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HAMMERSMITH & FULHAM

WE DIDN'T VOTE FOR THIS!

The Goodman/Harrison faction, which sneaked into control in May 1988, has transformed the political complexion of Hammersmith and Fulham Council.

By Steve Cowan
Member of ILEA Labour Group

It has changed a Tribunite-cum-leftist leadership into a hard right, opportunistic mish-mash.

This pole vault to the right springs from Cllr Ian Harrison's emergence as the bulwark for Mike Goodman's leadership.

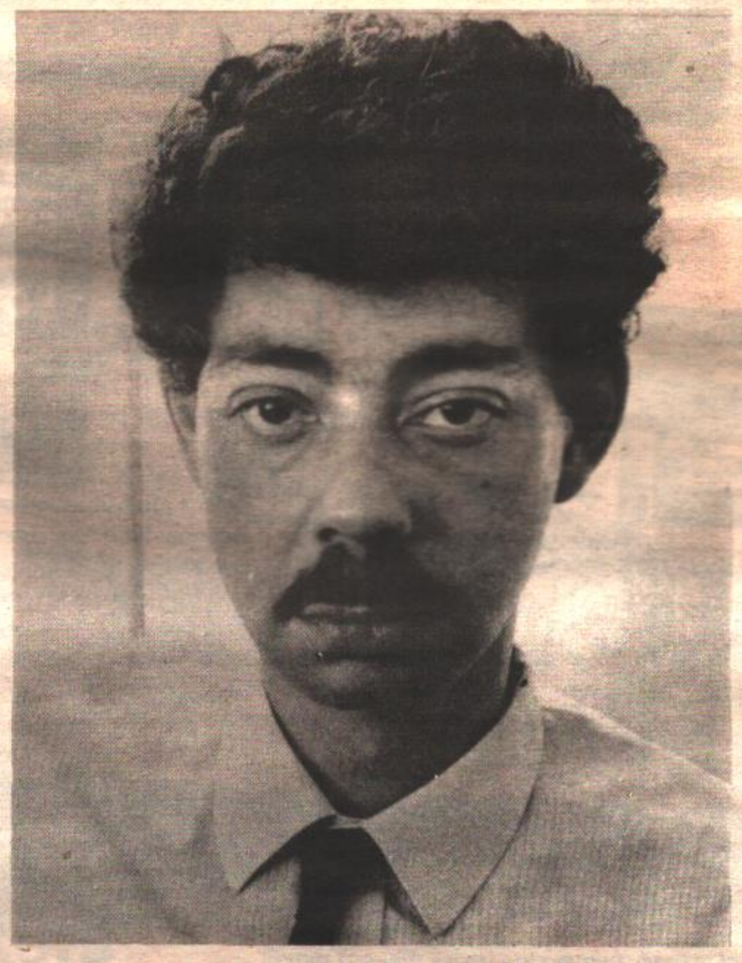
Harrison, a past supporter of various left wing groups, has dashed to the right at Ben Johnson speed, faster than anyone else in the London Labour Party.

Briefing readers will recall the speech Mike Goodman made at 1986 Party Conference, calling for the expulsion of all Militants — getting a standing ovation from Eric Hammond and his delegation.

Tony Phelan, NALGO Branch Secretary, commented on recent developments at the Town Hall:

"The Council is acting like a Victorian factory owner in its relations with the trade unions. its clear anti-trade union action is giving the green light to force through cuts in jobs and services.

"The people who wanted to elect a socialist Council must be wondering what they voted for."



Goodman and Harrison: the Leader and his Deputy



PHOTO: Terry Austin-Smith

These statements followed the unions' walk-out from the Council Staff Joint Negotiating Committee on September 19th, after the Goodman/Harrison clique made it clear that they were not prepared to negotiate on a number of important issues, such as threatened redundancies in the Parks Department.

Industrial relations is in crisis, deteriorating by the day, and dominating the front pages of the local Tory Press.

According to an exasperated Committee Vice Chair (who prefers not to be named): "We might as well abolish all Committees, sack the Chairs and Vice Chairs, and let the Leader and his Deputy run the Council on their own."

This view, shared now by a majority on the Labour Group, reflects the misuse of the misnamed Strategy Committee — the new mechanism for strengthening centralised control.

Recently the Ethnic Minorities Committee presented a working definition of racism for formal adoption. This conformed closely to the definitions already adopted by most

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LABOUR—TAKE THE POWER!

BRENT ROUND-UP

Defend jobs and services acros

The crisis in Brent has its own spec ial factors.

The eating up of all financial reserves by the Tories between 1983 and 1986 is a crucial one.

The root cause is, however, the political error of the "dented shield".

Brent today will be Greenwich, Hackney and Southwark tomorrow.

As the Tories meet no opposition from the likes of Dorman Long, Margaret Hodge, Dave Wetzel and Anderw Puddephat then they will turn the screw to reap maximum propaganda value and inflict the pain of Brent across all London's heartland.

Yet the fightback in Brent, which has destroyed illusions in the trade union bureaucracies in the TGWU, NUPE, NUT and GMB, is a clear example to us all of what can be achieved if a sustained organised fightbackis mounted with support give to all campaigns, however small.

The workers who have saved their jobs in Brent are now leading solidarity work with parents at Crawford Avenue. Tenants are linking with nursery campaigns; the dust workers with library occupations.

Do not let Brent fight alone. Organise against every job or service loss in your Borough. Come to the November 9th demonstration. Harass your pro-cuts Councillors in the Party and at the Town Hall.

There is no financial way out of Thatcher's stranglehold — only direct action can defend the local welfare state.

Crawford Avenue — an example to us all

At the centre of the fightback has been the magnificent example of the parents of mentally handicapped children at Crawford Avenue respite centre.

Faced with imminent closure and the prospect of their children going into care, the parents of 40 children who attend the centre occupied the building on September 22nd.

The weekly garden party (every Sunday at 3pm) held at the centre has become a focus for all those opposed to cuts. Over 200 adults and children attended the biggest party on October 9th.

Noel O'Mahoney, parents group leader, says:

"We have received magnificent support from the home helps, from parents at other centres and from anti-cuts Councillors. Dorman Long visited us on October 14th to tell us we could not win — but we are sure of victory. It was a sign of his desperation.

"We are opposed to all cuts. We want more Councillors like the 12 Labour Coucillors who have voted for us."

Rush donations to: Crawford Avenue Occupations Account, 24 Crawford Avenue, Wembley, Middx.



Crawford Avenue occupiers

HACKNEY LIBRARIES CUTS



PHOTO: Martine Stead

Somerford Grove Library. At least they've stopped short of actually burning the books (haven't they?)

Vandals reprieved!

By Jim Thain Hackney North & Stoke Newington CLP

Cllr Tommy Sheppard — possibly the most hated man in Hackney — has narrowly staved off an attempt to depose him as Chair of Hackney Leisure Services.

Both Hackney CLPs had been incensed by the way he and careerist Vice Chair Simon "who cares?" Matthews smashed the library occupations.

One LGC motion called for their resignations. It was defeated by 15 votes to 13.

One Leadership lackey turned up for two minutes, voted against his GC mandate, and then went home. Three right delegates left the chamber to avoid implementing their GC mandates. So much for accountability.

A second motion, condemning "the use of hired bully boys and the police" and "Wapping-style manoeuvres" was passed.

Sheppard submitted a report. Its many lies included:

•"At no time did the Council start any legal action against any member of its workforce."

Tell that to the librarians who were taken to the High Court and who saw their libraries' doors battered down.

•"No books were destroyed." This was exploded when occupier Martine Stead showed the LGC enlarged photos of the havoc wreaked.

•"No one was arrested." In fact two people, both Labour Party members, were arrested and charged.

Vestige

Sheppard also attacked *Hackney Labour Briefing* — the "local vestige of once credible left organisation"! According to Sheppard, the whole 200-day campaign was a far left front.

The arch-philistine is currently helping organise an Irish festival. This is commendable. But the Toad giveth and the Toad taketh away. On the one hand he seeks to "promote Irish culture", on the other he closes libraries.

Has this one-time student activist never heard of James Joyce, Edna O'Brien, Seamus Heaney, Maria Edgworth, G.B. Shaw, Maeve Binchey, Oscar Wilde, Julia O'Faolain, Sean O'Casey, Molly Keane, Bobby Sands...

By Graham Durham Brent Labour Councillors Against the Cuts

Teachers — nothing to lose!

A rolling programme of three day strikes began on October 11th as the national NUT and NAS/UWT leaderships were finally forced to resist Brent's savage attacks.

The strikes followed a closedown of all Brent schools for a half-day in September — even the normally compliant AMMA staged its first strike for ten years!

The strikes were called to prevent the first ever compulsory reundancy notices on 40 teachers. However, despite massive sympathy and support from parents across the Borough, the NUT and NAS/UWT leaders remain firm supproters of the cuts policy.

Their cosy relationship with Chair of Education Nitin Parshotam has led them to call off any further action now that Brent has announced there will not be any compulsory redundancies.

This is despite the damaging effects on education caused by the loss of 230 teachers through voluntary (i.e. under pressure) redundancy.

Anti-cuts Councillor Helga Gladbaum commented:

"The parents who have organised court action to prevent the disruption of education have shown more fight than someof the teachers leaders. An all-out teachers' strike would overturn this savaging of Brent's education service within days."

The left in Brent NUT are now organising for further action on an "unofficial" basis given this massive sell-out by their leadership.

Rubbish mounts as unions regroup

The number of dust workers has been cut from 209 to 116.

Street sweepers (in autumn!) have been reduced from 142 to 96.

The result has been total chaos.

Many streets have not had their rubbish collected for over 5 weeks. Piles of rotting refuse sacks have become a common sight on the streets and are quickly becoming a health hazard.

The few dustworkers that are left have reported encountering rats as they go about their jobs.

Commenting on the crisis, TGWU Deputy Convenor Eddie Keegan, said:

"The fact is we just haven't got enough workers to provide a decent service. There is no way my dust crews, working three-handed, can cover a Borough the size of Brent."



The rubbish mounts up

ss London!



PHOTO: Geoff Cox

BRENT FIGHTBACK TORCHLIGHT PROTEST
Wednesday November 9th, 5.30pm
24 Crawford Avenue, Wembley
(opposite Wembley police station!)
to
BRENT TOWN HALL
(Fortis Lane, Wembley)
LOBBY THE COUNCIL MEETING
at 7pm
No cuts in jobs or services!

Following union pressure and the barrage of complaints they've received, the Council have offered to employ 10 more dustworkers. At the same time they're planning to end sweepers' weekend working!

A leaner but fitter trade union leadership now exists and anger isboilingover.

So desperate were management to break the TGWU that they offered Eddie Keagan £9,000 and full pension to go. To his credit Eddie refused and remains an active supporter of Brent Fightback.

Rent Strikes Bite

900 Council tenants crowded into Brent Town Hall on October 12th to oppose a further £7 a week rent rise.

Over 60 tenants organisations were represented and many tenants' leaders addressed Labour traitors on the Housing Committee.

Boiled

The tenants' anger boiled over as the rent rise takes the year's total to £12 a week.

Liz Hylton, Church End tenants association, summed up the mood:

"We will never pay this increase. We cannot pay this increase."

Tenants on the Stonebridge estate have now formed Stonebridge Fightback to spread resistance. The immediate target is the November 9th Council meeting.

Home Helps — a magnificent victory

240 jobs were saved on October 11th as the Policy Committee was confronted with a lobby of 500 home helps reversed its August cuts.

Having exposed the collusion of NUPE leaders in the destruction of jobs, jubilant home helps pleged their "total" support to Crawford Avenue and all the other struggles across the Borough.

The home helps' leader, Ann Moore, said:

"This is a huge victory for the elderly and needy of the Borough. Graham, Helga, Mick and the other anti-cuits Councillors have our total support following the help they gave us.

"It has been a long fight but we feel we are turning the tide against Thatcher. Now the Trades Council is joining the fight we are sure we can win more victories."

Libraries — following Hackney's lead

As we go to press, there is news that Cricklewood and Kersal Rise libraries are being occupied to prevent closure on October 31st.



PHOTO: Geoff Cox

FRIERN HOSPITAL

Catering workers walk out

Catering workers at Friern Hospital staged a spontaneous walk-out on October 13th.

The COHSE members were protesting against the savage and immoral pay cuts and reductions in staff numbers which management intend to impose as part of the in-house tender privatisation exercise.

Catering workers are amongst the lowest paid workers in the NHS. Wage cuts of up to £17.20 a week are being threatened.

NHS catering staff throughout the country are about to receive an appallingly low £5 per week wage increase. After cuts like those threatened at Friern, workers will see no improvement whatsoever in take-home pay.

Many catering workers at Friern have given years of loyal and devoted service, often working under extreme difficulty and for a very low take home wage.

They are incensed, frustrated, and demoralised at this latest effort by management to push them further onto the poverty line. Further action is anticipated in support of the catering workers.

For further details and latest info., contact Allan Warby, c/o COHSE office, Friern Hospital, London N11.

TEACHERS STRIKE

ILTA demands escalating action!

Hundreds of schools across London were closed on Thursday October 20th, as 4,000 teachers demonstrated against the sacking of supply teachers.

The protest was also against ILEA's unilateral tearing up of an agreement reached with teacher unions last July on cover, non-contact time and class size.



PHOTO: Richard Hawkins

By Paul Foley
Islington Teachers Association

The teachers went on to a rally, where a speaker from Brent Teachers Association pointed to the success they had had in forcing Brent Council to withdraw compulsory redundancy notices served on 14 teachers. The action in Brent will continue in protest at the loss of over 200 teacher jobs.

The next speaker was Dick North, Treasurer of ILTA, who was sacked by ILEA and then reinstated. Dick's call for extended strike action and no cover action was loudly applauded by the rally.

Bernard Regan echoed this call to further applause from London teachers.

A sacked supply teacher explained the personal financial difficulties she had suffered as a result of being sacking. She pointed out that the work she did was necessary; and in no way a luxury.

June Fisher Vice President of NUT, emphasised this point. saying that supply staff had been, and always will be, essential to the running of ILEA schools. She claimed that the first Monday in September was the worst day in her 36 year teaching career.

Whilst the 1,500 present at the rally were impressed with June Fisher's personal support for supply teachers, they wanted to know what further sanctions the union would offer London teachers. June was unable to comment on this, much to the annoyance of the rally.

It is obvious that London teachers are determined to fight on behalf of their supply colleagues — the weakest and most vulnerable section of the teaching force.

The NUT must give a lead by escalating strike action — with selective strikes after half-term — and granting a blanket sanction of absolute no cover in secondary schools and one day only cover in primary schools.

This is the way to force ILEA to retreat and keep to the agreement signed with the unions in July 1988.

HOUSING

Labour must fight HATS!

Tenants fighting the planned Housing Action Trust (HAT) in Brixton are demanding more support from the Labour Party. The HAT will take Council housing on two estates out of Lambeth's control and after "yuppification" sell it off to the private sector.

Lambeth Briefing **spoke to DORA BOATEMAH, Joint Chair of the Angell Town/Loughborough Action Committee.**

The campaign against HATs is taking off on the estates with the tenants prepared to fight.

But we feel that the Labour Party nationally has not yet come out publicly in our support.

This is a disgrace and a disappointment considering the fact that the estates have one of the biggest Labour votes in Lambeth. It seems the Labour Party nationally is resigned to the fact that Mrs Thatcher is all-powerful and can do anything she wants.

Locally we feel too that Lambeth Council has been very slow in informing all their tenants, Borough-wide, about the single most important piece of legislation currently going through Parliament...THE HOUSING BILL. THIS BILL EFFECTS EVERYONE!

We would like to know just how far this Council is willing to go along with the Government's plans. If the tenants demand it are they prepared to defy the Bill if it becomes law?

If they are not, are they prepared to resign and make way for people who are prepared to fight.

Over the HATs issue the Council originally distanced itself from the campaign, because it argued the Government would accuse them of manipulating the tenants.

However the Government Minister, David Trippier made this accusation anyway and used it as a reason not to give the tenants a democratic ballot.

The Association of Metropolitan Authorities have a plan for a self-organised ballot in December... for this to be a success the Council MUST act now... GIVE US FULL SUPPORT AND STOP MAKING EXCUSES!!!

STOP PRESS: On October 25th, 40 tenants from Brixton and Tower Hamlets stormed the office of HATs consultants PIC Ltd. to express their total opposition to HATs and demand that the consultants stay off their estates.

The consultants claimed they were not aiming to privatise tenants' homes. However, a subsequently leaked document shows their real goal: "successful transfer to the private sector"!

WE DIDN'T VOTE FOR THIS!

Continued from front page

London Labour Councils. It said:

"Racist harassment is violence which may be verbal or physical and which includes attacks on property as well as on the person, suffered by individuals or groups because of their colour, nationality or ethnic or national origins, where the victim believes that the perpetrator was acting on racial grounds and circumstances reinforce that it is connected with White Racism.

"Racist harassment is also violence in the form of inaction, silence, structural and systematic exclusion and omission of black presence and reality and the denial of racism in Statutory, Voluntary and Private institutions and in their provision and delivery of service in a Black and White Community."

To general astonishment, Goodman refused to accept the concept of "White Racism". On July 26th, he bullied the Labour Group into voting it down, despite an offer of an amendment from Ethnic Minorities Chair Ken Martindale.

Goodman also opposed the second paragraph, which was included to ensure that the experiences of the Jewish, Irish and Mediterranean communities, amongst others, were fully taken into account.

Briefing readers will recognise the uncontroversial nature of this working definition, familiar to everyone involved in Local Authority Equal Opportunities work.

We expect such opposition from the scorpions of the Salisbury Review, the Monday Club, and other extreme right wing elements within the Tory Party and the media. It is astonishing to find a Labour Council leadership in 1988 having difficulties with such a statement. Even some Tory Authorities are moving towards formally adopting positions of this kind.

During Labour Group and full Council debates, not a word of support for Ken Martindale and the Ethnic Minorities Committee position was heard from Deputy Leader Harrison. ("Racist harassment is also violence in the form of inaction, silence...")

Harrison appears to have sacrificed everything for a few months playing second fiddle to Goodman. He rationalises his humiliating position by deluding himself that he, rather than Goodman, rules the roost.

On September 14th, Harrison attempted to abolish the Community Organisations Support Committee, and to remove the Chair and Vice Chair, Cllrs Judy Atkinson and Sue Brown. This was defeated, partly by the efforts of the local voluntary sector.

The Collective Action Group (made up of voluntary sector representatives) passed a resolution condemning the proposals and stating that abolition of the Committee would be seen as an attack on the voluntary sector and a first step to cutting grants and abolishing the newly-established consultative Voluntary Sector Forum.

Voluntary organisations were already angered by earlier moves by Harrison to grab back money from predominantly black and ethnic minority organisations, and transfer it to fund growth applications from white, middle class groups.

Working class ratepayers are still subsidising ticket costs for the out-of-borough, middle class patrons of the Lyric Theatre (which receives a Council grant of over £350,000 per annum).

The Manifesto commitment to redistribute resources to the Irish, Afro-Caribbean, and Asian communities is voted down — on the grounds that no money is available!

The Manifesto commitment to establishing an Afro-Caribbean centre has been reneged upon, despite the preparation of detailed and costed plans. Similar problems are being encountered by the Asian Association, whose agreement with the Council for a community centre is now under threat from the Goodman/Harrison faction.

The electoral consequences are potentially disastrous, as the Afro/Caribbean, Asian, and Irish communities form a majority of Labour supporters in large Labour held wards in Hammersmith.

If Labour goes into the next elections with its current Town Hall leadership, it will be defeated.

The good news is that the left is regrouping to challenge the leadership, with a "no confidence" motion to be debated at Labour Group on October 25th.

The traditional response of the Hard Right to such challenges has been to launch a witch-hunt against one or two comrades in order to frighten others off and deflect attention from the central issue.

Who will be the target when the racists strike back? My hunch is that some flimsy pretext will be found to attack Cllr Ken Martindale, Chair of the Ethnic Minorities Committee and a leading voice in Hammersmith's Afro-Caribbean community.

Watch this space!

FREE THE TOTTENHAM 3!

Picket Wormwood Scrubs Prison
Sunday December 11th, 7pm
(near East Acton tube; buses 7, 12, 52A, 72, 383)

Join us to give strength and comfort to the families of these young men, and to add your voice to the chorus calling for an end to silence, and freedom for the framed!
For more information contact the Defence Campaign: 01-885 3752

PUBLIC MEETING
on
Plastic Bullets
Speakers include:
United Campaign Against Plastic Bullets
Indian Workers Association
Free the Tottenham 3
Troops Out Movement

Followed by
SOCIAL
with
The Jacket Potatoes
John Marshall Hall, Blackfriars Road
(near Waterloo station)
28th October, 7.30pm
£2 (£1 concessions)

Come to the next meeting of
Lambeth Against the Poll Tax
Wednesday November 2nd
7.30pm
Lambeth Town Hall
All welcome

Lobby Lambeth Council
Wednesday November 9th
6pm onwards

ISRAELI EXHIBITION
Picket Ally Pally!
An official exhibition, extolling the virtues of the Israeli state, is being displayed at Alexandra Palace in Haringey.
The exhibition — "The Heart of Israel" — is organised by BIPAC, with funding from the state itself.
Pickets are being organised, and need your support.
Sunday November 13th: All day picket from 10am to 5pm.
Monday November 14th: Lunchtime picket of trade union rally.

Join the Striking Dover Seafarers in their daily picket of P&O's headquarters in Pall Mall between 9.00am and 5.00pm every weekday. Victory to the NUS!

Noel Park Labour Party
Fund-raising social
November 12th
Noel Park Community Centre
Gladstone Avenue, N22
8.30-late
Bar Disco
£3/£1 waged/unwaged