

From ALAN GREENGROSS
LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION
GREATER LONDON COUNCIL
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24 October 1984

David Mellor, Esq., MP,
The House of Commons,
London, SW1

Dear David

Thank you for your letter of 18 October about the Socialist propaganda sheet 'Keep the GLC Working for Putney' and a copy of a letter to you from the GLC's Director-General. In his letter to you Maurice Stonefrost confirms that the newsletter to which you objected was produced as part of the Council's 'Awareness Campaign', authorised by its Special Committee which he described as 'all party'. You have asked me whether this is indeed so, and if it is then "... it is little short of a disgrace .."

In this reply to you I wish to make two salient points, which I hope rebuts once and for all the ill-informed - but more often mischievous - allegation of collusion between Livingstone and the GLC Conservative Group on the question of his 'Awareness Campaign':

1. My Group is represented on the Special Committee but only to monitor expenditure, to find out in detail what the Socialists are up to, to oppose and to expose their policies.
2. Our record of opposition is consistent, well-documented, widely publicised and unrelenting.

To answer your immediate question, let me quote to you in full my letter to the Times, published on 4 June 1984, following an earlier one from Ken Livingstone in which he, too, referred to an 'all party' committee.

"Sir,

The Leader of the GLC in his letter (30 May) once again manages to convey a completely false impression.

His claim that his £3m publicity campaign to save the GLC is under the control of an all party committee is technically correct. The Conservative Group are indeed represented on the GLC's Special Committee on Matters Relating to the Council's

Future Existence and Functions (to give it its full title). What he signally fails to point out is that Conservative Members on that Committee have consistently voted against the Labour Party's anti-abolition publicity expenditure. Indeed our opposition is a matter of record and has been widely publicised (not least by Mr. Livingstone and his colleagues, when it suits them).

Our reasons are manifold. The sums of money are unwarranted, the campaign itself all too often overkills and it is probably wrongly targetted. But the over-riding reason is that I no longer believe (if indeed I ever did) that Mr. Livingstone wants to do anything other than use County Hall as a vehicle for confrontation. Indeed, his actions throughout are only consistent with a person who actually wishes to destroy local government as we know it".

Perhaps I might expand on this letter? Our voting record in Special Committee against the six main reports which have resulted in spending of over £10m is as follows: Roll call vote:- 4, Opposed:- 1 and Reserved:- 1. Two further reports, which were taken by the Council's Finance and General Purposes Committee were both opposed by the Conservative Group, one with a roll call vote.

My letter to the Times talks of our opposition being 'widely publicised'. We regard our role on the Special Committee (as on all committees) not only to oppose but, more importantly, to expose. So far this year my Group have produced over 170 press releases which have the widest circulation and which are, more often than not, picked up by the national press. This circulation, incidentally, includes all Greater London Constituency Association Chairmen and Secretary/Agents.

I enclose a random sample publicising Labour's 'Awareness Campaign'. Their headings speak for themselves:-

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| 21 July 1983 | 'Save-the-GLC Campaign. "Londoners are entitled to the Facts" says Alan Greengross, Leader of the Conservative Opposition'. |
| 27 July 1983 | 'More GLC Cash for Publicity' |
| 13 December 1983 | 'Another Million Pounds for Anti-Abolition Campaign' |
| 18 January 1983 | 'No Conservative Collusion with Labour' - Alan Greengross' |
| 4 June 1984 | 'Misspent £3m Publicity Campaign Did Not Have Tory Support' |
| 20 July 1984 | 'GLC Conservatives Convene Special Meeting of the Council to Requisition £3.5m Advertising Campaign' |

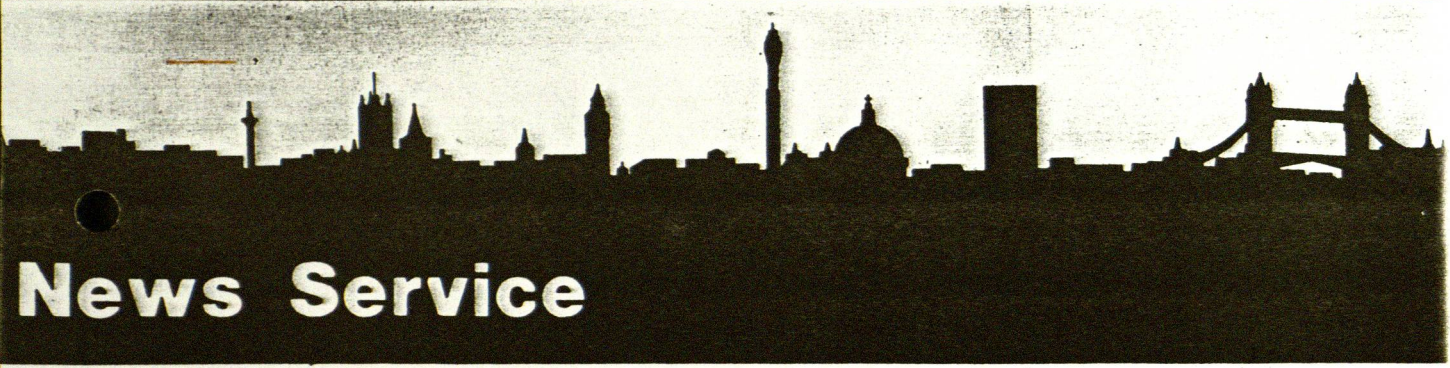
On 3 August I again wrote to the Times, this time following an equivocal point made by Maurice Stonefrost. In this letter, published on 15 August, I began:-

"Just in case part of the GLC Director-General's letter of 1 August may lead some of your readers to believe that the GLC Conservative Group on the Council is in some way part of the Labour Party's campaign to preserve the GLC, may I put the record straight?..."

I hope this brief resume of our implacable opposition to the 'Awareness Campaign' leaves you in no possible doubt about the position of my Group on this matter, but if there remain any areas on which you would like me to expand further please let me know.

I am copying this letter to Kenneth Baker.

Yours
Alan



News Service

Release Time

Immediate

21/7/83

No 96/83

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SAVE-THE-GLC CAMPAIGN - "LONDONERS ARE ENTITLED TO THE FACTS", SAYS ALAN GREENGROSS, LEADER OF THE CONSERVATIVE OPPOSITION.

"What we need is a full, a speedy and a proper enquiry into the whole question of restructuring London's local government," said Alan Greengross, Leader of the Conservatives at County Hall today, commenting on the GLC Labour Group's decision to launch an £800,000 'public awareness campaign' as part of their Save-the-GLC programme.

Every major change in London's government over the last 150 years has been preceded by a Royal Commission. Such a procedure would almost certainly be too slow or cumbersome but some sort of rapid, adequate and authoritative assessment is needed.

"Given the Government's plans to abolish the GLC by 1986, we must make sure that we get the subsequent restructuring not merely right but fully accountable. So that Londoners themselves can be assured that it is right, it will be essential for them to have all the information on which to base their judgement.

"Londoners are entitled to the facts," continued Alan Greengross, "but as plans for the Labour Party's publicity campaign unfold, I fear more and more that it will be used not to help London reach the right decision and secure a proper voice for the future but as yet another party political attack on the Government which will do nothing to help London through the immensely difficult and fraught coming months.

"Surely the time must come when Ken Livingstone will put London's future above his own."

- end -



News Service

Release Time

Immediate

27/7/83 No 101/83

MORE GLC CASH FOR PUBLICITY

In the face of Conservative opposition, the Labour-led GLC has gone ahead with a plan to increase its public relations budget by £274,000 a year by employing fifteen more staff as part of an "Awareness Information Programme."

Alan Hardy, Conservative spokesman on the Staff Committee, commented: "This is on top of an increase of six staff a few months ago because of what is called 'the campaigning nature of the administration', which is another way of saying 'using the GLC to propagate way-out ideas at the London ratepayers' expense to further the left-wing of the Labour Party.'

"The main reasons given for the new increases are firstly 'to handle the Council's grant-making activities in a sensitive manner in view of the constant misrepresentation of these in the media', and secondly 'the demands from committees and departments for publicity campaigning.'

"The GLC is fighting for its life in the face of abolition proposals," said Mr Hardy, "yet County Hall Socialists appear to have a death wish. How else can one explain their utter irresponsibility in increasing staff members at such a time for such a purpose.

"The public would be more inclined to accept the Tory view on the Council that the GLC has a role to play in London if the GLC's grant-making role were to be decimated, its staff numbers reduced and its attention concentrated on what it was set up to do in the first place.

"As it is Livingstone is acting as if he, like Hitler, were presiding over a '1000-Year Reich'. Presumably when the day of reckoning comes he and his left-wing colleagues will retire to the bunker at County Hall with their press relations army firing off propaganda shots to delay their ultimate fate."

- end -



News Service

Release Time

Immediate

13/12/83

No 182/83

ANOTHER MILLION POUNDS FOR ANTI-ABOLITION CAMPAIGN

Conservatives on the GLC are vigorously opposing plans by the Labour-led administration to spend another £1 million on campaigning against Government plans for abolition of the Council.

The £800,000 originally allocated has been used up, a report to the Council states. The new amount is destined only to cover the three months from January to March, when the current financial year ends, and more will probably be required after that.

It is said that additional staff, requiring further finance, will be required if the plan is approved.

Alan Greengross, Leader of the GLC Conservative Group, stated: "MP's and other decision makers interested in the democratic process should have all the information they need both now and in the future. The decisions they are going to make in the coming year are fundamental to the way we will all have to live in London in the future. It is iniquitous to allocate sums of this magnitude merely to attack the Government at the ratepayers' expense. Conservatives on the GLC feel that, in any event, such a campaign is likely to be counterproductive to all points of view."

- end -

Press contact:

Arthur Williamson

633 3770



News Service

Release Time

Immediate

18/1/84

No 10/84

"NO CONSERVATIVE COLLUSION WITH LABOUR" - ALAN GREENGROSS

Alan Greengross, leader of the GLC Conservative Group, said in a statement today:-

"I am appalled at the way some people are trying to suggest that there is common ground between the Conservatives and the Labour Party on the GLC.

"The Conservative Group is totally committed to and totally supports the Government's commitment to restructuring London's local government. All Ken Livingstone is desperate to do is preserve a platform on which he can strut and posture at the Government.

"The Government is to be congratulated on its desire to consult as widely as possible. The Government is proving its claim to be doing all it can to get the best possible solution for London's problems."

- end -

Press contact:

Arthur Williamson

633 3770


News Service**Release Time**

Immediate

4/6/84

No 93/84

MISSPENT £3 MILLIONS PUBLICITY CAMPAIGN DID NOT HAVE TORY SUPPORT

In a letter to The Times today, Alan Greengross, Leader of the GLC Conservative Group, following claims and allegations by the Leader of the GLC, said:-

"Ken Livingstone's claim that his £3 millions publicity campaign to save the GLC is under the control of an all-party committee is technically correct. The Conservative group are indeed represented on the GLC's Special Committee on Matters Relating to the Council's Future Existence and Functions (to give it its full title).

"What he signally fails to point out is that Conservative members on that committee have consistently voted against the Labour Party's anti-abolition publicity expenditure. Indeed, our opposition is a matter of record and has been widely publicised (not least by Mr Livingstone and his colleagues when it suits them).

"Our reasons are manifold. The sums of money are unwarranted, the campaign itself all too often overkills and it is probably wrongly targeted. But the overriding reason is that I no longer believe (if indeed I ever did) that Mr Livingstone wants to do anything other than use County Hall as a vehicle for confrontation. Indeed, his actions throughout are only consistent with a person who actually wishes to destroy local government as we know it."

- end -

Press contact: Arthur Williamson - 633 3770



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20/7/84

No 130/84

GLC CONSERVATIVES CONVENE SPECIAL MEETING OF THE COUNCIL TO REQUISITION £3½ MILLIONS
ADVERTISING CAMPAIGN

The Conservative opposition on the GLC has today convened a special meeting of the Council in order to challenge the decision of the Council to spend an additional £5.6 millions on the Council's abolition campaign. This money will bring to a total of £10.5 millions ratepayers' money being spent on Labour Party propaganda within London. The date of the meeting has yet to be arranged by the Chairman, Illytd Harrington.

The proposal is being rushed through in advance of the impending passage through Parliament of the Paving Bill which would make such action subject to the approval of the Secretary of State.

Speaking today at the Special meeting to discuss the future of the Council, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, Mr Cyril Taylor, said: "This further increase in the Council's publicity budget is a flagrant misuse of ratepayers' money. For example, £10 millions would advance the construction of 250 sheltered housing units for the elderly. In our view, it is unreasonable expenditure. We will, therefore, be seeking an interested party such as a London borough or ratepayers to seek leave from the courts to overrule the Council's decision. We further believe that the Government must now take action to restrict the use of ratepayers' money for publicity purposes under section 142 of the Local Government Act."

- end -

Press contact: Arthur Williamson - 633 3770