

# THETA PUBLIC MEETING

THE HOUSING BILL CAMPAIGN

speakers

JOHN FRASER MP

&

LOCAL COUNCILLORS

REFRESHMENTS. CHILDREN WELCOME.

3.15 SUNDAY 22nd JANUARY

JUBILEE HALL

Produced by Tulse Hill Tenants Association (THETA)

THETA HOUSING BILL CAMPAIGN  
BULLETIN

70% OF TULSE HILL

TENANTS SAY NO!

There has been a magnificent response to the THETA petition against the Government's Housing Bill. So far, 70% have made it crystal clear that they don't want to be taken over by private landlords. In Hardham, Scarsbrook, and Tulse Houses, where nearly every tenant has been contacted, over 90% are determined to stay with the Council.

Despite its unpopularity with tenants right across the country, the Housing Bill has now become law. But, tenants should not be despondent. The Government has been forced to concede ballots on estates threatened with take-over by Housing Action Trusts (HATs).

On Tulse Hill estate we can prevent the high rents and low security of private landlords. Make sure you attend the Tenants meeting on Sunday 22nd January at 3.15. in the Jubilee Hall.

INSIDE:

BUYING OR BOUGHT YOUR FLAT?  
HATS CAMPAIGN  
THE NEW HOUSING BILL

## WHAT IF WE BUY OUR FLAT ?

Some tenants are taking up the 'right to buy' for financial reasons or to gain security of tenure. A lease-hold agreement can give greater security, but only so long as the leasee can maintain their side of the agreement.

The advantages of staying with Lambeth for tenants are clear. There are also good reasons why leasees will also be better off.

\* Lambeth has pledged to keep their 'service charge' down to £11/week for five years. Under a private landlord the charge is likely to be much higher and different scales of charges could be operated on the same estate,

\* Under private landlords there could be many additional charges for management fees, repairs and decorating costs. There is no legal limit to such charges.

\* Lambeth have, by law, to tell tenants exercising their right to buy, what improvements they are planning in the next three years and charges that the leasee would pay, before any agreement is signed. This would not apply if an estate is handed over to a private landlord. A recent report suggests that it would cost £20 000000 to do up Tulse Hill estate- a private landlord could borrow this and then charge each leasee-£20 000 each!

Failure by a leasee to pay any charges would break the agreement and the landlord could evict them and sell the flat at full market price. Leasees have a common interest with tenants in staying with the Council.

## CAMPAIGNING AGAINST HATS

A ballot of tenants is to be held after Angell and Loughborough Tenants Association campaign against HATS.

Over 80% of tenants have signed a petition saying that they do not want to be taken over by a HAT. HATS give no guarantees about future security or rent after a set period. Watch out for campaign stalls in Brixton and give support.

## THE NEW HOUSING FINANCE BILL

Not content with slashing Council resources and encouraging private landlords to take over estates, the new Housing Finance Bill threatens to blow Council housing apart. Once again, tenants will be the victims.

The proposals are complicated and THEFTA will be producing a detailed briefing in the future, but the overall effect will be to strangle Councils financially and drive up rents. The three main parts are:

1. Housing Benefits to be paid from out of the Councils Housing Subsidy, rather than from general taxation, as in the past. That means the burden of Housing Benefit payments falling on tenants who pay rent.
2. Any 'subsidy' of rents from local rates will be outlawed.
3. Rent rises will be required to be set at 'market levels' (equivalent to private sector rents)

Tenants do not get tax relief on rent, like home-owners do on mortgages. The new Housing Bill will make tenants even worse off.

## HOW CAN I GET INVOLVED ?

Over 50 tenants have been involved so far- petitioning, delivering, producing information, photocopying typing, doing graphics, making posters or just attending meetings and talking to other tenants. Any interest or help is welcome. You don't need to be an expert on housing matters- just have a desire to stop private landlords taking over the estate.

If you are unable to attend the meeting on 22nd January, please contact:

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