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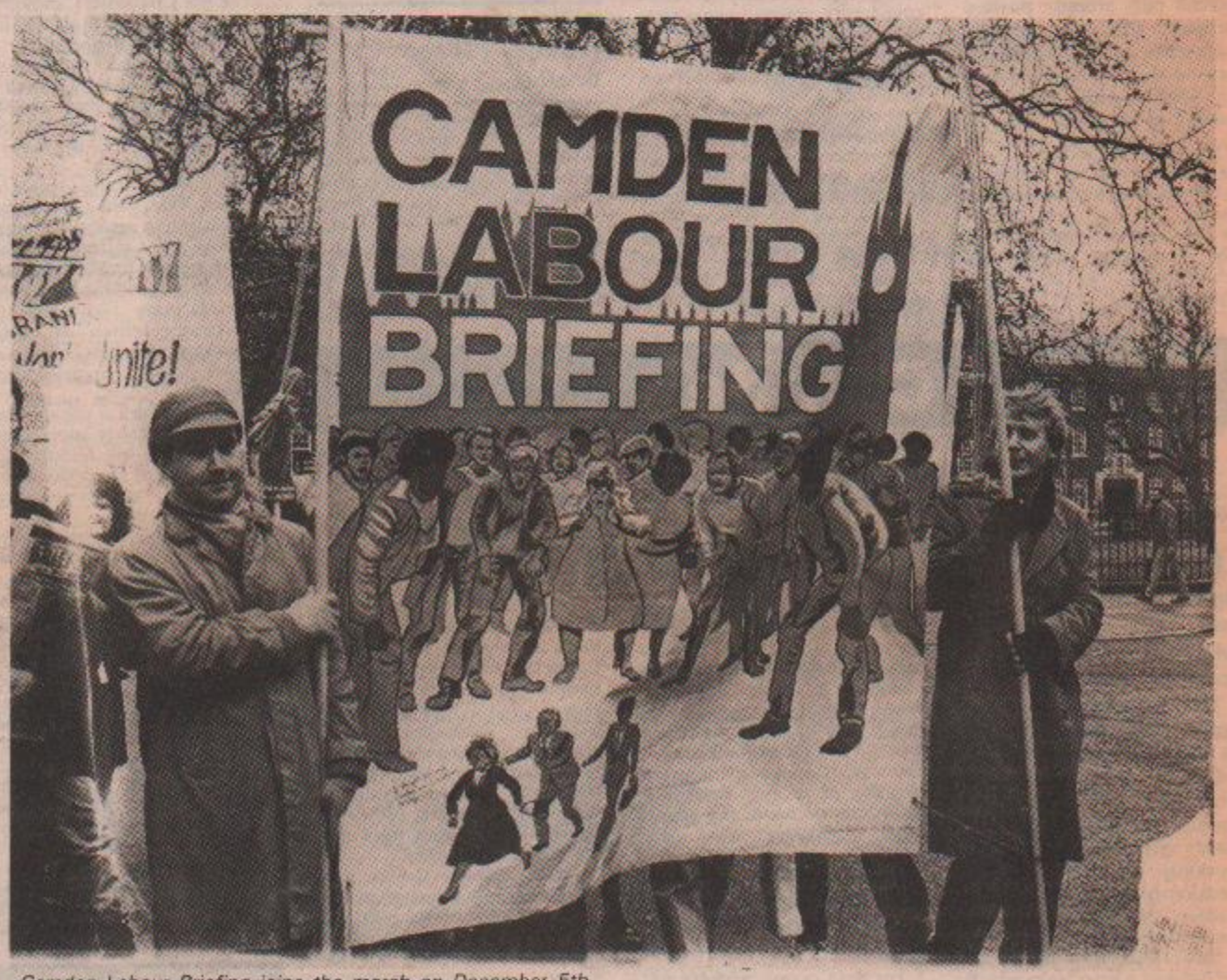


PHOTO: Leesa Herbert

Camden Labour Briefing joins the march on December 5th

MARCHING AGAINST THE CUTS!

The Labour Group on Camden Council is carrying out Tory cuts right across the Borough.

Cuts of 20% in services and 2,500 posts are to be implemented this financial year.

The scale of this attack has meant that the workforce and community has only one option facing it: resisting the cuts to fight off redundancies and defend services.

Since July, NALGO — the largest union with 5,500 members — has had a policy of no co-operation with cuts and opposition to voluntary and compulsory redundancies. This policy was won by a two to one majority at a 2,500 strong mass meeting.

Given the scale of the task confronting NALGO, in Camden and across London, it has found it difficult to convince its membership to stick to the policy. Nevertheless, at its AGM in November, it maintained its opposition to cuts, although it agreed to negotiate restructuring and redeployment arrangements.

Those proposing co-operation with the cuts — except for those leading to compulsory redundancies — were able to muster only 15 votes out of 800 at the NALGO AGM.

By *Labour Briefing* supporters in Camden NUPE and NALGO.

The vote indicates that NALGO members are not yet prepared to escalate their non-co-operation into an all-out confrontation with the Labour Group. Indeed, members in the Housing Department voted 300 to 50 to reject an SWP motion at a special meeting for all-out strike.

Nevertheless, there have been victories:

- **residential workers in mentally handicapped homes won 75% of a regrading claim after a 6 week strike;**
- **workers in Central Estates Management won the right for a temporary worker to apply for her post;**

and there was an 80% turnout on a one-day strike on October 29th.

However, temporary staff across the Council have not had their contracts renewed as shops have been reluctant to take action. The branch executive, despite a good policy, has not yet taken the lead necessary for shops and departments to take action, and cuts have taken place.

NALGO has received the backing of UCATT in its fight, but NUPE has adopted a policy of critical co-operation in the hope of saving its members jobs at the expense of NALGO members. A NUPE meeting in July voted six to one to co-operate with cuts.

But as cuts have hit front line services hard, manual jobs have been at risk. This has opened the eyes of NUPE members. There have been local official disputes; and at the last NUPE meeting the majority for co-operation was reduced to three to one.

The devastating attack on services has also led to large and angry meetings in the community.

- **A meeting of 250 furious parents met to denounce the loss of 350 nursery places and the introduction of charges;**
- **150 residents in Chalk Farm harangued the Labour Councillor who was justifying the closure of their local library;**
- **In Kilburn, 200 tenants denounced the Council's abandonment of any repairs — even those that it is legally obliged to carry out — except those necessary to prevent a dangerous health risk.**

The campaign against the cuts is being co-ordinated by a Voluntary Organisations Committee, and a Council Workers Campaign. In the run-up to organising the demonstration on December 5th, these meetings have been merged and opened up to all those locally who are prepared to build the demo.

Unfortunately, this has been abused by the SWP who suddenly turned up and insisted that they should have a speaker on the platform of the rally.

To give the Anti-Cuts Campaign authority, a new committee will have to be rebuilt on the basis of delegations from local organisations.

The size of Council union and local community meetings indicate that people are prepared to fight back. But there is still a big gap between an acceptance of the necessity of a fightback and the confidence to take action. London wide actions will help to bridge this gap.

LABOUR—TAKE THE POWER!

Borough round-up

Haringey

The Labour Group scab on the workers

December 10th sees the Haringey Labour Parties and the Council's Labour Group voting on a new cuts package for the 88/89 financial year.

Coming on top of the £15 million cuts already pushed through, the new package represents a frightening attack on the borough's working people which must be resisted at all costs.

The proposals include:

- A further rent rise for Council tenants (the third in less than a year).
- The loss of *thousands* of jobs, including compulsory redundancies, in all departments.
- The loss of hundreds of teaching posts, the closure of primary schools, ever-increasing class sizes, reductions in funding for repairs, equipment, books, and special needs.
- The closure of four libraries and reduced opening hours in four others, the closure of seven community centres, two swimming baths, and a host of other facilities.
- Closure of residential and short-stay homes for children, the elderly, and people with disabilities.
- Further increases in charges for day centres, and the end of holiday grants for the elderly and disabled.
- The virtual break-up of the "strategic" units — Race Equality, Women's, Lesbian and Gay, Irish, Environment, Disabilities.
- The closure of the DLO and massive redundancies in Public Works.
- Charges for playgroups, cuts in holiday schemes, cuts in grants to voluntary groups, cuts in street cleaning, cuts in free black plastic rubbish sacks...

By Mike Marqusee
Haringey Labour Briefing

These "reductions" or "savings" — as the right wing junta now running Haringey insist on calling the cuts — are only part of the £20 million package to be considered by Party and Group on December 10th.

Haringey Fights Back!, the local anti-cuts campaign, is organising a demonstration outside the Civic Centre for that evening in the hope that the flesh-and-blood presence of those whom their decisions affect will make some difference to people who have, in the past, raised their hands all too easily in support of policies which do not affect them.

The left Councillors, organised as Councillors Against the Cuts, have been speaking to trade union and community groups and are winning increasing support for their stand. They are now being threatened by the right with all the terrors of the Labour Whip!

One local Party branch, Hornsey Vale, held a successful public meeting against the cuts, featuring ex-Council Leader Steve King and local Councillor Craig Brewin, Mandy Mudd from Haringey Fights Back!, and representatives of local playgroups, teachers, Council tenants, and community centres.

For its defiance of the suicidal cuts policy narrowly adopted by Hornsey & Wood Green GC, Hornsey Vale is being threatened with as yet unspecified disciplinary action.

Meanwhile teachers are balloting for industrial action as are workers in Social Services.

Parents and workers involved in childcare staged a weekend demonstration. One hundred enraged local parents, many of them single mothers, beseiged the surgery of Deputy Leader Philip Jones when they learned that their local after-school club was to be chopped.

Up and down the borough, people are getting organised and taking action against the cuts. Haringey Fights Back!, with limited resources, is doing its best to co-ordinate these extremely diverse groups and give the campaign a firm base in the local labour movement.

Lewisham

So close in Lewisham

By a narrow margin, support for the Labour Group's cuts policy squeezed through Lewisham's Borough Local Government Conference.

If just one more branch had been mandated to oppose cuts, we would have won.

The conference then proceeded to stand on its head and support motions against cuts in the Library Service; and to somehow make housing and working with tenants a priority, while we cut services and raise rents.

By Cllr Pat Waylett
Hither Green Labour Party branch delegate

It then voted for a resolution to reaffirm the commitment to equal opportunities, despite the fact that the Council had already refused to fund a Lesbian and Gay consultation and that part of the cuts was the ending of interior decorations for people with disabilities.

Resolutions such as this after supporting a hard line cuts motion are worthless. While Labour Councils are slashing services, it is impossible to insulate some areas from that attack unless it is at the expense of bigger cuts elsewhere.

If people really believe that they can escape responsibility for acting as agents of the Tories by supporting a few meaningless platitudes at the same time, the political naievety is frightening.

As a direct result of the actions being taken by Labour Councils in London we will lose many Council seats in 1990 and control of some Councils. We are then somehow supposed to turn that around within a few months and win back all the London marginals in a general election! Unless the Party reverses its current policies we are guaranteeing a Tory government until at least 1995.

Is it any wonder that the Party is losing support when every time it is faced with a challenge it backs away and attacks its own supporters? We can pass all the resolutions we like: if we refuse to back them with real political action and decisive support for people struggling against capitalism, we will be seen as what we are — a bunch of well meaning political posers.

In Lewisham, as elsewhere, many members will continue to fight against the cuts. A narrow defeat at one Conference can't change that, any more than the thousands of defeats over the years can prevent the eventual victory of socialism.

Every individual cut will be opposed, in the Party, the unions and the community. Lewisham Fightback will continue to campaign inside and outside the Party. We will continue to build alliances with all those who want to fight.

It's a matter of regret that some Party members have chosen to stand between us and the Tories, but that cannot change anything.

Lewisham Fightback
Strategies for Resistance
with a speaker from London Fightback and reports from different sectors in Lewisham
Tues Jan 12th, 8pm
Deptford Town Hall
New Cross Road

Camden

We won't let the cutters off the hook!

Herbert Morrison once said that socialism is whatever a Labour government does.

The Camden Labour Group has carried this to its logical conclusion.

Socialism, for them, is what a Labour Council does under a Tory government: attacking the local working class and introducing racist measures.

When the Camden Labour Councillors stood for election in May 1986, they did so on the basis of a manifesto which promised no Tory cuts even if it meant conflict with the government. They therefore *lied* to the electors about their intentions.

Now they are *lying* about their intentions to consult either the Labour Party or the community about major policy issues.

They are *lying* when they claim to protect front-line jobs and services and equal opportunities. The massive package of cuts, 20% in services and 2,500 jobs, is being pushed through the Labour Party by bullying and verbal abuse of the opposition and undemocratic procedures.

Management is allowed to intimidate staff into applying for redundancy or retirement, and is quoting the Tory anti-union laws to sabotage resistance.

The Labour Group's only answer to the 11 in the Manifesto Group of Councillors who oppose the cuts is that they should remain in office to protect the working class against the worst effects of the cuts. To do anything else, they believe, would be to hand over power to the Tories.

For Group Leader Tony Dykes, being in office is the same thing as being in power.

From the beginning, Camden Labour Briefing warned that cuts, however small, were in essence anti-working class. It was an illusion that we had power as a Council; as it was really the Tories and the City banks dictating to the Labour Group.

This is now confirmed by the racist measures adopted by the LGC to repatriate Irish people, and possibly other national groups, to reduce the homelessness bill.

Local Government Committee Chair Martin Plaut, a supporter of the Labour Group line, admits implicitly that the measure is racist, but says that "if the Tories were in office, they would introduce much more racist measures." So now, it appears, there are *degrees* of racism; and anti-racist commitment, like all our other pledges, are only relative.

By Fred Leplat
Camden Labour Briefing

For the Council workers and community there is little difference between the Labour Group and the Tories: it is only a question of degree.

The only alternative is to fight back in Camden and across London. The role of the Manifesto Gorup of Councillors is to facilitate the Council unions and the community organisations in their fight against cuts and against privatisation.

There has been in the past a tradition in Camden of fighting back. 25 years ago Labour Councillors supported a bitter tenants' rent strike in St Pancras against a Tory Council.

Those Councillors who stood by the tenants were expelled from the Labour Party. Now the Labour Group is preparing to do the same, by removing the whip from the Manifesto Councillors.

As the Labour Group, and the Kinnock supporters in the local Labour Party, attack socialists and the working class, they abandon any remaining idea that socialism is about a new type of society.

They now no longer even pretend that capitalism can gradually be reformed: it is a question of remaining in office and managing capitalism.

Those in the labour movement who have turned their backs on the working class and sided with the bosses are called scabs. The Miners had the UDM. In Camden we have the Labour Group.

LAMBETH

Fight Alton!

Lambeth Against Alton has been holding weekly meetings for over a month every Tuesday, 7.30pm, Lambeth Town Hall. These have attracted wide representation from pro-choice supporters in the borough.

The groups organises weekly petitioning and leafletting in Brixton, which has met with strong support and interest.

The most successful event organised so far has been a public meeting called by Vauxhall Women's Section and sponsored and built by Lambeth Against Alton and Vauxhall and Norwood Labour Parties.

The meeting was attended by about 100 people who heard Jo Richardson report the growing opposition to Alton amongst Labour MPs. It appears that all London Labour MPs are now committed to vote against Alton.

Leonora Lloyd from national FAB explained the scale of the campaign needed. Linda Bellos, whilst stressing the need of all women to control their own fertility, outlined some of the specific concerns of black women about abortion.

Other speakers were Cllr Joan Twelves from Lambeth Against Alton and Charolotte Atkins from COHSE, both of whom spoke of their personal experiences of abortion.

Lambeth Against Alton is also sponsoring a picket of William Shelton's surgery. Shelton, Conservative MP for Streatham, is well-known as a "Life" supporter.

Our next major focus will be a South London demonstration to be held on January 16th at Clapham Common, 12 noon. Further details and publicity can be obtained from: Juliet (671 7285); Joan (582 2955); or write to the S. London Women's Centre, 55 Acre Lane, SW2.

Anne Potter

Westminster

Taking on the fight against the Tories

Tory-dominated Westminster City Council is following Margaret Thatcher's method of intimidating all those who oppose it.

By Paula Watson
Westminster South CLP

The first line of attack is through the police and the courts. This started when the police were used to break up a meeting of the housing committee by arresting from the public gallery four NUPE shop stewards, who are all activists against the Council's privatisation plans, and five Labour Councillors.

Since then a war of attrition has been waged against the nine. After two appearances at the magistrates court, carefully spaced to provide the maximum strain and anxiety, the five Councillors have been committed for trial next February, with the hearings carefully arranged in such a way that it will be difficult for them to appear in each other's defence.

The four shop stewards have been subjected to pressure at work. All are Council employees and have been up on disciplinary charges. They could be sacked at any moment.

So great has the strain become that three of them have chosen to pay fines rather than let their cases go to court. Indeed one has found his position so difficult that he has taken early retirement.

The Tory Council is using highly questionable contracts for those in temporary accommodation. In one grim block, Chester House in Victoria, tenants are required to sign a contract stipulating that they cannot have visitors after 10.30pm.

It provides for the street door to be locked at the same time, so that the many tenants who do not have a key to the outside cannot get in or out.

Council officers have keys to all the flats, which they use without warning or even knocking, barging in on the occupants, many of them women on their own or with children.

Tenants who complain are told that they risk jeopardising their chances of moving to better accommodation.

Despite the initimidation the fightback is growing stronger.

Tenants in Chester House are beginning to organise and a will to resist is emerging. Tenants realise that their chances of ever being rehoused are growing increasingly slim in the face of the Council's policy of selling off more and more of its property. Meetings are being held and contact has been made with the Labour Group.

Borough-wide, people are queueing up to sign the petition against designated sales; and lobbies at both meetings of the Council and the Housing Committee are loud and well attended.

The estate agents handling the sales seem to be a bit unnerved by constant picketing and the invasion of their offices by tenants action committees.

Meanwhile Westminster Workers agianst the Cuts is continuing its campaign against privatisation, despite the victimisation of its leading activists, who are still in the forefront of the struggle.

With the help of Westminster North Labour Party they are producing a leaflet explaining the facts on privatisation to be distributed to the Council workforce, who have been consistently misled by union leaders.

Some disorganisation is even becoming apparent in the Tory Group itself, many of whom are plainly unhappy at the strength of the opposition.

The dreadful Lady Porter rose from a hospital bed to fight off an attempt to dislodge her from the leadership. The attack failed for now, but there is much grumbling in the ranks. After all, they only have a majority of three, and this could easily be lost next time round.

GLLP Conference

GLLP London Labour Party rules socialism out of order!

By Joan Twelves
GLLP Executive
(personal capacity)

A resolution from Hammersmith CLP to the London Labour Party's Special Conference on December 13th at the Elephant and Castle Leisure Centre has been ruled out of order on the grounds that it is not relevant to the future strategy of Labour in London.

The contentious resolution is short and straight to the point:

"To introduce socialism, immediately, into all London Labour Party policies."

Along with 14 other resolutions, Hammersmith's simple plea has been ruled out of order by the Standing Orders Committee.

Also ruled out are resolutions from the NCU, the AEU, Islington South and Holborn & St Pancras, as well as those from Norwood, Vauxhall, Brent East and Westminster North. In fact, only 10 resolutions have been accepted!

Standing Orders could well have some difficulty explaining the reasons for their decisions to the Conference. I certainly can't work out why it's acceptable to discuss a resolution about campaigning on social security, child benefit and the Nationality Act, when those about campaigning on housing, education, privatisation and the poll tax are ruled out of order because they seek to amend *A Plan to Win*, which specifies only one campaign — on housing.

And I can't find a Standing Order which rules out resolutions on the grounds that they seek to negate previous decisions. Especially when those decisions were slipped through a Conference without any discussion or advance notice under the guise of a Chair's report.

One thing about this Conference is therefore predictable. It's going to start with a lengthy wrangle as delegates try to get their resolutions onto the agenda.

Another thing which is predictable is that the right wing and block votes of the big three (NUPE, TGWU and RACS) will bulldoze through NUPE's proposed rule changes to reduce the size of the Regional Executive, thereby excluding the smaller unions and gerrymandering the CLP section in yet another attempt to get rid of the left.

The reduction of the trade union section from 16 to 12 will allow more than half of those places (seven) to be taken by just three unions (TGWU, NUPE and GMB).

They will also presumably bulldoze through endorsement of the Officers' strategy document *A Plan to Win*. What is less predictable though is how the debate will go.

Despite the efforts of Standing Orders, not one of the resolutions admitted to the agenda wholeheartedly endorses *A Plan to Win* and almost all the resolutions submitted indicate an eagerness to wage a fight against some or all the Tories' attacks on the inner city, with many of them challenging the capitulation of London's Local Authority leaders — including calls for London-wide demonstrations against cuts in jobs and services.

These calls need to be taken up — whether or not the particular resolutions are allowed to be debated — and the defeatism and weakness of *A Plan to Win* challenged. The London Party mustn't be allowed to hide from the fact that the Tories are waging war on the people of London — especially those in the inner city — and that people *are* fighting back: in the health service, London Transport, the Post Office, and in Local Authorities against Labour Councils making cuts. A fighting strategy has to be worked out — and acted upon.

The opportunity also has to be taken to expose the fact that the Leadership of the London Party is more concerned with witch-hunting the left than with developing a real strategy for defending Londoners and winning London back to Labour. Regional staff certainly aren't spending all their time developing campaigns, leading membership drives and supporting those in struggle.

In fact, Terry Ashton, the General Secretary of the London Party, seems to be spending most of his time working out how to shut down Bermondsey CLP. He has drawn up a secret report which the constituency officers aren't allowed to see; NEC members aren't allowed to see; and even the ex-General Secretary of the Labour Party isn't allowed to see. But he's happy to tell the press about it.

The other thing he's been up to has been conniving with Neil Fletcher to get the ILEA Labour Party rules changed so that teachers can be witch-hunted more easily.

A clause has been added by the NEC, without consultation, which will require ILEA Management Committee delegates to complete a Register of Interests showing whether they are directly or indirectly employed by ILEA. They won't be able to vote if there's a "clash of interests". Freemasons, yes; NUT or NUPE members (and their partners), no.

And they say they want to increase Party membership!

It looks as though Hammersmith is going to have to wait a while for socialism to return to the London Labour Party. In the meantime, the Conference can at least be used to challenge and expose these witch-hunts, call the Chair and General Secretary to account, and demand a fightback is organised — with or without the support of the London Party.

London Labour Party Conference Briefing Fringe Meeting

LONDON'S FIGHTBACK

Speakers:
Sharon Atkin
Jeremy Corbyn MP
Joan Twelves
Nadine Finch
Steve King

Walworth Town Hall, Walworth Road
12.30 pm
Sunday December 13th

LCC: the main obstacle

By Cllr Frank Hansen
Brent

This Conference comes at an important time in the development of the left in London.

Since Thatcher's victory in June there has been a decisive shift to the right in the London labour movement, particularly at local government level, with Labour Councils literally vying with each other in imposing massive cuts in jobs and services.

This shift to the right has been led and orchestrated by the "soft left" and the LCC.

The basis of their politics is that Thatcher is so powerful and the working class in London is so demoralised that we have no alternative but to implement "humane" cuts in order to stave off the Tory onslaught.

The "bottom line" of no cuts in jobs and services whch united the left has now been abandoned. Capitulation is the order of the day, and this formula of retreat is the policy — we are told — that will bring Labour to power both in London and nationally.

Briefing supporters recognise that the alliance between the soft and hard left in London, which has been crumbling since the rate-capping struggle of 1985, is now finally at an end.

We do not underestimate the financial crisis facing local government in London. Fuelled by the fall in the Stock Markets and the likelihood of a world recession, the economic calamity facing Labour Councils will intensify.

At present many of the soft left ALA cuts are far from "humane". In next year's budgets we will see even worse attacks on the very people who put Labour into power in 1986.

Far from providing a strategy for electoral success, these concessions to Thatcherism will only pave the way for further demoralisation and defeat. Kinnock's election failure clearly demonstrates the futility of trying to combat Thatcherism with watered down reformist politics based on the middle class.

In contrast Labour was swept to power in many London boroughs in 1986 as a result of the struggles of the NUM, Lambeth, Liverpool, and the campaign against GLC abolition. No matter how difficult, this is the road which needs to be followed if the present tide is to be turned.

The reality is that the soft left, with their policy of cuts and capitulation, have now become the main *obstacle* to any united fightback in London. The fightback campaigns in many London boroughs have shown that there is a will to fight the Tory government, that the labour movement is not half as "demoralised" as the politicians of the soft left are themselves.

This is the future of the labour movement in London and it is on this basis that Thatcherism can be challenged and defeated.

A Plan to *Win*?

By Kate Allen
Hackney North CLP

The Greater London Labour Party has presented the document *A Plan to Win* to the special December Conference designed to mark Labour's fightback in the capital.

In totally contradictory terms this report advocates that Labour Councils stay in office, defend and even create and improve jobs and services but rejects a strategy of outright defiance through deficit budgeting.

The paper also stresses a firm commitment to Equal Opportunities although this of course is dependent on the "overriding duty to win elections".

What the GLLP Plan fails to appreciate is that commitment to Equal Opportunities requires a corresponding increase in finance to meet needs. It demands that at the very least left wing Councils stand by the manifesto commitments they were elected on; otherwise the whole thing is just a paper exercise.

Cuts affect everybody, especially the vulnerable and oppressed members of the community who are so poorly represented in offices of power.

As each Labour Council has capitulated Equal Opportunities policies set up to fight discrimination in employment and service delivery have been eroded. As Councils shift rightwards in attitude to defend their action women, children, black and ethnic minorities, lesbians and gay men, the elderly, those with mental health problems and disabilities suffer.

Directly after Thatcher was elected for a third term, Margaret Hodge, Leader of Islington Council, wrote a strategy paper clearly advocating a cuts position.

On privatisation, Hodge admitted that the threatened areas such as catering and office cleaning are those where significant numbers of Black and women staff are employed. Prohibiiton of "non-commerical" considerations in preparation of contracts would restrict the Council's freedom to oppose South African apartheid.

Hodge offered no strategy to fight this. Not surprisingly Islington Council has since employed Coopers and Lybrand an accountancy firm with investments in South Africa to help with their budget crisis.

When workers in the Policy Unit refused to co-operate the Council threatened them with suspension without pay, a tactic now frequently used in Islington to suppress any struggle through industrial action.

In addition a management services review of the Chief Executive Department in the recently decentralised neighbourhood offices has recommended generic job descriptions bringing an end to posts with specific skills like receptionist and cashier.

The expectation is that during sickness, holidays and in the event of job vacancies workers will cover for one another so that management will then phase out all temporary and relief staff.

When NALGO refused to implement this management indicated that their first move would be to terminate temporary contracts. Needless to say, many low-paid black workers are employed in the Chief Executive Department.

London's Housing crisis has escalated due to Labour boroughs reneging on their commitment to the homeless. Camden Council hit the headlines for the temporary closure of its homeless persons unit and its new policy of repatriation of Irish homeless families.

All those who are vulnerable and homeless are drastically affected by the closure and Black and ethnic minority people are subject to backdoor immigration controls.

Workers who tried to carry out Council policy and offer a decent service are now being punished because of the Council's panic measures in a financial crisis.

Hackney Labour Group, prior to the Borough Conference on the Council's budget crisis, took matters into their own hands and agreed a policy of placing Bed and Breakfast Families into sub-standard properties to clamp down on massive spending increases in this area. This has coincided with a large number of evictions of squatters, heavy police presence and the installation of "squatter-proof doors" and bars.

Hackney North and South GCs have passed resolutions in protest at this treatment of the homeless, but it continues.

The "new realism" of cuts means that any opposition to sexism and heterosexism are forgotten. Hackney Council are reviewing their committee structures. A draft report recommended the abolition of separate committees so that Women's issues will be represented under the mass label of Equal Opportunities. As all temporary posts in Hackney are under threat the *only* two lesbian and gay workers may lose their jobs.

Conditions for female workers are worsened as in Hackney locum cover for maternity leave has been cut. Child care provision has been underspent in order to compensate for a budget crisis in Social Services.

In other Labour boroughs the closure of nurseries and cessation of funding for community sector child care resources are seen as legitimate savings options.

In conclusion the Greater London Labour Party is mistaken in its view that commitment to Equal Opportunities is secondary to and separate from campaigning to win elections.

Nor is it correct in its assumption that that commitment can be made alongside a drastic reduction in public spending. Cuts hurt and those who are oppressed suffer most but in times of struggle they fight hardest.

In the 1984 Miners' Strike women, children, Black people, lesbians and gay men united to save working class communities, and this should never be forgotten. Those alliances that were so effective during that period can still be constructed on the basis of a united opposition to the cuts in local government imposed by the Tories.

This is already happening in the various Fightback campaigns across London, where the Labour Party, trade unions and local communities are organising in defence of Council services. The GLLP must decide which side it is on by opposing all cuts and supporting the London fightback movement.

Lambeth

Left councillors resign in disgust

Eight senior Labour Councillors, including the Chief Whip, have resigned their positions in disgust at Lambeth Council's £60 million spending cuts and have called on Council Leader, Linda Bellos, to do the same.

"Linda Bellos was not elected as Leader to make cuts," a spokesperson said. "She is ignoring the wishes of the local Labour Parties and breaking the promises she made to the people of Lambeth solely to hold on to power at all costs."

"We are no longer prepared to remain part of an Administration which is destroying services and making staff redundant as part of the government's attack on local people."

The resignations come as the Labour Council embarks on a second round of cuts to close a £60 million gap caused by government's spending restrictions. Recruitment has already been frozen, with the aim of cutting the Council's workforce by a fifth, and rents will be going up by at least £2.50 in April.

But with £16 million still to be found, jobs will inevitably be cut back even further, with staff being forcibly redeployed into "priority" areas. The Councillors who oppose the cuts argue that tenants will be paying more for a worse service; that the people of Lambeth need more and better services, not less, and that Linda Bellos is playing into the hands of the Tory government by making the cuts for them.

"Everyone knows the next step is compulsory redundancy — and with one in four unemployed the last thing Lambeth needs is more people on the dole."

"We are not going to disappear," pledged former Chief Whip, Joan Twelves. "We will remain as Councillors, working with the trade unions, the community, tenants and the local Labour Parties to fight these cuts, to protect our services, and to build opposition to all the government's attacks on the people of Lambeth."

The Councillors who have resigned their positions are:
Joan Twelves, *Chief Whip*
Julian Lewis, *Deputy Whip, Chair Police Committee, Vice Chair Construction Services*
Steve French, *Chair Construction Services*
Greg Tucker, *Chair Economic Activity & Employment*
Alison Higgs, *Chair of Health & Consumer Services*
Jonathan Oppenheimer, *Vice Chair Health & Consumer Services, Chair Norwood District Housing Committee*
John Harrison, *Vice Chair Social Services*
Bill Houghting, *Chair Brixton District Housing Committee*



PHOTO: Leesa Herbert

December 5th

Camden

Who's next for the chop?

Does Camden's ruling Labour Group want to rewrite the Homeless Persons Legislation for the Tories?

If not, they should immediately instruct officers to stop operating new racist criteria in the assessment of homeless applicants.

The irony of the Homeless Persons Section — that it has been closed to the public since April — should need no underlining.

Since September, however, the introduction of new guidelines by the Labour Group has resulted in the effectual deportation of homeless Irish people.

For example, a couple who had previously been accepted as Camden's responsibility went to County Sligo to show relatives their new baby. They returned to Camden to discover their hotel booking had been cancelled and were offered a travel warrant to return to Eire, although the Irish authorities had stated they were unable to provide accommodation.

Camden's Chair of Housing has been asked for political "guidance" on a further 3 cases involving 2 Bengali families and a Filipino family. He has stated publicly that Camden will not use the Tower Hamlets High Court ruling and therefore cannot presumably find these households "intentionally homeless".

By Fran Mason
HPU steward

Will he then be providing travel warrants for them to return to Bangladesh and the Philippines as he has with the Irish?

And if the Chair of Housing is serious about not using the Tower Hamlets judgement, and not forcibly repatriating people, why has he not yet made a decision on these cases, which were passed to him at the beginning of November?

Although the leadership of the Council deny it, this new policy is clearly in breach of any commitment to equal opportunities and results in forced repatriation.

Homeless Irish families are faced with the choice of sleeping on the streets of London or returning to Ireland where if they are lucky accommodation may be made available for them.

The relentless attack on the homeless has been waged alongside an attack on workers in the Homeless Persons Section. The unions have made constant pleas for managerial guidance, better systems and staff to perform essential tasks such as hotel occupancy checks. Yet Councillors and senior management chose to do nothing, until October 9th, when staff were locked out of their workplace and criminalised in the press because of alleged "irregularities" in the bed and breakfast budget.

An audit is being carried out and has proved original estimates of these "irregularities" to be wildly exaggerated.

Staff at the section are desperate to re-open and have campaigned extensively with local voluntary groups. Support has been forthcoming from other sections of the Council, housing workers from other London boroughs and *Briefing* councillors within Camden's Labour Group.

Clearly, other London Boroughs are closely monitoring the situation in Camden with a view to adopting their own harsher policies towards the homeless. A Labour authority, formerly committed to extending provision for the homeless, cannot be allowed to lead the way in decimating services to the homeless across London.

Camden must reconsider its new policies or face up to the fact that any commitment to equal opportunities has been discarded. The Labour Group was elected on its manifesto commitment to support groups such as the homeless, ethnic minorities, and women, amongst others. The homeless have already been betrayed — who is next?

Bermondsey witch-hunt

Ashton own goal (again!)

PAUL FOLEY spoke to JOHN BRYAN, Labour candidate for Bermondsey in the 1987 General Election.

Bermondsey CLP is currently facing the threat of suspension and expulsion of 40 of its most active members.

The list includes John Bryan, the Labour candidate for Bermondsey in the General Election.

The source of the threat is a secret report prepared by Terry Ashton, General Secretary of the Greater London Labour Party, which will be discussed at the Labour Party NEC on December 16th.

This report must come as a great surprise to the local Party. On June 15th John Bryan received a letter from Terry Ashton thanking him for his "tremendous efforts in the general election campaign". The letter goes on to describe Bermondsey as a "successful campaign" and ends with "thanks for a very hard and well-fought election". Spot on Brother Ashton.

Although Ashton's report has been leaked to the press, the officers of Bermondsey CLP have been refused a copy. The first John Bryan knew of the report was when he was contacted by a reporter from the *South London Press*.

- When officers of Bermondsey CLP contacted Terry Ashton for a copy, they were told to find out about it in the newspapers.
- When asked if the report had gone to the GLLP Executive, Ashton replied that he was employed by Walworth Road, and answerable only to the NEC.

Therefore, Bermondsey CLP have been given no opportunity to reply to any of the allegations in the report. Nice one, Brother Ashton. Full marks for dishonesty and blatant disregard of democratic procedures.

One can only surmise that Bermondsey CLP is being punished for its consistent campaigning against the rent increases and cuts in jobs and services introduced by Southwark Council.

The political consequences of this attempted witch-hunt may be devastating. At the last General Election Bermondsey CLP campaigned on a programme of socialist policies and increased the Labour vote by 23%, gaining one of the biggest swings to Labour in London.

With the Alliance in total disarray, Bermondsey CLP is poised to recapture the seat for Labour. The last thing they need is a Terry Ashton own goal.

The expulsion of 40 of its best militants and the disbanding of Bermondsey CLP will probably lead to the suspension of the CLP and severely damage Labour's chances at the next election.

Bermondsey CLP is urging supporters to send the following motion of protest:

"This ..... is outraged at the decision of Terry Ashton, General Secretary of the Greater London Labour Party, to send a report to the National Executive Committee recommending the suspension of Southwark-Bermondsey Labour Party and the subsequent expulsion of up to 40 Party members.

"We note that this report was prepared secretly and behind the back of the Party, without any reference to Party officers or any Party body. So far the Party has not been allowed a copy of this report, although information in the report appears to have been supplied to the press.

"Apparently the NEC could suspend the Party and expel 40 members without the Party seeing the evidence.

"This ..... is opposed to suspension and to any expulsions arising from the report, and calls on the NEC to reject it outright."

Resolutions and letters of protest should be sent to: Larry Whitty, The Labour Party, 150 Walworth Road, London SE17.

Messages of support and donations should be sent to: Bermondsey Labour Party Defence Fund, c/o 91 Mina Road, London SE17 2QS.

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No cuts in jobs!
Save public services!
Defy the government!

Islington North's MP
JEREMY CORBYN
and his agent
KEITH VENESS
Send greetings to GLLP Conference
and demand:
JUSTICE FOR PENSIONERS!
Abolish standing charges now!