CAMDEN LABOUR BRIEFING

DEFEND LIVERPOOL : NO RETREAT

DEFEND THE GLC, ILEA & LT : NO CO-OPERATION WITH ABOLITION

The government had hoped to reduce local councils' spending by withdrawing rate support grants, and at the same time make labour councils unpopular by provoking a rate-payers rebellion against high rate rises. This strategy failed and the Tories are preparing new drastic measures : rate-capping and abolition of the GLC and metropolitan counties .

Rate-capping and abolition will entail massive redundancies, cuts in services and privatisation. It will be an attack on democracy as a set of elections will be abolished. It is also an attack on the Labour Party as the Tories have no chance of winning through elections these councils.

The growth of many different campaigns, the massive demonstration on January 24th, and even the opinion polls show that there is massive opposition. We therefore have to organise this opposition to ensure that it is successful. Different ideas are being put forward inside the Labour Party on how best to build the campaiagn of resistance. This is a necessary debate, and time should be set aside in Labour Party and Union branches to discuss the issue.

At a recent Labour Party local government conference, Neil Kinnock argued that labour councils should not engage in illegal actions, and should try to implement rate-capping as humanely as possible while placing the blame for the cuts on the government. 'Tribune' repeats this argument but adds that if a council decides that it has no alternative, it should defy the government and get the support of the labour movement. Kinnock's approach offers no resistance, while 'Tribune' hedges its bets. Both offer no hope of winning.

We must say clearly now that we will refuse to co-operate with abolition and rate-capping as Ken Livingstone and NALGO have stated. Non co-operation will have to backed by strike action to actually be effective. In London, a united campaign of unions, labour parties and community organisations should be set up to defend the GLC, ILEA and LT. We should not delude ourselves that ILEA is more 'winnable' than LT or the GLC. Meanwhile we must defend Liverpooland place it at the centre of the 'Democracy Day' on March 29th, because if Liverpool is defeated, it will be much harder to win the fight against abolition and rate-capping.

Jill Entwistle (Holborn & St Pancras) Steve Marks (Hampstead & Highgate)

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SUPPORT THE TUC 'DAY FOR DEMOCRACY' DEMONSTRATION ON THURSDAY 29th MARCH

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CAMDEN LABOUR BRIEFING MEETING : THURSDAY 15th MARCH at 8pm
(open to all Labour Party members)
VENUE : Hampstead Labour Party Committee Rooms, 37A Broadhurst Gardens, NW 6

Graham Bash from the National Briefing Editorial Board will give a report, followed by a discussion on the strategy for the campaign to defend the GLC.

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