



REPORT

JANUARY 1989

HARRIET HARMAN MP

1. CHANNEL TUNNEL RAIL LINK

British Rail has now chosen Kings Cross as the terminal for the Channel Tunnel Rail Link. The channel tunnel and Kings Cross will be linked by rail via one of three possible routes. The most expensive option brings the railway in a tunnel from Mottingham to Kings Cross. Both the other two routes bring a massive railway right through the middle of Southwark. It is clear that if either of these two options is chosen, Walworth, Camberwell, Peckham and Nunhead will be devastated. There will be 180 trains every 24 hours. In the brief period of time in the small hours when the track was not being used by high speed passenger and freight trains, there would be engineering works on the line. Sound insulation of 3 to 4 metre high concrete walls would be placed beside the railway. Communities will be divided in half, roads blocked off, shopping centres and schools stranded. Life near the railway, for those whose home had not been demolished to make way for the widened track, will be a hell of noise and vibrations.

I attended a meeting at Dulwich Baths to hear British Rail put their case. There were about 1,200 people there from all over Southwark, including Nunhead, Walworth, Camberwell and Peckham. At that meeting I expressed my total opposition to an overland link through Southwark. I plan to :

* commission an independent "environmental impact study" into the effect of British Rail's plans

* lodge a petition against the parliamentary Bill which British Rail need to get through Parliament before they can use Kings Cross as the Channel Tunnel terminal.

* Work with all the local organisations who are opposing the Bill, particularly Southwark Council which is playing a leading role in the campaign.

* I will be attending the Walworth meeting and the Nunhead meeting on the rail link.



* Work with the London Labour Group of MP's. Tony Bank's MP, who represents Stratford in East London is in favour of the Rail link going to Stratford instead of Kings Cross.

* Seek a meeting with the Transport Minister, Paul Channon. Joan Ruddock, MP for Deptford, is now one of Labour's shadow transport ministers, so I will be working closely with her.

2. NORTH PECKHAM TASK FORCE

The Government regularly claim that the problems of inner cities are caused by Labour Councils. Two years ago the Government set up 8 inner city "task forces", one of which was in North Peckham. They claimed that the task force would concentrate central government effort in a small area to show how local enterprise could be generated and red tape cut through, in order to create jobs and set up training. The Government has claimed that the North Peckham Task Force has been a success. I have carried out an analysis of the work of the Task Force and can find no evidence to justify the Government's claims. The reason the government have set up task forces is as a public relations exercise to appear to be doing something in inner city areas in a way that undermines Labour councils. I plan to publish a report of my research shortly. I will be called "North Peckham Task Force. Job Creation or Public Relations."

3. PECKHAM LABOUR PARTY

In all wards there is a feeling of deep concern and demoralisation at the continued suspension of the General Committee. I shall be meeting Larry Whittly, General Secretary, shortly to urge him speedily to conclude the remaining procedural and disciplinary matters so that the party can be reconstituted.

4. BENEFITS

The situation in the local benefit offices continues to deteriorate, with long delays and a high error rate. I will shortly be holding special benefit surgeries in Brunswich ward and Basset ward. I have already held them in Consort, Newington, and St Giles.



5. LOCAL HEALTH SERVICES

Despite government announcements that the NHS is awash with money, Camberwell District Health Authority faces a serious budget deficit. This means that the DHA is constantly looking for ways of cutting costs at a time when demand for the services is growing. Together with the Community Health Council and the other Labour MP's whose constituencies use Camberwell DHA (John Fraser and Stuart Holland) I am raising the need for extra resources with the Regional Health Authority and the health minister.

I have been in close contact with the nurses at Muadsley about their discontent at the way the clinical regrading exercise has been carried out. I have taken up their case with the Health Authority Manager.

6. HEALTH ; NATIONAL ISSUES

In my capacity as Labour Shadow Health Minister I have

- * spoken in a House of Commons debate about AIDS

- * published a report about the dangers of the American health care system (please let me know if you would like a copy)

- * I am preparing a report on the low standards of care in private old folks homes.

7. SURGERIES

My surgeries continue to be packed out, mainly with housing and benefit complaints. After every surgery I write to every person who has come to see me explaining what I have done to take up their case. And I sometimes have to write two, or three times to the Housing Department before I receive a reply. So dealing with constituency casework takes up 80% of the time of those who work in my office and a majority of my time. Despite the fact that it is a frustrating task at times, it is crucial and I shall therefore continue to give my constituency case work a high priority in the new year.

I would particularly like to thank the party members who have helped at the surgeries in the past year. It is important that we are seen to work as a team to provide a sympathetic and efficient "service" to constituents, and I am enormously grateful to the following party members who regularly help at the



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surgeries; Charlie Robinson, Liz Bendall, Kate Cinnamon, Allan Lewis, Rose Winterton, Jon Roberts, Ros Tabor, Deb Bales....and the many other party members who help out on an occasional basis.

B. A PERSONAL HEALTH BULLETIN

As I mentioned in my last report I fell ill with pneumonia in November 1988. It was later discovered that it had been caused by psittacosis, a virus usually caught from parrots! The SUN devoted half of its front page to a story that I was at death's door. But I am happy to report that once again the SUN is writing rubbish. I went back to work the first week in the New Year, and despite the SUN'S encouraging comments about the inevitability of a relapse, I have been given a clean bill of health by my GP.

HARRIET HARMAN MP
January 20th 1989



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

REPORT

FEBRUARY 1989

1. Channel Tunnel Rail Link

Every day, more people become aware that their homes or their work is threatened by the overland rail link which may be built through Southwark.

Huge local campaigns have emerged in Walworth, Peckham and Nunhead.

I am in constant touch with the local campaigns as well as the council.

I have been to public meetings on the Channel Tunnel in Walworth, Peckham, Nunhead, Dulwich Baths and the Newington Estate. Each of the meetings has been completely packed with people being turned away after there is no room even to stand.

The objectives of the campaign locally remain to keep the rail link in a tunnel as it goes under London. The slogan is "keep the Chunnel in a tunnel". And to call for a proper public enquiry to decide the route rather than the obscure procedure of a private parliamentary bill.

Fortunately my days as NCCL legal officer have stood me in good stead as I became a parliamentary agent then and worked on many private bills.

So I intend to lodge a petition against the British Rail Terminal Bill (as it is called). I will publish the petition and publicize it.

I've commissioned an environmental impact statement of the effects of the overland rail link in our constituency, from Friends of the Earth. I hope it will be ready for publication in a fortnight.

Each of the local campaign groups is delivering 1,000 individual letters from me to each of my constituents whose homes are in the path of the rail link.

2. Guardian Angels

Fear of crime on the underground has led to a lot of public support for the Guardian Angels who are over here from New to set up a London operation. I have issued a statement condemning the setting up of vigilante groups. It should be the responsibility of London Transport and the Metropolitan Police to make public transport safe. A man came to my most recent surgery complaining that he had been on a tube and the Guardian Angels had started a fight.

3. Peckham Labour Party

I went to see Larry Whitty, Labour's General Secretary, and emphasised to him the concern in all wards that the party should be reconstituted. He agreed to write to all party members in Peckham explaining why the party was suspended and setting out a rough timetable of future events and when the party will be reconstituted. You should have received his letter by the time this report reaches you!

4. European elections 15th June 1989

We are in a weak position with the European elections coming up and not having a General Committee to co-ordinate organisation on this. The European elections are important, not just because we want to continue to have a Labour Euro MP, but because it will be an important test of public opinion in Peckham. In the last Euro election we had a very low turn-out. In one ward it was as low as 11% ! I will be liaising with our Euro candidate to discuss how best I can help co-ordinate the effort of all wards in the elections.

5. Health Services

Robin Cook MP and I leaked the Government's White Paper on the NHS because we knew that they planned to launch it with a scurrilously misleading PR campaign backed by £1 million of tax payers money. The leak put the government on the defensive, but we cannot be complacent. The White Paper plans to replace the NHS with something like the American system of health care. Local Health Service managers would not have to provide care locally, but could send patients where they had managed to negotiate a cheap contract. GP's would be given a fixed budget and would therefore consider not just what the patient needed by way of tests, drugs or hospital treatment, but also whether the GP practice would afford it. This would make it more likely for GP's to refuse to take on patients who are elderly or have a long term illness.

Guy's hospital is leading the way in trying to opt out of the NHS. The Government will clearly give a lot of money as a bribe to the first NHS hospitals to opt out, and in order to show "opting out" has been a "success". But opting out would mean that the hospital would concentrate on those services where they could make money by treating patients from other health authorities, rather than providing a broad range of services for local people.

Camberwell District Health Authority is suffering a major round of cuts as they try and keep within their budget. Together with the Community Health Council I am co-ordinating a campaign with the other 4 MP's whose constituents use the Camberwell District

services. We will be ;

*holding a public meeting to inform people of the cuts. It is provisionally booked for 9th March 1 pm in the Boardroom of Kings College Hospital.

*calling for a meeting with the Health Minister,

* writing letters to the national and Local papers.

The aim of this campaign is to draw attention to the effect on services of the budget cuts and to try and persuade the government to come up with some more money.

6. The Labour Party

I am taking part in the membership campaign which has been launched in the West Midlands and will be campaigning in Richmond in the by-election. I continue to chair the Health Subcommittee of the policy review group.

7. Surgeries

My surgeries continue to be packed. If anyone would like to help one evening a month please let me know.

Last Saturday Basset Ward organised a special benefit surgery for me. So now I have held special benefit surgeries in Brunswick, Basset, Consort, Newington, St Giles.

8. Rosemary Bright has joined my office as my secretary/pa. (People may remember Rudy Bright, a longtime Newington member who is her brother). But any mistakes in this report are my fault. I have joined the technological revolution by getting a computer/word processor!

HARRIET HARMAN MP



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

HARRIET HARMAN MP

REPORT

APRIL 1989

1. HEALTH SERVICE

a) Hospitals Opting Out

Guys, St Thomas' and Kings have all been listed as hospitals in which an "expression of interest" has been shown in opting out under the Government's new plans for the NHS.

Opting out would be very bad news for the local community who depend on these hospitals. Instead of planning services according to local need, independent boards (appointed by the Government) would plan services to bring as much money into these hospitals as possible. Local people would have to wait even longer as the opted out hospitals sold operations to people with private health insurance or from other District Health Authorities which were prepared to buy operations and treatment from the hospital. The hospital would be dislocated from the community.

It would also be bad news for the hospital. Opted out hospitals will not be "given" their land and equipment. They will opt out with debts of the value of their land. Servicing that debt will put many hospitals in financial difficulties. In fact the Government have said they expect 40% of all hospital sites to be sold. They have long thought there are too many hospitals in London. The ferocious competition between large London opted out hospitals would mean the closure of a number of them.

I have spoken on numerous occasions both in the House of Commons and in Southwark against opting out.

I have written to all three local health authorities and all three hospitals explaining the dangers of opting out and urging them to resist any attempts to opt out. It is, of course, the Secretary of State for Health, and not anyone locally, who will make the decision to opt out. I have asked each DHA to hold a ballot as soon as there is a definite proposal to opt out.

b) White Paper on the Health Service

As Shadow Health Minister I have been very involved in planning and taking part in Labour's campaign against the White Paper.

I have spoken in a number of major debates in the House of Commons and went to the Vale of Glamorgan to help raise the question of the health service in that bye-election.



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No doubt, health will be a major issue in the forthcoming Vauxhall bye-election.

I took part in the county council election campaign visiting various parts of the country, and will be playing a part in the national campaign for the forthcoming Euro elections.

c) Local Waiting Lists

The waiting lists for hospitals locally remain relentlessly high. I have issued various press statements analysing the figures and have had a further meeting with the Health Minister, Roger Freeman MP about the underfunding of the Camberwell District Health Authority.

d) I have chaired the Labour Party policy review group on health. We have proposed a decisive rejection of the "market" in health care, and the taking back into the health service of any hospitals that opt out, the abolition of the tax allowance for private health care.

2. CHANNEL TUNNEL

I continue to be actively involved in the campaign to stop the route which will devastate Warwick Gardens and cause blight over a wide area.

I have had meetings with British Rail, have spoken in the House of Commons, petitioned the Bill in order to be able to appear before the Bill's Committee (BR ruled out my petition saying my constituents had no interest!), I've made representations to BR about people who want BR to buy their homes so they can move, and met regularly with representatives of PEARL (Peckham Against the Rail Link)

I am trying to organise a meeting for the tenants of the Lettsom Estate who will be affected by the new rail link. The provisional date is 25th May and I have invited BR, PEARL and the Council.

3. HOUSING ACTION TRUSTS

Despite the fact that the Government have now been forced into giving tenants on Gloucester Grove and the North Peckham a vote before they set up a HAT, I remain opposed to HAT's

The Government have not given satisfactory assurances about
*rent levels not rising above that of the council
*security for the tenants after the renovations have been done
*the ability of tenants to choose to go back to the council after



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By

the HAT has finished

Despite the fact that the Government are offering the estates large sums of mosity if they have a HAT, I still beleive it is not in the tenants interests to vote for a HAT.

4. I have recently visited the new Tenants Association in Forsythe Gardens, I attended the AGM of Sumner Tenants Association, opened the new creche which has been set up by Camden Tenants Association, and am shortly to visit Ledbury TA

5 GLOUCESTER JUNIOR AND INFANTS SCHOOL

I opposed the amalgamation of the junior and the infants because I felt the school would be too large to be managable. It will be, once amalgamated, the biggest primary school in ILEA having over 720 pupils.

I wrote to all members of ILEA schools committee, I went to see the chair of the schools committee and lobbied as hard as I could.

Sadly, the decision to amalgamate has gone ahead.

6 EUROPEAN ELECTIONS JUNE 15th

Following a meeting I called with Richard Balfe and representatives of each Peckham Ward, I have arranged to undertake campaigning in;

*Brunswick....7th June

*Farady.....8th June

*Consort.....12th June

I will be contacting the other wards to arrange to be involved in their campaigning.

* I will be doing a "walkabout" with Richard Balfe in Peckham Rye on 3rd June

7. If any member wants to come and hear question time or a debate in the House of Commons, please let me know. I have an allocation of 2 tickets once every 6 weeks. If you would like your ward, or an organisation in your ward, to visit for a tour of the House of Commons, please let me know and I will arrange it.

8. MABEL GOLDWIN

I was very saddened to learn of the death of Mabel Goldwin. I was first introduced to her by Harry Lambourne, when he was



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Peckham's MP and I well remember how much he respected Mabel for the hard work she did on behalf of the Party and the people in Southwark. As I got to know Mabel I too, came to depend on her judgement and experience about everything that was going on locally. Mabel took her work as representative on the Council very seriously. She brought the same dedication to her work on the Arbitration Tribunal. Her death is a loss to us. But her example will be remembered for a long time to come.

HARRIET HARMAN MP
17th May 1989



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HARRIET HARMAN MP

REPORT

MAY 1989

1. European Elections

The Labour Party have decided to make the European Elections a referendum against Thatcher's 10 years in Government. So it is very important that we do well on June 15th.

I have been required to undertake a number of visits to marginal Euroconstituencies as part of our national campaign. So far I have been to the West Midlands, Nottinghamshire and East London.

I'm pleased that all wards locally are attempting to ensure at least full coverage of leaflets before polling day. Obviously it is better if wards are canvassed, but that did not prove possible in the last European elections either.

2. Vauxhall by-election

As everyone will know, Kate Hoey, who has stood for Labour in Dulwich in the last two General Elections, is the candidate in Vauxhall.

It will not be an easy contest. It is always more difficult to fight a by-election when the MP has resigned to take a new job. It is difficult to fight a by-election in a "stronghold". Added to which there is the problem of the controversy surrounding the selection procedure.

But it is of critical importance that we do well in Vauxhall. People will remember what a dreadful turning point Greenwich was. It is important that as many members in Peckham as possible go and help, as Vauxhall is only the next door constituency. They need as much help as they can get.

As neighbouring MP I have been called upon to commit a lot of time to the by-election.

3. Channel Tunnel

a) I organised a special meeting on the effects of the Channel Tunnel Rail link on the Lettsom estate. The meeting, to which all tenants were invited, was held in conjunction with the Tenants Association and was very useful. The TA will be keeping all tenants informed of channel tunnel issues; will be writing to the Minister protesting about the sub-surface junction at



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Warwick Gardens and the extra freight on the line; will be taking part in PEARL poster campaigns; and seeking a meeting with British Rail. The meeting was also attended by councillors and Council officers.

b) I am handling numerous cases of people who are outside the compulsory purchase zone, but who need BR to buy their homes as they have a pressing need to move

4. Housing

a) I have attended two of the first three meetings called by the consultants appointed by the government to "consult" tenants on Gloucester Grove about a Housing Action Trust. Tenants are being called to meetings on a block- by -block basis.

At all the meetings the tenants express the same concerns
* will there be a guarantee that rent levels in the HAT will not go above council rents
* will HAT tenants have as much security as council tenants
* when the HAT is wound up will the Government ensure that the council is in a position to buy the estate back (otherwise it will have to go to a private landlord)

The consultants cannot give assurances on any of these points.

In order to clarify the situation I plan to produce a Bill which will contain all these guarantees. If the Government accept my Bill, the tenants will know they have nothing to fear from a HAT. If the Government do not accept my Bill, it will be clear that their true intention is not to use HAT's for the benefit of existing tenants, but in order to "yuppify" the estates, like Docklands.

b) I attended an open meeting on the Crawford Estate.

5. Health Service

a) As I mentioned in an earlier report, I have been co-ordinating the five MP's who cover the Camberwell District Health Authority to try and get more money out of the Government. We have had a meeting with the Regional Health Authority and two meetings with the Health Minister, Roger Freeman. Now, Mr Freeman has accepted an invitation to a public meeting being organised by the Camberwell Community Health Council on June 12th (at which I am also speaking). I assume this must mean that he will be announcing that he will be making more cash available to the DHA. I don't think he would have accepted the invitation if it was only to say there is no more money. If that is the case, it will be a victory for the campaign we have been waging.



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b) As part of my front bench responsibilities on Health I produced a report about how the Government's White Paper will harm child health services. Please let me know if you want a copy.

c) I am on the committee for the Bill to outlaw "kidneys for sale". A number of Conservative back benchers spoke in the first debate on the Bill, opposing it and saying they could see nothing wrong with a free market in organs for transplant. Their argument was "if a poor person needs money, and a rich person needs a transplant, why shouldn't the poor person sell his kidney"!! There is no doubt that the Conservative Party has moved so far to the Right under Thatcher, that Tories now feel that is perfectly respectable to make out such arguments.

6. Schools

After the Euro-elections and the Vauxhall by-election I plan to try and visit all the schools in the constituency before the end of term in July.

Harriet Harman MP

June 5th 1989



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

REPORT

JUNE 1989

1. European elections and Vauxhall By-election

The election results were a great victory and really give us the chance of seriously looking as if we can win the next General Election. The results seem to have had a remarkable effect on morale in the country as a whole. We now have to build on those results so that we keep ahead in the opinion polls consistently in the next 12 months. After that we will effectively be in a pre-General Election period and the political temperature will heat up even more decisively. Obviously I have been playing an active role building on the Government's unpopularity due to the White Paper on the NHS.

2. Local visits.

In the last few weeks I have undertaken a number of visits to local organisations, including Southwark Council for Community Relations; Southwark Group of Tenants Organisations; The local Department of Social Security Offices; The Peckham and Carter Street Police Stations. Unfortunately only one of my planned visits to Managers of the three local housing offices has gone ahead because of the Nalogo dispute. But I hope to re-instate those visits in September.

3. Doreen Mason Aston.

The Southwark and Lambeth Report on the death of Doreen Mason was leaked to the Daily Mail and I was then beseiged by the press to make comments. I attach a copy of the press statement that I issued. It seemed to me that responsibility lay both with the three councils (including Berkshire) and the Government. I stressed that lessons must be learnt from the tragic case but that it would be wrong to have a witch-hunt of the social worker who was allocated the case.

4. Teacher shortage in Southwark

It is clear that there is a drastic shortage of teachers in Southwark for the Autumn term. It is hard to over-estimate the terrible effect this will have on primary school children, and

the disruption this will cause for the working life of the parents as children are sent home.

I am in constant touch with our front-bench spokespeople on this urging them to call on the Government to bring in an emergency package including an interim pay award, creches in all primary schools, more return-to-work courses etc. Unless the Government do all this the situation in Southwark will be dreadful in September.

I have written to all the schools in my constituency and asked them if children would like to come on a visit to the House of Commons.

I have visited, John Donne, Crampton, Walworth, Warwick Park and St Francesca Cabrini.

5. Benefits.

I continue to have a stream of really bad cases of people failing to get the benefits that they are entitled to due to maladministration of the benefit system locally. The ombudsman has recently ruled in favour of a constituent that I referred to him and I fear that the situation will get worse when all the work is sent up to Wigan for processing, leaving only an office at the Odeon site (not yet built) to handle all callers. I am raising this with the Minister.

6. Rubbish.

It is impossible to live or work in Southwark and not to have been struck by the awful state of rubbish on the streets. It is one of local government's most basic and important tasks, to keep the streets clean and empty rubbish bins. I have raised this with both the Leader and the Chief Executive and I know they share my sense of urgency about the situation.

7. Housing

I am continuing to take an active part in the campaign against the imposition of Housing Action Trusts on the Gloucester Grove and North Peckham estates. I have attended numerous consultative meetings on the estates. I have tabled dozens of parliamentary questions to clarify tenants rights under a HAT so they can know the situation BEFORE they vote. In my last report I mentioned my intention to bring in a Bill (jointly with other HAT Labour MP's) to give HAT tenants the same rights as council tenants.

Following discussion with the TA's, and in view of the fact that it now looks as though the ballot will not be till the beginning of the new year, I will introduce the bill in October, not in July as I had originally intended.

8. Wrongful imprisonment.

Following a visit to my surgery I referred to the Home Secretary a case of a constituent who was acquitted of assault but who spent months in prison on remand waiting for trial. The Home Secretary accepted my representations and awarded him £5,000.

9. Food Poisoning in Southwark

In response to a parliamentary question that I asked the Government revealed that there has been a 239% increase in food poisoning in Southwark in less than 10 years. I have publicized this and called on the Government to

- * set up a food standards agency
- * give boroughs more money to employ environmental health officers
- * bring in Regulations to guarantee minimum storage temperatures for food on display in shops.

10- Channel Tunnel

Following my representations, British Rail are to visit the Institute of Psychiatry, The Maudsley Hospital, Kings and the School of Dentistry, to prepare an impact statement of the effect of the proposed Channel Tunnel Rail Link on the sensitive scanning equipment used, not to mention on the patients !

11. Peckham Labour party

It is now over two years since the Party was suspended. I share the concern of members that the Labour Party at National and Regional level should get the situation sorted out as soon as possible. I have arranged a meeting with Joyce Gould of Labour Party HQ for 20th July and hope to be able to report on a timetable after that. I am particularly concerned that the party should be reconstituted in time to re-select me!

12. Summer holiday

I will be away during August but have made arrangements to ensure that the constituency casework continues to be dealt with in my absence.

Harriet Harman
17th July 1989



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

STATEMENT OF HARRIET HANMAN MP

DOREEN MASON. SOUTHWARK SOCIAL SERVICES

13th July 1989

There is a growing number of people in Southwark who are vulnerable and need the help of Southwark Social Services because they are either * a child at risk in their family
* mentally ill
* elderly and disabled

It is essential that Southwark Social Services is able promptly and sensitively to respond to these growing and urgent needs.

Today's report is a challenge both to Southwark Social Services and the Government.

People's lives and welfare are at stake.

This must not become a party political football. It is too important.

I am calling on the Government to ask the Social Services Inspectorate (which operates under the Department of Health) to carry out a thorough audit on Southwark Social Services, help them identify and remedy problems and point out where government action is needed.

The Inspectorate's involvement and assistance must not cease until they can assure people in Southwark that Southwark Social Services is able to protect and help vulnerable people in the borough.

The Government must commit themselves to take the action which the Inspectorate reveals is necessary.

It is no good the Government sending out pamphlets called "working together" asking social workers in different boroughs and health visitors to co-ordinate more closely if the pamphlets drop on empty desks. The Government has a responsibility to ensure that there are adequate numbers of properly trained staff. Vacancies in both health visitor posts and social worker posts are a responsibility that the government cannot shirk. They are the result of lack of resources in health and social services and government failure to train professional staff for the future.

Lessons must be learnt but there must be no witch hunt of social workers

Statement ends

Contact Anna Healey 219 3025 or 219 6958

HARRIET HARMAN MP

SEPTEMBER REPORT

I hope you all had a good summer, and are ready to campaign hard against the Tory Government and all their works. Labour still has a strong lead over the Tories in the opinion polls, but we cannot be complacent. We must continue to do all we can to convince voters that Thatcher's Government should go, and that Labour is the only effective alternative.

Parliament opens on 15th October and one of the most important issues in the new session will be the NHS. In my role as Shadow Health Minister, I am preparing for the NHS Bill, which will be announced in the Queen's Speech, following on from Kenneth Clarke's discredited White Paper "Caring for Patients." Other major issues will be the privatisation of electricity, the broadcasting bill, poll tax, and, of course, the handling of the economy.

Below I outline some of my activities since the summer.

1) NHS CAMPAIGN

(i) Labour has launched its NHS Post-a-Protest Campaign. Everyone who objects to the Government's plans for the NHS is asked to fill in a protest card, and send it to the Labour Party. The cards will then be collected, and passed on to Kenneth Clarke. I hope that all wards will order enough cards for each of their members, and I enclose an order form with this report.

(ii) I have written a series of reports for the Labour Party on the impact of the Government's NHS proposals on various groups. So far, I have produced statements about the effect of the White Paper on

- * the elderly
- * women
- * the mentally ill
- * children.

If anyone wants a copy of any of these papers, please let my office know.

Yet to be launched are the papers on ethnic minorities, drug dependants, and people with disabilities.

(iii) I helped launch local NHS campaigns at rallies in Bristol and in Glasgow, and I will be attending similar events in Leicester and Burnley in the near future. I also took part in the media launch of 'Cartoonists for Labour', in which some of the best-known cartoonists in the country, including Steve Bell, Austin and Larry, used a hospital bedsheet as the base for some vicious caricatures of Kenneth Clarke and Tory policies on the NHS.

(iv) I am shortly to visit the joint staff side at Kings Hospital. I attended a public meeting on the White Paper organised by the Council at the Rotherhithe Civic Centre, and visited the Maudsley Hospital at Denmark Hill.

2) FRIARY WARD BY-ELECTION

You should have received my letter about the vital Friary Ward by-election on October 12th, which gave details of the contact number for the campaign. I hope that you can offer some help, no matter how small.

I am making the Campaign a priority for my local work and

*I have met teachers from the Peckham Park School in the ward to talk about their concerns over the teacher shortage.

* I leafletted parents outside the school.

* I have arranged for the Labour Party Health Campaign Bus to visit the ward at mid-day on Saturday 7th October.

*I shall be holding a special surgery on 7th October with Cllr Henriques.

* I shall, of course, be canvassing and leafletting in the campaign before October 12th.

3) HOUSING

(i) I continue to campaign against Tory Housing policies, which have created a housing crisis in inner-London, with thousands homeless and thousands more living in wretched conditions.

(ii) One policy of particular concern to Peckham is the proposal to establish Housing Action Trusts (HATs) on the Gloucester Grove and North Peckham estates. The Government wanted to impose these HATs on local tenants without any consultation, but an amendment passed in the House of Lords stipulates that there must be a majority vote in favour by tenants before a HAT can be set up on an estate. I have been warning the tenants of the dangers of HATs, particularly in the lack of security and control over rents. I am at present preparing a report on HATs in Peckham, which will be based on the answers given by the Housing Minister to a series of my Parliamentary Questions on the issue. This report will form the basis of a Bill I am planning to introduce to show that the Government is not prepared to give any guarantees to tenants of HATs.

(iii) I have also written to the Housing Minister complaining about the Government cut in the repairs budget for local authorities. I am also sending out an open letter to all TAs, explaining that I am pressing Southwark Council to improve the delivery of services to Council tenants, particularly in repairs, the collection of rubbish, and in responding to letters and phone calls from tenants.

(iv) Poets Corner TA came to visit me at the House of Commons, and I have taken up their demand for an entryphone on Kipling House.

4) EDUCATION

(i) I have invited all primary schools in my constituency to visit me at Westminster, and so far I have seen St. Josephs Infants and John Donne School. The children seem to get a great deal out of the visit.

(ii) I have met the new Director of Education for Southwark, Gordon Mott, and other education officers, and discussed some areas of concern, such as fees for adult education, staff morale, and the national curriculum.

(iii) I have written to the Education Secretary, John McGregor, about the teacher shortage, urging the Government to give an interim pay award to the teachers. I have also been in touch with local education groups and parents about this issue.

5) RECONSTITUTION OF THE PARTY

As you will be aware, a timetable has now been drawn up for the reconstitution of the Peckham Constituency Labour Party, and an AGM is to be held in November. I have discussed these steps with Regional Party Officers, and I very much welcome this move. I see it as a new opportunity for all members to become involved in political campaigns as well as exercising their democratic rights within the regional and national Labour Party. I hope that everyone will approach this reconstitution in a positive spirit, will put the past behind them, and make Peckham CLP a party for all of us to be proud of.

6) NEW MEMBERS SOCIAL

I held an informal social for all new members of the CLP on 19th September in Herbert Morrison House. The event was quite a success, attended by more than 20 people, and I intend to hold such socials once every six months.

7) CONFERENCE

I shall be attending Conference next week, 2nd to 6th October, and I will be speaking at seven fringe meetings.

8) CONSTITUENCY CASEWORK

I would like to thank most warmly Charlie and Di Robinson and Mike Corfin, and the other helpers who stood in at my surgeries while I was on holiday. Over the summer recess there was a serious assault on the backlog of my constituency casework, which has now been cleared. John Roberts (St. Giles Ward) did a tremendous job in helping in my office. I now have a new

assistant, Leo McKinstry, so I hope that my work will continue to be fully up to date. I am now in the fortunate position of being able to write back to constituents within a few days of their attending my surgeries - Simon Hughes, eat your heart out!

However, there is always a huge number of people contacting me for help, so any volunteer assistance I can have in the office or at my surgeries is greatly appreciated. My surgeries are held on the second Friday of the month at the Camden Tenants Hall, Camden Square, on the third Thursday of the month in Peckham Town Hall, and on the fourth Thursday of the month in Walworth Town Hall, or you can ring my office (219 5137) to offer help.

9) CHANNEL TUNNEL RAIL LINK

I am still getting many complaints from people worried about the plans for the Rail Link, particularly the building of the major junction at Warwick Gardens. I am continuing to campaign against this development, and I have again written to Sir Robert Reid of British Rail to ask that the plans be reconsidered. I have taken up many individual cases of people seeking compensation, and I have been in touch with the Camberwell Society about the local blight which the link will cause in the constituency. I have also written to the Prime Minister, asking that she puts some public money into the rail link to ensure the least possible damage to the environment.

10) SOCIAL SECURITY

Many of the saddest cases I have to deal with involve those who have been rejected for community care grants, and therefore have almost nothing to live on. I have become increasingly concerned at the way the DSS office in Camberwell seems to be operating outside the Government's rules for Social Fund payments, because it has run out of funds, and I have written to the Social Security Minister asking that he ensure that the office has adequate funds to meet its statutory duties.

11) SHADOW CABINET

One final piece of news - I am standing for election to the Shadow Cabinet. The election will be held in the second week in October.

Harriet Harman
27th September 1989



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

OCTOBER REPORT

HARRIET HARMAN MP

Since I last wrote to you, Parliament has started sitting again. Proceedings have, of course, been completely dominated by the shock resignation of the Chancellor, Nigel Lawson. I happened to be coming from a meeting of the Parliamentary Labour Party in the House of Commons as the news broke. It was wonderful to see the panic spread amongst the Tories at that moment. The resignation and consequent reshuffle have made Thatcher's style and the Tories' handling of the economy the key political issues of the day, and given the Labour Party a great boost. Opinion polls are now putting us 15% ahead of the Tories, something that has not happened since the early seventies. We must all build on this growing support, and campaign even harder to expose the consequences of Tory policies.

1) CHANNEL TUNNEL LINK

Pressure is growing on British Rail to alter its plans to build the Channel Tunnel rail link through south-east London to a terminal at Kings Cross. Two consortia of private contractors have urged that the link be built further east with the terminal site at Stratford, thus avoiding the destruction of a large part of the urban environment. BR itself is now admitting that it may have to finish the link at Swanley in Kent, because passenger demand will not be as high as first estimated.

This is extremely good news for Peckham. I have been campaigning against the building of the link through Peckham for some time because of the damage it will cause. Amongst the action I have taken recently is the following:

i) I have recently written to Cecil Parkinson, the Transport Secretary, urging him to reconsider the route of the link.

ii) I have also met directors from BR and put this case to them. I have stressed that they must allow my petition against the Rail Link Bill to be submitted and heard in the Parliamentary Committee considering the Terminal Bill and the Route Bill.

iii) I have written to the Prime Minister urging that the Government put some public money into the link so that more safeguards for the environment can be provided.

iv) I continue to attend public meetings in Peckham on the issue where local people voice their concerns about BR plans and the

lack of consultation over them.

v) I remain in close contact with the PEARL campaign, sending material for their newsletters, and taking part in their meetings and demonstrations.

vi) I am dealing with a number of cases where hardship has been caused by people being unable to sell their house or flat.

2) HEALTH

As Shadow Spokesperson on Health:

i) I leaked the draft of the Government's forthcoming White paper on Community Care, which shows that the Government is planning to use private agencies for home helps, care attendants and meals on wheels - services currently provided by local authority.

ii) I addressed a Conference on Mental Health and Women at the Maudsley Hospital.

iii) I have issued press statements on the following:

- * A call on the Government to change the law to make more organs available for transplants

- * The scandal of growing hospital waiting lists

- * The Labour Party "no-fault compensation" scheme, whereby victims of mistakes in the NHS, such as haemophiliacs with AIDS, would receive compensation without having to prove negligence.

iv) I launched the Labour Party NHS Bus from Peckham on its campaign trail round London on October 7th.

3) EDUCATION

i) I attended the lobby against the Government's plans for top-up loans for students on 19th October, and received a petition from Peckham students. I have also written to the Education Secretary, John MacGregor, setting out my objections to the proposals.

ii) I issued press statement against student loans, highlighting the fact that the number of students in post-16 education from Peckham is one of the lowest in the country.

iii) I am still greatly concerned about the teacher shortage in Southwark, and I have written to the Chair of Education proposing some steps which might be taken by the Council to help ease the crisis.

iv) I continue to have regular visits to Westminster from Peckham schools. This month I have organised visits from Michael Faraday School and Brunswick Park.

4) HOUSING

i) I have written to all Tenants Associations in Peckham, explaining how I am campaigning against the Government's plans to undermine local authority housing, but also urging that Southwark Council improves the delivery of services to tenants, particularly in the following areas

- * the cleanliness of estates
- * repairs
- * giving answers to enquiries.

ii) Squatting: I have raised this issue with the Chief Executive and Chair of Housing, and I also attended a meeting of the Camberwell District Committee, urging that Southwark Council draw up firm deadlines for filling empty properties.

iii) I took part in the launch of the building of the North Peckham neighbourhood office, which is the first stage in the Council's housing decentralisation programme.

5) SOUTHWARK COUNCIL

i) Friary By-Election: I was pleased that we retained the seat. I played an active part in the campaign. However, the decline in the Labour vote shows that we must do more to improve the quality of Council services.

ii) I have raised this point about service delivery in recent meetings I have had with Andrew Porter, the Secretary of the LGC and Anna Wyatt, the Chief Executive of Southwark. Action is particularly needed to improve the refuse and street cleaning service.

7) GENERAL

i) I took part in the Parliamentary lobby for women's equality on 26th October.

ii) I spoke to the AGM of the Londonwide Pensioners' Link about Community Care, and I have also issued messages of support to other pensioners' meetings in London.

iii) I took part in the Parliamentary lobby about Safety in the Construction Industry, and I am taking up the tragic case of a young man from Southwark who was electrocuted to death on his first day working day at BR Euston.

Harriet Harman

3rd November 1989



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

Harriet Harman MP

November Report

The Tories are still trailing badly in the opinion polls, and have been recently hurt by the Leadership contest, the Rover scandal and divisions over Europe. Despite their declining popularity, the Tories have not offered any change of policies. They will continue with their privatisations and attacks on public services, as was shown clearly in the Queen's Speech on 21st November.

Within Peckham, the Constituency Labour Party has now been reconstituted. I hope that it will enable us to develop an effective campaigning organisation which will continue to build up support for Labour in the local area.

1) Ambulance Dispute

I have been very involved in supporting the ambulance crews in their dispute with the Government.

* I enclose a copy of my speech made in Parliament on 9th November, in which I attacked the Government for refusing to agree to arbitration.

* I spoke at the rally for the ambulance staff in Trafalgar Square on 18th November and took part in the march through central London last Wednesday 6th December.

* I organised a deputation of London Labour MPs to the headquarters of the London Ambulance Service on 28th November, and I have visited several local ambulance stations, including Brixton.

* I have written twice to Kenneth Clarke demanding that he refer the dispute to arbitration.

* I have issued several press statements in support of the ambulance crews, and given many TV and radio interviews.

Despite several recent deaths - including a pensioner killed by an army ambulance - the Government seems determined to drag the dispute on. I hope that the massive public support which the ambulance staff have won might force Kenneth Clarke to back down soon.

2) Health

The campaign against the Government's proposals for the NHS continues. Robin Cook and I delivered 90,000 post-a-protest cards to Kenneth Clarke's offices on 27th November. I have issued press statements on the following health matters:

* A demand that Labour sets up a fair compensation system and overhauls the complaints procedure of the NHS.

- * An exposure of the serious shortfall of intensive care cots for babies.
- * Support for the lobby of Parliament by the Royal College of Midwives.
- * A demand that the Government award compensation to all NHS patients who have contracted AIDS through contaminated blood products, not just haemophiliacs.

I visited Burnley on 8th November and Leicester on 15th November for days of campaigning on the Health Service.

The campaign against the Tories NHS proposals has now started inside Parliament as well. The 2nd reading of the NHS and Community Care concluded on 11th December. I shall be leading for Labour in the Committee stage of the Bill, which will probably last until Easter. In our Parliamentary campaign, we will be stressing the following six points:

- * Any decision on whether a local hospital should opt out must be made subject to a ballot of the local people it serves.
- * Patients must have the right of access to the hospital of their choice and GPs must retain the right to refer patients to any consultant of their choice.
- * GPs must have the right to prescribe the drugs their patients need without cash limit.
- * All contracts negotiated with hospitals by health authorities or GPs must be designed to protect quality and not just to promote competition on cost.
- * Funds supplied to local authorities expenditure on care in the community must be through a specific ring-fenced grant dedicated to community care.
- * Elderly and disabled people in local authority homes should have the same right of access to benefits as those in private residential care. The NHS Bill will be the first to have its proceedings televised, and therefore it is vital that Labour makes a powerful impact so that we can strengthen the campaign against the health service proposals.

I shall also be leading in the Committee stage of the Embryo Bill, which will start in Easter and finish in the summer. I shall be strongly supporting the clause in the bill which will allow research into the prevention of serious handicap and will help more people with infertility problems to have children. I shall oppose any attempt to use the Bill as a way of restricting abortion rights.

3) Housing Action Trusts

I have published a report based on the Parliamentary answers I have received to my questions about the plans for HATs on the North Peckham and Gloucester Grove estates. This report shows clearly that despite all the recent soothing words of the Housing Minister, Michael Howard, the Government has still not given any firm guarantees to tenants about their rents and security under a

HAT. I have argued that the real aim of the Government behind the HAT is to develop luxury housing in Peckham for those working in the City and the West End. A few hours after the publication of my report, Michael Howard phoned me to request a meeting to discuss his so-called assurances. I have agreed to meet him on 20th December. I shall also be meeting tenants and local authority leaders, including the Leader of Southwark, to discuss the campaign against the HAT proposals.

I have recently had discussions with some TA representatives from North Peckham and I have also visited the new offices of the North Peckham Project team. I have been pleased to find that not many people have been taken in by the Government.

4) Casework

I am pleased to report that I am dealing with my constituency caseload effectively at present. Generally, constituents who visit my surgery can expect a letter from me within a week, whilst those who write or telephone can expect to hear from me within a fortnight. I held a special surgery in Faraday Ward on 2nd December.

The vast majority of my cases are on housing, DSS or immigration problems. Though the Government changed the immigration rules in January of this year, giving much more power to immigration officers, I have had some success recently in preventing three deportations. This shows that if a case is argued effectively, an MP can still have some influence. I also won a payment of nearly £2000 for a constituent whose DSS claims had been handled with total incompetence and negligence.

I would like to thank Alan Lewis (St.Giles Ward) for his help in my House of Commons office over the last month.

5) Education

Visits by children from Peckham Schools to Westminster continue. So far, I have arranged visits for Warwick Park, Walworth, Michael Faraday, Brunswick Park Junior, St Josephs, and John Donne School. I have also recently visited St Francis, Warwick Park, and Haberdashers Aske for meetings with pupils and staff.

I wrote to Sir Peter Imbert, the Head of the Metropolitan Police, to protest about plans to re-route a march on 16th November from Camberwell to central London by students protesting at the Government plans for loans. The Police eventually agreed to allow the march on the original route.

6) Local Visits

Apart from schools, my local visits recently have included the following:

- * South-East Training, which provides courses for young people on the ET scheme. I am very concerned that these trainees are not being given the skills they need through the present schemes, nor are they being given the financial and social support. My fears were confirmed by this visit, and, as a result, I have asked a number of Parliamentary questions about training. I shall be producing a report on the Deptford Skills Centre in the New Year.

- * AGM of the Southwark Police Consultative Committee

- * Southwark Trades Council, where I spoke in support of the ambulance staff.

- * British Incurables Home and Hospital

- * Ammon Lodge and Corbet Lodge, both residential homes for the elderly.

- * AGM of Peckham against the Rail Link (PEARL)

- * Staff at Kings College Hospital in Denmark Hill

7) Miscellaneous

- * I had a useful meeting with local representatives of the Tidy Britain Group. We discussed a number of initiatives for improving the cleanliness of the Southwark and I am now following these up through Parliamentary questions and liason with the Police and the Public Protection Department of the Council.

- * I issued a press statement supporting the call for a Dog Registration scheme, following a vicious attack by a pit bull terrier on three Peckham shoppers.

- * I attended the annual Conference of Tribune on 25th November and took part in the workshop on Women and Politics.

- * I have publically attacked plans by the Sanctuary-Spiral Housing Association to increase their rents by over 70%.

May I take this opportunity to wish you all a very peaceful and enjoyable Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Harriet Harman

19.12.89

EXTRACT FROM

HANSARD

9 - NOV. '89

6.49 pm

Ms. Harriet Harman (Peckham): The Secretary of State commented on how many Labour Members were in the House when he spoke tonight. They are here because they had hoped to hear something from him tonight which showed that we could look forward to the resolution of the dispute. We have heard nothing of that tonight. Those Labour Members who are present tonight are reflecting the high level of public concern in their constituencies that there should be an urgent resolution to the dispute.

The situation is serious. The Army and police vehicles and the voluntary ambulances cannot cope adequately with accidents and emergencies. To expect them to do so is unfair on ambulance crews who want to work and who have been prevented from doing so, and it is unfair on the police and the Army, who are put in the front line of a situation which is not of their making and with which they know that they cannot cope.

The Government have been right in the past to praise the ambulance service, particularly when ambulance officers and crews have risked their lives to save others. But when it comes to a pay award, they are offered less than the rate of inflation. They are offered a pay award that would let them see their standard of living slide, and that is wrong; that would see a widening gap between their pay and the pay of the other emergency services—the police and the fire service—with whom they have to work as a team.

The dispute need never have happened. It should never have happened. Having created the dispute, the Government are now making things worse every day and every hour.

The Secretary of State has insulted the ambulance crews that have been praised in the past by accusing them of posturing and pretending. He has twisted the facts, saying the unions first accepted the pay offer when it is clear the pay offer was twice refused on a ballot of all the membership. He said again and again in the House tonight that the union is on strike. The ambulance crews are not on strike; they have been suspended. Is he so out of touch with what is happening outside the House that he has not seen today the London ambulance service vehicles taking ambulance calls with signs on the side saying, "Suspended but still working"? Those ambulance crews want to work, but they are being prevented from doing so. The ambulance crews are rightly concerned about the pay offer, not just as a matter of justice for themselves, but because they rightly have long-term fears for the future of the service.

As my hon. Friend the Member for Newham, South (Mr. Spearing) said, ambulance crews are voting with their feet and leaving the ambulance service. The fact that the London ambulance service, like other ambulance services, is understaffed contributes to the fact that only half our ambulance services meet the Government guidelines for getting to accidents and emergencies on time. The Surrey

[Ms. Harriet Harman]

ambulance service, which serves the constituency of the Minister for Health, does not meet the Government target for getting to accidents and emergencies on time.

The Secretary of State talked of bonds of common humanity. I hope that he will listen to the case of Mavis Thomas, whose sister came to see me in my surgery. Mavis Thomas, aged 17, had an asthma attack and an ambulance was called. The London ambulance service told me that no vehicles were available at the nearest three ambulance stations. It took half an hour for the nearest ambulance to arrive, and by the time Mavis Thomas reached hospital it was too late to resuscitate her and she died. Understaffing has contributed to the situation where the service cannot provide the ambulance service that we all want to see.

If the Secretary of State had talked to ambulance crews, he would know, as we do, that they do not want to be prevented from working. He would know, as we do, that they do not want to be in an industrial dispute. They do not want to be in political controversy. They want to do their job, and it is that job that the public want them to do. The Government are gambling with people's lives, both currently and in the future. They must agree to arbitration.

The Secretary of State has offered no hope of a solution tonight. The House must vote for arbitration to replace confrontation. If we do, the dispute could be ended tonight.

6.54 pm