Gloucester Grove.

(2) Housing Report - A report of my first one thousand constituency cases is now being prepared. A researcher is helping me and I hope to publish a report showing the depth of the housing crisis in Southwark within the next few months.

8. FAMILY LAW

Despite strenuous arguments by Jo Richardson and myself, the Parliamentary Labour Party has decided not to oppose the Government's new Matrimonial and Family Proceedings Bill, but to have a free vote instead. This is very disappointing as the Bill will cause more bitterness in divorce and further impoverish single parents and their children. But Jo and I will be working to ensure that the vote against the Bill is as large as possible, and that our position is well publicised.

9. ILEA and GLC

(1) So far I have been to nine school meetings in Southwark to discuss opposition to the current education cuts.

(2) The march, rally and lobby of Parliament about the GLC and ILEA on the 24th January 1984 was very successful. But the arrangements in the House of Commons for receiving lobbyists and arranging for them to see their Members of Parliament are totally inadequate. I have taken this up with the Chief Whip. As a Party who should be encouraging mass lobbies of the Conservative Government, and who should welcome delegations from trade unions and the community to the House, it is quite wrong that people who lobby have to queue for hours, often in the pouring rain, cannot get a cup of tea and often do not even get to see their Member of Parliament.

10. CHILD CARE

I attended the National Child Care Campaign's Annual General Meeting and am working with them to challenge the Government's use of the "Under-Fives Initiative" money. The NCC are concerned (a) that the sum allocated for the Under-Fives, only £2 million a year for the country as a whole, is totally inadequate and (b) it is not even certain all that money has been spent, and the money which has been spent appears mainly to have gone to organisations such as Dr Barnardo's and the Pre-School Play Group Association, rather than financing nursery projects.



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

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

R E P O R T

FEBRUARY 1984

1. BURGESS WARD BY-ELECTION : 23rd FEBRUARY

There was a by-election in Burgess Ward following the resignation of one of the two Labour Councillors. Burgess Ward was in Peckham, until the boundary changes, and now it is in Bermondsey. Despite having an excellent candidate, and an experienced agent, we lost the election. A formerly safe Labour Ward returned the Liberal candidate with a 250 majority. It is very important that we in Peckham take this result very seriously, and see where there are lessons for us. The main complaint I heard on the doorstep in Bermondsey was that they never hear from Labour except at election times; that at least the Liberals keep them informed of local developments. We need to look at those areas in Peckham where we should be increasing our contact with our supporters. It is not equally easy in all Wards, because the level of membership varies. But at the very least every household in Peckham ought to get a Ward-level newsletter - even if it is only one a year! I will be happy to help write copy and help distribute.

2. SPECIAL FARADAY WARD SURGERY

I have provisionally agreed to do a special surgery on the Aylesbury Estate on 30th March. The idea is to have a special leaflet/newsletter to advertise it. I hope to do it jointly with the Faraday Councillors.

3. GUY'S HOSPITAL 'RAG' MAGAZINE

Guy's Hospital have a charity fund-raising 'rag' week every year. This year they produced a magazine to raise money, which contained racist 'jokes'. Examples include - "How do you stop a Pakistani from spitting, - Turn the grill down". And - "How do you get a hundred Jews into a mini? - One driving and 99 in the ashtrays". I have sought a meeting with the people who produced the magazine to express my disgust. I have referred the magazine to the Director of Public Prosecutions, to consider prosecuting for incitement to racial hatred. The magazine has now been withdrawn. But the South London Press wrote an editorial criticising me for condemning the 'jokes'.

4 JASON GREEN

I reported last month on the tragic death of Jason Green, aged five months, and the concern over the GP deputising service which visited him shortly before his death. The Southwark Coroner has refused to hold an inquest. I am protesting to the Home Secretary and trying to get the Coroner to change his mind.

/continued....

0-71+90-1+20-8+50-3=3
ME
st my sums !!
4+2=6
2+4=6
0-2+4=2



5. HEALTH

- (i) I have proposed to the London Labour Group of MPs that we embark on a major project on health in London.
- (ii) The visit of the Ambulance to Southwark was very successful.

6. HOUSING

- (i) I am liaising closely with the Council on their housing benefit campaign.
- (ii) My report on my first 1000 housing cases is coming along very well.
- (iii) I have put down a major series of questions to the Housing Minister on the housing situation in Peckham. The questions were worked out in conjunction with the Council Housing Officers.
- (iv) We have had to postpone the meeting on Gloucester Grove because we had too many apologies. But I hope to reorganise it soon.

7. POLICE

- (i) I had a meeting with Commander Cree about rising crime in Peckham and he has given me a great deal of information which I am having analysed. He agrees that high unemployment causes increased crime.
- (ii) I am liaising with the Council's Police Committee about the Metropolitan Police deciding to introduce new policing policies without local consultation.

8. EDUCATION

- (i) I arranged a visit from Peckham Park School to the House of Commons, and am now trying to arrange a visit from Warwick Park School.
- (ii) At ILEA's request, I spoke on their behalf in the recent parliamentary debate on London.

9. CONTEMPT OF COURT

In 1981 I was convicted for contempt of court for showing a journalist Home Office documents AFTER they had been read out aloud in open court. Jointly with THE OBSERVER and THE GUARDIAN I am appealing to the European Commission on Human Rights, and they will be hearing the case on May 10th in Strasbourg, France.

10. PART-TIME WORKERS

I challenged the Foreign Secretary about the Government blocking an EEC directive which would give part-time workers equal pay and equal legal rights with full-timers.

11. I went to Chesterfield to campaign for Tony Benn in the by-election. And I also visited the women at Greenham Common.



REPORT - MARCH 1984

1. Racist "jokes" in Guy's Hospital Rag Magazine

I have not yet heard from the Director of Public Prosecutions on his response to my reference to him of the Guy's Rag Mag, but the Dean of the Medical School has written condemning it and saying the students responsible will be writing to me 'apologising'. I have yet to receive their letter. The District Health Authority also endorsed my reference of the Rag Mag to the DPP.

2. Immigration

I have been battling with the Home Office over a series of disgraceful decisions to deport Peckham people - a number of them are Party members. Jeremy Hawthorne, who is a solicitor in a firm that specialises in immigration, is going to help me with my follow-up on these cases, including seeking meetings with local ethnic minority organisations.

3. Anti-Apartheid

I received a delegation from local members of Anti-Apartheid on the day of the national Lobby, and followed up by writing to the Prime Minister, urging her to condemn the proposed Rugby tour of South Africa.

4. Jason Green

The Coroner, following my representations, has now agreed to hold an inquest into the awful circumstances surrounding the death of Jason, aged five months. He died following a visit from a doctor from the GP deputising service. I have also put his parents in touch with a solicitor, and they are considering suing their GP and the deputising service.

5. Dulwich/St Francis Hospital

Jointly with other MPs from the Camberwell Health District, I visited Dulwich/St Francis. Afterwards, John Fraser MP (Norwood/Labour) and I issued a statement complaining about the cuts in the London Ambulance Service, which meant that patients could not use the day-ward but either had to wait for treatment or be admitted as in-patients. This was well covered in the South London Press.



6. Lewisham and North Southwark (Guy's) District Health Authority:

I attended a meeting called by the Chair and senior administrators of the District, to discuss with all the District's MPs the future strategy of the Region.

I explained forcefully that I would not support 'solving' the cuts 'problem' by reducing all the District Hospitals to two sites and selling off the 'surplus' hospitals. I also stated that the District's strategy should be to work to get the Regional Health Authority to try to get more money from the Government and that I would not support their proposed strategy that we should argue for more money at the expense of other areas within the District (such as the Medway Towns). I also re-emphasised my opposition to privatisation.

7. New Members

I have discovered that many Labour MPs write to all new members welcoming them to the party and I have started to do this.

8. New Voters

I have also started to write to all first-time voters when their birthday appears on the electoral register.

9. Marked Register

I have discovered that you can get from the Lord Chancellor's Office a copy of the register with a mark against all those who voted in the June 1983 General Election. This is an invasion of privacy! But since the register exists and will be useful for wards in their Euro election work, I shall obtain one and pass the information on to the wards,

10. Old Folk's lunch clubs and day centres

With the help of Mick Bryant (NUPE representative) I am arranging a series of visits to the clubs and centres in Peckham.

11. Special Aylesbury Surgery

This will now be held on 27th April (not 30th March as previously reported.)

12. Promotion!

I have been appointed Shadow Minister for Labour on Social Services, which includes all personal social services from child-care through to meals on wheels. In order to make a space in my work programme to take on this extra work I have, regretfully, had to resign as Chair of the Labour Coordinating Committee. I will not be cutting down my constituency work.

13. British citizens working in Saudi Arabia

Norman Godman MP (Greenock/Labour) and I are both taking up with the Foreign Office the disgraceful lack of support the Foreign Office gives to British people working for cut-throat Saudi Companies. Clearly, the Government is so busy trying to get on well with the Saudis that they turn a blind eye to Saudi companies exploiting British workers out there and even withholding their passports and not letting them leave. This arose out of the case of a constituent who has since managed to get home but not before the Saudis "confiscated" £900 of his wages.

14. Housing Benefit

I had an extremely useful meeting with the Four Boroughs Campaign on housing benefit (Lewisham, Greenwich, Lambeth and Southwark) and am following it up by putting pressure on the Minister over his Housing Benefit Review. Due to 'flu I had to convey my apologies to the Housing Benefit Rally in North Peckham Civic Centre.

15, Visits

I have attended Faraday Ward, Newington Ward and the Women's Section North in the last six weeks. Due to the large number of 'running three-line whips' in the House of Commons on vital matters such as the Rates Bill, Trade Union Bill and Transport Bill, they have had to be flying visits. I also attended the Annual General Meeting of Southwark Association for the Mentally Handicapped, visited the Ellison House Probation Hostel at the Aylesbury Estate; and spoke at a meeting on the ILEA at Southwark College. I am due to meet Brunswick Ward next month.

HARRIET HARMAN

2nd April 1984



REPORT : APRIL 1984

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

1. SPECIAL SURGERY FOR AYLESBURY ESTATE

This was held on 27th April, and was very successful. Following discussion at the Ward (Faraday), it was agreed to hold a surgery jointly between myself, the three Councillors and the Secretary of the main tenants' association on the Aylesbury Estate. We leafleted all Aylesbury tenants, so that even those who did not want to come at least knew we were there and available to discuss any problems. The surgery lasted from 5.30 until about 8.30, and there was a very relaxed and informal atmosphere. The officers of the Ward and some members came, and there was a stall of Labour Party material and leaflets. Dolly Coombes kept everyone supplied with tea! About 30-40 Aylesbury tenants came and, after chatting to Joan Amodio, the tenants' representative, they talked either to me or the councillors. The main problems raised were housing and the police. I shall be following them up with a visit to the Housing Office and representations to the local police Commander. The Secretary of the huge Union of Communication Workers Branch at the Borough High Street sorting office, who lives on the Aylesbury Estate, came to see me. We arranged for his branch to affiliate to the Peckham Labour Party and I am to visit the sorting office as the guest of the UCW in May. I also hope to include news of the follow-up to the surgery in the next Faraday Ward newsletter.

Following the success of the Aylesbury surgery, I hope to use those Fridays that are not already taken up with my regular surgeries and the G.C. meetings to hold special surgeries in each of the Wards.

2. NEW BUS ROUTE

Liddle Ward members will remember that during the by-election campaign in October 1982 a leaflet was issued promising that if I was elected I would press for a new bus route to go through the heart of the large estates between the Walworth Road and the Old Kent Road, and link those Estates with Burgess Park, the East Lane Market and the Peckham and Elephant Shopping Centres. We did have a campaign for this bus route with united effort from the Gloucester Grove Tenants' Association, the TGWU bus workers at Peckham Garage, Southwark Councillors and Liddle Ward members. We had a delegation to the GLC, collected thousands of signatures on petitions to London Transport and made countless representations to the Department of the Environment. On 28th April the new bus started! To welcome it we had a mass bus ride with placards and rosettes. Representatives of the Gloucester Grove Tenants' Association were there, as were representatives from the TGWU and the Peckham party. I let Peter Tatchell, Bermondsey CLP secretary, know so that he could leaflet the Heygate. The Gloucester and the Aylesbury were leafleted with announcements of the new route. I arranged publicity in the local paper.

3. SOCIAL SERVICES

In my role as Shadow Social Services minister, I will be concentrating on provision for the under-fives and for the elderly. I have spoken at several major conferences on child-care, and plan to help expose the massive rip-off scandal of private old people's homes, which cheat old people of their benefits and defraud the DHSS.



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

R E P O R T

MAY - 1984

1. GLOUCESTER GROVE ESTATE

After months of pressure from the Tenants' Association, Councillors and myself, the GLC finally sent in contractors to remove asbestos from the Estate. But the way the contractors planned to do it would cause even greater danger to tenants. So, at the tenants' request, I stopped the contractors continuing their work until their methods are approved by the Tenants' Association and Southwark's Environmental Health Officer.

2. POSTAL WORKERS' DISPUTE

I visited the South East District Postal Office at the invitation of the Union of Communication Workers. They explained their pay claim. They claimed 5.22 percent as a cost of living increase and were only offered 2 percent. At present they only take home about £70 for a 43-hour week. I expressed my full support for the claim and tabled an Early Day Motion in the House, deploring the Government's offer. I am also following up the Post Office's proposal to close down offices in London and divide post offices into smaller non-union post offices.

3. CAMELOT SCHOOL MERGER

At the request of parents of children at the Infant school, and after discussion with ILEA and Labour School Governors, I supported the campaign against the merger of the Infant and Junior schools. I joined a march of the parents up to County Hall, issued a press statement, made representations to ILEA and am organising joint opposition from the Labour Governors.

4. HEROIN

i. At the suggestion of Mick Bryant (Newington Ward/NUPE) I have contacted tenants' associations in the North of the constituency, suggesting that I meet them, together with the Community Drug Project, to discuss what action should be taken.

ii. At the suggestion of Mary Ellery (Liddle Ward) I have called a meeting of the tenants' associations on Gloucester Grove, Sumner, North Peckham and Camden, together with the Community Drug Project, to discuss the spread of Heroin use on these estates.

5. EUROPEAN ELECTION CAMPAIGN

I have spoken at rallies at a number of different Euro constituencies - including London South Inner. And on behalf of the Labour Party nationally I have broadcast on the subject of the Euro elections on TV and Radio, including Woman's Hour: on BBC Radio, and ITN.

/continued....

6. RADIOACTIVE PHIALS

Following a report from Councillor David Main, I have taken up the question of radioactive material which was left in a parked car in Pomeroy Street, SE14. The car was broken into and the radioactive material stolen and dumped on a nearby estate. The phials were ultimately found by the police, but I have asked a number of questions of the police and health authorities about how it came to be left in a parked car and safety procedures on the search.

7. TUSTIN ESTATE. SPECIAL SURGERY

At the invitation of Consort Ward, I am doing a special surgery on the Tustin Estate.

8. GREATER LONDON COUNCIL

The campaign to save the GLC is - if the public opinion polls are correct - continuing to gather public support. I have been actively involved in numerous aspects of the campaign, and will be speaking at the major anti-racist event in July. I spoke in the debate on the GLC money Bill in which the Government is cutting back GLC's new building programme.

9. DEMONSTRATIONS

I attended the demonstrations to protest at the visit of South African Prime Minister Botha, and to protest about Cruise missiles.

10. SOCIAL SERVICES

Having been in the job of Shadow Minister for three months now, I am beginning to get a grip on it. My priorities are going to be to focus on child care provision (under fives and school holiday and after school provision) and services for the elderly, particularly the growth in profit-making private old folks' homes. It is a mistake to call them 'private', because the DHSS pays large sums to private homes for elderly residents who are eligible for Supplementary Benefit. I am also undertaking a series of regional visits. So far I've been to Birmingham, and my next visit is to Gloucester.

11. ANOTHER BABY!

I'm very pleased to be expecting another baby. It is due at the end of November, so I will be on maternity leave in December, including the Christmas and New Year recess.

HARRIET HARMAN

0=21+9 0=1+2 0=8+5 0=3
= 2+4 = 0
ME
1st my sums !!
May '84
1+2=3
4+2=6
5+2=7
6+2=8
7+2=9
8+2=10
9+2=11



R E P O R T

JUNE 1984

1. EUROPEAN ELECTION - JUNE 14

The results were good for Labour generally, and show us making steady progress in winning back support from the Alliance and the Tories. The results in London were particularly good, no doubt partly due to the GLC Campaign which has shown how the Government is penalising Londoners. Our Euro MP, Richard Balfe, was returned with an increased majority. But the turnout in Peckham was very low and must give cause for concern.

Turnout in Peckham constituency -

	per cent
Liddle (In one polling district in Liddle it was as low as 11%)	14.8
Faraday	19.1
Consort	21.3
Friary	21.4
Brunswick	21.9
Barset	22.3
St Giles	22.6
Newington	24.6

2. MINERS' STRIKE

There was an excellent turnout at the March and Rally on the day of action called by the South East Region TUC. I spoke at the Rally and attended the March. Congratulations are due to those who organised the excellent Social on 23rd June at Dulwich Baths, and the Sponsored Walk/Run at Peckham Rye which raised over £1,000 for the Miners.

3. RE-SELECTION

I very much fear that the question of the procedures for re-selection of MPs will be reopened at this year's Party Conference. I do not believe that the present procedures are perfect for involving to the maximum all Party members in crucial constituency decisions, but there can be little doubt that the reopening of the whole re-selection issue could damage the Party by breaking our new-found unity. I met Neil Kinnock on July 9th and stressed to him my opposition to the reopening of this constitutional tinder-box.

4. POSTAL WORKERS

Post Office Management have agreed not to close any Crown post offices in Peckham without first consulting me. This advance notice will be of great assistance to the Union of Communication Workers in any anti-closure battle locally.

5. UNEMPLOYMENT

I have met with Mike Ward, Chair of the GLC Jobs and Industry Committee and, as a result, he is exploring the possibility of the GLC doing a major research/report on Jobs and Industry in South East London.

6. SPECIAL SURGERY

Liddle Ward have agreed to help with a special surgery on the Sumner Estate - Date still to be fixed.

7. TGWU GENERAL SECRETARY

It is good news for the Labour Party and the Trade Union Movement that Ron Todd beat George Wright in the recent election to become the next General Secretary of the TGWU when Moss Evans retires next year. Ron is firmly committed to the Party, to nuclear disarmament and to a radical economic strategy.

8: MEETINGS and LOCAL EVENTS that I have taken or will be taking part in -

Side meeting at NALGO Conference - 13.6.84

Crawford Tenants' Association meeting - 14.6.84

Child Minders picnic in Burgess Park - 20.6.84

Seeing off 800 pensioners on People Care Association Brighton trip - 25.6.84

OAPs' Club, Pitt Street Settlement - 26.6.84

Southwark Pensioners Action Group, open meeting - 28.6.84

Barset Ward meeting - 28.6.84

Anti-Racist Rally in Jubilee Gardens - 30.6.84

Southwark Wellcare (for single parents) AGM - 2.7.84

Walworth School visit to House of Commons - 3.7.84

Clubland Methodist Interim Council - 9.7.84

Greek Festival in Burgess Park - 22.7.84

Brunswick Ward members day school - 28.7.84

HARRIET HARMAN

6th July 1984



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

R E P O R T

JULY 1984

1. HOUSING

- (i) Every year the GLC "Money Bill" comes before Parliament. This authorises the GLC's capital spending programme. For the first time ever, the Government have sought to limit the amount of the GLC's capital spending. (This is quite separate from the amount the GLC raises on the rates). For a borough such as Southwark a limit on the GLC's capital spending would be disastrous. Peckham includes a large number of estates which were built by the GLC, such as Brandon, Gloucester Grove, Sumner, to name but a few. At the time of the handover of these estates to Southwark Council, the GLC agreed to remedy any major defects. A cut in the GLC capital programme would mean either that the waiting time for major repairs would increase, or that they will simply not get done if the GLC is abolished. I spoke out against these cuts in the debate on the Money Bill. At the request of the Council I hosted a press conference in the House of Commons, which was reported in the Evening Standard.
- (ii) Together with the Consort Ward Councillors, Liz Bendall and Peter Troy, we held a special surgery for tenants on the Tustin Estate (off the Old Kent Road). It ran very smoothly.
- (iii) On the 1st August I shall be attending a meeting of the Ledbury Tenants Association in Friary Ward.

2. SCHOOLS

- (i) Walworth School 6th formers came on a visit to the House of Commons.
- (ii) I attended the prizegiving at Crampton Primary School in Newington Ward.
- (iii) At the time of writing, I am just about to try to speak in Prime Minister's Question Time about the hopeless lack of safe supervised play for children in school holidays.

3. RATE CAPPING

The Government has confirmed press rumours that Southwark is on the hit list of Councils to be rate-capped. I had an extensive briefing on the potential effect of rate-capping with the Council leader, Tony Ritchie. I spoke both in the debate on the Government's announcements of the new rate support grant limits and the announcement of rate-capping, and pointed out that if Southwark Council were forced to meet Government targets it would mean -

/continued.....

- * Fewer home helps
- * Fewer meals on wheels
- * Fewer day centres

and this would mean more elderly people being forced into institutions. This is the exact opposite of the Government's "care in the community" policy.

4. WORKING WITH THE COUNCIL

This is obviously a critical time for the Council, and my liaison with them is greatly improved. I am now, on a weekly basis, getting briefings, tabling questions, speaking in the House of Commons, and writing to Ministers about Council issues. I have confirmed to the Council leader my support for their stand against the Government's attempt to cripple Southwark, but I have emphasised that it is vital there is strict disciplined coordination between all the threatened councils if the strategy of resistance is to succeed. No council acting alone can beat the Government (except Liverpool!).

5. SOUTHWARK By-ELECTION

The By-election in Lyndhurst Ward (the northern-most ward in Dulwich) was a triumph for Labour. At the last Council elections our majority over the Tories was 49. We increased that to 800, with the SDP coming a poor third!

6. I opened the Greek Festival in Burgess Park and attended the Southwark Carnival. I will be attending the Miners' Wives Rally in Burgess Park on August 11th.

7. HEALTH

The Lewisham and North Southwark District Health Authority have issued a consultation document. Basically, it completely accepts the massive cuts the Government wants to make in health care in our area. In consultation with the Community Health Council and the Health Unions, I will be submitting my own evidence in response to the document and will condemn its total failure to offer any resistance to the decline of our health service - but simply to "manage the cuts". I attended the DHA meeting at which the consultation document was agreed.

8. DOCK STRIKE

I issued a statement in support of the striking dockworkers and circulated it to Dockers, the Trades Council and the local press. But the dispute was resolved before it got any coverage.

9. SOCIAL SERVICES FRONT BENCH WORK

I am continuing to concentrate on social services provision - or lack of it - for the elderly and children. This has included -

- *joining the campaign against Bromley Council who have decided to close all the nursery classes in Bromley

- *Criticising Gloucestershire County Council who have only 29 day nursery places for the country's 29,500 children under five years

- *Speaking up for Basildon Council whose spending on the expenses of volunteer toe-nail cutters for the elderly is threatened by rate-capping

- *Investigating the scandal of un-registered profit-making old folks homes which are being funded by the DHSS.

/continued ...

10. FURNITURE GRANTS

I am battling with the DHSS over a man who came to my surgery over refusal of a furniture grant. He is a council tenant, but the DHSS has said he can't have a furniture grant until he can produce twelve rejected applications for furnished flats. He is in hospital at present, but when he comes out he will have to return to sleeping on the floor. The DHSS have given him a grant for sheets and blankets. No doubt they expect him to tuck them into the floorboards!

11. I will be on holiday from 17th August to 10th September. But Leo will still be working in my office and can arrange for help from another Member of Parliament on urgent immigration cases.

HARRIET HARMAN

31st July 1984



R E P O R T

AUGUST 1984

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

1. MINERS' DISPUTE

The march and rally in Burgess Park in support of the Miners' strike on August 11th was a magnificent demonstration. Miners' wives and children had come from all over the country and presented a "cheque" at the DHSS to protest at the low level of benefits for strikers' families. Peckham Labour Party members put in a great deal of work, both before the march and on the day itself. I spoke at the rally in Burgess Park.

2. SCHOOL HOLIDAY PLAY SCHEMES

Together with "Playboard", a new organisation to coordinate and develop play facilities, I toured play schemes in Southwark. I issued a statement deploring the overall lack of such schemes in the country as a whole, and warning that rate penalties and rate capping threaten those few schemes that do exist. It was well publicised in the papers and on TV and radio.

3. SPECIAL SURGERIES

(a) Together with Brunswick Ward, I have provisionally fixed a special surgery on the Glebe Estate.

(b) Together with the Ledbury Tenants Association and Friary Ward Councillors, I shall be holding a special surgery on the Ledbury on 17th September.

4. HEALTH

(a) I have given my full support to the occupation of the South London Hospital for Women. The Health Authority have closed all the in-patient facilities and now only the out-patient clinic remains. I visited the occupied hospital with Jo Richardson MP on 15th August.

(b) Both the Camberwell and Lewisham and North Southwark District Health Authorities have new Chairmen. I will be meeting them in September.

(c) The TGWU and the other health unions have discovered that the Health Minister's instruction to District Health Authorities to privatise cleaning and catering services was illegal. After a discussion at a meeting of the TGWU South London Coordinating Committee, which I attended, they are considering calling a meeting of the Labour and trade union representatives on the two Health District Authorities plus shopstewards and health emergency campaigns to discuss how to use this discovery in the fight back against privatisation.



5. HOUSING

(a) All the research on my surgery housing cases has been completed but so far I have not found time to write it up. I will do this in September.

6. NEW BUS ROUTE

In earlier reports I have written about the extension of the P3 bus to run through the Heygate, Aylesbury and Gloucester Grove Estates, linking the Elephant and Peckham, which was won as a result of a joint campaign between tenants, pensioners and bus workers. The new route is proving a great success and attracting far more passengers than London Transport expected. The bus workers are pleased, because L.T. are considering putting extra buses on the route.

7. THE "SPIKE"

The Government's closure date for the Camberwell Resettlement Unit is 1985. But answers by Ministers to parliamentary questions that I tabled reveal that the "replacement" programme has already fallen way behind and because of rate-capping local councils in South London are going to find it impossible to cope with extra demands. I have written to the Minister to protest.

HARRIET HARMAN

16th August 1984



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

R E P O R T

SEPTEMBER 1984

1. HOUSING

- (a) I attended the Annual General Meeting of the Sumner Tenants Association, the AGM of the Southwark Group of Tenants Associations, and a meeting of the Pelier Tenants Association. The approach I am taking when speaking at such meetings is that where the Council can make improvements in their housing service they should be strongly pressed to do so. But that the solution to the Borough's growing housing problems is made very much more difficult by Government spending restrictions.
- (b) The special surgery I held on the Ledbury Estate on the 17th August was very successful. Leaflets advertising the surgery were printed and distributed by the Tenants Association, who also provided tea and sandwiches. Councillor Mabel Goldwin attended the surgery, as did a number of Party members. About 35 tenants came to the surgery to discuss their problems, and the atmosphere was very positive and relaxed. I am following up the housing problems with the local District Housing Office.
- (c) Brunswick Ward have organised a special surgery on the Glebe Estate on the 28th October, which I shall be attending.
- (d) The next special surgery is planned for the Sumner Estate in Liddle Ward, but no date has been fixed yet.
- (e) The material from the research on my surgery housing cases has now been collated and written up in draft form. I have sent a copy to Councillor Tony Ritchie, Council Leader, and am trying to get a TV programme interested in reporting it. The aim will be to show how bad housing conditions are and therefore how disastrous are the Government's housing cuts.

2. MINERS' DISPUTE

I will be speaking at the rally organised in support of the Miners on 16th October.

3. POST OFFICE CLOSURES

I am taking an active part in the campaign against Post Office closures in Southwark. In particular, I am opposing the closure of the counter service at the South East District Office in Borough High Street, which will lead to job loss as well as service cuts. I am also working with the Council and the local pensioners' organisations to try to save the Arnside Street, SE17, sub post office. Sub post offices operate on the basis of pay rates much lower than those negotiated by Post Office Unions, and they do not have proper training or standard opening times. Nevertheless, the Arnside Street sub post office provides a very important service to pensioners and others in the area and so we hope to try to save it.

/continued...

4. PENSIONERS

- (a) I attended the Annual General Meeting of the Southwark Pensioners Action Group.
- (b) The Government have changed the rules of assessment for heating allowance in such a way that most of those on Supplementary Pension will get a £1 cut in November. I have protested strongly about this to the Minister, and have issued a Press Statement condemning the cut.

5. POLICING

- (a) I shall be speaking at the Conference organised by Southwark Black Workers Group on the question of policing in Southwark on 13th October.
- (b) Arising out of the special Aylesbury surgery, I called a meeting between the Police Commander for Southwark and representatives from the Aylesbury Tenants Association. I share what I believe to be the view of Tenants Associations who were present at that meeting, which was that the Police, though they attended the meeting in large numbers, seemed unwilling seriously to consider the points the tenants were making. Their answer to complaints about slow police response to burglaries was simply that if fewer officers were on the beat and more in Panda cars they would be able to respond more quickly, and their response to complaints about the small number of police on the beat on the Aylesbury was simply to say that there was a manpower shortage, without saying anything about how they were going to try to deal with the problem. The equivalent of one sergeant and 20 police constables had been taken out of policing in Southwark to be sent to police picket lines since the beginning of the Miners' dispute.

6. SOCIAL SERVICES

In my capacity as Shadow Social Services Minister, I have stated the complete impossibility of local Councils making cuts in their Social Services budget, which are being laid down by the Government in their Rate Penalties and Rate Capping. Such cuts would be bound to mean the virtual collapse of social services at a time when growing unemployment and the increasing number of elderly are placing more, not less, demands on the Social Services. On this I am working closely with Councillor David Blunket, who is the only local authority representative on the NEC, the Local Government Campaign Unit and the Association of Metropolitan Authorities (which is Labour controlled). I am also emphasising the dire effect on welfare services which the GLC abolition would have, because of the £36 million per year that the GLC gives in grants to voluntary organisations providing welfare services.

/continued...

7. BURGESS PARK "ONE O'CLOCK CLUB"

Following my visit to this GLC Play Scheme in August, the mothers whom I met there wrote to the Environment Minister, Patrick Jenkin MP, asking what would happen to their Play Scheme if the GLC were abolished. His reply to them reveals not only that there are no plans to save such important schemes, which are vital to those living in the large housing estates nearby, but that also his Ministry does not even know what a "One O'clock Club" is! The mothers at the Club are shocked to discover that the Minister who intends to take over the running of London seems not to have even the first idea of the services currently being provided.

8. RADIOACTIVE PHIALS

In May I reported that I was taking up with the Minister the question of safety precautions following the theft of radioactive material from a private car which had been left in Pomeroy Street SE14. The Minister has finally replied that the material which was stolen is outside the regulations for carrying radioactive material and that the matter has simply been dealt with by the Police "advising" the Company concerned to lock radioactive materials in secure containers fixed into the car. I have taken this up with the Minister again and publicised my concern in the South London press.

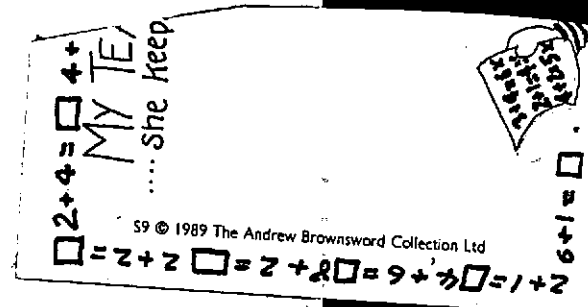
9. I am still writing to all new members, welcoming them to the Party, and also to all those whose eighteenth birthday appears on the Electoral Register, reminded them that they are now eligible to vote, and telling them how to get in touch with me. If anybody hears of new voters or new members who have not been receiving such letters, could they please let me know and will check up on "the system".

10. MATERNITY LEAVE

My baby is due in November, and I am finding it increasingly difficult to get around. But I am trying to keep up with as much work as possible, from home, and I am also hoping to make watertight arrangements to ensure that my constituency work is properly and promptly dealt with in the period after the baby is born and to ensure that I try to maintain regular newspaper coverage on issues of local concern.

8th OCTOBER 1984

HARRIET HARMAN



S9 © 1989 The Andrew Brownsword Collection Ltd



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

R E P O R T

OCTOBER 1984

1. MINERS' STRIKE

The strength of feeling in support of the miners locally was well illustrated by the massive attendance at the Public Meeting on the Miners' Strike, which was organised on the initiative of the Peckham Labour Party on October 16th in Walworth. I estimate that over two hundred people attended, which makes it one of the largest meetings in the area for some time. Peter Heathfield, the NUM's General Secretary, and Betty Heathfield, of the NUM's Women's Support Group, spoke at the meeting, as did Pat Arrowsmith (CND), Mike Terry (Anti Apartheid) and myself. Despite the huge attendance and the strength of feeling at the meeting, I did not notice reports of it appearing in the South London Press or the South East London Mercury. I have written to the Editors of those two papers complaining about the lack of coverage.

2. POST OFFICE CLOSURES

As stated in my September Report, the Post Office plans to close the counter service at the South East District Office, and the Arnside Street sub post office, (among others). But the Post Office has temporarily shelved their plans to go ahead with the closures because of the DHSS dispute at Newcastle. The Local Post Office management admitted in a letter to me that post office closures "can cause hardship". The Post Office have also said that they are delaying their decision on the Arnside Street sub post office. This provides an important breather to step up the campaign locally.

3. BLIND WORKERS SACKED

I have taken up the case of two blind and disabled workers who were sacked by the London Association for the Blind after exposing health and safety breaches in their Southwark factory. I have called on the Chairman of the LBA to reinstate the two workers and have taken up the matter with the London Councils which finance the London Association for the Blind. One of the workers who was sacked is Branch Secretary for the National League of the Blind and disabled at the factory (TUC affiliated). I am working on the campaign to get them reinstated, together with the Southwark Trades Council, the Trades Union Support Unit, and the Southwark Disablement Association, as well as the National League for the Blind and Disabled.

4. VAT ON GAS

It has been rumoured that, despite the huge profits the Government makes out of the Gas Industry, it is considering putting VAT on gas, which will add 15 percent to fuel costs. I have made representations to the Energy Minister about this, and I am liaising with local groups on the issue.

/continued...

5. POLICE BILL

The Police Bill has now passed into law. At the last minute the Bill was amended to make racial discrimination by a police officer a specific disciplinary offence. Despite the fact that this is a welcome step forward, the Bill remains thoroughly insidious, as it gives arbitrary and sweeping powers of stop, search and arrest, and substantially reduces protection for suspects in a police station. It is therefore important that, whilst welcoming the small gains we were able to make in watering down the Bill, our commitment to repeal the Bill when the next Labour government takes office must remain firm.

6. IMMIGRATION AND DEPORTATION

As members will no doubt know, when all the legal appeals procedures have been gone through unsuccessfully, constituents can get their MP to make "representations" to the Home Office minister to get him to allow them to stay in this country. It is entirely up to the minister whether or not he will accept an MP's representations and David Waddington MP (the current Home Office minister responsible for immigration) has earned himself a reputation for refusing such representations. But in the last few weeks I have had a number of cases where representations have been successful, partly due to demonstrating strong local support for the person threatened with deportation. But I am currently working on a particularly unpleasant case of a Nigerian woman who was detained on entering the UK, although she had full permission to come here, because she was pregnant and the immigration officers were concerned that she would have her baby here on the National Health Service!

7. APARTHEID

(a) Together with many other Labour Members of Parliament, I have made strong representations about the disgraceful treatment by the British Consulate in Durban of the three South Africans who took refuge there to escape internment without charge.

(b) The cynical stance of the Government and of the Daily Mail has now been fully exposed, as Zola Budd, who was given British citizenship in record time in order for her to run "for Britain" in the Olympics, failed to win a gold medal and has now returned to live in South Africa!

8. BLACK PEOPLE AND THE LABOUR PARTY

I am very concerned about the lack of proper "front bench" leadership from the Parliamentary Labour Party on the question of race discrimination. I have been making strong representations that major initiatives with the black community should be taken by a Front Bench spokesperson on race. Currently the post is held by Denis Howell MP, (formerly our Minister for Sport).

/continued....

9. CHILDMINDERS

On the 7th November I will be opening the National Childminders Conference on rate-capping. Child-minding is by far the largest form of provision for children under five, and is gravely threatened by cuts in social services departments. If Councils go along with the massive cuts which the Government want to impose on social services departments, monitoring, registering and training of childminders, which is patchy at present, will become almost non-existent. This would be bound to lead to a lowering of standards among childminders and place many children at risk.

10. THE GLC

I will be taking part in the GLC rally and lobby of Parliament on the 8th November 1984. In particular, I have arranged for the voluntary organisations in Southwark to be able to lobby Gerald Bowden MP (Dulwich, Conservative) and Simon Hughes MP (Southwark, Liberal) at the House of Commons. I took part in the opening of the development site for the Southampton Way industrial workshops, which is being set up jointly by the GLC and by Southwark Council.

11. REMEMBRANCE DAY

I hope to lay a wreath on behalf of the Labour Party at the Remembrance Day ceremony on 11th November. But my baby is due that week, so I hope people will understand that, if I am not at Walworth Town Hall, it might be because I am at Guy's Hospital!

12. LONDON REGION WOMEN'S CONFERENCE

I attended the Women's Conference on the 27th October. The event stands out particularly in my mind for two reasons. Firstly, because there was a very moving report from one of the women cleaners from Barking Hospital who has now been in dispute for only a few weeks shorter than the miners. Out of 95 workers whose terms and conditions were originally threatened by the private contractor, 62 of the cleaners are still solidly on strike, which is a very high proportion considering the dispute has now gone on over eight months. The speaker reported that they have "won the right to be reinstated" from an industrial tribunal. The other noteworthy point about the Conference was that it had a really excellent press - a model for other conferences to follow!

13. GLEBE SURGERY

Together with the Glebe Tenants Association, the Brunswick Ward of the Labour Party organised a special surgery on the 8th October. This involved every flat on the Glebe being leafleted, and the surgery was well attended, with a relaxed and informal atmosphere. It was very good to have a surgery involving the local Party members, the local Councillor (John Lauder), the Tenants Association and myself. But what will be important now is to follow up forcefully on the problems which the tenants brought into the surgery.

/continued...

14. CHRISTMAS DAY

It would be very helpful if Party members could let me know in advance of Old Folks lunch clubs that will be having Christmas lunches up to and including Christmas Day. I always try to attend at least three Old Folks lunches on Christmas Day itself, but if there are any lunches leading up to Christmas, please let me know so that I can see whether I can attend.

15. MAIL ON SUNDAY

The Mail on Sunday appears to be trying to cobble together a story that Peckham Labour Party is a battleground of warring sectarian factions, and that I am about to be de-selected as MP. They do not appear yet to have decided whether to say I am about to be de-selected by a "right wing plot" or a "left wing plot". There is no doubt that they are motivated by malice and any report would be entirely mischievous journalism. I have told them that I welcome the re-selection procedure as a healthy democratic process in which an MP's role is rightly evaluated by the Party. I have also told them that the Peckham Party is a united and campaigning party and utterly condemned them for trying to stir up trouble. I merely report this so that Party members who receive calls from the Mail on Sunday or other parts of the right wing press can be forewarned!

2nd NOVEMBER 1984

HARRIET HARMAN



R E P O R T

NOVEMBER 1984

House of Commons,
London, SW1A 0AA
Tel: 01- 219 3000
01- 219 5137

1 NEW BABY

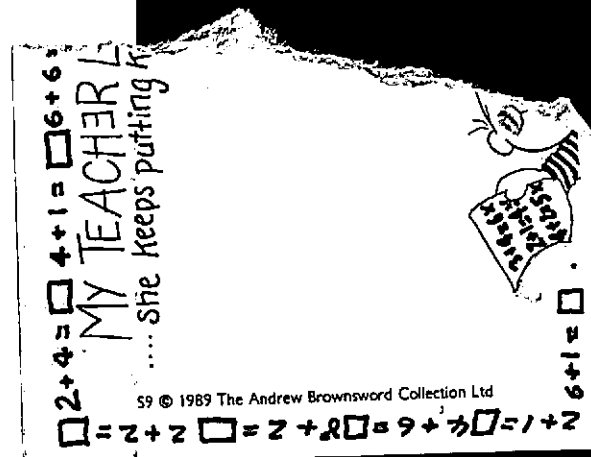
On 20 November, Joe was born at Guys Hospital, weighing in at 8lbs 5ozs. Very many thanks to all the Party members who have sent me and Jack their good wishes. It was worrying to see the extent of the public expenditure cuts in Guys Hospital. They have axed the Physiotherapy altogether from the Maternity Ward at Guys and on the night I was admitted, the entire Accident and Emergency Department was closed down. The ambulances were being turned away due to the fact that all the beds in the hospital were full and they could, therefore, not take new patients. And this is before the District Health Authority have implemented the further cuts they plan.

2 MINERS' DISPUTE

- (a) I was active in setting up the Miners' Christmas Appeal, including getting signatures from the "leading" Labour Members of Parliament in support of the Appeal. The target for the Christmas Appeal was £50,000. But on the first day this was exceeded because John Paul Getty Jr donated £100,000!
- (b) I have complained to Capital Radio and the IBA following a report by a Party member that a dee-jay on Capital Radio referred to Scargill as a "second Hitler".

3 POST OFFICE CLOSURES

- (a) I have called on the South East District Postmaster to reveal publicly how many representations he has received in favour of Post Office closures and how many he has received opposing the Post Office closures. It will reflect very badly on the Post Office which, after all, is a public corporation, if they either refuse to publish the result of a public consultation or if, when they publish the result, it is revealed that they intend to ignore the views of the public.
- (b) I have discovered a clause in the Telecommunications Act which obliges the Post Office to take into account "social factors" when making decisions about the Post Office service. I have challenged the Minister for Trade and Industry to halt the Post Office closures on the basis that they cause hardship and, therefore, would be in breach of this section of the Act.



4 GLC

The Second Reading of the Bill to abolish the GLC is due to take place at the House of Commons on 4 December. Joe will be making his first appearance at the House of Commons at exactly two weeks old because this is such an important measure that I plan to take a break in my maternity leave to vote against the Bill.

5 ROAD HUMPS

Southwark is a borough which has considerable problems with traffic speeding through to the centre of London from the outer London suburbs. One of the ways to safeguard pedestrians and slow traffic down is to have humps in the road (sometimes called "sleeping policeman") but the Department of Transport guidelines make it almost impossible for built-up areas like Southwark to put up road humps. Following representations that I made to the Department of Transport about the restrictiveness of the guidelines, the Department of Transport have agreed to review them!

6 BALLOT FOR POLITICAL FUNDS

Under the new Tory trade union laws, all trade unions who are currently affiliated to the Labour Party will have to ballot all their members in order to seek approval for the union to continue to maintain a "political fund". Failure to win the "political fund" ballot would not only devastate the Labour Party financially and weaken the vital links between the party and the trade union movement, it would also severely restrict political campaigns by trade unions against privatisation and public expenditure cuts. Though some trade unions have decided not to comply with the requirements for ballots before taking industrial action, all trade unions have now decided that they will comply with the law requiring ballots for political funds. There will, I hope, be a co-ordinated campaign at national level between the trade union movement and the Labour Party. But it is also vitally important that we have a good local campaign to ensure that the benefits of Labour Party affiliation and political funds are made known to trade union members in Southwark, so that we can have a high "Yes" vote locally, when the ballots take place next year. I hope that, as a bare minimum, all wards will have speakers about the "political fund" ballots, and that all trade union branches of affiliated trade unions will have speakers from the Labour Party on the subject. It might be a good idea, sometime in the New Year, to have a meeting to discuss the "political fund" ballot campaign locally.

STRIKE BY WOMEN MACHINISTS AT FORD

Despite doing highly skilled work, the women sewing machinists at Ford get unskilled pay rates. They are TGWU members and as a TGWU sponsored MP I have sent them a message of support and tabled a Parliamentary Early Day Motion calling on the company to accept their claim for skilled rates.

HARRIET HARMAN
7th December 1984



R E P O R T

DECEMBER 1984

1. MINERS' STRIKE

(a) Following my complaint that a disc jockey on Capital Radio had called Arthur Scargill a "Hitler No.2", the Independent Broadcasting Authority has ordered Capital Radio to apologise to Arthur Scargill, and also ordered that the disc jockey should be "spoken to in the strongest possible terms". The IBA said they found the remarks "completely unacceptable". Previously, Capital Radio had refused to apologise to Mr Scargill, saying that the remarks were "barely audible". This seems to be rather an odd thing for a radio station to say! Nevertheless, it is a success, albeit limited, to get the IBA to order Capital to apologise. But I am not satisfied because the apology is being made privately rather than being broadcast. Since the original remarks were made over the radio and would have been heard by hundreds of thousands of Londoners, I feel the apology should be made publicly and I am pursuing this.

(b) In the first week of January I visited the NUM picket at Snowdown Colliery in Kent to express my full support to the Miners and to bring them a New Year greeting. My visit to the NUM picket line was widely publicised on local radio and in the local newspapers. I also commented that the tragedy of this dispute is that by continuing to work, the Nottinghamshire miners are laying on the line the jobs of all other miners in this country. These comments were publicised on International Radio News. The pickets all spoke very warmly about the support they have received from Peckham Labour Party and expressed the hope that they would have more visits from members of the Peckham Labour Party.

2. HEALTH SERVICE

(a) I have submitted a report of my comments on the Lewisham and North Southwark District Health Authority's plans for the future. I strongly criticised the Health Authority's plans to implement cuts, close hospitals, and "shed" jobs. If anyone would like a copy of my report to the Health Authority, would they please let Leo know by ringing 219 5137.

(b) The Hedley Atkins Breast Cancer Unit is under threat. This is a specialist unit which does pioneering work on the treatment of breast cancer and is currently situated at New Cross Hospital (within the Lewisham and North Southwark health district). Already nine of the beds in the unit have been closed because of public spending cuts, leaving only twenty-seven beds, and the

Health Authority have privately circulated a proposal to move the unit to Guy's Hospital "when New Cross Hospital closes" and further drastically cut back the beds in the Breast Cancer Unit. I have protested strongly about this to the District Health Authority, and these comments were reported on Thames at Six and BBC Radio London. I have also tabled an Early Day Motion, calling on the Health Minister to allow the District Health Authority sufficient funds to defend and develop the work of this important unit.

3. POLICE

The Police in Liverpool detained two men for seven days under the Prevention of Terrorism Act over Christmas. They then discovered that they had no connection with terrorism whatsoever, but they nevertheless charged them with "withholding information", which is an offence under the Prevention of Terrorism Act. It is quite wrong that people who the police acknowledge have no connection with terrorism should be charged under the Terrorism Act. Their conviction will leave a blight on these men for the rest of their lives because their criminal record under the Prevention of Terrorism Act will remain long after the Police comments about them not being involved in terrorism have been forgotten. I have taken the matter up with the Home Secretary and with the Attorney General, and my criticisms of the Liverpool Police were well publicised on radio and in the papers.

4. MARIE PAYNE MURDER CASE

Marie Payne's murderer had a history of sex offences against young children, which was not reported to the Social Services Department by his probation officers. This meant that, without knowing about his criminal record, the Berkshire Social Services Department allocated him (through a voluntary organisation) to work with young children. Following these revelations at the murder trial, I have called on the Home Secretary to legislate to provide proper guidelines about when Social Services Departments should have access to criminal records, what sort of crimes should be revealed to them and that the individual concerned should have a right to check their records to ensure their accuracy. At the moment the situation is governed by a very woolly and unsatisfactory Home Office circular.

5. AFRO-ASIAN ADVISORY SERVICE

I spoke at the Annual General Meeting of the Afro-Asian Advisory Service on December 20th.

6. "MATERNITY LEAVE"

The Baby and I are in good health and so I have been able to do a considerable amount of work from home during my "maternity leave". I plan to fully return to work at the end of January. I would like to place on record my sincere thanks to those who helped at my surgeries during my "maternity leave" - Ed and Hilda Portlock, Peter Troy, Roy Kennedy, Colin Anderson, Dave Cleverly, Vivian Hyett, and Mary Ellery. In particular, thanks are due to Leo Foulkes who has shouldered considerable responsibility in my office during this period, together with Neil and Ioan, who have also done invaluable work. There is no procedure for maternity leave in the House of Commons and constituency and parliamentary responsibilities remain as heavy as ever, so I am particularly grateful to all those who have helped me carry out those responsibilities, but also allowed me a short while to enjoy the new baby.

9th January 1985

HARRIET HARMAN