LONDON LABOUR
BRIEFING
10p FIRST ISSUE

ILEA SURRENDERS

Ken Livingstone
GLC Councillor
Hackney North

THE LABOUR-CONTROLLED Inner London Education Authority has given in to government pressure for cuts and reduced the 1980-81 budget by £21 millions. Whereas the Tories asked for a 5% cut, the ILEA have offered 4.2% "in order to defend the ILEA from threats of abolition by the Tories."

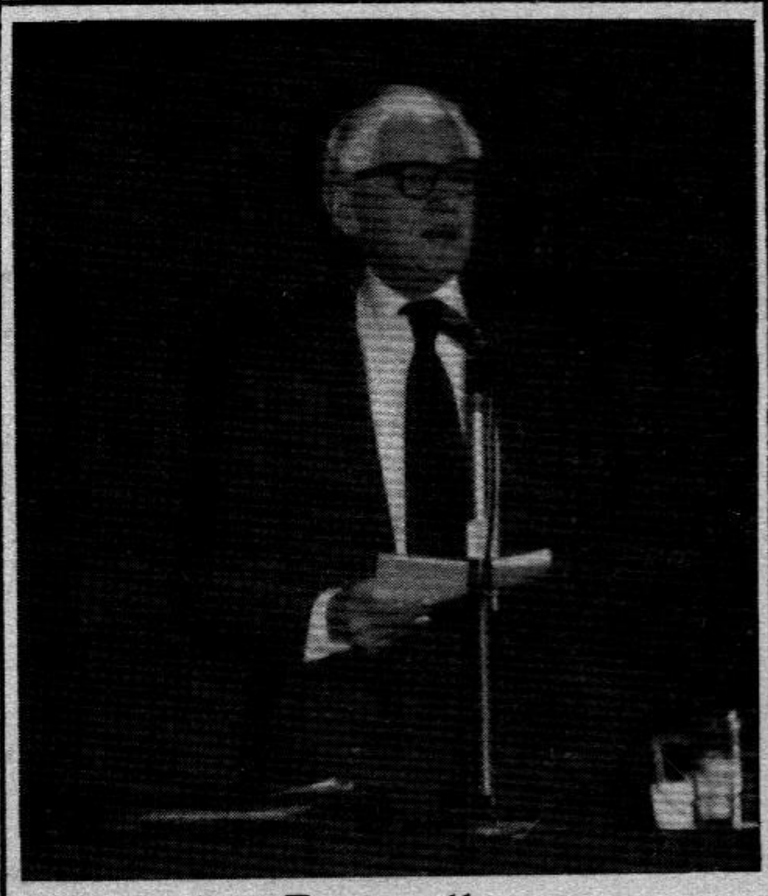
The idea that the ILEA will be saved if it makes cuts is nonsense—it will only divide and confuse those activists in the labour and trade union movement who will be called upon to lead the campaign to defend the ILEA from breakup. Parents who would have fought to save their child's education will not come out to play an active role in that campaign if they see that the present Labour ILEA has disrupted their children's education with present cuts.

This disruption will have a major impact because the ILEA cuts are concentrated in the field of jobs. Over 1,000 teachers' posts will not be filled as vacancies arise, and although the ILEA leadership have promised no redundancies amongst full-time staff, the ILEA employs thousands of part-time teachers and workers in the school meals service and many of these staff have the threat of redundancy hanging over their jobs.

By cutting discretionary student grants by nearly £1 million, the ILEA is hitting at those, mainly working class, students who do not qualify for the national mandatory award. This will force them back into a job market for which they are ill-qualified and in competition with the unemployed.

The following list is not exhaustive but deals with the two-thirds of the agreed cuts which are most unacceptable to the Labour movement:

Schools:
Reduction of 850 teachers in primary and secondary schools.
Reduction in capitation and school resources.



Bramall whinges to Conference

Further and Higher Education:
Cut non-teaching staff in further and higher education colleges.
Cut resource allowances in further and higher education colleges by 10%.
Reduce teaching staff in polytechnics.
Worsen student/staff ratios in further and higher education.
Cut discretionary student grants.
Stop second course grants and restrict art grants.
Reduce polytechnics block grant.
Increase student meals charge.

Community Education:
Increase adult evening institute fees from £8.30 to £11.
Cut length of AEI courses from 35 to 30 weeks.

At the ILEA budget meeting I proposed an amendment to the budget motion restoring the cuts. This was massively defeated by the bulk of the Labour members voting with the Tories to defend the agreed cuts. Labour members voted as follows:

Against the cuts:
Dimson, Livingstone, Rossi, Turney and Chalkley.

Abstaining:
Bondy, Gardiner, Grieves, Laywood.

For the cuts:
Brammal, Branagan, Garside, Goodwin, Gillies, Hillman, Hinds, Horstead, Kelly, Kingwell, Keys, Mayne, McAskell, Miles, Morgan, Ross, Phillips, Sofer, Styles, Wicks, Walker, Ward.

Cut 37 technicians and media resource officers.
Reduce school secretarial hours.
Cut 10 nursery assistant posts.
Increase school meals by 5p in 1980.
Reduce quality of meals.
End free travel for children over three miles from school.
Cut 58 pre-college students employed in special schools.
Cut 23 unqualified teachers employed in special schools.
Cut 86 posts from in-service training.
Cut 14 school gardener jobs.
Save on school heating and lighting.

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ILEA SURRENDERS

Close residential centres, medical centres and increase parential contributions.
Cuts in school games provision plus closure of Gorsebrook (eight jobs lost).
Reduce number of AEIs.
Reduce AEI resources, fuel and lighting, charge for models and cut canteen times.

Miscellaneous:
50% cut in furniture replacement.
Cut maintenance, rewiring and extend painting cycle.
Reduce administration costs (including contact).

The annual meeting of the London Labour Party rejected the ILEA policy of cuts by 1017 votes to 310 on Sunday 2nd March after an impassioned speech from Sir Ashley Brammal that the cuts were essential to defend the ILEA from Tory attack. Instead, the annual meeting decided to oppose break-up of the ILEA by a clear political defense based on the preservation of services. The Tories seek the break-up of ILEA in order to reduce the rates in the Cities of London and Westminster and transfer the cost of education to the deprived Labour boroughs in inner London. Whilst rates in the City would be massively cut the burden on the average domestic ratepayer in inner London would increase by up to £3 per week.

The defense of ILEA is essential and we must unite unions and parents around that campaign by defending jobs and services. If ILEA gives in they merely expose those Labour boroughs which are not making cuts and encourage the Tories to demand even larger cuts next year. Make sure you know how your ILEA member voted and question them at GMC meetings about their intentions. Are they now going to accept the conference decision and reverse the cuts? What do they intend to do next year?

EVENING STANDARD, WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 20, 1980—3

Labour left line up for GLC fight

How the enemy see us

by Michael King

TONY BENN'S son Stephen and Labour leader of Lambeth council Ted Knight, will fight the GLC election next year.

They are among several prominent Left-wingers who could take control of County Hall if the Labour party defeats Sir Horace Cutler's Tories on May 7, 1981.

Another 24 hopefuls have now been approved by the executive of the London Labour party and will be offered to the city's 92 constituency parties when they begin choosing candidates in June.

Stephen Benn, 28, is the elder of the former Eenergy Secretary's two sons. In the 1978 borough elections he opposed Kensington's former Tory leader Sir Malby Crofton.

Ted Knight, 46, took over Lambeth town hall at the same election and is knwon to have Parliamentary ambitions, but if he were returned to County Hall he could be a serious rival to veteran Sir Reg Goodwin who now leads the opposition.

Sir Reg's name on today's list dispels sptculation that he might not stand again. Although he will lead his party into the election, he could be ousted if the Labour group becomes dominated by Left-wingers.

As forceast last December, five Labour stalwarts will not be seeking re-election. Their safe seats include Lambeth Central—tailor-made for Mr Knight.

Other notable Left-wingrs hoping to be adopted are: Jeremy Corbyn, 30, Haringey councillor and brother of squatters' leader Piers Corbyn.

Tony Hart, husband of Dame Judith Hart, MP, and Keith Veness, who will be available if he loses the Croydon NE by-election on March 20.

No fewer than 14 former GLC members who lost their seats in 1977 are hoping to make a comeback.

Among Left-wingers are Tony Banks and David White—both controversial figures in their last spell at County Hall. Moderates include Tony Judge, a former housing chief.

Ken Livingstone, a prominent activist on the Left, is among 20 sitting GLC members who want to stand again.

But it has been rumoured that one or two moderates among them might run into trouble when they seek re-adoption in their constituencies. They include Labour chief whip Harvey Hinds at Peckham, and ILEA Labour leader Sir Ashley Bramall at Bethnal Green and Bow.

Sir Ashley seems certain to get a roasting at next week's Labour Party conference for responding to the Government's call for education cuts.

Editorial

The "trial issue" of LONDON LABOUR BRIEFING went amazingly well, so here is number one of the real thing.

The attention being paid recently by the media to the GLC has certainly born out our editorial in the last issue. The left has been successful in four selections for the pending GLC bye-elections—Bryn Davies in Vauxhall, Keith Veness in Croydon North East, Ann Ebsworth in Croydon Central and Lewis Herbert in Lewisham West—and this bodes well for next year's selections throughout London.

Regardless of its immediate outcome, the steel-workers' strike has shown just how vulnerable the Tory government actually is. From now on, there is clearly going to be an all-out battle between this government and our movement. For Labour Party members, the situation merely highlights the need for a resolute opposition to be built. In London's Town Halls, however, there is very little sign of any awareness of the tasks. Lambeth is trying to stand firm, but is now dangerously isolated. Camden and Haringey, the two authorities most likely to have stood by Lambeth, have both conceded dangerous amounts of ground in complying with the Tory cuts in the last few months.

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To date, the prevalent attitude amongst Labour municipal leaderships is still to "fight the cuts by implementing them". If the Tory government could be destroyed by burying it under a mass of paper submissions and protests, its days would now be numbered. But this is not the case—we are confronted by a vicious class government that will make no concessions unless confronted with a threat to its power.

The Tories are determined to make the rich richer. The changes in Rate Support Grant, Housing Improvement money and aid to the "shire counties" are not mistakes or oversights—they are carefully planned moves in the openly declared policy of Thatcherism. Argument and discretion have very little place in fighting this—only a general defiance from the key Labour authorities can make our opponents think twice. When we capture the GLC in 1981 we must be prepared from day one for an all-out attack on this discredited government. And we must now start a serious campaign to support Lambeth and end the cowardice and vacillation of the thirteen other Labour London Boroughs who have failed Lambeth. LONDON LABOUR BRIEFING is in favour of a conference of councillors, CLPs and local government workers to begin this process: watch this space!

GLC Transfers: Nine Councils Firm

After three years of Tory pressure, nine London Labour councils are still refusing to accept the transfer of GLC estates. One other borough, Tower Hamlets, has merged its own housing stock with the GLC to create one housing management authority. We are now waiting to see if the government will try to force through the transfer against the wishes of the dissenting boroughs.

Not Accepting Transfer		Accepting Transfer	
Hackney	17,334	Southwark	23,194
Lambeth	16,633	Barking	12,511
Lewisham	14,143	Greenwich	12,206
Islington	7,948	Newham	832
Camden	2,650		
Haringey	2,437	Total	48,734
Waltham Forest	1,897		
Hounslow	832	plus:	
Brent	397	Tory councils accepting transfer	95,781
Total	64,262	Total	144,515
Tower Hamlets	30,579		
Total	94,841		

Ken Livingstone
GLC Councillor, Hackney North

Our Programme for the GLC (extracts)

*** A Major Commitment to Public Transport**

We must campaign for an *immediate* 25% cut in fares; a crash programme to purchase additional buses; improved wages and conditions for London Transport staff in order to reduce mileage losses due to staff shortage; an expansion of the maintenance service to get buses back on the roads and a crash programme of bus lanes and other bus priority measures.

In the medium term we must integrate British Rail services into the LT network and introduce a fare free system so that public transport becomes the dominant form of transport in London. Fares subsidy must come from the rate so that commerce and industry contribute. As 62% of the GLC rate falls on the commercial ratepayer the average London family could travel free on London Transport in return for a £1 a week increase in the rate.

*** Housing**

The bulk of the GLC's housing stock will have been transferred to the boroughs but there will still be 96,139 properties left which are concentrated in Inner London.

These are neglected, near slums which suffer average rents £3 a week higher than the highest rented Labour boroughs.

We must freeze rents for the period of the next GLC and institute a crash programme of internal and environmental improvements. There must be immediate devolution of management out of County Hall to local areas with full tenant involvement. Tenants must be allowed transfers as of right within estates.

The GLC must immediately stop the sale of council housing and fight the government in order to establish a crash programme of municipalisation and new development.

A direct labour department must be established.

*** GLC staff**

The GLC must act to end low pay by adopting a realistic minimum wage and bringing manual workers onto a 35 hour week. Camden has already adopted this policy and if every Labour council in London did the same it would create nearly 10,000 new manual jobs. As unemployment will be 2,000,000 by 1981 this is a key policy.

Union representatives must be co-opted onto all committees at the GLC so that they can bring their first hand experience to bear on the problems we will face. TU reps must also be appointed to the London Transport Executive. The cuts in the fire service must be restored.

The list is endless. The executive policy documents cover other areas such as planning, employment and finance and there is no shortage of radical, socialist policies. We must ensure that there is no shortage of radical socialist members to carry out the policies we agree.

LEWISHAM

Lewisham is to be congratulated for not making the cuts the last issue forecast. The council has not made cuts, apart **from £600,000 from external council house decoration.** Real **expenditure will grow 2% next year, despite Lewisham's low rate base.**

So why complain? At the Lewisham Annual Delegate Conference last November (mentioned in the last issue), a motion passed *and* supported by the Leader of the Labour Group called on Lewisham council to consult the unions "with a view to mounting a public campaign to reject both massive rate increases and drastic cuts in services. Lewisham," it said, "should lead the way to a united stand against the Tories."

Since then, nothing has been seen to be done. **It is open to question whether the council want to fight the sort of campaign needed now.**

Let's look back: while Lambeth consulted each constituency party, and mounted a public campaign, Lewisham:

1. were not keen to provide information to party members;

2. were not prepared to put across the real arguments to get the public behind them from the start;

3. made out that 'no cuts' equals 66% on the rates, when with minor cuts and next October's rent increases they have magically reduced the rate increase down to 48%.

You could learn more about Lewisham policy from the *New Statesman* than from being on the Cuts Committee.

The Labour Group accepted motions at conference as armour in the fight for socialist policies.

Why then has nothing been done about commitments, about the publicity battle, or about building an All London Campaign against the cuts and against the Tory Government?

I question whether they have the guts for the kind of campaign needed. Mind you, I question whether there are enough people in Lewisham ready enough to take up the fight by becoming councillors themselves! What chance have we until we are led by people who will fight for socialist policies that the party in Lewisham, in London, and nationally, has agreed? None. That is why *I* am standing for the GLC.

The election is likely to take place on 24th April and any assistance in the two weeks before the election would be gratefully appreciated. Phone our HQ: 699 2001, or me: 761 2168—and let us build a socialist GLC!

Lewis Herbert
Labour Candidate
West Lewisham GLC By-Election

G.L.C. : View from the Inside

John Plant
Chairman, GLC Branch of NALGO and member of Newham Council
(written in a personal capacity)

FOR ANY INCOMING administration an important problem is to establish good working relationships with its employees. This is particularly the case for an administration that is seeking to make radical changes to the policies and practice of the institutions through which it operates. The next GLC Labour Group will need to bear this in mind when it wins the 1981 election.

In the GLC the workers have suffered a great many changes for the worse under the Cutler regime, but this does not necessarily mean that they will automatically welcome more changes to put things right. In the conditions of today's job market most workers take a defensive view of their jobs, hoping to be allowed to get on with them with a minimum of disruption. At the same time most of us at County Hall and the other GLC workplaces are sadly aware of the damage that Cutler has done to the services provided by the GLC, and a sense of responsibility towards the people of London should ensure that a dynamic left wing Labour administration will be able to win the support of the staff if it approaches the problem sensitively.

It would be as well to recall that NALGO is not yet affiliated to the Labour Party, although the GLC Branch and others in London have fought for this for several years. The degree of reflexive sympathy of NALGO members with the Labour Party is probably lower than in many of the unions which have had a long political relationship with the Party. One reason for this is that professional staff, in order to succeed in their careers, must be able to work for authorities with a whole range of political compositions, and political neutrality has come to be seen as an advantage for promotion.

In some ways this situation is changing. Each year we see NALGO's Annual Conference presented with the demand for Labour Party affiliation. At the same time it has been frequently observed that individual members of white collar unions such as NALGO, as well as manual unions like NUPE active in the public sector, seem to constitute a growing force in the left of the Labour movement generally.

The fight against the cuts has not had a simple or straightforward impact on the public sector unions. Our members have not forgotten that it was Callaghan's government that began the cuts, nor that Labour councils all over the country have put them into effect under both Labour and Tory governments. This awareness obviously limits the support NALGO members can generate for a new Labour administration.

Not all the doubts come from the side of the employees. Many councillors feel that the constraints and restrictions that they encounter in making new policies are a result of deliberate obstructiveness by the staff, and on rare occasions they are right to think so. More often the restrictions are imposed by central government, and usually in a complex manner that an overworked councillor does not have the time to understand. As a result the officers making the report or giving the advice come to be blamed for decisions of government.

There is another aspect of the councillor/officer relationship to be considered, which is that the councillor usually only meets the most senior officers, and these are likely to be conservative (usually Conservative) in their approach because of their senior positions and high salaries. These are a very small and atypical group of local government staff. There are, for example, no more than a handful of women Chief Officers in the London area, and so far as I know no blacks. What is more, this group has no very direct interests in London. Few if any of them actually live in London. Most of them live in the outer suburbs and do not pay London rates or send their children to London schools. The trend towards corporate management in local government has considerably strengthened the influence and power of these senior officers, and any radical administration will find them an important force to be overcome.

Having outlined what I see as the most important aspects of the problem of building a relationship with the staff I want to look briefly at the context within which the new GLC will be operating. Although there is a widespread belief that a wave of industrial action will bring about the end of the Tory government we cannot assume that this will necessarily have been achieved by May 1981. Until the question of the removal of the right wing leadership of the Labour Party has been settled it seems to me unlikely that the working class will be prepared to make a major onslaught. Even if I am wrong, there does not appear to be a challenge to the leadership within the Party which promises any real alternative to the public expenditure restraints of both Thatcher and Callaghan.

The incoming Labour GLC will therefore have to deal with a double problem of trying to reconstruct after the damage perpetrated by Cutler's hatchet men and doing so in conditions of restricted financial resources, whatever government is by then in power. If this is the case, the questions of its policies and its relationship with its staff become more important, if the work that can be achieved is to have the maximum effect.

Because of the resource limitations and the probability of a hostile government the early period of the new GLC will inevitably be one of planning and propaganda. There will be a great deal of 'first aid' to be carried out. Some of Cutler's gratuitously vicious cuts, such as the grants to the London Tenants' Organisation, should be put right, and aid to community groups and advice centres generally stepped up to promote the fightback in the boroughs still under Tory control. Nevertheless, the real objective must be to use the resources of the GLC as effectively as possible to construct a real socialist strategy for London.

If this is to achieve permanent changes, somehow getting away from the Tory-Labour pendulum of control at County Hall, it must be something quite different from the dreary run of official publications and studies. It will need a real change in the way Labour at County Hall sees itself and its functions. It will mean taking a step beyond the role of conducting local or regional management for capitalism.

An effective socialist strategy for London cannot be drawn up in the way that council reports are usually drawn up, and even the present methods of 'public consultation' such as are used for town planning procedures will not be adequate. We must look for ways in which genuine involvement in the planning process can be achieved by London's working class. The unions and trades councils will have to be strongly encouraged to take part, as will tenants' and community groups. The resources of County Hall should be directed towards helping these organised Labour movement bodies to formulate the plan for London. If this kind of relationship with the mass movement cannot be achieved, eventually any Labour administration, however radical its initial intentions, will find itself incapable of turning its plans into political campaigns strong enough to force the government, and the capitalist organisations behind the government, to release the resources that London's problems demand.

The new GLC should commit itself to this kind of political strategy, and then it will find no difficulty in working through to logical solutions to the problems of the London area. Otherwise it will constantly find, as do Labour councils everywhere, that economic conditions that it is in no position to challenge, come to dictate its every action. The unique constitution of the GLC will make it possible for a radically new approach to urban government to succeed if the new Labour Group is prepared to step outside of its normal frame of reference and look for ways to use the GLC as a weapon in the class struggle.

BRIEFING EDITORIAL POLICY

In this issue we have succeeded in printing every article or letter submitted to us—no matter what the 'line' being argued—without cuts or alterations. We'll do our utmost to continue this policy. The aim is to provide **information** which cannot be obtained elsewhere, not to harangue readers with an artifically-concocted ideological 'line'. Be as polemical as you like, but please try to keep your articles (a) informative and (b) short. We'll try to find space for everything, but the longer your article, the smaller the typeface will have to be! Articles to:

'Briefing', 158 Thorold Road,
Ilford, Essex.

London Transport: the Facts

It is now almost three years since the Tory Party took control of London's transport system. Those three years have been characterised by a succession of unkept promises followed by desperate searches for scapegoats. The truth of the matter is that the incoming Tory administration in 1977 did not understand the needs of London and it pursued policies which actually made the services worse.

The initial error in Tory thinking was to treat London Transport as a business rather than a service. The initial claim by the Tories was that they would eliminate fares subsidies completely while raising fares by no more than the rate of inflation and maintaining existing levels of service.

These policies have now been reversed but it is worth recalling that by the end of 1977 fares relief had been cut by £38 million in real terms.

	1976	1977	1978	1979
	£m	£m	£m	£m
Actual fares subsidy	87	63	50	54
Subsidy needed to maintain 1976 level	87	101	117	126

It can be seen if the subsidy had only been kept in line with the 1976 level a further £72 million would have been available to London Transport to keep down fares and in fact would have meant that the 19% fare increase which is being brought in at present would not have been necessary.

The Tory record on fares merits close examination. Their pledge was to hold fares to the level of inflation. This had not been done.

Year		Fares rise	Rise in Retail Price Index
	Month	%	%
1978	June	10.0	8
1979	June	7.5	17
	Sept	12.5	
1980	February	19	13

Thus the Tories put up fares faster than the level of inflation.

It is just possible that the travelling public would be prepared to accept this if the service had been improved. However, this has not been the case and despite the constant cutting of schedules London Transport has failed to meet its targets. The biggest single factor in this decline has been the failure of Bus Plan 78. The Labour Party warned at the time that cutting services would have the effect of reducing overall mileage. Evidence was produced by Camden Borough Council that the plan was not working in the early months of 1979 but the Tories refused to acknowledge it. Now however, in *Bus Service Reliability and Rescheduling*, this failure is admitted. The report discusses a possible further rescheduling.

"This is the approach which formed part of Bus Plan 78, and what are thought to be the effects of this—the operated mileage actually falling—have been described."

What this means is that before Bus Plan 78 92% of a scheduled 211 million miles was operated and after Bus Plan 78 92% of a scheduled 202 million miles was operated.

It is all too easy to lose sight of just how far the bus service has declined but the situation is all too clear.

	1976	1977	1978
	m	m	m
Passenger miles (bus)	2,980	2,919	2,819
Bus miles operated	182	179	172

Thus it can be seen that not only are there less buses on the road but significant numbers of passengers are seeking other means of transport. And this decline has continued.

There are also a number of areas where other factors are causing difficulties. Unquestionably traffic congestion is a real cause of cancellations and delays in bus services. During the 12 weeks ending 1 December 1979, 1.7 million bus miles were lost due to traffic congestion and an unquantifiable number of services were disrupted. Even the Tories own Chairman, Harold Mote, said: "The effect of traffic congestion in London on public transport is becoming worse. From 1972 to 1975 it caused a loss of about 2.5 million bus miles a year but last year this had risen to 6.1 million."

Despite this belated acceptance of congestion as a problem the Tories are unable or unwilling to do anything about this by bringing forward a major programme of bus priority measures. In fact the number of staff working on such schemes has actually been reduced.

Staff shortages are also a cause of lost bus mileage and in the twelve weeks ending 1 December 1979, 4.3 million miles were lost due to what are officially described as "difficulty in recruiting and retaining bus drivers." There again the Tories seem incapable of coming to terms with the situation and making the job more attractive.

Tories were in any case more interested in building new roads that London didn't want or need. For the next fifteen months at least it seems that things can only get worse. London Transport is being attacked and vilified by the Tories who try to hide from the consequences of their own policies. London Transport is preparing plans to cut back on weekend services. Harold Mote says this wasn't his idea but the incoherent direction the Tory Party gave to London Transport is the direct cause of this suggestion which no one believes London Transport wants to implement.

However, not only are services to be cut during 1980 but a policy is being pursued which means that there will be a massive fare increase of anything up to 25% in the second half of the year.

"Travellers on public transport were warned of big changes to come by Sir Horace Cutler, Leader of the GLC, when he forecast an open battle between the GLC and London Transport." [Middlesex Chonicle]

"He said that it was time bus users started to apply realistic fares instead of being subsidised by other road users."

Every time London Transport fares go up more passengers desert the service and thus the costs for those who remain go up yet again.

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EVENING STANDARD, FRIDAY, MARCH 7, 1980

£12m axe falls on LT investment

by Norman Leith and Michael King

LONDON Transport chiefs have slashed £12 million from their investment budget for this year by order of their GLC overlords—and it is going to mean poorer all-round travel for bus and Tube commuters.

LT chairman Mr Ralph Bennett, warning today of "bleak future prospects," said this major blow to investment schemes would have a demoralising effect.

London Transport was forced to reduce its budget for 1980 when the GLC rejected original budget plans last December on the grounds that bus services were totally inadequate.

Submitting the revised and reduced budget for 1980 Mr Bennett said he was "very concerned" about the long-term effects of likely restrictions on future transport spending.

"If the 1980 level of Government grant continues for following years annual cuts in planned capital spending ranging between £17 million and £50 million will be necessary," he said.

The immediate effect of the cuts as far as the travelling public is concerned will be a halt to a modernisation scheme at Piccadilly Circus Underground and stations on the Central Line.

A ventilation scheme at Piccadilly Circus costing £400,000 will be abandoned. All station modernisation and reconstruction will be deferred saving £2,400,000.

Work on proposed automatic fare collection will also be deferred. And over the next five years, London Transport has warned the GLC, projects that could be at risk include automatic train operation; Underground depot modernisation; more station and garage modernisation; the proposed automatic fare collection system and even straight-forward replacement.

Mr Bennett said: "The schemes which suffer are mainly those which affect the passenger environment. The deferment of such schemes is a major blow and the prospects for the future are even more bleak."

LAMBETH: TOWARDS

'BUILD A WALL OF UNITY ACROSS LONDON'

Three Views

THE GLRC ANNUAL CONFERENCE totally opposed the Tory government economic policies and demanded a common platform of 'no cuts' in public expenditure from every Labour-controlled local authority.

It recognised the responsibility of Labour councillors to raise the necessary funding needed to maintain social services, housing and education programmes and jobs, by increasing rates.

The Executive Committee argued that only by such a strategy could those in need of services be protected, and the maximum support from working people and public sector unions be rallied in defense of Labour councils threatened by Heseltine.

It was emphasised that the campaign to be waged must not just be anti-Tory. A positive socialist alternative must be fought for, aimed at bringing to power a Labour government committed to such policies.



Retreat?

By an overwhelming vote the Conference rejected those who called for a 'no cuts—no rate or rent increase' position. Delegates saw this demand as a slogan for political disaster at this stage in the struggle against the Tory government.

Any local authority adopting such a stand would be immediately bankrupted by the City of London. Employees without wages, the elderly, young and handicapped deprived of needed support, and a collapse of services generally, would drive wedges between Labour councillors, the trade unions and the local community

The isolation and defeat for one council would drive other Labour boroughs and local authority workers to accept massive cutbacks.

A feature of the Conference was a unity between right-wing spokesmen and those associated with Socialist Organiser in a desperate, and at times hysterical endeavour to characterise Lambeth council as a 'cutter'.

Both groups see the danger of acknowledging that an independant left wing council can defy the Tory government and maintain a policy of refusing to cut any service, or job, or job opportunity.

Thrashing around they discover that Lambeth has decided to spend only £3 million instead of £5 million on two swimming pools. Digging still further they gleefully point out that a civic rubbish dump isn't going to be moved to another site—it's going to stay where it is!

Finally they declare Lambeth councillors to be traitors because they have put up council rents. After a three-year rent freeze, and a manifesto commitment limiting such a standstill to a period of wage restraint, Lambeth councillors were faced with a clear risk of surcharge if they refused to make an increase.

With every other Labour borough having decided to increase rents, were Lambeth comrades wrong to refuse to accept personal bankruptcy and removal from office for five years?

I think not. Some may deem it a retreat, and others will revel in having established that socialism cannot exist in one borough. The Tory government however does not view Lambeth's stand as that of capitulation.

Labour Party activists should reject those within our movement who seek to isolate Lambeth. Every Labour councillor should be called on to carry out the Conference decision. A wall of unity should be built across London. Only in this way can we defeat the Tory attacks.

Ted Knight
Leader of Lambeth Council

Lambeth needs YOUR organi
in order to take on the Torie
STAND BY LAMBETH COUN

THE CRUNCH

THE STORY BLOW BY BLOW

LAMBETH: Recreation building cut and rents up, but confrontation course still on.

"LAMBETH COUNCIL HAS BECOME the symbol of a national fight against the Tory government's attack on local authority expenditure" wrote Ted Knight in introducing his report to the Labour Group on 16th February. By the end of the day the Tory government (District Auditor) had won the first round (rents) of the battle, but Lambeth was still well dug in at the front of the cuts fight.

With the spectre of the District Auditor cast before councillors by the officers, only a quarter of the Group stood firm against a rent increase. Worse still, a narrow majority forced through a £1.50 average increase which coupled with a 29% increase in communal heating charges, meant Lambeth had imposed a heavy burden on its council tenants even before the rate increases had been discussed.

With a rent increase of this magnitude —calculated at approximately the equivalent of a 4.5% increase in rates—the rate increase/cuts debate became somewhat defused. The right, including ex-leader David Stimpson, had originally demanded a maximum rate increase of 45% (as against Ted Knight's 56.3% with rent freeze). However, at the last minute this was modified and clarified by Nick Grant: cuts in all growth, increase in planned vacancy rate and a further £½ million of cuts ('savings') would bring the rate increase down to 46%.

Meanwhile Ted Knight's position had also undergone some modification. In the light of advice explaining the Tories' proposed legal restrictions on capital (new building) schemes, over £1½ million was to be cut mostly from recreation centres and parks which, councillors were advised, could run out of cash half way through building. (An attempt, supported by myself, to reinstate some of these schemes, failed.) Adjusted by the decision to increase rents, Ted Knight's proposed rate increase became 49%.

The third strategy, which had seen some support in the Labour Parties (which I personally was mandated to vote for) and which had been demanded by the Lambeth 'Fightback' Campaign, called for no cuts and no rate increase. "Why should the council cut the income of ratepayers in the borough?" asked Neil Turner and Steve Stannard. If such a policy meant being thrown out like the Lambeth, Southwark and Lewisham Area Health Authority, then so be it.

Ted Knight's depiction of such a position as 'political suicide' resulting in surcharges and debarment from office with disastrous consequences for our supporters (e.g. council workers, tenants, disabled, mothers, the elderly) in the borough, had widespread support. The position was defeated with only a handful of votes in favour.

Thus finally the right's strategy secured a derisory eight votes (out of 42) and Lambeth steered a 'no (substantial) cuts' position into the 1980-81 budget, although clearly the Tory government via the threat of the District Auditor and legislation, had forced Lambeth to make a substantial retreat from the clear 'no cuts, no rent increase' position. However, few people have believed that one borough alone could take on the Tory government and win. Lambeth gave a lead *and in the first round* was left isolated by all except possibly Camden. In the battles that are to come, with the Tories assembling legal powers to control spending and force council house sales, Labour councils that want to fight will have to operate on the margins of legality. Unity of London Labour councils will be essential in such a situation.

Kevin Moore
Lambeth Councillor

zed strength
and win.
CIL!

Going Wrong

SUDDENLY IT'S ALL going wrong in Lambeth. After a brave political and economic stand against Thatcher's central government, the first steps of capitulation have been taken by Lambeth's Labour-controlled council.

A total of £1.9 million has been cut from the council's future planned expenditure, an average council rent increase of £1.50 per week has been imposed, and heating costs have been raised by 29% in the public housing sector. All this from a council which, just a few months ago, was proudly proclaiming that it did not, and will not, cut a penny from its planned or existing services. So all of a sudden Lambeth ratepayers are paying more (49% more in rates) for less than they bargained for.

Of course, we all appreciate that it is the fault of the central government—but some Labour councillors in Lambeth have not been too willing to flex their political might against Thatcher.

Some indication of this can be seen from the amazing scenes in the February GMC of Lambeth Central CLP. The constituency is a supporter of the Campaign for Labour Party Democracy, and both the GMC and the MP (John Tilley) regularly support official Party policy. Not so some of the councillors!

Lambeth Central's January GMC strongly supported a resolution which specifically asked for the Group to adopt a "no cuts, no rate increases, no increased charges" line.

In the Group meeting—which will effectively determine the outcome of the full council meeting in late March—the Lambeth Central councillors in some considerable number completely rejected that resolution by implementing the cuts and increases outlined earlier.

The February GMC equally strongly passed an emergency resolution asking Lambeth Central Labour councillors to support the Party line—even if that meant going against the Group Whip. And what happened after that resolution was so strongly passed?

Well, six out of seven councillors present immediately asked for their names to be minuted as publicly expressing that they would vote *contrary* to that resolution at the full council meeting! Those six councillors were: Stewart Lansley, Malcolm Noble, Liz du Parcq, Mike Bright, Andrew Sawdon, and Nick Grant.

Names worth remembering—these are the people who gladly use the Party as a vehicle for attaining office, but not for implementing official Party policy.

Graham Norwood
Lambeth Central CLP

LONDON LABOUR: LEFT STRENGTHENS GRIP

This year's London Labour Party Conference (the prefix 'Greater' has now been ditched—provided the NEC go along with this blow against chauvinism) was dominated by the struggle against the Tory government's public expenditure cuts—and quite rightly so!

Issues clear

The issues were clear. How could the Labour movement mobilise massive working class support to challenge Thatcher's policies? What should Labour councils do, faced with a drastic reduction in the rate support grant? How could a newly-elected Labour GLC mount effective opposition to central government and defend jobs, services and living standards?

As far as the Party's right-wing (a miniscule group in conference) was concerned, our best alternative was to cut and run and hope for the best. In his GLC report Reg Goodwin bleated about the "wicked and stupid Tories" and warned us that a Labour GLC would be "seriously inhibited". We shouldn't draw up a manifesto with "promises that could not be achieved" etc etc. One thing is clear: a GLC led by Goodwin would be putty in Heseltine's hands—it would be better to have Larry the Lamb as leader!

Summing up the transport debate, Ken Livingstone, GLC councillor for Hackney North, offered us a brighter perspective. A left-controlled GLC should confront the Tories, and we should only select candidates prepared to engage in all-out war with the central government. Gladys Dimson echoed this sentiment in the debate on housing: "We're going to take on this Tory government and win on housing—no more council house sales!"

If we are to have any chance of implementing the strategic housing plan for London contained in Composite A (overwhelmingly passed), then clearly we're going to need a much higher degree of solidarity than exhibited by the Labour London boroughs over the issue of GLC transfer. As John Mordacai pointed out, four boroughs had effectively scabbed on the movement by capitulating to Cutler's plan. (Composite B supporting transfer in principle was smashed).

Transport

In the transport debate, conference finally got round to discussing nuclear power—or at least nuclear waste (the 'Neasden Syndrome' as we call it on the North London Line). Put to a card vote the composite deploring the transport of toxic chemicals and nuclear fuels through populated areas was *defeated*. Although there was some confusion about the term 'toxic chemicals' (could this mean the destruction of manufacturing in NW London?), the vote was frightening to say the least. Much more work needs to be done on this issue—indeed before it is too late!



Ken Livingstone

A debate on Ireland at a Labour Party conference is as rare as a Labour council refusing to implement the cuts. Thanks to the work of the Labour Committee on Ireland, this issue is at last being taken seriously. Resolution 84 calling for a "commitment to the policy of withdrawal" was passed by 10:1 in a card vote! This is certainly an encouraging development—although the crucial questions of *how* to get the troops out and *when* were completely fudged.

Three positions

As conference passed composite after composite opposing the cuts and promising socialist programmes for transport, housing, etc, etc—it was becoming blatantly obvious that all these plans would be smashed unless we managed to challenge, confront and *actually bring down* the Tory government. The debate on "Tory cuts" tackled this question—and three positions emerged:

1. The right-wing 'strategy': carry out cuts and pretend not to. Raise the rates and rents, and wait for the next election to "bring down" the Tory government.

2. The 'Ted Knight' strategy: Refuse to implement the cuts and use the rates (and rents!) to maintain jobs and services, and to "buy time" to build a united front which can effeetively challenge and bring down the Tory government.

3. The 'hard left' position: no cuts, no rate rises, no rent rises—an all-out challenge to the Tory government now—even if it means one Labour council going it alone.

Afraid of putting their views on paper, the right confined themselves to making snide remarks about "Lambeth cutting" and "Ted Knight raising the rents". This was sickening to say the least, since these people have left Lambeth stranded and open to victimisation by Heseltine. No doubt the right were extremely relieved by Lambeth's back-tracking on the rents issue, since it takes the pressure off them!

Composite K argued the "all-out war now" position and clearly it was the *best* of all motions. "The steelworkers have

Continued over→

London Labour Conference

shown us the way to fight the Tories," said the mover from the LPYS, ". . . the organised power of the working class is the only force that can defeat and bring down the Tory government." Clearly the Labour movement cannot "buy time" for ever by passing rate rises on to the working class. Yet the weakness of this composite was that it was essentially *propagandistic.* It did not answer in any convincing way the *practical* question: do we have the forces assembled *now* to ensure that one Labour council (Lambeth) by refusing to raise the rates, can spark off the sort of movement that will actually challenge and bring down this government? It is obviously correct to say that if *all* (or a goup of) councils refused to balance the books and if a general strike could be prepared at the same time, the combined forces at our disposal would be *invincible.*

However, unless comrades believe we are already at this stage, it is quite wrong to demand that an individual council *must* implement the no rates position *now.* (The composite was defeated.)

Ted Knight argued that most of London's Labour councils would be forced into Heseltine's "penalty box" by raising rates. This would be a much stronger basis on which to challenge the Tories in a united fashion. If Lambeth went alone it would be smashed and the whole movement would be thrown back. Lambeth's concession on the rent was necessary to avoid the disaster of surcharge.

However, there are dangers in this position. Undoubtedly Knight is correct when he argues that the main dividing line in the movement is between those who want to cut and those refusing to implement cuts. However, sooner or later someone has to give a lead and put their neck on the block. Concessions may "buy time" but they also strengthen the defeatist attitude of the right-wing Labour Groups. Clearly the class struggle itself will determine the *time* to strike and risk all. It may not be now—but let's ensure that Lambeth does not miss the bus!

Sunday's debates also had their high spots, with random attacks on the Parliamentary Labour Party in general and Neville Sandleson in particular. Chairman Arthur Latham quoted Sandleson as saying "the worm has eaten too far into the apple" and retorted: "Well we say to Sandleson, leave the apple and stand as a worm."

Most deserved was the roasting that Ashley Brammall suffered. Moving his ILEA report, Brammall tried to justify the ILEA cuts: "Why is a raised charge by ILEA a cut, when raised rents by Lambeth council are not?" No doubt this will not be the last time the right-wing try to use the retreats at Lambeth as a justification for their own betrayal. But conference had none of it, Latham for the Executive and delegate after delegate getting to the rostrum to move reference back of the report. The reference back was overwhelmingly passed.

Frank Hansen
Delegate from Brent East CLP

Barnet on the march

SATURDAY 23RD FEBRUARY saw several hundred local Labour Party members and supporters, together with trade unionists, marching through Margaret Thatcher's traditionally Tory constituency of Finchley, to say:

* **NO to school closures**
* **NO to less help for the old and sick**
* **NO to cuts in the school meals, libraries, nurseries and the arts.**

The march was organised by the Barnet Anti-Cuts Campaign who state that public services are the hard fought for right of our people. "We aim to defend and extend those services at local level by organising a broad-based campaign amongst the people of Barnet which will monitor the cuts, publicise their effects, organise support for the trade unions taking action against the cuts and other groups initiating similar opposition; and at a national level by working alongside other organisations who are building united action against cuts and advancing the alternative policies."

We marched from the NUPE headquarters in the Finchley High Road, past Saturday shoppers, who greeted our slogan "Maggie, Maggie, Maggie, Out, Out, Out" with thumbs-up signs and other indications of support.

The march ended with a rally at a Finchley Central Church Hall, where tea and refreshments were served by volunteers, before we were addressed by the speakers, Stan Newens (MP for Harlow), Len Powell of the Steel Workers' Union and Lou Lewis of UCATT. The meeting was chaired by Barnet councillor, Mrs. Joan Pudney.

Sheila Leslie
Friern Barnet and Finchley Labour Party

Two Vital Bye-elections!

Two vital bye-elections for the Greater London Council take place on Thursday 20th March, both in highly marginal seats in the Borough of Croydon. Both Croydon North East (which I am fighting) and Croydon Central (candidate, Ann Ebsworth) require swings of 8% from the last general election results, but the electorate in Croydon is traditionally very volatile and a large degree of disenchantment with Tory measures has already set in, so surprise results here are by no means precluded.

This is the first test in anything like a marginal seat in Greater London since the general election and these constituencies are thus seen by both sides as a test of both the government's standing and the sort of success likely for Labour in the GLC elections next year.

Croydon is not an area of sharp debate inside the Labour movement—even the most right wing Labour councillors appear to support the local cuts campaigns—but this is largely due to the present balance of forces, i.e. a Tory council, GLC and government. Nevertheless, the local parties are well-organised and active and have a good local history of case-work and campaigning.

A good result is necessary in these bye-elections not only for the reasons outlined above but also to show the left can organise and win. The local paper, the Croydon Advertiser, **has already started a vendetta against my candidature in particular, and the** Evening Standard **has also weighed in. A rebuff for these people would be a Labour victory on the 20th.**

All offers of help for Croydon North East to: 104 Portland Road, SE25 (tel: 654 3020), any back-up on the day being particularly welcome. Failing that, get your CLP/ward/union branch to vote a donation—the campaign is expensive and we are grateful for every penny.

Keith Veness
Labour GLC Candidate
Croydon North East

The Southwark Story

The handful of 'Militant' paper sellers slogging away in Southwark's three constituencies must have felt proud recently, when rumours began to circulate in Dulwich, Peckham and Bermondsey about the 'trot take-over'. It was even said, reputedly by Herbert Morrison House, that Peckham would be the next Newham.

What was happening? Knives were being sharpened in readiness for the 1980 Annual General Meetings of the parties.

BATTLE LINES DRAWN UP

Battle lines were clearly drawn (for the first time in recent history) about two years ago, when a handful of new councillors joined the London Borough of Southwark. A motley bunch, by no means did they have agreed 'left' policies in common, Trotskyist or otherwise. What *was* shared was a common concern about the lack of open government in Southwark.

The first issue which sparked the waiting fire was the decision to build a new municipal headquarters—the New Town Hall Debate. Flames were fanned by the obstinate refusal of Labour's establishment to listen to opposition to the scheme from any quarter, including the three local parties. The result: 11 Labour members who voted in council against the whip, were expelled from Group for six months.

The manner in which the new town hall decisions were taken was as much at issue as the proposed new building. The Labour establishment, headed by Council Leader John O'Grady, a former vice-chairman of the Social Decmoratic Alliance, were determined to silence opposition at all costs. They were unused, after many years of unopposed right-wing rule, to challenges especially from within their own ranks.

The constituency parties were vociferous on the issue. All declared against the scheme. Peckham and Dulwich both passed motions advising branches to de-select those councillors who ignored their party's views. Since then it has been increasingly apparent to watchful party activists just how often their councillors *do* ignore their party's decisions.

This is not a time for fence-sitting within constituency parties. Those who would court all sides of the party have come unstuck over fundamental issues like the cuts. The hypocrisy of the council's right-wing has not remained hidden from their parties—if council reselection were held tomorrow, it is doubtful if many of them would retain their seats.

1980 BACKDROP

This dissatisfaction within the parties with the actions of their local councillors was the backdrop to the 1980 AGMs. It was exacerbated in the months leading up to the annual meetings by the council's attitude to the Tory cuts.

After months of being told that the current round of committees' activities—considering the effect on services of 4%, 5%, and 6% cuts in the 1980-81 budget—was simply a paper exercise required to safeguard ourselves from watchful Tory eyes, they were of course implemented. The parties had been told they would have time to consider and inform their councillors about their position on the cuts. They did—with a resounding "no". They were, yet again, ignored.

The first sign of trouble came in November when Dulwich GMC passed a 'no cuts—no rate or rent increases' motion. Few councillors supported that one! Several spoke later in Group about the irresponsible behaviour of their local party.

By the beginning of this year it was clear that Southwark would not only cut its budget by the required 5% but that rates would rise massively to boot. In Southwark the scoreboard is as follows:

Cuts: an overall 5% off committee spending for the coming year.

Rents: up by 17%, with garage charges also raised.

Heating Charges: are also up by an iniquitious 25%.

Rates: for the domestic consumer this year will increase by 46.6%.

This was the inglorious result of the council establishment's 'consultation' with the local parties.

All did not rest here however. The two constituencies which held AGMs in February (the final one is yet to come in March) saw the return of a much stronger slate of left candidates for the party posts.

THE RIGHT EXPOSED

Some **Labour Briefing** readers will have recently heard (*South London Press*, 1.3.80) of the letter sent by Peckham MP, Harry Lamborn, to GMC delegates immediately prior to the party's AGM. What they will not have heard is that the letter was in fact only sent to *selected* delegates—presumably those thought to be open to his influence. The party is rightly angry at this blatant, if somewhat incompetent, attempt to stir up feelings against the left of the local party. His attempt was unsuccessful—he now faces the wrath of his GMC in a few weeks' time.

In Dulwich, before the January round of branch AGMs, selected members received a letter from Bob and Helen Eadie (a husband and wife team well-known locally for their long opposition to reselection of MPs and supporters of Campaign for Labour Victory) advising them to support the right-wing slate—enclosed in the letter—for the forthcoming election of party officers.

Both these bids failed. They were important in exposing the manoeuvrings of the right. They have not only exposed the fact that they are 'guilty' of behaviour they claim is the illegitimate province of the left of the party, they have also failed in their attempt to retain the power they have exercised locally for so long.

With strong local parties, the tarnished image of the Labour Party in Southwark should be revitalised, as Labour is seen to be part of campaigns which fight to protect the working class—instead of identified with the collaborationist policies pursued for so long by Southwark council.

Carol Turner
Peckham CLP
and Southwark Councillor

Haringey Votes for Cuts

The Tory attack on public spending and the lack of an effective political response from the majority of Labour councillors is nowhere more apparent than in Haringey.

The borough elections in May 1978 showed truly dramatic results; Labour: 42, Tory: 17—representing a swing to Labour over 1974, and a result even better than the Labour landslide in 1971. These results were achieved on a very firm policy of total opposition to spending cuts, a real political fight against racism and for large and necessary growth in council services.

Immediately after the elections, this became council policy, which every Labour councillor was therefore bound to support.

The Labour defeat of last May hit Haringey as it hit every other borough—a virtual end to municipalisation, a cut in the rate support grant, allegations of overspending by the Area Health Authority—and the usual paraphernalia of Tory hypocrisy.

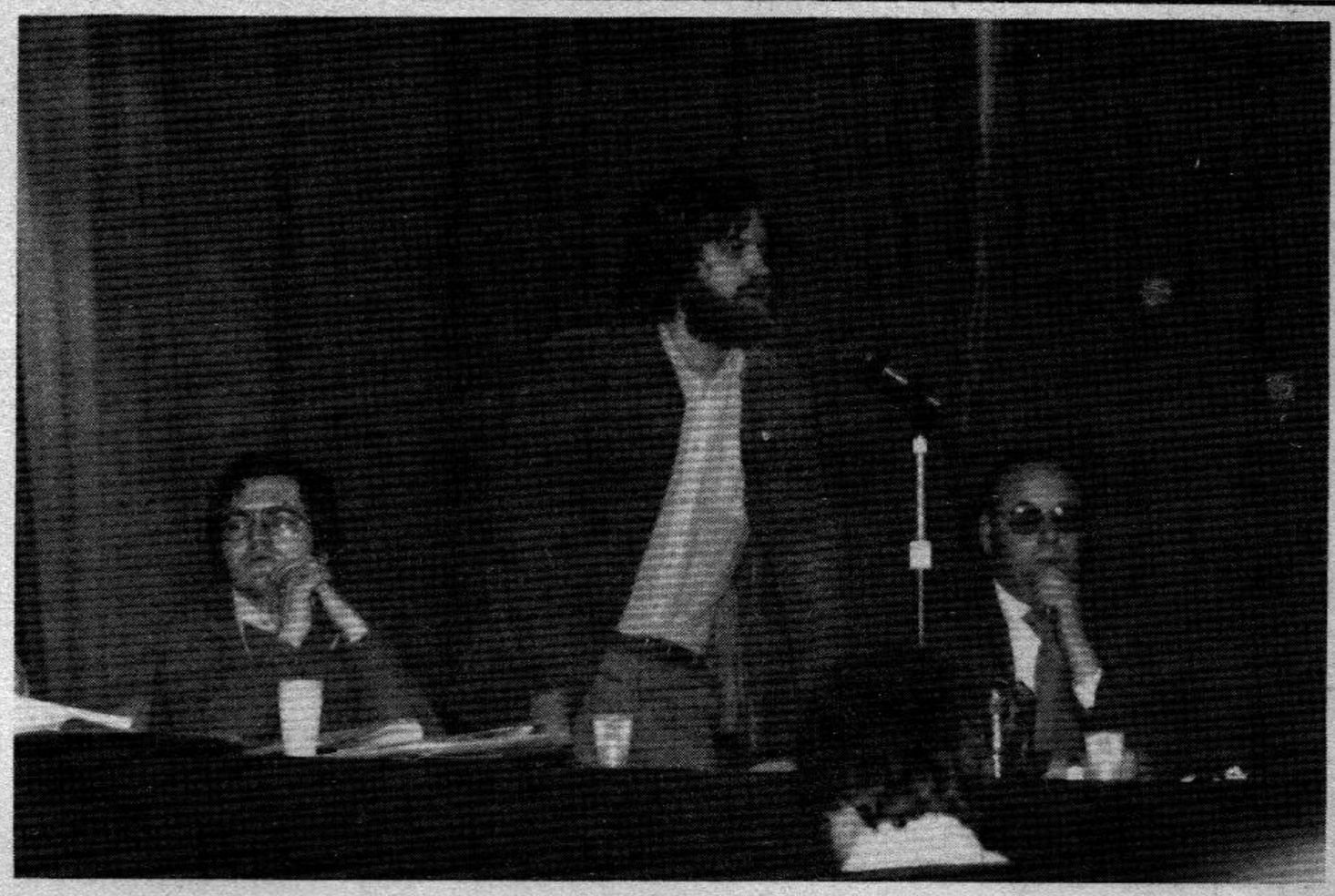
Haringey's three Labour Parties made an immediate two-fold response to the Tory government. It was decided that Labour councillors and Labour AHA members should mount a political offensive against the Tories by uniting with all Labour-controlled councils and refusing to make any cuts in services.

Secondly, and of equally crucial importance, it was decided to establish a campaign against the cuts in Haringey. This campaign has grown enormously and now has 91 affiliates from the Labour Party, local trade unions, other left political parties and community organisations.

In the first round of cuts in the summer of last year the Labour Group leadership proposed cuts of £3 million, which—although carried in the Labour Group—were then defeated in the main spending committees.

The Labour Group then effectively voted for a "no cuts" position and the entire leadership resigned. After four days of intense debate and activity, the Labour Group finally voted to reinstate the leadership and make cuts.

The battle against Toryism has also been fought as the AHA members with three of the four Labour members demanded recall meetings and organised lobbies and marches in conjunction with health service unions. Some success was achieved when decisions to close the Wood Green and Southgate Hospital and



Jeremy Corbyn

end night-time accident and emergency services at the Prince of Wales' Hospital were reversed.

The government's cut in the Rate Support Grant for 1980-81 has faced Haringey with the same set of problems as elsewhere.

Intense debate in the Labour Party and cuts campaign in the borough has been accompanied by massive leafletting, attacking the concept of public spending cuts and pressing Labour representatives to fight the Tories. Since its formation in July, the Haringey Campaign Against the Cuts has organised three major marches, six other demonstrations and lobbies, 14 public meetings and several petitions. The total number of leaflets has well exceeded 150,000.

The position finally reached by the Local Government Committee of the Labour Party was that there must be a united campaign of Labour authorities to resist the government, and that the Haringey Labour Group should initiate this. The prerequisite for any such campaign must be the council's refusal to make cuts in services; only if a united campaign fails should large rate increases be imposed this year. Clearly, in the battle against Toryism, rate increases are not, and cannot be, the permanent answer.

Despite these views, the Haringey Labour Group finally voted, by 20 to 17, to accept a budget that includes cuts of £3.8 million. These cuts will hit every service by raising school meal charges, meals on wheels charges, cutting certification allowances in schools and reducing a whole range of recreation provisions.

Ordinary Labour voters, and Party members, must ask themselves what sort of lunacy it is that makes Labour councillors impose such cuts? Why are they apparently so leaden shod that they only kow tow to the administrative agents of the state?

The truth is that councillors in Haringey seem to be scared by the prospect of Heseltine attacking them, and have no faith in the ability of our movement to fight back and win. To prove that they have no faith, they are playing no part in the struggle at all!

Haringey is not unique. The failure of the right-wing Labour councillors to do anything to oppose Toryism will prove the seed of their own defeat by the Party. Otherwise the right will ensure the defeat of the Labour Party. Working people, having looked to Labour to defend them in times of attack, found the Labour leaders busy dismantling (in the *most* humanitarian way possible!) the defensive walls.

Our task, as ever, is to organise to unite our whole movement to defeat the Tories, and secure real accountability of our representatives in this fight.

Jeremy Corbyn
Haringey Councillor
Secretary, Haringey Campaign Against the Cuts
Organiser, Haringey Labour Party

CLPD: CURB THE PARLIAMENTARIANS! Power to Conference and the NEC!

After five years of intensive struggle, mandatory reselection is now firmly part of the Labour Party constitution —and the Commission of Inquiry had better not remove it!

But there are many other battles still on the Campaign for Labour Party Democracy's agenda. The immediate task is to ensure that the principle of constituency reselection is carried out by the GMC, and not the paper membership—that is, to ensure that democratically-elected delegates go from the wards, women's and youth sections, and the trade unions, to compact those divergent views into a cohesive collective attitude.

This is essential—the MP or candidate reports regularly to the constituency (it is not practicable that he or she could report nearly so often to individual branches and sections and members), and the use of the GMC prevents unfair 'packing' by new members who would appear on scene only to vote in a reselection poll, and then never be seen again!

We must also change the pattern of electing the Labour Party leader. Presently only the 268 Labour MPs have a say—it is our turn to take power in this important decision. An electoral college, with half the votes allocated to Labour Party-affiliated unions, would give *everyone* a say, and would end the present elitist method of election.

The next necessity is for the National Executive to have the right to decide the Party's election manifesto. As custodians of Party policy in between annual conferences, the NEC (which is elected every year) is the only body which is both democratic in composition and accountable in power to the Labour Party's rank and file. They therefore should take the power now residing with the Shadow Cabinet or Cabinet—dependent on Labour's Parliamentary position—and formulate the election manifesto.

The Campaign for Labour Party Democracy is also extending its interests to the field of positive discrimination. CLPD advocates the compulsory inclusion of *at least* one manual worker and one woman on the shortlist of each constituency's selection conference.

This institutional reform will recognise the imbalances in society which adversely affect the working class and women. The 1979 election left Labour with only 62 MPs who came from manual jobs—and, by way of a symbolic fact, no NUM-sponsored MP in a Welsh seat. And today there are only 11 women in the Parliamentary Labour Party.

A mechanical suggestion such as that of the CLPD will not provide the long-term answer—only education can do that —but such a move recognises that we have to restore Labour's credibility by including more working people and women in particular into Labour's ranks.

That's the way ahead for the CLPD— if you want to join, contact Victor Schonfield, 21 Wallingford Avenue, London W10. Will *you* be with us?

Graham Norwood
CLPD Executive Committee

LETTERS

Dear Comrades,

After the GLC elections, when the Labour Party has been re-elected, they will have to reorganise the departments that the Tories have destroyed.

The direct works department being one of these, it will have to be reshaped to move into the 80s. There will be a need to tender for all contracts which at the moment are being carried out by contractors and to tender for work in other Labour controlled councils.

As I work in the construction industry I can see the need for a direct works organisation. If we are ever going to see a decasualisation of the construction industry, the only hope construction workers have is the Labour Party. It must be stressed that we should build for the needs of people, not for profit.

There will be a need to work very closely with the unions and to set up area and regional committees with the unions to oversee contracts.

Within the Labour Party we must build for the future with socialist policies. Once elected, the GLC councillors must carry out a socialist programme. I believe the electors of London have seen the folly of electing Tories, and that when re-elected the Labour Party at County Hall will have a large majority. It can then carry out its election promises, and not as in the past shy away from carrying out the manifesto with excuses.

Yours fraternally,

Danny McCarthy
Peckham CLP

Dear Graham Bash,

I can understand your wanting to have a Bash at the Tories, but what I fail to understand is why you are not supporting and using the official machinery of the GLRC of the Party, particularly since you give the impression that the EC of the GLRC is OK because it makes mostly correct, i.e. your view, decisions.

What if others do to you, now and in the future, what you are trying to do to them?

Are you not, in short, thoroughly reprehensible?

Yours sincerely,

Vic Butler,
London N11.

NEXT MEETING
FOR GLC DISCUSSION

SOCIALIST TRANSPORT POLICIES
speaker: David White

County Hall (Rm 166) 7.00pm

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