

**tower hamlets
law centre**

**annual report
1979 - 1980**

CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

As Chairperson of the Management Committee of Tower Hamlets Law Centre for the past year and being the delegate from the Stepney Branch of the Union of Construction, Allied Trades and Technicians (UCATT), I can perhaps best liken the work done by the Law Centre during the year to that of a conscientious trade union organiser who in achieving record recruitment figures has then to contend with the problems of success.

Tower Hamlets Law Centre has certainly been conscientious in its endeavours towards the provision of a wide range of legal services for the people of Tower Hamlets, the logical result of which has been a sharp increase in the volume of work we are called upon to do, thereby adding to the pressures on our resources.

Finance

The Lord Chancellor's Office has again provided most of our funds, £70,274 this year. Regular contact with the LCO is maintained through David Owen and John Holland. We have heard that David Owen is retiring from responsibility for Law Centres at the end of this year and we shall be sorry to see him go.

The grant from our own Borough has been disappointing this year. We applied for £15,000 but it looks as though we are only going to get £5,500 which, since we received £11,000 last year, will mean a substantial cut for the Law Centre.

We were fortunate to have carried over from last year a surplus which was almost entirely due to the generous donations made to us by a number of firms of solicitors in the City. These donations continue to be a very welcome source of funding. Continued support from this source during the year has been crucial to our economic viability, and for this we would particularly like to thank Michael Hayes of MacFarlanes who has encouraged and co-ordinated these contributions, and also Guy Sutton of Norton Rose Botterell and Roche, the firm which organises the secondment of one of their solicitors to our Law Centre for periods of from three to six months. The latest in the line of successful and much welcomed secondments is Sarah Millar who will be leaving us in the middle of April.

There have also been donations from individual and group clients, and these continue to be most generously made. Inflation however has and will continue to place additional strains on our finances. In the coming year efforts will be needed to ensure that the position does not become very serious indeed.

Law Centre work, staff and management committee

We have had some resignations this year from both management committee and staff. Elizabeth Gharial and Akik Rahman both moved away from the Borough and so resigned from the management committee. Steve Keevash and Mary Roberts from the staff resigned, and Alison Scott and Bridget McKenzie were appointed; Brenda Hails has been away on maternity leave but returns in April to share the post of receptionist with Bridget.

The Law Centre has continued its concentrated work on housing and employment, while the number of immigration cases has increased dramatically, reflecting the trust the Borough's Bengali community now has in the Law Centre.

The Law Centre's main areas of work are discussed in more detail in the Group reports but it should be said that work has also been done in two rather different areas, that is in education and in planning.

Education: The staff have given talks in schools, colleges, youth clubs and pensioners clubs. Two courses on housing and welfare rights for the Bengali community have also been given for which educational material in Bengali has been produced. We have also worked with students at the Basement (an intermediate education project) on films on arrest rights and on discrimination. A Compensation Kit has been widely circulated mainly to tenants associations and to advice workers. The staff will continue to develop this important area of their work.

Planning: This was the subject of one of our members meetings, and we are all agreed on the necessity of having a planning perspective in all aspects of our work. Some planning work has been done by the Law Centre in the past year and this is more fully described later in this Report.

Members' Involvement

Since our last Annual General Meeting there have been two members' meetings: one, which has already been mentioned, on planning and one on the changes in Employment Law. The attendance at both meetings was disappointing when one considers the amount of effort which goes into the organisation of these meetings.

Although the support groups flourished for a while in varying degrees, eventually they were discontinued due to poor attendance at meetings.

Everyone at the Law Centre, staff and management committee, is anxious that the membership should be actively involved in the working of the Law Centre. By all means, send in your criticisms, suggestions and ideas for the attention of the management committee. Let the new management committee know what subjects you would like to have discussed at future members' meetings. It is we believe only through a constant interchange of ideas between the membership, staff and management committee that we can ensure the right service is being offered to the people of Tower Hamlets.

Constitution

The Law Centre's present constitution has been in operation now for more than three years since the amalgamation of the West Stepney and Stepney Green Law Centres in July 1976. We think that perhaps the time has now come for one or two amendments to the Constitution and we would like to put these forward for discussion by the membership at the AGM.

Under our existing constitution a sizeable proportion of our membership will cease to be members following this year's AGM unless re-elected at the meeting. This might appear to some to be strange and unnecessary, but it could however have the effect of getting rid of the dead wood and keeping our membership records realistic. Without this clause we could well end up with an almost totally inactive membership, so all members to whom this will apply, provided they are still eligible under other membership clauses, are being asked to indicate their continuing interest in good time for the AGM.

We sincerely trust that no undue anxiety is caused to our friends by carrying out our duty under the constitution.

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The Royal Commission on Legal Services

The long awaited report of the Royal Commission was finally published last October. Whilst it welcomed the development of Law Centres, the report recommended a new service provided by "Citizens' Law Centres" under central control, the only local involvement being through so-called advisory committees. The Royal Commission recommends that these Citizens' Law Centres undertake individual casework only (this to be subject to stringent means testing) with no element of community work at all.

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At the time of writing we do not know the attitude of the Lord Chancellor's Office to the recommendations of the Royal Commission. They are under scrutiny by a working party who will be submitting their report to the Lord Chancellor some time around Easter, so it should not be too long before we find out whether all or any of these recommendations will be implemented.

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We are of course opposed to any moves which takes away control of the Law Centre from local people, or which imposes, from afar, strict rules about the type of work to be carried irrespective of the needs of the area. The membership will of course be kept informed of any developments.

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Before I conclude, I would like to extend my warm thanks on behalf of the staff and management committee of the Law Centre to all the volunteers who assist in the running of the evening advice sessions.

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I would like to say finally that I have greatly enjoyed my year as Chairperson of the Law Centre's management committee however daunting it appeared at first; indeed I felt privileged to be chosen. I feel that I have presided in a year of some considerable changes. A very noticeable maturing of management committee/staff relationships has taken place with the management committee eager and willing to manage in a very real sense and, most important, the staff keen to create not only the climate to facilitate this but also to provide the apparatus for effective management. It should be a source of the greatest satisfaction to those members of the management committee who have served for some time, that even if a high percentage of new members are elected to the management committee for 1980, a firm basis for continuity exists assisted by previous management committee work and agreed procedures covering management committee/staff relationships.

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I would think that I speak for the whole membership of the Law Centre when I say that our aim is to see a long-term independent future for our Law Centre which can provide an efficient service, responsive to the wishes and needs of the people of Tower Hamlets.

Fraternally,

Mick Houlihan

March 1979

HOUSING GROUP REPORT

Within the next year there will be major changes in housing law and in the local management and maintenance of the GLC and LBTH housing stock.

The Housing Bill proposals and the GLC policies mean a change in emphasis away from the public sector and back to private landlords and owner occupation. In this Borough there is very little private accommodation at the moment and so what these policies mean for the people of Tower Hamlets is that there will be even less money to improve the existing estates or to build the houses for rent that are so badly needed. At the same time, the GLC and LBTH have agreed to establish the Joint Management Committee with six Tower Hamlets Councillors and six GLC Councillors who will be responsible for day to day management and maintenance, including all lettings. Although this means that tenants will have a greater choice and flexibility, what it also means is that Tower Hamlet has given up control over housing management in the Borough. It remains to be seen how this will work. The important decisions on building, major rehabilitation programmes and house sales will remain with the two existing authorities.

We have worked very closely with the Tower Hamlets Tenants' Federation which over the last year has gained real strength with many new members. They are obviously concerned with these developments and the implications for tenants, especially their impact on the hopelessly inadequate repairs and maintenance service. Tenants have not been consulted or even informed about the Joint Management Committee, but the Tenants' Federation is determined to make sure that tenants' interests are not overlooked. We have worked closely with the Federation to draft a new Tenancy Agreement for all council tenants in Tower Hamlets. The Housing Bill will force local authority landlords to have proper Agreements with their tenants and the Federation are proposing that our draft be adopted by the Joint Management Committee.

Repairs cases for GLC and Borough tenants continue to form the bulk of our caseload. We have also been helping tenants with campaigns to make both the GLC and the Borough do improvement and modernisation work which they are under no strict legal duty to carry out. For example, the Borough have at last recognised that condensation is a major problem and now they and the GLC are willing to insulate flats rather than just blame tenants. Whole blocks have been rewired, and central heating systems improved.

The Housing Bill proposal to give tenants the "right" to do their own repairs will not solve the problem of the large scale repairs which need to be done on so many estates, most of which consist of delapidated blocks of flats. Failure to repair, long delays and shoddy workmanship remain a constant problem for tenants in Tower Hamlets. The programme for modernising run-down estates has hardly started, and there are no plans at all for the modernisation of post-war blocks. It has still to be seen if the Joint Management Committee will have the budget or the labour power to really halt the decline in housing standards. In addition to actually getting repairs done, we have also been claiming for the loss, inconvenience and damage caused by disrepair. We have produced a do-it-yourself guide to claiming compensation and we have sold over 1000 copies to tenants' groups and advisers all over the country. Our repairs booklet has sold out, and we will not be reprinting until after the new Housing Bill comes into question.

A significant proportion of our time has been spent advising clients and negotiating with landlords on eviction proceedings. Most of these clients are GLC or Borough tenants. These cases frequently link up with repairs work as

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tenants can set off damages for disrepair against their rent arrears. The Housing Bill proposes security of tenure for council tenants, though there will still be specific grounds for possession. It also proposes a new form of private tenancy called "shorthold" tenure which will be for a fixed term of between one to five years, with complete loss of security after that. Existing private tenants with full security could be persuaded to sign new shorthold agreements and new tenants will be faced with having to move on from flat to flat. We expect that in future possession actions against both private and public tenants will become more complex.

Another part of our work with private tenants involves advising on rent levels and helping tenants apply to the Rent Officer or the Rent Tribunal, or appeal to the Rent Assessment Committee. The Housing Bill proposes reducing the length of time during which fair rents are frozen from three years to two years, and the "fair rent" will apply from the date of the registration and hearing rather than the tenant's application. It is likely that this will mean private tenants paying higher rents.

One feature of the privately rented accommodation in this Borough is the high proportion of rooms in large old houses let out to the many single people and couples without children who would not get council housing. The rents are often already high, and conditions appalling. We have done some work trying to persuade the Borough's Environmental Health Officers to use their powers under Public Health legislation to inspect and enforce a proper standard of repair and amenities in these houses.

A large number of people approach us particularly at the evening advice sessions because they are desperate for transfers. There is very little we can do to help, and indeed the sales of council houses and the creation of high-rent estates will mean that the best of the housing stock will be inaccessible to the 10,000 tenants on the transfer lists, or the 8,000 on the waiting list.

Over the past year, emergency advice and action for homeless people has become a large, difficult and harrowing part of our work. Our experience of the Borough's Homeless Persons Unit is that it carries out its legal duties towards homeless people unsympathetically and often without regard to these legal duties. We sometimes find ourselves in the position of having to explain the legislation to Council officers and on occasions we have had to threaten legal proceedings before they will provide accommodation for people who are entitled to it.

We believe that there will be a continued demand for our services in the coming year. However, with the changes in legislation and organisation we have mentioned, tenants in Tower Hamlets will have to be more determined than ever if they are to achieve any improvement in their housing conditions.

RACE GROUP

The Law Centre is now an established resource for the Bangladesh community. The Race Group, that is the four law centre workers who concentrate exclusively on work with Bengali people, is still almost entirely a casework unit, mainly in response to the continuing demand for an individual casework service.

There have also been a couple of courses covering aspects of housing (including how to register on the waiting list, getting your landlord to carry out repairs, rent arrears and evictions) and on claiming contributory and non-contributory benefits. These have been organized together with two local settlements at different ends of the Borough, both of which have strong links with tenants on two large G.L.C. estates. There have also been opportunities to try and extend our services to isolated women by visiting them at home and helping with child benefit claims - in theory quite straightforward but notoriously tricky if you do not speak English and perhaps do not have all the necessary original documents to submit with your claim. It has been encouraging too to spend time talking with small groups about common housing and other legal problems.

The principle of taking on every case which comes to us still seems to be the correct one, in view of the dwindling number of suitable advice agencies in the Borough but we have now reached a position where we have had to admit that we can no longer respond adequately to the many demands on our services so instead of continuing to try to react to these demands hoping that by haphazardly taking on every single case there will be enough time to cover everything, we are thinking out ways of organising what we are doing rather more tightly and concentrating on housing, immigration and welfare rights work as agreed priorities.

The weekly legal advice session at the Montefiore Centre (a community centre in Spitalfields) is still our main point of contact with new clients. These sessions have now been running for almost two years in cooperation with members of the Bangladesh Youth Movement and have proved quite a success. People have come to the sessions with problems which range from personal accidents, consumer, criminal, tax, road traffic offences as well as requests for help with filling in child benefit, rent rebate, housing waiting list and a whole collection of other forms, and with applications for U.K. citizenship. We have noticed that there is now an increasing demand for advice from people having to claim benefit for the first time in their lives having lost their job because of the massive rag trade slump which is currently ensuring that there is a high rate of unemployment in the community. Many of the new unemployed are ineligible for unemployment benefit (many are self-employed) and are facing problems successfully pushing claims for supplementary benefit. But by far the largest number of cases that come to us fall generally within the housing or immigration categories.

The very wide range of recurring housing problems which come to our notice vividly reflects the heavy odds stacked against most Bengalis who hope to be rehoused by the Council. The deplorable conditions in which very many Bengali people are still forced to live in this area have been publicised, large numbers of people still live together in small rooms in a state of disrepair which it is quite impossible to describe without any hope at all of

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being rehoused by the Council. Many people who have lived in the Borough long enough to mass up enough points are made an offer of accommodation which is too small for their needs and which is not infrequently in an extremely poor state of repair. When a tenant reports necessary repairs to the landlord (the Council or the G.L.C.) it is rare for these to be carried out promptly and effectively. One of our clients moved into his new flat and discovered that the water heater did not work, the G.L.C. managed to repair this after five months of repeated requests by the tenant. Another waited for more than a year for his landlord (also the G.L.C.) to succeed in mending the window frame in his fourth floor flat by which time the whole window was a serious threat to the safety both of the family's small children and of people passing by on the pavement four floors down. Yet another reported a number of defects to his landlord, Tower Hamlets Council, on literally countless occasions, it was not until after more than a year and issuing legal proceedings that the Council took action on his complaints and agreed to rehouse him.

Immigration

The entire period covered by this report has been overshadowed by the Government's proposals to change the immigration rules and to introduce a compulsory register of the wives and children of Commonwealth citizens who have already settled here.

This long period of uncertainty, when the Conservatives' precise plans remained unclear, has recently ended and we now know that some of the more callous of the proposals, including the intention of imposing a compulsory register of dependants, have been abandoned, at least for the time being. However, the anxiety caused to members of the local Bangladeshi community by these proposals, which received widespread publicity during the general election campaign, cannot be exaggerated, and it is probably responsible, at least in part, for the dramatic increase in our immigration work during the last year.

Our statistics show that in February 1979, we received only two immigration enquiries at the Montefiore Centre. In the same month this year, we had to deal with no fewer than 22 immigration problems.

Most of our work arises out of applications for entry clearance made by wives and children in Bangladesh who wish to join their husbands/fathers in the United Kingdom, and with the subsequent appeals where entry clearance has been refused. Unfortunately, because of the inordinate delays in dealing with these applications and appeals, there is as yet little to report in terms of completed cases (At the moment, we are dealing with a number of cases where the original application was made as long ago as 1972 or 1973). However, we have about thirty appeals which are due to be heard in the next twelve months.

A horrific case of delay concerned a Bangladeshi (Mr. M) whose wife and children applied for entry clearance in 1972 to enable them to join Mr. M. in the U.K. After five years the British High Commission refused the application in May 1977. Mr. M. immediately lodged an appeal on his family's behalf and he was

then advised, quite correctly, that it would be about eighteen months before the appeal could be heard in London. In October and November 1978 and in January 1979, Mr. M. wrote to the British High Commission, Dacca, enquiring about the progress of the appeal but did not receive a reply. In March he consulted us and we wrote to the British High Commission protesting about the delay. They replied that they would make "an urgent investigation into the case." In fact, they summoned Mrs. M. to Dacca for a further interview - this was the third occasion on which she had been interrogated at length about her family - in order "to piece the case together." It was only after we had made further representations that the British High Commission wrote to us admitting that they had lost their file and that despite their earlier decision, they proposed now to grant entry clearance to Mrs. M. and the children.

Last summer, a lot of confusion and distress was caused by a sudden, unannounced change in the immigration procedures regarding returning residents. There are many people in this country who, though not patrials, i.e. persons with a right of abode in the U.K., have been allowed to settle here permanently. Whereas previously, such people could re-enter this country freely, provided they returned within two years of their departure, new instructions from the Home Office to immigration officers stated that if there was any doubt about a person's "ordinary residence" in this country when she/he was last here, she/he should be given only limited leave to remain here - usually, for six months.

Mr. B. is a Bangladeshi who first entered the U.K. in 1957. During the last 22 years, apart from four visits to Bangladesh, he has lived here continuously. Last June, he returned from his most recent trip to Bangladesh and on his arrival at Heathrow, he was interrogated at length by an immigration officer. Mr. B. had with him not only his current Bangladesh passport but also his previous passports which showed clearly that he had been living here since 1957. Nevertheless, Mr. B. was given leave to remain in the U.K. for only three months. On his behalf, we wrote to the Home Office asking for an explanation as to why a time-limit had been imposed and requesting that it be removed. We also asked for a prompt reply, pointing out that the situation was causing Mr. B. very considerable anxiety. No explanation was ever received from the Home Office and it was not until February this year that Mr. B. was informed that he was free to remain here permanently.

Mr. B. had consulted us in June 1979, by the end of July, we were dealing with seven similar cases. Clearly, anyone in Mr. B.'s position who wishes to visit relatives in Bangladesh should be aware of the risks - they will not be allowed to re-enter this country automatically; moreover, they will not be able to stay here permanently unless they can establish, to the Home Office's satisfaction, that they are "ordinarily resident" in the U.K.

EMPLOYMENT GROUP

Over the past year there have been significant legal and economic changes which have had a considerable influence on the nature of the work of this group.

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We continue to do a large amount of individual casework owing to the lack of other legal resources in the Borough and to the fact that legal aid is still not available for proceedings before the Industrial Tribunal. This has meant processing a number of claims for unfair dismissal, although this aspect of the casework had been substantially affected by the change (by statutory instrument rather than Act of Parliament) in the length of qualifying employment from 26 to 52 weeks on 1st October 1979. We have since dealt with a number of cases where dismissed employees have had no remedy against their employers apart from claiming notice and/or holiday pay due to them.

We are also frequently called upon now to advise individuals or groups who have been or are about to be made redundant. There have been a considerable number of redundancies in firms within the Borough, and while the statutory requirements about notice, consultation and compensation have usually been complied with in the larger unionised workplaces, there have been many much smaller firms who have not even paid their employees wages due. In fact, one pattern which has emerged with such smaller firms is to 'temporarily' lay off staff and then close down completely without informing the workers that they are being made redundant. Unaware that they have any legal entitlement, these people are not making any claim whatsoever on the state Redundancy Fund. Of course the other problem is that many people seeking advice on an individual basis fail to qualify under the redundancy provisions because they have not been in continuous employment for the requisite 104 weeks length of time. This has meant that we are increasingly having to give welfare rights advice to people coming to us initially with employment queries.

The other effect of a situation where firms are closing down is that our work in attempting to enforce Wages Council Orders has been very difficult as employers literally disappear. While the Wages Council Act is an important piece of legislation it is unfortunately largely ineffective in industry in Tower Hamlets.

Our links with the local trade union movement have further developed over the past year. There is great anxiety amongst most trade unionists with whom we have contact about the present Government's proposals in the Employment Bill and the general feeling is that this piece of legislation will lead to a deterioration in industrial relations rather than an improvement.

The other major part of our work has been to examine patterns of employment within the Borough, and particularly within the clothing industry. Our immediate task has been to acquaint ourselves more fully with the conditions of work, and we are pleased to acknowledge the work and assistance of other groups in connection with this. These include the Race Group of the Law Centre, Tower Hamlets Training Forum, The Docklands Resource Centre and Tower Hamlets Trades Council.

A large section of the local Bengali community works in the fashion industry which is composed of a large number of small businesses in competition with each other. In general there is a low level of skill amongst the workers who believe they have little chance of employment elsewhere. Many firms employ directly only a few people, and rely instead on outworkers and sub-contractors. This last

group, who either class themselves self-employed or who are forced into this position by employers unwilling to employ them directly on a bona fide basis, come into the factory premises to use the employer's equipment. One such employer in the Borough has a workforce of about 90, some 55 - 60 of whom are 'self-employed' in this way. They are paid higher rates so that their pay contrasts markedly with that of the direct employees who have to rely on overtime to make up their low basic wages.

The physical working conditions are very cramped with bad lighting and little allowance for health and safety. In fact, these employees are virtually unaffected by both the employment protection legislation and the trade union movement - unionisation remains at a very low level within the industry despite initiatives made by the unions.

Within the Borough considerable changes are proposed with the development of Docklands and the building of a large new shopping centre in Whitechapel, among other things. We are proposing to devote more of our resources to collecting information on the effects these plans will have on employment within the Borough so that we can pass such information on to local groups who are already very concerned about the future of Tower Hamlets.

PLANNING

At the Law Centre's last A.G.M., views were expressed that the Law Centre should be devoting some of its resources to planning.

The Law Centre responded to this by first holding a members' meeting on the subject of planning. Since then some of the Law Centre staff have been meeting regularly with other workers in the Borough to discuss planning issues.

It was felt that the first aims of the Group should be to collect information, monitor planning decisions made by the Council and identify the key issues.

Our practical achievements have been to study the local plans and to pass on information to local groups. We have also researched the Urban Development Corporation section of the Local Government Planning and Land Bill and have been involved in advising local groups on the legal implications.

Planning is clearly a crucial issue in Tower Hamlets. If they are implemented, plans for the Relief Roads, the Urban Development Corporation in Docklands and the vast shopping centre proposed for Whitechapel will all alter the Borough dramatically and not to the benefit of local people. It is too early to say how the Law Centre's initial work in the area of planning will develop but much will depend on the people of Tower Hamlets becoming actively involved in fighting planning proposals which are not in their interests.

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SESSIONS

The legal advice sessions run by the Law Centre continue to provide an important service to the community, complementing the advice work done by the Citizen Advice Bureaux and private practice solicitors who are extremely busy.

West Stepney Legal Advice Session has now moved premises from 59 Watney Street. This was the site of the old West Stepney Neighbourhood Law Centre from 1973, and the building is due to be demolished in the near future. The session now operates, thanks to the Glamis Estate Tenants' Association, in the Glamis Estate community centre in Wapping. This, we hope, will attract people from a wider catchment area as well as continuing to serve the West Stepney area.

Stepney Green Legal Advice Session continues to be run from Dame Colet House, and we should like to acknowledge the work of Tom Flexen and Janet Burns. These sessions have been particularly busy in the three months preceding this report.

The Montefiore session, which caters for the advice needs of the local Bengali community on a Thursday evening, has become much busier over the past year, thus reflecting the links established by the Race Group of the Law Centre with the community.

Through the sessions an average of 70 people a week are seen in the 12 hours that the sessions are open. Each session is supervised by a legal worker from the Law Centre who deals as necessary with the 'follow-up' work (such as making phone calls, checking correspondence, confirming points of law) which forms a significant part of their work each week.

LAW CENTRES FEDERATION

The Law Centres Working Group is now called the Law Centres Federation. Our delegates have attended regular Executive Meetings, General Meetings, the Annual Conference and various specialist sub-committees. There have been two main strands of activity discussion this year. Firstly, the Royal Commission on Legal Services reported in October and although its report only had one chapter on Law Centres, there was recognition of the "vital contribution" of Law Centres and that "the volume of work that they have attracted has shown how deep is the need they are attempting to meet".

However, the Royal Commission's proposals for extending Law Centres would destroy much of what is valued by our members and clients - that is our independent Management Committee and our ability to offer our services to groups of clients with a community interest, or to community associations. The Federation's officers and the two full time Secretariat Workers have been arguing for our ideas and principles, now that the Royal Commission's recommendations are being considered by the Government.

Meanwhile, the existing Law Centres are suffering, like all other services, from the cuts in public expenditure. This year several Law Centres had their funds cut, others have never opened and four Law Centres (three in Wandsworth and one in Hillingdon) have already been closed down by hostile local Councils.

The Federation will continue to have a central role in supporting and assisting the development and defence of the Law Centre movement.

Phil Bell
Ben Birn
Fred Day
Janet Bu

Elizabeth

Pan Hans

Mick Hou

Bill Pan

Akik Rah

Jalal Ud

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THE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE AND THE STAFF

THE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE
(Elected in February 1979)

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| Phil Ballard | (ex-seaman; active trade unionist) |
| Ben Birnbaum | (NUTGW delegate to Tower Hamlets Trades Council) |
| Fred Baynham | (local resident) |
| Janet Burns | (Secretary of Limehouse Fields Tenants Association) |
| Elizabeth Gharial | (volunteer lawyer at legal advice session; Secretary of Stephen & Matilda Tenants Co-op) |
| Pan Hanshaw | (Chairman of Albert Gardens Tenants Association) |
| Mick Houlihan | (UCATT delegate to Tower Hamlets Trades Council; E.1 Festival Committee; Stepney Community Transport Committee) |
| Bill Panday | (local teacher; member of Management Committees of local settlement and local youth club) |
| Akik Rahman | (formerly Bangladesh Youth Movement for Equal Rights) |
| Jalal Uddin | (Bangladesh Youth Movement for Equal Rights) |

THE STAFF

- | | | |
|---------------|------------------|----------------|
| Lizzy Batten | Mithu Ghosh | Alison Scott |
| Bob Doyton | Brenda Hails | Ruth Simmons |
| Sarah Blandy | Jamal Hasan | Heather Vassie |
| Lilian Dyrnes | Bridget McKenzie | Nick Walker |
| Jane Foot | Roy Mincoff | |

PAST STAFF

- Steve Keevash (until August 1979)
Mary Roberts (until December 1979)

STATISTICS - 1979

<u>E CATEGORY</u>	<u>T.H.L.C.</u>	<u>W.S.L.A.S.</u>	<u>S.G.L.A.S.</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
JUVENILE CRIME	4	2	16	22
ADULT CRIME	32	63	91	186
WELFARE BENEFITS	28	7	13	48
CONTRACTS/CONSUMER	13	58	90	161
MATRIMONIAL	4	34	127	165
PERSONAL INJURY OR LOSS	27	56	91	174
EMPLOYMENT	82	52	69	203
STATUTORY UNDERTAKINGS	10	7	14	31
EDUCATION	1			1
HOUSING	204	140	141	485
IMMIGRATION	78	11	12	101
LEGAL DOCUMENTS	2	14	33	49
NEIGHBOUR DISPUTES		3	8	11
RACIAL DISCRIMINATION	1			1
SEX DISCRIMINATION	1			1
TAX	1	5	5	11
DEFAMATION		1	1	2
PLANNING	1	1		2
LEGAL EDUCATION	4			4
MISCELLANEOUS	14	10	84	108
ENVIRONMENTAL POLLUTION				
TOTAL	507	464	795	1766

STATISTICS 1979

<u>ACTION:"</u>	<u>T.H.L.C.</u>	<u>W.S.L.A.S.</u>	<u>S.G.L.</u>
1. Advice only	50	161	307
2. Retained for advice	19	53	12
3. Retained for correspondence/negotiation preparation of documents, etc.	360	121	240
4. Retained to advise and assist client to conduct his/her own case in court	7	6	16
5. Retained for representation	58	-	1
6. Referred to Roy Mincoff			
7. Referred to Tower Hamlets Law Centre		47	47
8. Referred to private practice	8	58	145
9. Referred to other law centre (outside)		2	1
10. Referred to London Small Claims Court			
11. Referred to trade union	2	2	2
12. Referred to claimants union			4
13. Referred to T.H. Soc. Services Dept.			
14. Referred to Consumer & Housing Advisory Centre	...	3	1
15. Referred to G.L.C. Information Centre			
16. Referred to other LBTH/GLC Dept.	1		1
17. Referred to D.H.S.S.			1
18. Referred to C.A.B.		4	10
19. Referred to Councillor/M.P.		1	2
20. Referred to C.H.C.			
21. Referred to C.C.T.H.			
22. Other referral	2	6	5

** The statistics given are for new cases only and do not cover the actual numbers of cases dealt with at the Law Centre or the numbers of callers at the sessions over a year; nor do they cover inquiries dealt with at the Law Centre's reception which average 170 per month

TOWER HAMLETS LAW CENTREINCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNTSFor the year ended 31st March 1979

	Notes	1979 £	1978 £
Grants		74,360	66,600
Donations		19,615	8,911
Income Tax recoverable		114	125
Legal Aid income		4,335	3,278
Costs recovered		1,344	499
Bank Interest received		161	-
		<hr/>	<hr/>
		99,929	79,413
		<hr/>	<hr/>
Employment costs		58,681	49,480
Fees payable		10,706	6,669
Rent and rates		3,783	4,167
Printing, postage and stationery		4,983	3,909
Electricity and telephone		1,896	2,132
Insurance		660	431
Advertising		205	197
Subscriptions and donations		803	319
Repairs and renewals		573	338
Court fees		295	187
Travelling		696	274
Miscellaneous and office expenses		1,532	1,412
Amortisation of leasehold expenditure		397	331
Depreciation of office equipment		3,163	555
Audit fees		550	355
		<hr/>	<hr/>
		88,923	70,756
		<hr/>	<hr/>
Surplus of Income over Expenditure transferred to Accumulated Fund	1	£ 11,006	8,657
		<hr/>	<hr/>

TOWER HAMLETS LAW CENTRE

BALANCE SHEET

At 31st March 1979

	Notes	1979 £	1978 £
Employment of Capital			
Fixed Assets	2		
Furniture and office equipment		5,491	1,534
Leasehold expenditure		1,190	1,587
Library		886	445
		<u>7,567</u>	<u>3,566</u>
Current Assets			
Stock	3	100	100
Debtors and prepayments		4,712	1,324
Cash at bank		18,989	9,981
Cash in hand		8	37
		<u>23,809</u>	<u>11,442</u>
Current Liabilities			
Creditors and accruals		7,223	5,926
		<u>7,223</u>	<u>5,926</u>
Net Current Assets		<u>16,586</u>	<u>5,516</u>
		<u>£ 24,153</u>	<u>9,082</u>
Capital Employed			
Accumulated Fund	5	<u>24,153</u>	<u>9,082</u>
		<u>£ 24,153</u>	<u>9,082</u>

The notes referred to above form part of these accounts.

)
) Chairman
)
) Committee Member
)

TOWER HAMLETS LAW CENTRE

Notes on the Accounts

1. Surplus of Income

The surplus of income for 1978 £8,657 is shown after adjustment for expenditure of £4,065 incurred in the year to 31st March 1978 which was recovered from the Spitalfields Law Service subsequent to 31st March 1978.

2. Fixed Assets

	Furniture	Equipment	Leasehold Expenditure	Library	Total
At Cost or Valuation At 31st March 1978	416	2,369	1,987	445	5,217
Additions Proceeds from Insurance Claim	-	11,254	-	441	11,695
	-	(4,134)	-	-	(4,134)
At 31st March 1979	416	9,489	1,987	886	12,778
Depreciation At 31st March 1978	-	1,251	400	-	1,651
Provision for Year	-	3,163	397	-	3,560
At 31st March 1979	-	4,414	797	-	5,211
Net Book Value At 31st March 1979	416	5,075	1,190	886	7,567

The furniture was valued at 31st March 1975.
Depreciation is provided at 33 1/3% on Equipment on a straight line basis.
The leasehold expenditure is shown net after deducting £3,000 grants and contributions towards this capital expenditure and is amortised over the period of the lease.

3. Stock

Stock consists of stationery valued at cost.

TOWER HAMLETS LAW CENTRENotes on the Accounts (contd)

4. Legal Aid System

Unbilled costs incurred and recoverable on clients' cases covered by the legal aid system are not included in these accounts as in the opinion of the Committee the amount involved cannot be quantified.

5. Accumulated Fund

The movement on the accumulated fund is as follows:-

At 31st March 1978	9,082
Expenditure recovered from Spitalfields Law Service	4,065
Surplus income over expenditure for the year to 31st March 1979	11,006
	<hr/>
At 31st March 1979	£ 24,153
	<hr/>

TOWER HAMLETS LAW CENTRESTATEMENT OF SOURCE AND APPLICATION OF FUNDSYear ended 31st March 1979

	1979 £	1978 £
Source of Funds		
Surplus of Income over Expenditure	11,006	4,592
Expenditure recovered from Spitalfields Law Service	4,065	-
Depreciation	3,560	885
Insurance Claim	4,133	-
	<u>£ 22,764</u>	<u>5,477</u>
Application of Funds		
Additions to fixed assets	11,695	988
Increase in working capital	11,069	4,489
	<u>£ 22,764</u>	<u>5,477</u>
Increase in working capital:		
(Increase)/decrease in creditors	(1,298)	(1,000)
(Decrease)/increase in debtors	3,388	(6,976)
(Decrease)/increase in bank balances and cash	8,979	12,465
	<u>£ 11,069</u>	<u>4,489</u>

