

HACKNEY



NOT FOR SALE

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Another World Is Possible.

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THINK GLOBALLY : ACT LOCALLY
COMMUNITY CONTROL IN HACKNEY NOW!
DUMP THE DEBT

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GLOBALLY:

Against the background of the war against Afghanistan, the World Trade Organisation (WTO) will be meeting in the tiny desert dictatorship of Qatar, from the 9th-11th November, to work on another round of trade agreements to open up new areas of life around the world to exploitation by big businesses. This time they're aiming at getting agreements to enforce the privatisation of public services, force GMO seeds on member countries and to allow the patenting of lifeforms. The British Labour government is a major sponsor of this agenda to put profit before people and the planet.

LOCALLY:

Hackney's Labour controlled Council have their own their own agenda to make sweeping cuts to local services and community groups. They are also slashing the pay and conditions of their workforce and have sacked or sought to intimidate union activists. Some of the lowest paid worker's have seen their annual wage cut by £1, 500 a year, whilst the council bosses are imposing new working conditions that will make it harder for women workers with childcare responsibilities to hang onto their jobs.

Where does all the money go?

All of this is with an eye to further sell-off of community resources and privatisation of services. It is being presided over by Chief Executive Max Caller, who, with a personal salary of £150,000 a year, is demanding cuts of £75 million over the next three years from the borough's budget.

Max and his mates on the Council will of course tell us there is no alternative, that in order to balance the books, the workers and the local community must suffer death by a thousand cuts. Yet every year the people of Hackney hand over £70 million in loan repayments to the central government to service the £750 million debt that the council owes to the Public Works Lending Board in Whitehall. If the government told their civil servants to write off this debt, there would be no need for these savage cuts.

Who profits from Hackney's debts?

The money the central government loaned to Hackney was raised from banks and other financial institutions through the issuing of bonds. These financial institutions still expect a return on their investments. The same city fat cats are also the paymasters who call the Labour Party tune. They are well aware that through increased charges to the community and lower pay and conditions for workers, there is potentially a fat profit to be made through the privatisation of public resources and services.

This is why the Labour government, both on a local level in Hackney, and on an international level through the WTO meeting in Qatar, is sponsoring an agenda of further privatisation and sell-off of our social and environmental assets.

Hackney's debt is the perfect excuse for the local Labour Party and their cronies to force through their plans to reduce the Council to a collection of highly paid executives managing private sector contracts. In this sense Hackney serves as a laboratory for their agenda of privatisation for local government services.

Privatisation is not a better deal for the community:

They argue that privatisation is the only solution to the corruption and mismanagement of their predecessors. But privatisation has not served the people of Hackney any better than bureaucratic rule. We all remember the disastrous privation of Housing Benefits Services under ITNET, which cost over £25 million in lost revenues and many private sector residents their homes. Whilst Service Team, the privatised refuse service, looks set to cost local people more than when the service was council controlled.

What are the options?

We have no nostalgia for the bad old days of bureaucratic state control. What we need, as workers and as local people, is direct control over how resources are allocated and how services are provided in our community. It is not about electing Socialists or other representatives to put pressure on the government to change their ways. We need to develop new ways to relate to each other, in order to challenge a capitalism system that puts the greed of a few above the well being of our communities and planet.

How can we do this?

We can do this by linking our struggles as workers over control of our workplaces with the struggle now happening over control of our community resources housing, services and other assets the Council wants to sell off to the private sector. By taking direct action on the ground to support each other, we can act to break down the divide between our working lives and our local environment

Support Organised Actions:

In the coming months there will be strikes and actions by Hackney workers and there will be occupations and protests by Hackney Community Groups. We need to act together to support each other. The struggle here in Hackney is one part of a struggle of people and communities around the world against the privatisation and enclosure of communal resources. By organising ourselves we can challenge this process and put forward alternative visions in solidarity with groups and communities across the world actively resisting this agenda of corporate greed.

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