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# BRIEFING
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## ILEA: nowhere left to run

# STAND AND FIGHT!

**The Tory Cabinet has decided that ILEA will be abolished and control of education in inner London handed over to the local boroughs. To defeat the attack a well organised united campaign of the whole labour and trade union movement in London is needed.**

Even before abolition, Baker's decision to insist on ILEA setting a maximum rate at 81.6 pence in the £ gave notice of massive job losses and wholesale damage to the service if the Labour Group sticks to its "balanced budget" road.

The education service, like the NHS, faces problems that are a consequence of central Tory policy decisions. Like the Health Service, it is not possible to limit the horizons of the fightback to one of campaigning locality by locality. That is where we can start — but we need to go further.

**By Bernard Regan**

Suspended NUT Executive Member
Inner London

The level of spending on education in inner London is greater than anywhere else in the country. That is the legacy of generations of working class people fighting to improve education going back to the last century. It reflects the needs of children and young people in the London of the 1980s.

The current Labour leadership were elected on the basis of a manifesto which declared a commitment to maintaining that educational provision. That leadership now has to declare what its intentions are. Will it make Baker's cuts or will it stand by that manifesto? Will it fight to preserve an Inner London Education Authority — or will it leave those of us in poorer boroughs to go hang?

There are no such things as "socialist cuts" and no amount of handwringing can cover the fact that Labour members implementing a budget on the basis of the rate level determined by Baker are implementing Tory policies. It is no consolation to a sacked cleaner, school keeper, dinner worker, technician, office worker, librarian or teacher that they were cut by Labour members. And trying to organise a fight against abolition will be undermined by implementing cuts.

The Labour Group has to make a choice — spend the next year implementing Baker's cuts — or join the groundswell of working class resistance to the Tory government.

Majority opposition poses the same problems as staying in office — they can be surcharged for voting down a "legal" budget. Resigning and fighting an election will simply leave the Tories in power at County Hall to make the cuts in their absence.

The present situation was entirely foreseeable. Over the years union after union warned them that their so-called "creative accounting" was nothing of the sort. It simply put off the problem.

On February 9th the Inner London Teachers' Association held a one day strike to protest against the government's decision on rate-capping and abolition and to call upon ILEA to refuse to make cuts.

ILTA does not consider this action to be solely in defence of teacher jobs but rather a defence of all jobs and of the whole service.

What is needed is a campaign that unites all those who are prepared to fight, which brings together all the unions. Perhaps the upping of the stakes will persuade other unions to respond to ILTA's initiatives.

Continued on back page

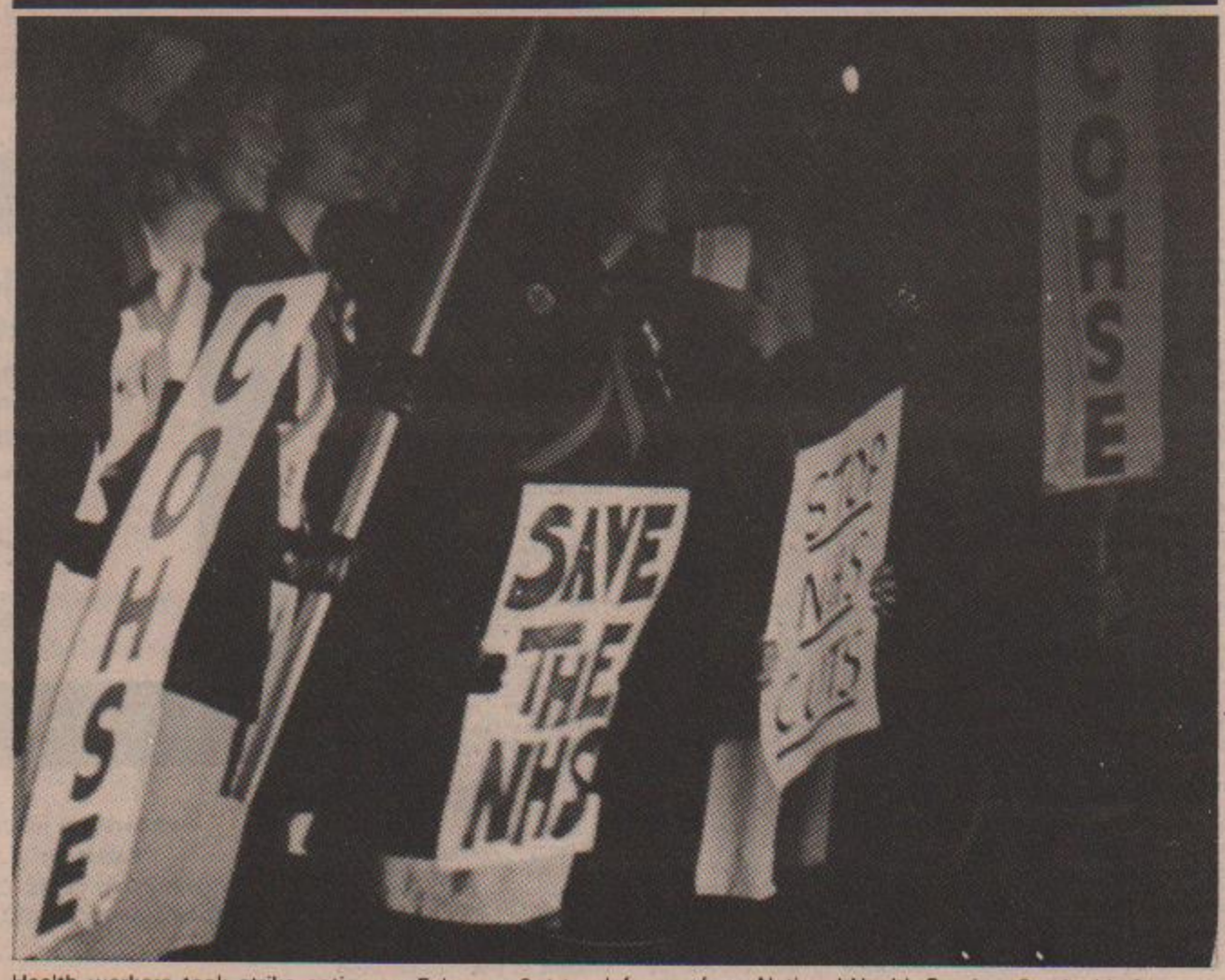



PHOTO: Martine Stead

Health workers took strike action on February 3rd in defence of our National Health Service. See inside for London and National coverage.

**LABOUR—TAKE THE POWER!**

# March 8th

## Support grows

**NALGO Metropolitan District Council has called on all local government NALGO branches in London to strike on March 8th.**

**The decision came after the District Council was told that the ILEA Joint Union Committee had decided to organise a one day strike on March 8th to protest against cuts in jobs and services and against the attack on ILEA.**

The call for a London-wide strike in defence of Council jobs and against the new laws attacking local government was initiated back in October by London Fights Back (the anti-cuts campaign) and London Bridge (the shop stewards network).

The date of Wednesday March 9th had been set; publicity produced; and 12 NALGO branch, ILTA and Haringey NUT, and three Building Department Joint Shop Stewards Committees had backed this call.

When the one-day strike was discussed on the ILEA Joint Union Committee, NUPE proposed that a one day strike with a demonstration be held on March 8th. This suggestion was deliberately put to undermine the idea of co-ordinated action to resist government attacks on a London-wide basis.

However, London Bridge agreed to shift the date of its action to ensure maximum unity across London, and the emergency resolution to the NALGO District Council calling for support for strike action on March 8th was overwhelmingly supported, despite attempts from the district leadership to confuse the discussion.

These decisions by the ILEA JUC and NALGO District Council are a victory for left activists in the unions. The present round of cuts in London Councils will lead to the disappearance of 20,000 jobs; yet the district and national leaderships of NALGO and NUPE have been sitting on their hands.

They claim that one day strikes do not bring results and that a general discussion on strategy is necessary. This is true — but that is no reason to do nothing as their members are thrown on the dole.

The official support of NALGO and the ILEA unions for a one day strike will make it a lot easier to encourge union members to strike on March 8th. It will, however, still be up to local union branches and shop stewards to do the work of mobilising members for the strike and demonstration.

London Bridge and London Fight Back will therefore still play a crucial role in ensuring that the one day strike and demonstration is a success.

**London Bridge Co-ordinating meeting for the one day strike:**
**Every Monday at 6pm, Room S126, North Block, County Hall**
**Make sure that your union is affiliated to London Bridge and sends delegates.**
**Donations are necessary for the cost of leaflets and posters.**

**LONDON BRIDGE**
**General Meeting**
**Thursday February 18th, 10am**
**Camden Town Hall**
**Details from Ed Hall, the Secretary, London Bridge, 9-15 New Park Road, London SW2 4DU.**
**01-674 9844 ext. 180**

# ILEA strategy debate

## How to fight the cuts

By Ian Harrison

**Any *Save ILEA* campaign will only succeed if it recognises the conditions in which Baker's abolition proposal has arisen were created by the Labour Group's response to Ridley's budget.**

Previous *Save ILEA* campaigns have rallied parents and teachers in defence of a unified inner London education service because ILEA was committed to comprehensive education for all ages with a high level of resourcing given a background of acute urban deprivation.

This is no longer the case. ILEA has already antagonised most of its teaching staff by its policy of compulsory redeployment and has alienated even more staff with a selective vacancy freeze.

Now it is poised to make cuts of £117 million which will destroy any remnants of staff support and will turn parents and students against the Labour politicans responsible.

What are the possible responses to the crisis?

- To demand that the ILEA Labour Group should vote against a cuts budget and risk surcharge. But there is as much chance of them doing that as there is of Neil Kinnock calling for a General Strike.
- Majority opposition: the Labour Group sits on its hands whilst the ILEA Tories vote the cuts through. Labour would intervene subsequently to manage the cuts "in a humane way".

In practice, public perception (and reality!) would be of Labour acquiescing in the cuts and collaborating in their implementation.

- Labour should keep control of ILEA for the next six months in order to defeat the abolition amendment.

This would be doomed to failure if, hand in hand with public announcements about saving education in inner London, Labour ILEA was busy destroying the service through cuts.

The only viable strategy which could mobilise popular support behind a Labour Party campaign to stop the cuts and save the education service is to declare publicly that ILEA is no longer under Labour Party control but is run by central diktat from Whitehall; and a formal recognition of this by *the resignation of ILEA members with their CLPs refusing to contest the subsequent by-election.*

Labour can *not* sustain an adequate education service for inner London with a 10% budget cut this year, and further cuts in subsequent years. Instead of agonising in committees about which cuts to make and attracting public anger on the Labour Party, socialist ILEA members should be out on the streets, and in campaign rooms exposing the government's destruction of democratic control of inner London education, and organising resistance to every cut in every school, college and nursery.

This strategy does not require a majority of ILEA Labour members to work; only ten (or more) need to resign with the backing of their constituency parties.

We fought for ILEA in the past because we wanted to defend our education service. Now it is only determined opposition to *cuts* in the education service which will give Labour any chance of re-establishing a properly-resourced ILEA in the future and of strengthening the forces of opposition instead of demoralising them.

Hammersmith CLP has voted for this strategy. Other inner London parties should be debating their approach and instructing their ILEA members accordingly.

## *Fightback now!*

**At last, after years of procrastination, the Cabinet have decided to come clean about ILEA abolition.**

By Steve Cowan

Of course everyone always knew that it was the long term intention of the Tories to abolish ILEA. But now no one, not even fellow travelling local Tory and Alliance parents can fudge the issue.

Despite what is now a special ILEA tradition of bashing the teachers and their union, there will be a massive response, led by the NUT, to prevent the break-up of ILEA.

As with the previous four *Save ILEA* campaigns it will be the degree of teachers involvement and organisation which will make all the difference.

At stake is the future of Local Education Authorities (LEAs) as democratically accountable, local providers of education. This government sees the continuing existence of ILEA, as the largest and most influential LEA, as a blockage to their programme to shift control of schooling and training away from the community and into the hands of employers.

Therefore all local government workers and service users should rally to the *Save ILEA* campaign.

In the next few weeks this campaign will broaden out from its present base in what has come to be known as the "opt out boroughs".

With everyone who is involved in education at any level opposed to abolition, the opportunity to *defeat* the government is there. Past campaigns have shown that mass public support can be mobilised and that this has altered government proposals.

Any campaign should consciously link with the growing militancy amongst London healthworkers and industrial action in targetted constituencies must be planned now.

Through this maximum political pressure can be brought to bear against inner London Tory MPs. It is no good kicking off a campaign and ruling out industrial action, as Neil Fletcher, Leader of ILEA, did in the week abolition was announced.

Forty years ago the Palestinians saw most of their country being wiped off the map to be replaced by a state within which they had few rights: Israel. They became refugees in their own land. Twenty years later, in 1967, Israel occupied what was left of historical Palestine, the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.

Arbitrary arrests and imprisonment, the denial of basic human rights make up daily life for the 1.5 million Palestinians living under military occupation in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. They have had their lands taken away from them, and on this land Israeli settlements have been built which now encircle every major Palestinian town and village. Their economy has been wrecked, their population turned into a source of cheap labour for Israel.

Ruled by a military administration, the Palestinians have had to organise themselves to provide basic health care. Their Youth and Students Committees have helped to build their colleges and recreation clubs. In short, they have been organising to replace the role of the state they have been denied, and they have been organising to thwart Israel's attempts to grind down the occupied population until they are prepared to retract their allegiance to the PLO and sign away their rights to self-determination in Palestine

Twenty years of occupation have been matched by twenty years of struggle. The Palestinians refuse to bow down to Israeli pressure to leave Palestine. Neither are they prepared to accept Israel's autonomy plan which will effectively make them like the Bantustans in South Africa.

The silent resistance has finally erupted into the most widespread, violent, and protracted rebellion to have taken place since Israel first consolidated its occupation in 1967 - only to be echoed by a massive mobilisation of Palestinians inside Israel in a solidarity general strike.

Rarely, if ever before, has Israel seen such a demonstration of unity among the Palestinians within its borders. That this unity emerged in solidarity with the Palestinians outside Israel has demonstrated that Palestine can stand as a nation. The level of struggle that has been kept up for six weeks in the face of live ammunition, tear gas and mass arrests is a measure of the anger and militancy among the Palestinians. Unfortunately, the British labour movement has yet again failed to respond. In the face of the media outcry at Israel's treatment of the Palestinians the Labour Party has almost played the role of apologist for the actions of Israel, while the TUC has remained silent, and is certain to want to continue in its close relations with the Histadrut.

The Palestinian struggle will continue, and we must fight for the British labour movement to support them

Come to our meeting.

**Palestine Occupation**
**1948 - 1967 - 1988**
**Public Meeting by the Labour Movement Campaign for Palestine**
**Monday February 15th, 7.30pm**
**Conway Hall, Red Lion Square**
**Chair:**
Jeremy Corbyn MP
**Speakers:**
Harry Cohen MP
Palestinian Journalist
NALGO Black Members

☐ I/we wish to join/affiliate to the Labour Movement Campaign for Palestine.
Membership costs £2.50, unwaged £1.00. Affiliation for organisations £5.00.

Name .....

Address .....

*Please return to:*
*The Secretary, BM LMCP, London WC1N-3XX.*

# Local Government round-up

## Camden

# Camden sets the pace in making cuts

**On February 8th a special meeting in Camden decided to withdraw the Labour Whip from eleven Councillors who dared to oppose the Council's policy of cuts.**

**The eleven had already been removed from all Committees where they held Executive authority, and the withdrawal of the Whip is a continuation of this process.**

The Camden Leadership argue that the eleven are refusing to abide by Group Standing Orders. Yet Right wing Councillors have refused to abide by Standing Orders for years.

Camden's entire rate-capping strategy was destroyed by right wing Councillors voting against the Group and with the Tories. The current financial crisis was partly precipitated by right wingers appealing directly to the District Auditor.

**By Steve Taylor**
**Camden Labour Briefing**

No action has ever been taken against them; they continue to chair Committees, hold Group positions, and are vociferous members of the Group.

The Whip was removed from the eleven for the simple reason that they have opposed the cuts.

The Labour manifesto in Camden was quite explicit. There was a commitment to defend and extend jobs and services, and that the Labour Councillors would lead the inevitable confrontation with central government.

A Labour Council in Camden had never, and would never, make Tory cuts. The eleven have stood by this promise, and have adopted the name of *Manifesto Councillors*.

Since June 1987 the Manifesto has become a dead letter in Camden. In unison with their Conservative financial strategy, the Group leadership have instigated a Conservative political strategy.

They have attempted to divide the working class. In the trade unions, NUPE were promised exemption from the most draconian cuts if they agreed to support the financial strategy. The more reactionary voluntary organisations were promised continued funding if they refused to support the more radical voluntary groups.

The more conservative Tenants Associations were promised continued services if they refused to support black and ethnic minority organisations, gay and lesbian groups, and women's organisations.

None of these promises have ever been kept, but that was never the point. The purpose of the exercise was to divide the working class and then to attack those workers and communities who remained in the forefront of resistance.

Voluntary organisations which supported the eleven have found their funding withdrawn. Women's groups, ethnic minority groups and campaigning community organisations have all had their grants cut — in some cases by 100%.

**NALGO and UCATT members have each received individual letters stating that unless they sign a new contract of employment within two weeks, the Council will assume that they have left their jobs — in other words, they will be sacked.**

Individual Labour Party members have been threatened with disciplinary action; and a member of the Local Government Committee has been removed by Holborn & St Pancras CLP for voting against the Council's repatriation policy.

The withdrawal of the Whip is to be seen in this context. The Leadership can no longer justify their policies and must remove their critics.

Camden is now running ahead of other Labour controlled Local Authorities in making cuts — 21%-50% across the board.

But other Local Authorities will find themselves in the same predicament over the next year.

No matter how hard the Group leaderships attempt to silence criticism, cut opposition and destroy resistance, we and the communities with which we align ourselves will remain. The Group Leadership might have surrendered to the Tories, but we haven't, and neither have the workers and working class communities at the centre of Camden.

## Camden NALGO

# NALGO poised to fight compulsory redeployment

**Camden Council is still attempting to force compulsory redeployment onto 5,000 workers in NALGO.**

At a union meeting on February 3rd the branch executive recommended that further negotiations be sought over a 72 hour period. Yet the previous week the union had voted overwhelmingly for strike action unless the Council withdrew a letter to NALGO members threatening the sack if they didn't sign redeployment agreements.

This is a climbdown by the branch leadership — although the branch agreed to strike at the end of the 72 hour period.

The Council Leadership have conceded nothing besides a withdrawal of the redeployment letter for 72 hours, pending negotiations.

Camden LGC have advised the Council to withdraw its threat of mass redundancies, but it is unlikely that the Labour Group will listen.

They are threatening to use Tory employment legislation to defeat any strike action. Clearly, other pro-cuts Labour Groups will be watching Camden very closely.

Council Leader Tony Dykes still insists that the compulsory redeployment is a necessary part of their (suicidal) budget strategy. This is clearly untrue, with senior management in the Council already expressing strong reservations. The Labour Group is even prepared to attack the closed shop agreement.

It's a positive step forward that after months of relative inactivity, the overwhelming majority of NALGO members are opposed to the Council's redeployment plans and seem prepared to take strike action.

## Islington

# One-day strike by NALGO

**Islington NALGO went on one-day strike on February 4th in defence of jobs and services.**

The strike was planned to coincide with the Policy Committee which was considering a 8-10% cuts package threatening at least 400 Council jobs with devastating effects on services.

Most workplaces were picketed by NALGO members from early morning, and over 2,000 were out on strike showing their disgust at the Council's proposals.

At 5pm a march of over 600 left Highbury Fields to lobby the Policy Committee at the Town Hall. Speakers from ILEA, NHS, Haringey Fights Back!, and Camden NALGO addressed the lobby. Demonstrators called for Councillors to come out of the Town Hall and address them — but none appeared.

**By Kate Adams**
**Hackney Labour Briefing**

When union members tried to go in to the Policy Committee a heavy police presence barred their way to what was supposedly a public meeting. This led to much anger and eventually the police agreed to allow 50 people to go inside.

It appears that Margaret Hodge and pro-cuts Councillors now have to be protected by the police whenever union members want them to justify their actions.

Despite the protests, the Policy Committee approved the recommendations, subject to a number of minor changes. Now at least 400 jobs will be threatened and the Council is on a collision course with NALGO.

## Letter

Dear *Briefing*,

In its report on the current situation in Lambeth, *London Labour Briefing* no. 85 refers to the eight Councillors who resigned Committee position in protest against compliance with Tory cuts.

I point out that I resigned two months ago from being Chair of Clapham District Housing Committee, Vice Chair of Economic Activity and Employment Committee and Labour Group Secretary for precisely the same reasons as the "eight".

I am delighted that they have now joined me but would like to put the record straight.

Yours against the cuts,
*Rachel Webb*
Lambeth Councillor

## Lambeth

# Lambeth Council lock out AEU

**The effect of Lambeth Council's lockout of AEU vehicle workshop works has intensified — with all Council ambulances off the road and dust collection falling further behind schedule.**

Management, who had previously refused an offer of emergency cover from the AEU, have now come cap in hand asking to clear some cases. But views have hardened — in the face of the Council Leadership's refusal to take the issue seriously, and AEU mass meeting decided unanimously not to do emergency work while they were still locked out.

Both Norwood and Vauxhall GCs have overwhelmingly supported the AEU members, but Labour Group took no notice. Management had refused to honour a 35 hour week and consolidation of bonus agreement signed with the AEU.

The AEU is one of the strongest and most militant of the Council unions. If they can be defeated then all the other cuts would be that much easier to get through.

In a parallel move, despite the public pledges that there will be no redundancies, the Council Leadership has set in motion the setting up of a large scale redundancy scheme.

Unfortunately, despite the AEU action other unions are dragging their heels. NALGO members, in a major setback, have decided to try to negotiate over redeployment — though in a contradictory meeting they also agreed to ballot for all out action in support of the AEU. Other manual worker unions have fluctuated in their support of the AEU, one day calling for support, the next day writing to the Council demanding that they make sure that Council vehicles are kept on the road at any cost.

I asked Sylvester Smart and Brian Gard, leading the AEU strikers, how they saw things developing:

**By Greg Tucker**
**Lambeth Councillor**

**Sylvester:** The next stage is to show that this dispute is a Council-wide issue and increase the support from other Council workers. The AEU strike is having devastating results — forcing the workforce to think about what really is happening in the Council.

We have tremendous support from NALGO, both financial and also a pledge to ballot their members for strike action. Other manual unions have indicated their verbal support but at this stage, after two weeks, we are having to ask those unions that this support be made real in terms of not just respecting our picket lines, which many of them are doing, but also to see that the cuts are coming, bonus schemes are being withdrawn, redundancy notices are on the way and that they should join us and force the Council to halt their current cuts policy.

There is a basic leadership problem with the manual trade unions and there has not been any guidance to their members. They are not really aware of what is going on. Lots of people we talk to seem amazed when we tell them the facts and cannot believe that this is how a Labour Council acts.

They would like to support us but fear that the Council could decide to take disciplinary action or stop their wages.

**Brian:** The strike is about two issues — the Council's refusal to honour agreements, and their refusal to negotiate around its policies.

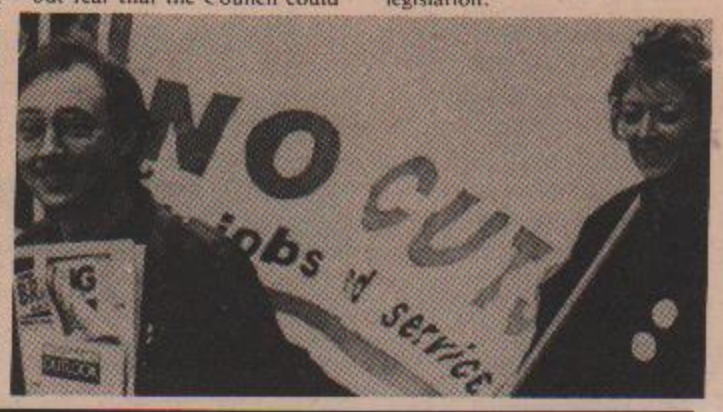
The Council position on job cuts is severe. They have not taken into account at all the effect on service. They haven't spoken to the people who get the services out to the public.

I honestly believe that they have made a commitment to themselves to go along a road of no negotiations. They are not willing to change direction in any way.

It appears that there are some Councillors who have gone along with Labour Group who are having second thoughts, now sitting on the fence. You just cannot go around making policies and having no discussion with the people who have to put the policies into action. I hope they will see sense and settle this dispute.

**Sylvester:** We need to convince members of Labour Group that once you start to go along the policy of cuts it will never stop. We have to convince them to join with the trade unions and not attack us as they are currently doing.

**Brian:** We know the Council has problems. We want this Council to fight the government along with the trade unions and not just go along with Tory Party legislation.




## Hackney

# Housing cuts repelled by workers

**The cuts package agreed by Hackney Council's Labour Group on December 16th included quite severe reductions in the Housing Dpartment.**

Amongst the cuts were the closure of six "area bases" (local estate offices); the deletion of 13 reception workers jobs at central headquarters; the ending of the daytime "mobile patrol" emergency service and the merging and cutting of jobs at six District Offices.

Outrageously, the package also proposed creating two *additional* assistant director posts — presumably to work out more cuts packages!

However, the final straw was the exposure of a plan by the Chair of Housing to launch a bogus Housing Association of himself and selected chums to take over tower blocks on the Trowbridge and Clapton Park estates and convert them into shortlife furnished lets for the Council's homeless families — thus pre-empting Tory schemes in the new Housing Act.

A joint mass meeting of 500 housing staff from NUPE Officers and NALGO (each union has roughly 50%membership in housing) was so outraged by both sets of proposals that it voted (with only one against) to issue the Director of Housing with an ultimatum to withdraw the cuts or face a walkout of all housing staff.

**By Keith Veness**
**Hackney NUPE officers**

On Monday January 25th, within half an hour of a 100% solid walkout, the cuts package was withdrawn; and a promise to commence negotiations on all the proposals was made to the unions.

Union members agreed to suspend strike action, but to boycott all lettings until the "Eastway Housing association" of the Housing Chair had been disbanded.

The Council's Housing Committee met two days later and, following intense lobbying by NUPE Stewards, passed a vote of "no confidence" in Councillor Brynley Heaven, the Housing Chair, for his part in the Housing Association fiasco. It called for its disbandment and for housing staff to manage the properties directly.

The Council Leader subsequently assured NUPE he would abide by this vote.

As we go to press, a joint NUPE/NALGO meeting has voted to lift the lettings boycott and accept direct management again for the flats. However, it voted almost unanimously to take immediate strike action if any further cuts packages were proposed.

This excellent victory, the best one we believe to have been gained by Council workers since the General Election, was made possible by:

- Close co-operation between NUPE and NALGO officer stewards.
- The involvement of and support from manual workers — most of whom are also NUPE members. The manual workers' convenor, Fred Linnard, was present at all negotiations to give management an extra pressure to settle. Such unity between different negotiating groups is vital.
- The support of the anti-cuts Councillors, united with the unions through Hackney Fightback, who helped to push our case at committees and raise information items for us.

Such links have to be forged in any anti-cuts fight.

We don't kid ourselves that further cuts will not be attempted but our stewards and members are not going to accept anything pushed on us! We hope our success will serve as an example to other unions — both in Hackney and London-wide.

# Feb. 3rd NHS Day

# Striking for the NHS!

## Camden

**Nurses throughout Camden kept a noisy and good humoured presence at picket lines on Wednesday, with unprecedented displays of solidarity and support from the public.**

At the Royal Free nurses were joined by doctors belonging to the Medical Practitioners' Union who, unlike the more conservative BMA, are not opposed to strike action.

Nurses cheered hundreds of Camden NALGO and UCATT members who marched to a rally outside the private wing of University College Hospital to show solidarity with the strikers in their fight for better pay and conditions.

Many of the speakers spoke of their determination to build Wednesday's action into national strike action and the mood was one of determination to fight the Thatcher government.

Pickets outside the Middlesex and UCH spoke of management intimidation and victimisation of union activists; but the prize for the stupidest management instruction of the day goes to the Elizabeth Garrett Anderson, where a shop steward was instructed not to attack patients entering the hospital...

While John Moore stated "I think there is some confusion about what today's action is about," there was no doubt in the minds of the nurses. A striker picketing the Middlesex told me:

"We're on the frontline. It's us that clears up the mess that the government has left around. It's us that discharges patients out into poverty and homelessness well before their time. It's us that see the pain and the agony of long waiting lists, who see patients sitting at home actually in physical pain and actually dying around us.

"Never mind the emotive stories of young babies, there are also old people and people of all ages in acute pain and suffering because of this government. That's why we're here on the frontline and if we've got to clear up that mess we certainly deserve some extra money for doing so."

Despite the fact that the Bloomsbury Health Authority has a budget shortfall of £1.3 million for '87-88 it faces a revenue reduction of £4.5m in '88-89 — in reality a staggering cut of £5.8m next year. As Bloomsbury is already 735 (19%) nurses short, staffing implications are frightening.

The DHA has already closed 800 beds since 1982, and there are now plans to close both the UCH and Middlesex, and amalgamate them into a 900 bed hospital. This would result in the loss of a further 600 acute beds for the local community.

Is John Moore really sure the nurses don't know what Wednesday's strike was about?

*Mary Helsdon*

## Tower Hamlets

**In Tower Hamlets — where local campaigners have recently been having success in forcing the DHA not to make cuts — four NHS hospitals had picket lines all day.**

At the London Hospital a lunch-time meeting on the picket line was attended by nurses, midwives, GPs, clerical workers, catering staff and porters. The speech therapists, on strike for the day, were also there.

The Post Office workers from the local sorting office came to give support at lunch time, but had not been able to take strike action, although many had wanted to.

Local Labour MPs Peter Shore and Mildred Gordon spoke at the meeting, and there were banners from the NUT, NALGO, UCW, and Trades Council. Labour Party members, Councillors, and four DHA members were also present to show support.

A large delegation was sent on to the London march.

*Andrea Campbell*, Tower Hamlets DHA, personal capacity

## Paddington

**The initiative came from NUPE nurses with some COHSE support.**

The RCN nurses locally were not able to support the action because of their union ruling, but although they had to cross the picket lines they were sympathetic to the action.

All day there were at least 200 on the picket lines and it was often many more because people came and went a certain amount.

Many nurses came out in their lunch break and there were many people on the picket line who had never been on picket duty before.

The slogans were "Open up Hospital Beds!" — "Cut Waiting Lists!" and "Better Pay and Conditions for Healthworkers".

There was strong support from bus and postal workers and there were local government workers and teachers on the picket line.

The public were sympathetic. No hostility was expressed at all. Nurses were invited onto the buses to leaflet the passengers and taxi drivers were taking large bundles of leaflets. At times, the picket was joined by ancillary workers, health visitors, midwives and doctors.

The Campaign Group of Labour MPs were also there, represented by Jeremy Corbyn. Two of the Westminster Councillors, Helen Goldfarb and Linda Julian, were both present — celebrating their court victory the day before.

Jenny Edwardes, Westminster North's Labour Parliamentary Candidate in the last General Election, was also present.

Media coverage was good with the TV present all day. Ambulance workers were supportive but in their own ballot had narrowly voted against strike action.

A health worker said the day had been so successful that further action was being considered and a particular target was the budget on March 15th.

*Kerry Leach*

## Haringey

**Over 500 health workers took action in Haringey, organising pickets at the North Middlesex, the Prince of Wales and St Anne's hospitals.**

Healthworkers were joined on the picket lines by groups of local government workers, Labour Party members and other trade unionists.

The mood at St Anne's hospital, which has faced cut after cut in the last few years, was particularly militant. Haringey Health Emergency has been in the forefront of campaigning against the cuts in St Anne's, but itself is facing severe cutbacks from Haringey Council (led by Toby Harris, who has been so vocal about cuts in the health service!)

*Briefing* spoke to student nurses Louise and Cathy from the Middlesex about why they were taking strike action:

*"We're on strike because morale in the Health Service is at an all time low. The government attacks on the NHS mean we have to do something and we have massive public support for strike action.*

*"The press and the Tories say we are acting irresponsibly, but we think we're doing the patients much less harm than Thatcher — she's the one who has created long waiting lists and is starving the NHS of cash.*

*"We now need to take more strike action, because the Tories aren't going to back down just because of today. We need to build more widespread action, we need the support of the TUC, maybe even a general strike in defence of the NHS."*

## Ealing

**Ealing Hospital came out on strike on February 4th — helping to turn the Day of Action into a mini-"week".**

**A picket of 30 nurses in the morning grew to 250 by 1pm, with other workers including threatre staff, who closed the theatre for 2 hours.**

**Barbara McLenn, a COHSE shop steward, said:**

***"We were overwhelmed by the support given to us by other workers and the community."***

**The strikers visited local restaurants, who showed their support by donating samosas to the pickets. A local bakery gave them free rolls.**

**Hanwell Bus Garage went on half-day strike.**

**There was a spontaneous march made up of nurses, transport and local government workers, with NALGO and GMB supporting. 500 people marched to the Town Hall, and despite warnings from the police telling them not to, 600 poeple marched back to the hospital.**

***Rashmi Chopra, TU Representative, DHA (personal capacity)***

## Lewisham

**Hither Green Labour Party joined healthworkers picketing their local hospital on the morning of February 3rd.**

**One of the nurses told us:**

***"This hospital is still under threat of closure. Today we hope to show the strength of feeling in support of our health service."***

**Lewisham Town Hall's NALGO branch organised a march from the Town Hall to Lewisham Hospital to show their support.**

## Maudsley

**Tony Benn, Dennis Skinner and Harriet Harman were among many supporters who visited the Maudsley Hospital picket line.**

COHSE nurses here were in the forefront of London nurses action, striking for 24 hours on February 2nd.

Other solidarity was given by local Labour Party members, Southwark Trades Council, Southwark Pensioners Action Group and FAB campaigners.

## Barts

We started off by going to 10 Downing St; and there was no one there. So we went up to Trafalgar Square, because we heard there were four coachloads of Charing Cross nurses going there.

When we got there different hospitals were arriving all the time. We don't know who organised it because all the posters were ripped off the noticeboards at St Bart's.

We're in the RCN, but we're in favour of changing to a different union. NUPE had a meeting and called the strike action, so they tried to do the most.

We need a better organised campaign, perhaps with a work-to-rule.

The Westminster nurses said their strike was fantastic. We met one nurse (from Westminster) who said some nurses have changed to COHSE and organised strike action all within the matter of a few days.

We are worried about public opinion so we think it was really good that Hackney NALGO came out on strike with us.

*Two RCN members from St Bartholomew's, interviewed on the spontaneous march which attempted to go down Whitehall to Downing Street, but when stopped by the police marched instead down the Embankment to Parliament.*

## Support in Hackney

**The NHS Day of Action saw a Council union, Hackney NALGO, support the healthworkers by taking one day strike action.**

Following early morning picketing, all the strikers and supporters from other unions gathered for a rally on the Town Hall steps.

A speaker from the local Homerton Hospital brought greetings of solidarity from healthworkers. At the end of the rally, a march of 700 moved off to St Bartholomew's Hospital to support the healthworkers in a lunchtime picket.

Passing through Hackney and Dalston shopping centres and into the City there was considerable support from the general public, who gave the march an enthusiastic reception all along the route.

The Day was a considerable success, and this should now be built on by Hackney NALGO not just taking action in support of other workers but also in defence of its own jobs and services which are currently under threat.

**The day's action was very good. We just hope something will come out of it.**

**Quite a few nurses have come out, even some RCN members were on strike today.**

**We need as much support as we can get, so we were very happy that Hackney NALGO joined us. We were on strike because we need more money, for living and our accommodation, and our patients are suffering.**

**Nurse I.M. Lindo,**
**NUPE member, St Bartholomews**

## Central Middlesex

**Despite poor union organisation, there was a well attended picket at Central Middlesex Hospital in Park Royal, N.W. London.**

General support was shown by passing motorists and at least one Brent Council lorry turned round at the picket line.

Striking nurses and admin workers with NUPE, COHSE and NALGO banners were joined by other Brent Council workers, a Brent Trades Council contingent with banners and other labour movement activists.

Within the hospital, decisions on support for the day of action were confused. Each trade union (NUPE, COHSE, NALGO) met separately with only the NUPE branch officers meeting.

NALGO Members voted to strike, but NUPE and COHSE members did not — although several were on the picket lines as well as some ambulance workers, despite lack of official support.

At present no joint union organisation exists at the hospital and the NUPE branch is run by an outside NUPE full-time official. However, many hospital workers recognise that the day of action has shown up the shortcomings in their organisation for the future.

*Pete Firmin*

# Stand & Fight

Continued from front page

ILTA members have been balloted on further strike action and the ILTA Council has backed support for one joint day of action on March 8th which would bring together all workers in the region faced with cuts in jobs and services.

Inside the Labour Party, wards and CLPs should be calling on their ILEA members not to implement cuts and to join in the building of a united fightback against cuts and against abolition.

Up to now ILEA members have relied on people like Chief Education Officer Bill Stubbs to present ILEA's case to government. Stubbs advised the government not to break up ILEA but added the rider that if they intended to do it they should act swiftly. Stubbs, like a lot of the top officers,has now tendered his resignation — announcing that he had got a job with the Department of Education and Science under Kenneth Baker!

It is way past time that ILEA members stopped relying on friends like that and got out into their localities and build a campaign based on action. East London Teachers Association, in conjunction with Tower Hamlets Labour Parties,recently built a lobby of some 300 against the "opt out" Alliance Council — that is the sort of campaigning that has to be done.

There is nowhere for ILEA employees to run. Our jobs are on the line and we have to fight. ILEA members should be joining us in that fight, not firing Baker's ammunition at us — it hasn't helped them avoid the crossfire.

**Education Meeting**
**Wednesday February 17th, 7.30pm**
**Assembly Hall, Lambeth Town Hall**
**Chair:**
Steve Bawa, Lambeth School Governor
**Speakers:**
John Esterson, Lambeth ILEA teacher
Maria Krupska, College lecturer & school governor
John O'Malley, Lambeth ILEA Councillor
**Organised by**
**Lambeth Trades Union Council**
with support from
Streatham Labour Party, *Defend London's Education Committee*, ILEA Joint Trades Union Committee

**Save Hackney's Education!**
They've been doing it to our Health Service — now they're doing it to our schools
They are stealing our children's future!
**Public Meeting**
Thursday February 11th
Hackney Town Hall
Mare Street, E8
Speakers include local MPs, Parents, Governors, Teachers and Support Workers

**United Against Gutter Education**
**Monday February 29th, 7.30pm**
**Friends' House, Euston Road**
**End of British Tour London Meeting**
**organised by**
**National Namibia Support Committee**
Additional Speakers invited:
General Union of Palestinian Students, Bernie Grant MP, Joan Ruddock MP, Diane Abbot MP, Glyns Kinnock
For details and further information: Namibia Support Committee 01-267 1941/2

**LOBBY**
**London Fire and Civil Defence Authority**
Meeting to discuss 292 job losses
**February 11th, 1pm onwards**
**County Hall, London SE1**