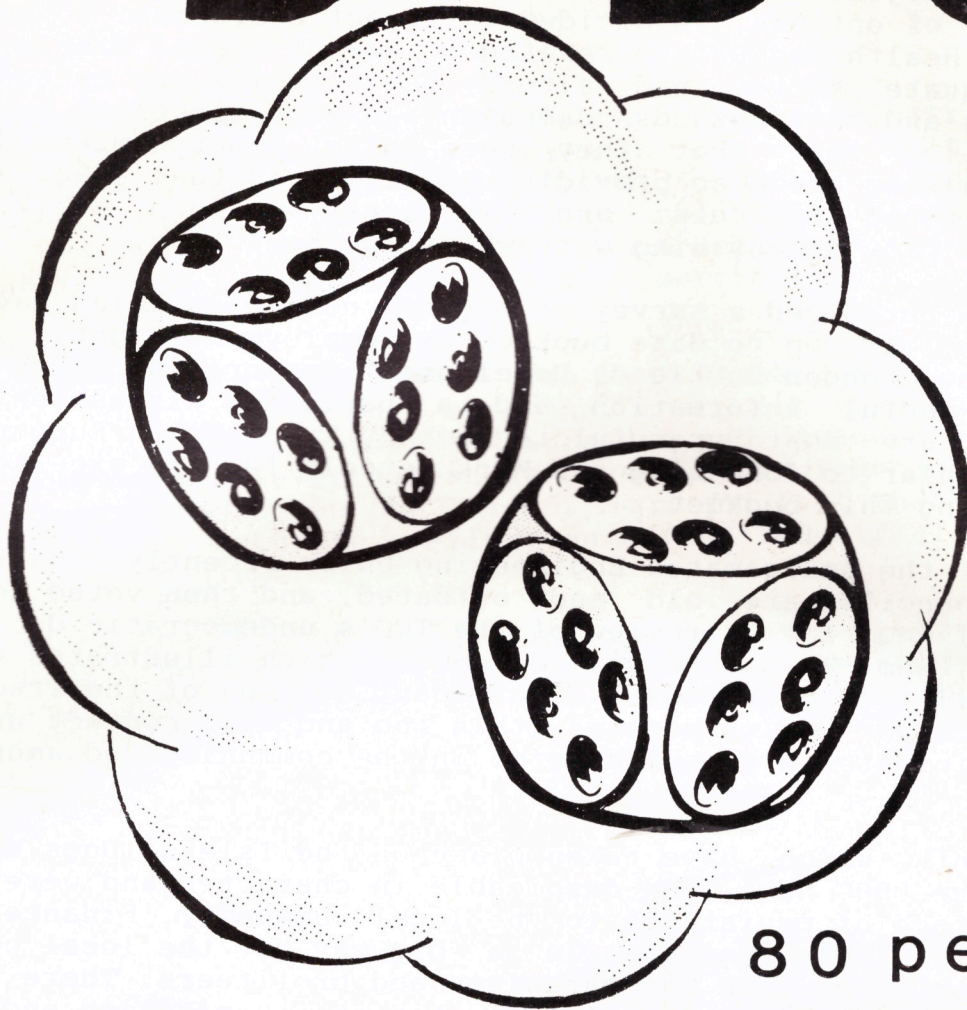


LoaDedDiCe



80 pence

A TRADE UNION LOOK AT
THE LONDON DOCKLANDS
DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION
(LDDC)

By
Tower Hamlets Trades
Union Council

INTRODUCTION

Having received a grant from the Isle of Dogs Neighbourhood Committee to spend on a project to be of benefit to residents of the area we were given a number of options. We decided to reject a proposal to carry out a survey on Health and Safety related to use of Visual Display Unit's since an adequate survey had already been carried out by the Trades Union Congress and the 'Hazards' campaign had also spoken at one of our open meetings on work that they were doing. Tower Hamlets Advanced Technology Training are also providing a service in that area, although severely threatened by cuts, and the money we had available was insufficient to provide anything worthwhile in the future.

Instead we have produced a survey of the new companies which have moved into the area, an up to date booklet on 'Employment Rights' and this booklet on the London Docklands Development Corporation which we hope will provide useful information and a basis for discussion amongst residents. We are most grateful to Hackney Trade Union Support Unit, and in particular to John Lang and Mark Metcalf for the excellent work done on producing this booklet.

Gavin Laird of the Amalgamated Engineering Union recently remarked that the Trades Councils are old and outdated, and then voted against a resolution calling for a review of the TUC's undemocratic decision to cut funds to them. He was heavily defeated, which illustrates the role we play is still recognised by a significant section of the Trade Union movement. We hope you recognise this too and will contact us if you wish to participate in the work we do in the community and amongst the Trade Unions.

The developments which have taken place on the Isle of Dogs under the auspices of the LDDC have been despicable in character and were carried out in the face of resistance to the local community. Finance capital has moved into Tower Hamlets in a big way but the local community receives not a penny from the parasites and profiteers. There are some who say that the working class locally has no organisation and no will to fight back. We have every intention of proving them wrong!

Comradely, Phil Edwards. (Secretary of Tower Hamlets Union Council)

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We would like to thank all those who have helped with this publication and in particular Penny from the Docklands Forum.

John Lang.

Mark Metcalf.

COMPANIES ON THE ISLE OF DOGS

INTRODUCTION

A drive around the Isle of Dogs quickly reveals the industrial make-up of the area. It is dominated by large, in some cases multi-national, companies such as GEC, Tate and Lyle, Midland Bank, Abbey National, Taylor Woodrow, Guardian Newspapers and the Daily Telegraph. On the fringes of the main industries and construction sites there are a (very) few traditional firms such as timber merchants John Lenanton and Son Limited.

It was impossible, in the short time that we had, for Tower Hamlets Trades Union Council to do much more than carry out a random survey of the profits, pay (of directors and workers) and dividend payouts of a number of companies. Nevertheless we have analysed the accounts of 23 companies who are trading on the Isle of Dogs and feel that the results are, generally, an accurate reflection of the industrial and private sector base of the region.

If any worker on the Isle of Dogs would like us to analyse the accounts of the company they work for, then please do not hesitate to contact us. Similarly, anyone wanting to ask questions and find out more information on any of the companies we have examined should contact us immediately.



The Isle of Dogs skyline is dominated by the skyscraper built by Olympia and York at Canary Wharf. Part of the building is rented by the Daily Telegraph, who made profits of £38,500,000 in 1990.



All 4 major banks, Midland, Nat West, Barclays and Lloyds have opened new, expensive offices on the Isle of Dogs. Average pay in the Midland Bank in 1990 was £17,000 a year. The highest paid director got £429,000.

Profits, dividends, pay

COMPANY.(financial year end.)	PROFIT BEFORE TAX.	DIVIDENDS TO SHAREHOLDERS	HIGHEST PAID DIRECTOR.	AVERAGE PAY.
	£000,000	£000,000	£000	£000.
NAT WEST PLC.12/90	504	284	498	21
MIDLAND BANK PLC.12/90	63	70	429	17
BARCLAYS BANK PLC.12/90	760	335	553	14.5
LLOYDS BANK PLC.12/90	591	190	331	18
ABBEY NATIONAL PLC.12/90	582	125	189	11.7
DAILY TELEGRAPH12/90	38.5	28	188	26
GEC PLC. 3/90	872	683	365	13
BALFOUR BEATTY12/90	36	4.2	141	15.5
GROUP.				
TATE AND LYLE 12/90	210	48	568	12.6
THAMES WATER PLC.3/90	179	39	157	16.7
SEACON HOLDINGS PLC.9/90	1.6	1.2	137	17
PURA FOODS LIMITED.9/89	(3.8) loss	0	33	15
JOHN LENANTON AND SON LTD.4/89.	(0.1) loss	0.1	47	11.7
METRO RADIO TAXI'S.3/90	(0.1) loss	0	16	10.6
DUCAL LIMITED.9/89	2.1	0	117	8.8
THOMAS TELFORD LTD.12/89	1.9	3	0	unavailable
TUBULAR BARRIERS LTD.7/90	0.3	0	0	21
TUBULAR EDGINGTON.7/90	0.5	0	71	13
(parent company of Tubular Barriers)				
R.W. BOWMAN. 3/90	0.6	0	35	unavailable
DOCKLANDS LIGHT3/90	0.3	0	116	17
RAILWAY.				
D.C.GARDNER PLC. 12/90	2	1	112	21
OCTAVIUS ATKINSON &12/89	2	0	42	14
SONS. (parent company is Taylor Woodrow PLC.				
NORTHERN & SHELL PLC.12/90	1	0.1	100	15



The workers at the Tate and Lyle factory on the Island are part of a massive multi-national company which during the year ending ending December 1990 had sales of £3,431 million, profit before tax of £210 million, a payout of £48.3 million to shareholders and a highest paid director, Neil Shaw, being paid £568,000 or £10,923 a week. Meanwhile average pay for the 16,670 workers was £16,022 per year.

Isle of Dogs Companies

During the year ended September 30th 1990 Seacon Holdings PLC had sales of £17.3 million, profits before tax of £1,583,000 and paid out a huge £1,614,000 to its shareholders, money which could have been used to improve wages or increase investment to secure the long term future of the company.

The Chair of the company, C Roth was paid a salary of £136,000 and obtained £168,000 in dividends from his shares. Meanwhile average wages in this shipbrokers and freight contractors company was £17,215 & profit per employee was £13,460.

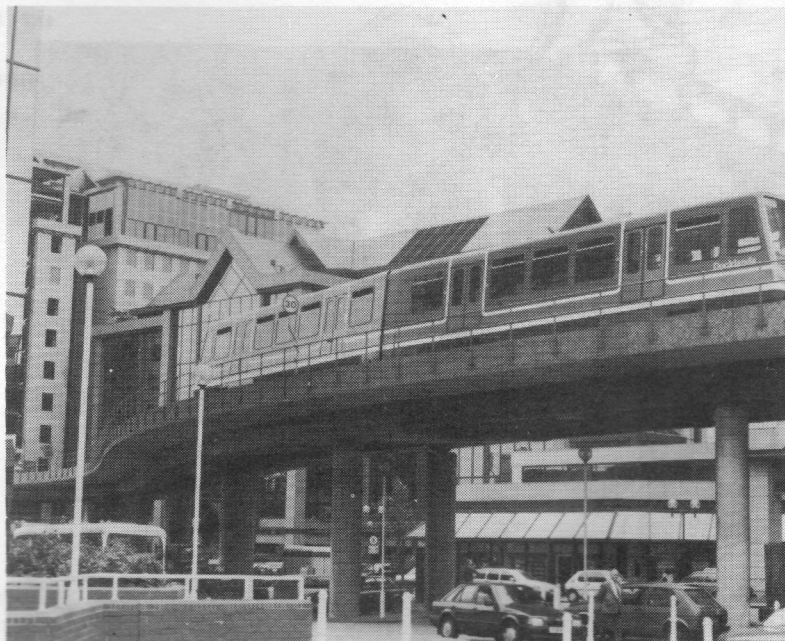


In the year ending March 31st 1990 Thames Water PLC had sales of £611 million and a profit before tax of £179 million. (a return of 29%) The payout in dividends to shareholders totalled £38 million.

Following privatisation the highest paid director has seen his wage jump from £41,000 to £157,000. Average wages for Thames Waters 7,790 workers was £16,736, but meanwhile the profit made by every one of them for the company was a huge £23,003 a year.

In the year up to March 31st 1990 the Docklands Light Railway (DLR) accounts show profits of £280,000 before tax. In fact the company made a loss of over £5,000,000 but was rescued by a London Regional Transport (LRT) grant of £5,700,000.

The total amount paid to directors rose by 303% to £399,000. The highest paid, BMD Ripley, was paid £51,000 by the DLR and £65,000 by LRT, a total of £116,000 or £2,230 a week. Meanwhile average wages were £16,813 or £323 a week.



Doing OK... directors pay

COMPANY.	TOTAL WAGES TO DIRECTORS. £000's	HIGHEST PAID. £000's.
Nat West	3,800	489
Midland Bank	2,600	429
Barclays Bank	3,700	533
Lloyds Bank	2,500	331
Abbey National	1,080	192
Daily Telegraph	1,183	188
GEC	3,000	365
Balfour Beatty	979	141
Tate and Lyle	2,900	568
Thames Water	497	144
Seacon Holdings	378	137
Pura Foods	234	33
John Lenanton and Son	152	47
Metro Radio Taxis	35	16
Ducal limited	438	117
Thomas Telford	0	0
Tubular Edgington	396	71
R.W. Bowman	157	35
Docklands Light Railway	399	99
D.C. Gardner	694	112
Octavius Atkinson	281	42
Northern & Shell	316	100



Despite a loss by Lenanton of £83,000 in the year up to April 30th 1989 the amount paid to the directors rose by 36% to £152,000 and the highest paid director saw his wage jump by 12% to £904 a week.

THE TOP FOUR PAID DIRECTORS IN COMPANIES WHO TRADE ON THE ISLE OF DOGS.

Director/company	Wage	Amount in dividends from shareholdings.	Total.
Conrad Black, Daily Telegraph	£127,000	£5,794,000	£5,921,000
Simon Weinstock, GEC	unknown	£2,899,897	£2,899,897
Lord Weinstock, GEC	£365,000	£814,000	£1,179,000
Neil Shaw, Tate and Lyle	£568,000	£220,000	£788,000



Conrad Black, chair of the Daily Telegraph was paid £127,000 in wages but also obtained £5,794,000 from his 106 million ordinary shares. Profit per employee at the Telegraph was £38,000 in 1990.

Tories and the Isle of Dogs

COMPANIES ON THE ISLE OF DOGS WHO HELPED FINANCE THE TORIES 1987 ELECTION CAMPAIGN.

Company.	Amount to Tories in 1987.
Lloyds Bank	£5,600
Nat West Bank	£9,260
GEC	£50,000
Tate and Lyle	£2,500
Tarmac	£30,000
Taylor Woodrow	£78,500
TOTAL	£175,660



EX-CABINET MINISTERS WHO ARE NOW DIRECTORS OF COMPANIES TRADING ON THE ISLE OF DOGS.

Ex-minister	Company of which s/he is director.
Lord Carrington.	Barclays Bank PLC. Daily Telegraph PLC.
Nigel Lawson.	Barclays Bank PLC.
James Prior.	GEC PLC.
Peter Walker.	British Gas PLC. Tate and Lyle PLC. D.C.Gardner PLC.
Baroness Young.	National Westminster PLC.

POLITICAL HONOURS - DIRECTORS OF COMPANIES WHO ARE TRADING ON ISLE OF DOGS WHO WERE AWARDED HONOURS BY MARGARET THATCHER 1980 - 1990.

Name/honour	Company	Donations to Tories 1980 - 1990. £000's.
Lord Weinstock. (peerage)	GEC PLC	100
Robert Clayton. (knighthood)	GEC PLC	100
Robert Davidson. (knighthood)	GEC PLC	100
Robert Haslam. (knighthood)	Tate & Lyle	210
Eric Pountain. (knighthood)	Tarmac	279
Frank Gibb. (knighthood)	Taylor Woodrow	622

DIFFERENT MONKEY SAME TUNES



Source's of information - Labour Research Magazine's, August 1990, October 1990, December 1990, May 1991, June 1991 and July 1991.

URBAN DEVELOPMENT CORPORATIONS (UDC'S)

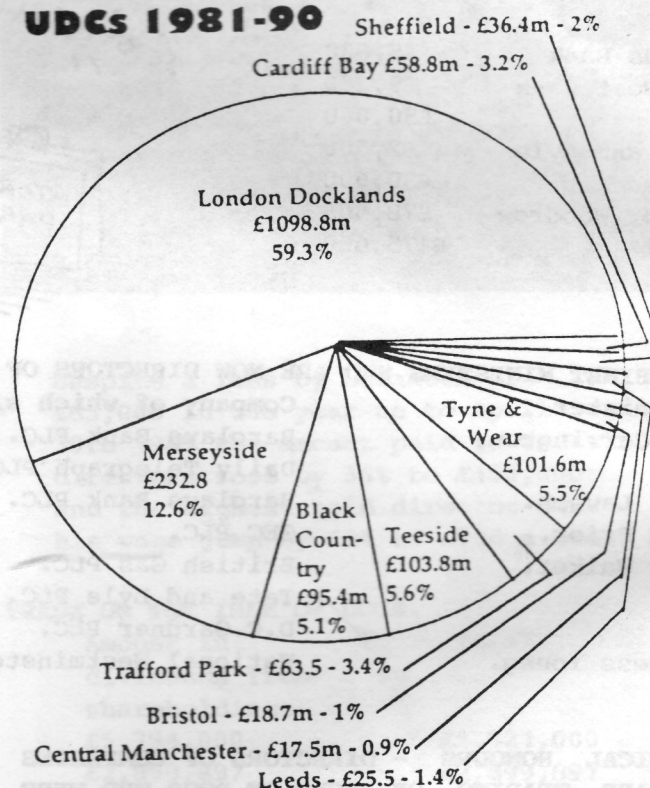
In 1980 powers were given to the then Secretary of State, Michael Heseltine, under the Local Government Planning and Land Act, to establish Urban Development Corporations (UDC's). The following year, Merseyside and the LDDC were the first of 11 UDC's to be started.

UDC's were the Governments answer for dealing with inner city regeneration and the LDDC was to be the flagship which would show that a market led and property development approach could solve the problems of the inner cities.

According to the Act, "if the Secretary of State is of the opinion that it is expedient in the national interest, he may by order made by statutory instrument, designate any area of land as an urban development area".

UDC's were supposed to "secure the regeneration of its area"....."by bringing land and buildings into effective use, encouraging the development of existing and new industry and commerce and creating an attractive environment and ensuring that housing and social facilities are available to encourage people to live and work in the area".

Urban Development Corporations - Grant-in-aid to UDCs 1981-90



The Secretary of State took away planning control from the elected local authorities and gave it to the boards of the UDC's, which he himself appointed. In the case of the LDDC the people appointed to the chair have always been connected with major property companies. For example, the chair between 1984 and 1988 was Christopher Benson from the Metropolitan Estate Property Corporation. A token local councillor, serving only as an individual has usually been invited on to the board. As has already been stated the board is only accountable to the Secretary of State and not to the local electorate. UDC's are not covered by the 1985 Local Government Access to Information Act which requires local authorities to open up files and records to the public.

With such far reaching powers, any plans for the areas which have been drawn up by the local authorities or communities have in general been swept aside and consultations have been practically non-existent. Decisions have been politically manipulated with the Secretary of State overturning decisions made by Inspectors who had refused planning permission for certain developments put forward by the LDDC.

THE TORIES, LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND THE LDDC

Since winning the 1979 Election the Tories have used a market led approach to the economy which has resulted in, 2 major recessions and misery for many people. This same approach has been applied to the attempted regeneration of Londons Docklands.

The Governments obsession with market forces and the private sector has wasted millions of pounds of public money. Where we once had state assets being run by the Government and to some degree accountable to the electorate, we now find these assets in the hands of the private sector and accountable only to a few individuals and some shareholders.

To offset this criticism (as well as to pay for the continuing economic crisis) the Government has tried to portray the country as a "nation of shareholders" by selling off state industries at knockdown prices. In reality, many, mainly middle class people made a quick profit and the shares ended up in the hands of large institutions.

Time and again, with the aid of expensive advertising campaigns and large financial concessions or "sweeteners", we have witnessed the selling off of state assets such as gas, water, electricity and telecommunications to the private sector.



The Tories have sold many publicly owned enterprises, at knockdown prices, to their friends in private industry.

All of this has led to a huge increase in the cost of these services and an increase in the directors salaries.

The same obsession with the private sector has been seen in the London Docklands. The "market" was supposed to be the answer to the regeneration of the docklands and other inner city areas. To achieve this the Government set up organisations whose members were appointed by, and whose actions were accountable to, the Secretary of State.

In the case of the London Docklands, the organisation which was set up was the London Docklands Development Corporation (LDDC) and at its outset in 1981 the Secretary of State appointed Nigel Brookes, Chairman of Trafalgar House PLC, as chairperson of the LDDC. Trafalgar House was one of the largest contributors to the Tory Party during the 1987 election campaign, giving £40,000.

Trafalgar House
— PUBLIC LIMITED COMPANY —

The chair of Trafalgar House PLC, Nigel Brookes, was appointed by the then Secretary of State, Michael Heseltine as first chairperson of the LDDC in 1981. At the 1987 General Election Trafalgar House PLC gave the Tories a £40,000 donation.

During a decade in which local government has come under increasing attack from the Tory Government, the LDDC has been given unfettered powers to carry out its role. Ironically much of the legislation enacted against local government has been carried out in the name of "choice" and "accountability." The powers that have been given to the LDDC has ensured that choice and accountability are things that local people in the Docklands have seen very little of.

Local authorities have endured, amongst other things, having their rate support grant slashed, rate capping, their housing stock dwindle due to the right to buy and the restrictions by the Government on the building of new houses/flats, services having to be put out to competitive tender and the lose of millions of pounds through having to implement the poll tax. Because the local authorities have refused to fight the Government then all of this has led to major cuts in jobs and services.



There have been major reductions in Local Government jobs and services during the period that the Tories have been in Government. Monies acquired through the sale of public enterprises have been used to pay for tax cuts for the rich rather than the facilities working class people need.

Meanwhile the Government backed LDDC has gone on unabated, with huge amounts of land belonging to local authorities and communities being given to them, massive concessions being given to firms to come to the Docklands and thousands of jobs and homes being forsaken at the alter of market forces. The hypocrisy of this Government's political disdain for local democracy has been that whilst developing organisations such as the LDDC they abolished the Greater London Council in 1986.

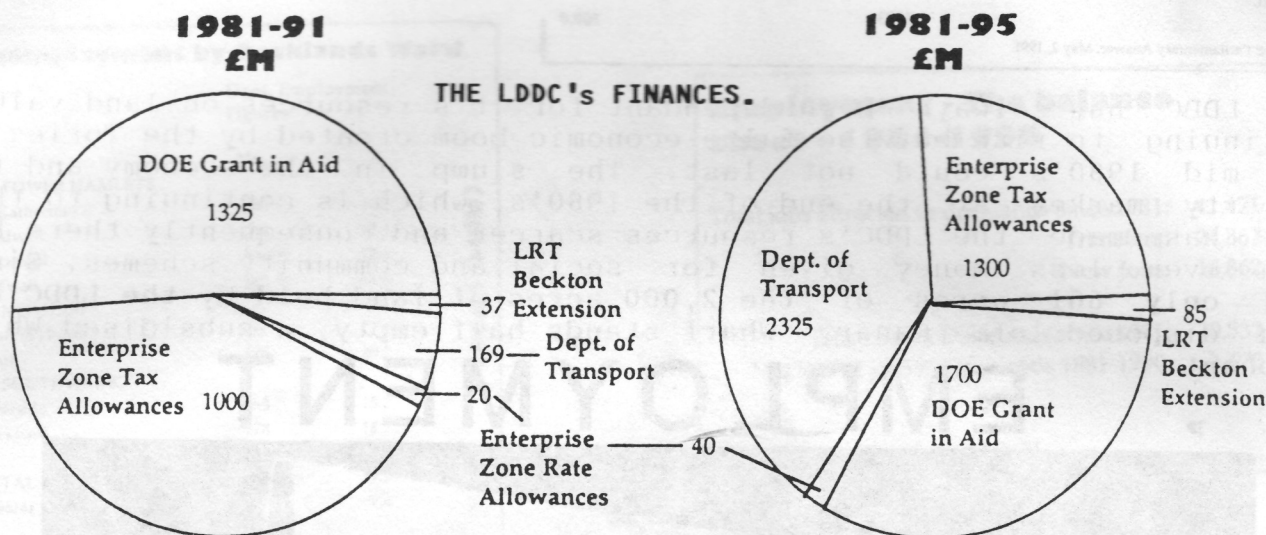
To increase the profits of big business there has been a concerted attempt to drive down the wages and conditions of the workforce. To achieve this, the main plank of the Government's policy has been to attack organised workers within the trade union movement. Legislation has been used in an attempt to weaken the unions and over the past decade we have witnessed many unions backing away from confrontation as the law has been used to threaten them with financial ruin. The move to Docklands has been used as an excuse by many firms to shed jobs, worsen conditions and de-recognise trade unions.

A WASTE OF MONEY

Financing the LDDC

The LDDC officially came into being on July 2nd 1981. It was one of the 11 Urban Development Corporations (UDC's) that were set up in England and Wales between 1981 and 1991. During this period the LDDC, despite being only the fourth largest UDC in terms of area covered, actually received the most funding, being given £1.3 billion out of the total of £2.3 billion awarded to all the UDC's.

On top of the £1.3 billion, the LDDC also received monies from the Department of Transport for road building and was also granted tax allowances and rates relief through the Enterprise Zone at the Isle of Dogs Area within the LDDC. (Only 3 other UDC's have Enterprise Zones). The estimated figure for tax allowances in the LDDC Enterprise Zone between 1981 and 1991 was £1,000 million.



Sources: Parliamentary Answers April 29th 1991; LDDC Corporate Plan 1991; Department of Transport estimates of costs of DTP roads and Jubilee Line (£1.3 Billion).

In total it is estimated that over the period 1981 to 1991 the LDDC received £2.5 billion from public sector funding. Taxes from workers have been used to keep the private sector "flagship" afloat. This misuse of public money is continuing today with the LDDC "hammering through a new £240 million eight-lane tunnelled highway, the famous Limehouse Link. The link is the golden road to Canary Wharf, the most expensive thoroughfare in Europe at a cost of £3,443 an inch." (Guardian newspaper 11/9/91)



The Docklands Cake - How it was allocated

LDDC Expenditure 1981-90

	£M	%
Staff salaries and admin	136	10.2
Environmental	72	5.4
Land Acquisition	155	11.6
Land Reclamation	113	8.5
Utilities	142	10.6
Roads	344	25.8
Industry/community support	65	4.9
Housing	147	11.0
DLR	158	11.8
Promotion/Publicity	3	0.2
TOTAL	1335	100.0
LDDC Income 1981-90		
Sales of Land and Property	275	19.7
Grant in Aid	1101	79.0
Other Income	18	1.3
TOTAL	1393	100.0

Source: Parliamentary Answer, May 2, 1991

As more and more money has been "thrown" at the private sector, the local communities and authorities have been left the crumbs. Since 1981 just 5% of the total LDDC expenditure has been spent on, in the words of the LDDC, "community and industry support". This compares to over 20% being spent on land acquisition through compulsory purchase and vesting which has caused much grief to the local people.

The LDDC has always been dependant for it's resources on land values continuing to rise but the false economic boom created by the Tories in the mid 1980's could not last. The slump in the economy and the property market at the end of the 1980's, which is continuing to this day, has made the LDDC's resources scarcer and consequently there has been even less money given for social and community schemes. Since 1981 only 661 acres of the 2,000 acres of land held by the LDDC has been disposed of. Canary Wharf stands half empty, a subsidised White Elephant.

EMPLOYMENT



The move to Docklands offered companies cheap rates and tax allowances and also gave them the opportunity to erode working conditions. For example, using new technology as an excuse, Rupert Murdoch's News International instigated an industrial dispute when it published it's papers from a plant at Wapping. They did this with the use of a scab workforce and massive police support, at the expense of the original 5,500 workers. After 1 year on strike the dispute was eventually lost.

With other publishers watching Murdochs tactics and the unions fearful of further battles other national newspapers moved into Docklands and thousands of jobs were lost. Workers in an industry which had been one of the strongest in the country have found themselves with conditons that have continued to be eroded and in some cases the union has actually been de-recognised.

The Tory ideology of weakening the unions, thus destroying jobs and conditions, so as to increase profits is highlighted by the experience of the London print industry. Newspaper firms continue to show their gratitude to the Tory Government with unwavering support.

The LDDC stated that by attracting firms using massive subsidies, jobs would eventually become available for local people. This was based on the Tory economic theory of giving more money to the rich so that there would be a "trickle down" effect to the poor. By targeting the floorspace it had to offer instead of the skills and needs of the local workers, there has actually been an rise in unemployment in the area.

Unemployment by Docklands Ward

Ward	Dept. Employment Figures	
	No.	%
LB TOWER HAMLETS		
St. Katherine's	990	19.2
Shadwell	708	18.3
Blackwall	398	14.4
Millwall	987	18.6
LB NEWHAM		
Custom House	896	17.6
South	870	20.7
LB SOUTHWARK		
Riverside	563	15.2
Dockyard	778	18.9
TOTAL	6190	17.2
Greater London	309300	7.4

(April 1991)

Source: Department of Employment, and The Unemployment Unit.

Employment - The balance sheet - 1981-1990

Total jobs attracted to docklands since 1981: 41,421
 Transfers: 24,862
 New Jobs: 16,862

Jobs Lost in Docklands since 1981: 20,532
 Net loss of jobs in Docklands 1981-1990: -3,670

Source: Parliamentary Answer 8/5/91

Much of the rise in unemployment in the area has been due to the failure of the LDDC to support the industry that existed in the area prior to 1981. In 1981 firms in docklands provided 27,000 jobs. By 1990 only 12,000 of these jobs remained. Public money has been used to compulsory purchase the land where firms stood or to relocate them. The Government's own figures, published in April 1989, showed that of the 148 firms that had been re-located, only 6 were relocated in Docklands.



Virtually all of the firms which were based on the Docklands prior to the arrival of the LDDC in 1981 have either closed or been re-located elsewhere. Such firms tended to employ more local people.

Most firms that moved into the Docklands brought staff with them, over 60% of the workforce was straight transfers. A 1989 survey of 12 major firms on the Isle of Dogs revealed that only 3% of their workforce were resident in the area. Due to the total mismatch of jobs, skills and a lack of training provision, local people have found themselves left out in the cold or in very low paid unskilled employment.

Despite the financial clout that the LDDC has in the way of incentives for firms, they have failed to carry out any strategy which would ensure firms would have to guarantee employment or training for local people in return for these incentives. Sadly more local firms and jobs are being destroyed as the LDDC buys more land to continue it's transport policy which has made life a misery for local people.



Ironically as local firms are destroyed, many new units remain un-let due to the property market collapse and yet within the Enterprise Zone (EZ) building work is continuing unabated. This is despite the fact that there are many units in the EZ that have closed and remain empty.

INTERVIEWS

1. PENNY AND BEN OF DOCKLANDS FORUM.

'WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT WHAT HAS HAPPENED ON THE ISLE OF DOGS IN THE LAST 10 YEARS?'

"There has been a complete change around in the nature of the island, large vacant spaces have been filled up by a range of buildings from low rise warehousing to formidably high office blocks, whilst close to the older residential areas we have seen new high price housing built."

"There is still an established community and they expected that the vacant docks land would be used to address some of their needs and plans to this effect were drawn up back in 1974, which included, improved housing, community provision, transport and infrastructure."

"When the LDDC came along it was seen in terms of stealing the land, hence in 1985 residents from Surrey Docks wrote the song, 'Give us back our land.' Parliament was used to put through vesting orders and gave away 600 to 700 acres of land in one go to the LDDC."

"The main change with the LDDC was the taking away of control by the local authorities, they also exacerbated the decline of local companies, some of which were going into decline anyway, but because of the LDDC it made them decline faster as they found that the land on which they were sited was worth more than the firm itself."

"People lived on the island because they worked on it, recent policies have developed employment in the office and service sector and have drawn on a broader labour market, at the same time examples like News International show that the Docklands was used to change working practices. Companies in moving to the Docklands have shed labour."

"Docklands is a good example of what has generally happened in Britain, heavy industry has been run down with the office and service sector taking over. The LDDC quickened the process, it even shut some of the remaining sea based industries with the land going for expensive housing."

"The LDDC simply put Compulsory Purchase Orders on the land and forced the firms to close. They have also tried to bring in a new population, they have tried to change the people rather than the opportunities."

'WHAT TYPES OF JOBS HAVE LOCAL PEOPLE MANAGED TO GET?'

"Most firms brought staff with them, new jobs are mainly in catering and cleaning. Often the workers aren't on the books, the money is rubbish. Locals don't see themselves as working in the area, they have seen their brothers go round looking for building work, no-one I know has managed to get building work. Employers also have a preconception that East End people are troublemakers, that they speak badly."



The first chair of the LDDC was also chairman of Trafalgar House, his firm built the development at Timber Wharves but they couldn't sell it, the LDDC bought it. They bailed their friend out."

"The LDDC's view of re-generation does not include social provision. Their first community liaison officer, John Wesley Fenner, had previously been a East African missionary! The community is seen in terms of 'why can't these bloody people get out of the way.'"

"It's the same with housing as whilst 17,000 new homes have been built, 85% are private and on the Isle of Dogs and Wapping its 100% Over 20% are empty and the developers are trying to get the LDDC to buy them and then sell them to housing associations. No council houses have been built."

Bonus for Trafalgar House plc

AT LEAST 500 families were moved to build the road to Canary Wharf, the 'Limehouse link'.

Over three hundred of them were moved to the Timber Wharves Estate which was bought "off the peg" from Ideal Homes, part of the Trafalgar House Group, which has many connections with the Tory party and whose ex-director Nigel Broackes was at one time head

of the London Docklands Development Corporation (LDDC).

The estate was part of the speculative building boom in docklands which was encouraged by the LDDC. When the bubble burst and the recession struck, the estate became unsaleable and Ideal Homes was stuck with it - until the tenants were railroaded in and forced to pick up the tab.

'WHAT STRUGGLES HAVE TAKEN PLACE AGAINST THE LDDC?'

"Trade union involvement in local people's struggles has been minimal, the fights have been mainly over land use with one of the first being around the airport and the devising of an alternative scheme. Working with the GLC local people got together and drew up the Peoples Plan for the Royal Docks, a very early initiative of popular planning which got presented at the Public Enquiry into the airport back in 1984."

"SPLASH (South Poplar and Limehouse Action for Secure Housing is fighting against pollution, the road and they also want community facilities including 7 old blocks, which were given to the LDDC free of charge, put back into use to reduce housing overcrowding. They are looking to set up their own nursery, training schemes, they are challenging the whole thing, they're saying; 'we know what we want.'"

'WHAT DO YOU THINK MIGHT HAPPEN IN THE FUTURE?'

"I think that the LDDC will continue, even under Labour. It may help them, the LDDC didn't try to win people over to their own exploitation, they should have got Labour councillors on the LDDC board, as they have done on Urban Development Corporations in other parts of the country."

"In 50 years time there will be no local community, it will be like the City of London. Certainly if there is a community it will be a different one with privacy dominating and symbolised by the entry phones, video systems and the private - keep out signs."

"I'm more optimistic, SPLASH is making a fight of things. People are fighting back, at present the LDDC are forced to go to their meetings. However, even if people get community centres and other facilities, what about jobs because without them then there is no future!"

2. A WORKER ON THE ISLE OF DOGS.

"I have worked in the clerical sector of the newspaper industry for 10 years and the firm I work for was one of the first to move from Fleet Street to the Isle of Dogs in 1987. By moving into the Enterprise Zone the firm didn't have to pay rates for the first 3 years. Jobs were lost when we moved and new agreements strengthened the managements hand. As the News International dispute had just finished people were too frightened to put up much resistance to what was being offered."

The first thing I noticed about the new building was that the security was a lot tighter and done by a private firm. The offices themselves were a lot more spacious and open planned, but the surrounding area was practically empty, there was the constant sound of pile driving and building work. From the higher floors you can see the wall that has been built around the Enterprise Zone separating it from the Islands residents.



Interview with worker on Isle of Dogs (continued)

"Unlike in the City where there was so much to do at lunchtimes there was nowhere to go except the pub, the canteen or ASDA. Four years later, there has been only a slight improvement, with the addition of a few banks, building societies and eating places. This is especially a problem for women with families who quite often need to organise their shopping as part of their work.

Canary Wharf is supposed to have some up market shops, but these are obviously aimed at the workers who will occupy the area and not the local community. Our firm is moving into Canary Wharf and is being offered a very good deal to do so, which includes Olympia and York (the owners of Canary Wharf) buying our existing building at South Quay.

The building next to ours, which started going up soon after we moved here, was suddenly stopped and lay empty for over a year before building started again under new owners. It is still not finished and there are lots of empty buildings with 'To Let' signs up in the area.



"I only really see the area when I go to the local swimming pool, the estates are quite run down."

To me a good sign of how much there is in an area can be found in a supermarket, in ASDA the food is quite often reduced in price where the shop has failed to shift it.

The only contact I have with local people is with the cleaners at our place, they are all women varying in age from 21 to 60 and the wages are fairly low. They are all family people who live on the Island or nearby and many of them are the main wage earners.

Union wise, the togetherness of people has gone from when I began in the industry. This is because the closed shop agreement has gone and jobs are advertised outside rather than from a central pool of labour. A different kind of person is encouraged into the firm with individual contracts being the norm and collective bargaining destroyed.

The union is recognised but members are intimidated and won't stand up for themselves or the union. Thus the union committee has few activists although there is still a fairly strong health and safety committee which is one area where we can still have some success."

HEALTH HAZARDS IN TOWER HAMLETS

TOWER HAMLETS OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AUDIT

Tower Hamlets people are all too familiar with the connection between their health and work. The Match Girls Strike in 1888 was partly because of their concern about 'phossy jaw' which affected many of the match making women at Bryant and May in Fairfield Road. In 1983, five clothing workers died in a fire in an unregistered factory in Mile End. Unsafe storage of inflammable materials and lack of means of escape contributed to their deaths.

The sorry history continues to present, for instance with the terrible deaths of the three young men from inhaling fumes in a sewer at Watney Market in September 1990.



A lot is known by experts about specific hazards of particular occupations but it is often not more widely known. For instance few people know that makers of leather products - of whom there are hundreds, if not thousands in Tower Hamlets - have higher death rates than underground coal miners. There is also concern about general working conditions; one study has found that serious industrial accidents in the UK increased by nearly 25% in the 1980's. There is increasing evidence that general working conditions such as pay levels, shift-patterns, amenities also affect health.

Employers too often see health and safety as an additional burden - a cost to be avoided if possible. Enforcement of the law or help with prevention is rare.

Statutory bodies such as the Health and Safety Executive, Factory Inspectorate, Fire Officers and Environmental Health Officers, are under-resourced and often appear unwilling or unable to act on hazards. The chances of the thousands of workplaces in Tower Hamlets being visited by these bodies are minimal.

Though there are specialist agencies like the London Hazards Centre, advice workers and trade unionists often have difficulty finding out about hazards.

Health services, advice and information projects and trade unions have not been as geared up as they could be to investigating and acting on exposures to hazards in workplaces. Medical and dental students and GP's receive little training and support in occupational health.

In this context Tower Hamlets Health Strategy Group (HSG) decided to take an initiative in occupational health. The HSG is an independent group promoting public health in the borough. Tower Hamlets Trades Union Council has supported the project from its beginning. An occupational Health Forum was set up to bring together health and advice workers, trade unionists and other interested parties to discuss the situation and see what might be done.

On behalf of the Forum, the HSG agreed to carry out a survey in GP surgeries of the occupational health characteristics of patients using: Pre-clinical medical and dental students on their 'Community Module' carried out most interviews, Camden Occupational Health Project trained and supervised the interviewers, inputted the data on their computer and analysed it, The Bilingual Health Workers from City and east London FHS, the Royal London Trust and the HSG worked alongside these students and The General Practices - GP's and their staff let the interviews take place in their waiting rooms.

THE AUDIT.

The survey took place over three days (five sessions) in fourteen general practices in Tower Hamlets. About five hundred patients were interviewed. They were asked questions which related to an Occupational Health Record card devised by Camden Occupational Health Project. The questions covered the type of jobs patients had done, work related health problems and what hazards they had been exposed to. They were asked whether they would like any further advice and follow-up. The first 465 records have been analysed.

The sample.

It was always realised that it would be an unrepresentative sample. Although in principle it would be weighted according to other known data, at this stage this has not been done. When the 1991 Census data relating to employment becomes available, this may be worth doing. Data specifically relating to the five Docklands practices used (187 patients) has been extracted.

Occupations of those visiting the doctors.

More than half the sample were accounted for by eight occupations:-

Catering	64
Personal services (nurses, nursery workers, home-helps)	39
Secretaries, VDU workers	30
Clothing, leather, textiles	28
Construction and related	28
Cleaners	23
Drivers	13
Caretakers	13

Over a quarter (27%) of the sample worked in catering, cleaning and personal services. At the time of the 1981 Census the figure was 17.4%, but it is known to have risen since then.



Construction accounted for only 3.5% of the occupations of Tower Hamlets residents in 1981. The 6% in our sample could either reflect the growth in construction jobs or the poor health and safety record of the industry. Clothing workers were probably under-represented in the sample. For the Docklands practices, the concentration was less: 38%. The biggest single group was catering workers.

Place of Work and residence.

Over a third (nearly 27%) of those interviewed said they worked, or had worked most recently, in Tower Hamlets. In 1981 the comparable figure was over 51%. It is known that more Tower Hamlets residents work outside the borough than in the past but responses were not recorded for over a third of our sample. The Docklands figures were similar.

Sex, age and ethnicity.

Women made up 37.8% of the resident workforce in 1981. This survey interviewed more women than men reflecting the attendance at surgeries at the interview times. Over half the sample were in the 20 - 39 age group. Another quarter were over fifty. We wanted to see if information from older workers would be helpful in identifying possible long-term ill-health effects because some symptoms take a long time to appear. More than two-thirds (72%) of the patients said they were from the UK. Information was not recorded for nearly 9% of the sample. No other group made up more than 4% of the sample.

WORK RELATED HEALTH PROBLEMS.

The most common problems reported as occurring presently or in the past were:-

	% current	% past
Stress	29.7	15.7
Backache	25.2	25.8
Headache	20.0	16.3
Joint/muscle pain	17.4	14.6
Breathing difficulties	9.2	0.0

The Docklands results were similar but with present stress recorded among Isle of Dogs patients exceeding 40%. This was strikingly higher than elsewhere.

WORKPLACE EXPOSURES.

The most commonly reported work place exposures were to:

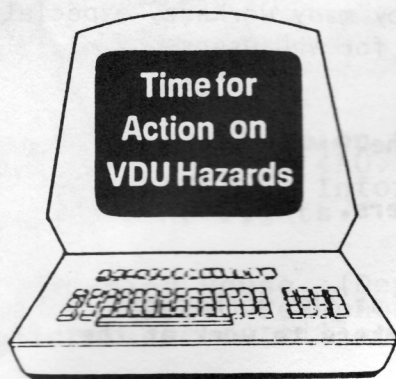
	% current	% past
Chemicals, oils, vapours	25.2	25.2
Lifting	23.2	20.9
Posture	22.6	14.6
Noise	22.2	14.8
Dust	22.2	23.2
Repetition	13.5	8.4

In most cases Docklands residents reported lower levels of specific exposures than the rest of the borough. However 12 of the 39 people reporting problems of violence and harassment at work were from the Isle of Dogs.

Further information.

The overall results show that many patients make a connection between their ill-health and their work. Specific case studies currently being written up demonstrate that they have good reason to make these connections.

This is a preliminary report from the HSG project. A fuller report will be available later this year from: Tower Hamlets Health Strategy Group, Oxford House, Derbyshire Street, London E2.
Telephone:- 071 729 9858.



*VDU WORKERS'
RIGHTS CAMPAIGN*

During conversations about new technology with workers either living and/or working on the Isle of Dogs it became apparent that amongst their concerns were the use of Visual Display Units. (VDU's) In addition a smaller number complained about repetitive work and the injuries resulting from such work. In order to try and assist those workers struggling for better health and safety conditions we reproduce below information on VDU's and stress, VDU's - eye and vision effects and Repetitive Strain injuries.

VDU HAZARDS

EYE AND VISION EFFECTS.

Visual Display Unit's are a serious health hazard. The most commonly reported ill effects of VDU work are those to do with **eye & vision**. Since VDU's were introduced many workers have experienced increased health problems including **eyestrain, burning or sore eyes, irritated eyes, blurred vision, double vision, changes in colour perception, tiredness, nausea, irritability, headaches, migraine & cataracts.**

THE CAUSES ARE:-

1. Eyestrain is muscular fatigue & is caused by the eye muscles doing the same thing for long periods. Eye fatigue can result in many of the symptoms listed above.
2. Flickering of screens & illegibility of characters.
3. Focussing on bright lights for long periods can lead to blurred or double vision & even a temporary change in colour perception.
4. Glare from reflections on the screen can make VDU work even more strenuous to eyes.
5. On older VDU's screen brightness can't be altered & this increases an operators visual burden.
6. It is thought that VDU operators can develop cataracts as a result of being exposed to emitted electromagnetic radiation. For more information ask for the Radiation factsheet.

WHAT SHOULD BE DONE?

All the measures below should be implemented:-

- * VDU work should be limited to a maximum of 4 hours in one working day with hourly breaks of 15 minutes.
- * Anti-glare screens should be either built into or fitted to all VDU's.
- * Window blinds should be installed to avoid reflected glare & over head lighting should not be fluorescent.
- * Contrast & screen brightness must be adjustable to suit the individual operator.
- * The source of cataract problems - radiation - can & should be eliminated.
- * VDU workers should have their eyes tested annually for cataracts.
- * Workers with cataracts should be able to transfer to other work with the same pay & benefits.

WHAT YOU CAN DO? It is likely that only collective bargaining will achieve the above, but in the meantime you can:-

- * Make sure you **take regular breaks away from the VDU** to rest your eyes.
- * Make sure you **have your eyes tested regularly** to look for any visible signs of visual deterioration. Many trade unions have negotiated for 6 monthly eye tests during working time at the employers expense.

JOIN A TRADE UNION.

- * If you are not a trade union member then consider joining one - organisation is your first line of defence. Get others to join. We can help in contacting the relevant trade union & providing recruitment literature. If you are a trade union member, make sure your branch officials know about VDU hazards.

STRESS

Stress is recognised as an occupational disease suffered by many workers, especially those performing repetitive, boring jobs. It is a major problem for VDU users.

WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS?

- * Fatigue. * Irritability & depression. * Headaches & migraine.
- There can be long term consequences as well:-
- * high blood pressure. * Heart problems. * Indigestion & ulcers. * Accidents.

WHAT ARE THE CAUSES?

- * VDU work is socially isolating as it can be done exclusively at the workstation & often involves only keyboarding. It's not unusual for VDU workers to work at the screen for 8 hours a day with only meal breaks.
- * VDU's gives employers the chance to measure workers productivity by recording when it is switched on & off. This control measure can be used for determining wage payments.
- * Employers drive for profits results in them expecting substantial benefits from new VDU's. Jobs are then organised around the equipment & not the human operator.
- * Stress is also the result of visual, muscular & radiation emissions. For details on these see or ask for our other fact sheets.

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

In the short-term you should ensure that you get your full entitlement of meal breaks away from your VDU. Get away from the office altogether, go for a walk and get some fresh air. Secondly, find out from your work colleagues whether they are suffering from any of the complaints listed & raise their complaints with your immediate manager/ess.

WHAT IS THE SOLUTION?

In the long term the following is necessary:-

- * Jobs to be designed to take account of human needs not those of the machine. The work should be limited to 4 hours per day including 15 minute rests after every 50 minutes. Jobs should include a minimum 50% non-VDU work. Some unions have negotiated agreements which contain such provisions.
- * There should be no productivity monitoring of VDU operators.
- * Any new technology agreements should only be made after full discussion with trade union representatives & VDU operators over the question of job design.

REPETITIVE STRAIN INJURIES

Are you involved in Repetitive work?

Is this work giving you persistent pain in your muscles or tendons?

Do you get frequent bouts of pins & needles?

Do your arms and/or legs feel 'heavy'?

Do your fingers, arms or legs sometimes swell up?

If the answer is YES to any of these questions then you may have a repetitive strain injury. (RSI)

Repetitive strain injuries are disorders which produce discomfort or persistent pain (sometimes excruciating) in muscles, tendons & other soft tissues such as fat.

This pain may or may not produce signs visible to doctors on examination or on X-ray which can mean that workers who have the disease are accused of shirking.

The pain is usually caused or made worse by work activities which are frequent & repetitive or less frequent but forceful movement, or activities associated with awkward postures which increase static load.

For more information contact Tower Hamlets Trades Union Council immediately. All enquiries treated confidentially.

Useful addresses

1. **Tower Hamlets Trades Union Council**, Davenant Centre, 179/181 Whitechapel Road E1. Telephone Phil Edwards (Secretary) on 081 555 7045 (evenings) or 071 981 0921. (day)
2. **Hackney Trade Union Support Unit**, c/o Liberty Hall, 489 Kingsland Road, London E8 4AU. Telephone:- 071 249 8086 or 071 249 6930. Not open on Friday. Information on the union to join & advice on employment rights.
3. **Companies House**, (Department of Trade and Industry), 55 City Road, London EC1Y. Telephone:- 071 253 9393. Place to obtain company microfiche detailing sales, profits, directors pay, dividends, etc.
4. **Docklands Forum**, 192 Hanbury Street, London E1. Telephone:- 071 377 1822. Lots of information on what is (and isn't) happening on the Isle of Dogs.
5. **Service Workers Action & Advisory Project (SWAAP)**, Room 160, South Bank House, Black Prince Road, London SE1. Telephone:- 071 587 1947. Employment advice on all aspects of work in the Service sector.
6. **London Hazards Centre**, 3rd Floor, Headland House, 308 Grays Inn Road, London WC1X 8DS. Telephone:- 071 837 5605. Advice and information on all aspects of work to do with health and safety.
7. **City Centre**, 32/35 Featherstone Street, London EC1. Telephone:- 071 608 1338. Advice & information for office workers on health and safety including VDU's, RSI..
8. **Labour Research Department**, 78 Blackfriars Road, London SE1 8HF. Telephone:- 071 928 3649. Information, advice and publications on all aspects of the trade union and labour movement as well as employment rights, health and safety etc, etc...
9. **Bethnal Green Rights Shop**, 296 Bethnal Green Road E2. Telephone:- 071 739 4173. Check opening times. Benefits advice.
10. **Citizens Advice Bureau**, Toynbee Hall, 28 Commercial Street E1. (071 247 4172) Check opening times.
11. **Association for Racial Equality**, 347 Cambridge Heath Road E2. Phone:- 071 729 5775. For help in tackling racial discrimination/harassment.
12. **Equal Opportunities Commission**, Overseas House, Quay Street, Manchester M3 3HN. Telephone:- 061 833 9244. For help in tackling sexual discrimination/harassment and/or making an equal pay claim.
13. **ACAS**, 83-117 Euston Road, London NW1. Telephone:- 071 388 5100. Information & advice on how to settle disputes.
14. **Wages Inspectorate**, Clifton House, 83-117 Euston Road, London NW1. Telephone:- 071 387 2511. Latest wages council rates.
15. **Health and Safety Executive**, London North East, Maritime House, 1 Linton Road, Barking, Essex IG11 8HF. Telephone:- 081 594 5522. Contact point for Factory Inspectorate.
16. **Youth Employment & Training Resource Unit**, 7 Frederick Street, Birmingham B1 3HE. Telephone:- 021 236 8620. Resources, information and services on the issue of youth un/employment & training.
17. **Construction Safety Campaign**, c/o Secretary Tony O'Brien, 52 Ansdell Road, London SE15 2DL. Telephone:- 071 732 3036 (home) or 071 732 3711. (work)

TOWER HAMLETS TRADES UNION COUNCIL

This report on the Isle of Dogs was published in January 1992 by Tower Hamlets Trades Union Council. (TUC) Funding for the publication, and an earlier one on Employment Rights was provided by Tower Hamlets Council (Isle of Dogs Neighbourhood Committee) and was a consequence of a research project examining developments on the Isle of Dogs; which showed that many workers and local people were extremely unhappy about developments in the area.

Tower Hamlets TUC is composed of delegates from a variety of different trade union branches in the borough. A branch affiliates to the Trades Council at a fee which every branch can afford. If you are interested then please contact us as soon as possible.

Tower Hamlets TUC would be very pleased to send a speaker to your branch to explain the work it does for trade unionism in the locality.

At the current time the main areas of work in which we are involved are:-

1. Provision of advice, information & resources for local trade unionists.
2. Production of employment rights, health and safety materials for distribution to both unionised & those about to be unionised!
3. Trade Union recruitment campaigns.
4. The Construction Safety Campaign to highlight the dangers of the construction industry and to demand improved health and safety, and the election of trade union safety representatives.
5. Information on companies in the area including their sales, profits, directors pay..
6. Strike support.

If you would like further information about our work or the availability of our resources please contact us at the address below.

If you would like to order more copies of the booklet then please write to:- Tower Hamlets Trades Union Council, Davenant Centre, 179-181 Whitechapel Road E1. Or phone Phil Edwards (Secretary on 081 555 7045 (Home) or 071 981 0921. (Work)

JOIN A UNION.

