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## East Mids heart unit under threat

# Protest and strike to save our NHS

## Join the national demo on 18 March

Steve Score, Leicester

Glenfield congenital heart centre in Leicester saves children's lives. No wonder there is so much anger at NHS England's threat to stop children's heart surgery there. It is the only place in the whole of the East Midlands that carries out these operations.

[My son was one of 332 children](#) who had heart surgery there last year. Yet NHS England's main reason for ending this surgery is that they now require 375 operations a year.

They ignore the fact that Glenfield is increasing its capacity and is likely to meet that arbitrary target soon anyway, and the fact that it has been praised for its "excellent outcomes".

The closure plan has been strongly opposed by patients' families and campaigners. The campaign has also been backed by Unite the union regionally, the Midlands TUC, as well as local trades councils and union branches. A combined total of 60,000 people have so far signed either the online petition or a paper version.

### Real motives?

If NHS England's arguments don't add up, what are the real motives? They deny it's about money. But is it a coincidence that this is happening at the same time as the government demands [£22 billion in 'efficiency savings'](#) - cuts - from the NHS?

Many local campaigns are springing up to save NHS services and hospitals. We need to pull these all together and it needs union backing. Let's unite to stop the Tories taking the heart out of the NHS!

### Demo details:

- Saturday 29 October
- Assemble Victoria Park, Leicester from 11am
- Ending in a rally in Jubilee Square at around 1pm

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## Re-open Grantham A&E

Gary Freeman, Unison health service group executive member for East Midlands (personal capacity)

[The closure of Grantham Hospital's night-time Accident and Emergency service](#) was supposedly for three months. But as predicted by campaigners, there are now rumours of a further extension of this.

There has been huge public opposition to this closure, with weekly protests. 3,000 people marched through the town in September.

The nearest A&E department is 25 miles away. Lincolnshire is a large rural county with poor transport links. Time lost means lives at risk.

Campaigners believe there has been a deliberate attempt by the trust to underestimate the needs and usage at Grantham A&E to justify its closure.

It is also happening against the backdrop of new NHS cuts in the government's 'Sustainability and Transformation Plans'.

- Join the protest Saturday 29 October, 11am at St Peters Hill, Grantham
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## Health campaigners announce date for national demo in defence of the NHS

**Mike Forster, Hands Off HRI chair (personal capacity)**

The date is set! The national steering committee of Health Campaigns Together has called a national demo under the banner 'It's our NHS' for 18 March 2017. In response to the [growing crisis](#) in the health service and shrinking budgets, campaigners have decided to put out the call.

The government's agenda to force hospital trusts to balance the books next year, which will usher in massive cuts, has sprung the campaign into determined action.

Under the misnamed title of '[Sustainability and Transformation Plans \(STPs\)](#)', the Tories will let hospital trusts make the decisions about how to implement cuts of £22 billion.

These are eye watering cuts and in the words of health campaigner and academic John Lister: "will spell the end of the NHS as we know it".

As word get outs of [hospital closures](#), bed reductions, staff redundancies and of course an anticipated winter of crisis, opposition to government cuts will mushroom. Campaign groups will spring up everywhere.

Now they have a focus and this anger can coalesce around this important demo in London.

The time to act is now! The NHS is fast becoming an issue of huge national concern for working class people everywhere. This demo can unite trade unions, campaign groups and activists in a coordinated protest. This can act as a catalyst to build huge local and national resistance. It must be a priority to get momentum behind this bold call to arms.

Get your union branches to back the demo. Start to publicise the date. Let's call on the Labour Party to get behind the demo.

The Tories have never been so vulnerable. Their dirty and secretive attempt to privatise the NHS is out. We can win this vital battle.

### **We say:**

- Build for 18 March demonstration
  - No to NHS cuts and the STPs
  - Scrap the private finance initiatives and kick the privateers out of the NHS
  - Victory to the junior doctors
  - A decent living wage for all NHS staff
  - Coordinate national trade union action to defend the NHS
  - Renationalise the NHS
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# Hundreds march and rally to defend South Tyneside hospital

Elaine Brunskill, Northern Socialist Party regional secretary

Up to 500 people marched and rallied to stop the threatened downgrading of South Tyneside hospital. As we marched through South Shields, bystanders clapped to show their appreciation of the campaign.

Our chant "we are ready to fight - the NHS is a human right" and others were taken up enthusiastically. At the end of the march one person commented "you lot are bloody good chanters!"

Trade unionists, community activists and political parties were joined by many who said they'd never been on a protest in their life - but understood the necessity of fighting for the NHS.

One grandmother told us she'd brought her two grandsons along to ensure they understood the importance of fighting to save the NHS. Another elderly woman said she remembered the birth of the NHS and was afraid that the Tories were intent on taking it away. Even school children were eager to sign our petition. It's clear that across the generations there's a growing mood to defend this vital service.

Socialist Party speaker Norman Hall got rousing applause when he called for the [nationalisation of the pharmaceutical companies](#) who leech millions out of the NHS.

## Applause

But the biggest applause of the day was when he called for a [24-hour general strike](#) to bring down this Tory government as the first step to save the NHS. One person in the crowd stood with a clenched fist salute during Norman's speech.

Unfortunately, none of the trade union speakers made a clear call for industrial action to defend their members' jobs and to fight this rotten [Tory government's plans](#) to decimate our NHS.

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## 'Jungle' camp destruction is no solution

### Defend the right to asylum

Vladimir Bortun

The French authorities have started the eviction and demolition of the ['Jungle' camp in Calais](#).

Thousands of people have been living there in squalid conditions over the last couple of years, desperately hoping to be granted asylum in the UK - whether because they have family links here or because they can speak the language.

[Most of them have fled from Middle Eastern and African countries torn by war](#) and brutal dictatorships, all of which owe a great deal to the various imperialist interventions by Western powers such as Britain and France.

Millions more Syrians and Iraqis that have escaped vicious sectarian wars are stuck in camps in Turkey, Lebanon and Jordan. It was recently revealed that many refugee children in Turkey are being exploited in sweatshops, making goods for high street retailers in Britain.

The 8,000 or more migrants now living in the Jungle cannot be deported back to Libya (the last country they left before reaching Europe), which is still a failed state five years after the Western military intervention.

Instead, they will be settled in temporary and improvised centres across France where they can reportedly apply for asylum.

At the same time, the French authorities have been asking their British counterparts to take in 500 unaccompanied children who say they have family in the UK.

At the very last minute, the Tory government reluctantly agreed to take in 200 children, but much more needs to be done.

[The fundamental right to asylum](#) must be respected for those fleeing war and persecution - children and adults alike.

The anti-refugee argument that public services here are strained means that defending the right to asylum has to go hand-in-hand with opposing the cuts in public services and fighting for more social housing, better schools and a fully funded NHS - which we socialists do on a daily basis.

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## Welsh budget: Labour government makes Tory cuts

Dave Reid, Socialist Party Wales

The [Welsh government](#)'s budget continues Welsh Labour's policy of meekly passing on the Tories' public service cuts. It inflicts them on some of the most deprived communities in western Europe.

The Welsh government is slamming another nail into the coffin of council services. There will be a further cut of 3.5% to council spending next year if proposals go through.

We are reaching the point of no return. Nearly 20% has been cut from devolved public services in Wales already.

If cuts to council funding continue, some services will disappear for good. Even statutory services will be severely impacted. Already, the child protection unit of at least one Welsh council refuses to respond unless the child is within 72 hours of harm.

And council workers' pay and conditions are under threat, as councils take the cheap and easy option of outsourcing council services to private companies, who cut staffing, hours and pay.

Welsh finance minister Mark Drakeford highlighted the increase in NHS spending of 2.5%. But this does not even keep up with health inflation, which is higher than the average inflation rate - let alone make up for last year's cuts.

It's no good for the Welsh government just to wring its hands and blame the Tories. Nor is it acceptable for [Welsh councils](#) to pretend they are 'improving' services while they cut and privatise them.

Their strategy of 'humanely' implementing inhumane Tory cuts has failed. Between them they have implemented the managed decline of public services in Wales towards oblivion.

Instead, a council of war should be called in Wales, bringing together the Welsh government, councils, trade unions and community organisations, to declare "enough is enough!" and prepare a plan of action to defy the Tories:

- Pool council reserves
- Combine Welsh government and council borrowing powers to set no-cuts needs budgets for Welsh government and local government

- Begin a mass campaign of protests, strike action and civil disobedience to demand sufficient funding from Westminster to maintain public services at an adequate level

The Wales Trade Union Congress (TUC) has pointed the way, [passing a motion initiated by Socialist Party members calling for no-cuts budgets](#). It called on "councils of all parties in Wales that claim to be against austerity to set legal no-cuts budgets." This echoed the decisions of public service union Unison's local government conference, and the national local government committee of general union Unite.

All these motions represent the growing realisation that we cannot continue as we have done previously. A stand must be made against the cuts.

The Tory UK government is very weak and divided. Already it has been forced into eight major u-turns since being elected.

And even they have been forced to accept - in words, at least - that investment needs to be pumped into the ailing British economy.

So now is the time to strike. The Welsh government needs to pass a no-cuts budget and the TUC should be building towards a 24-hour general strike to end the cuts.

The alternative is just too bad to contemplate.

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## Academies mired in debt and corruption

### Fight for publicly run schooling

Lucy Brotherston, teaching assistant

The new Tory government under Theresa May will continue converting state schools to 'academy' status and setting up new 'free schools'.

This, along with May's drive on new grammars, illustrates a determination to remove power from local authorities, replacing them with unaccountable private bodies.

The BBC recently got hold of figures suggesting 113 academy trusts in England have run up debts of almost £25 million.

And this, it seems, is the tip of the iceberg. The academies project has allowed unscrupulous businesspeople to redirect huge amounts of public money out of schools into their own pockets all over the country.

Meanwhile, the Observer found in 2015 there were two claims of "financial irregularity" against academies and free schools every month. There were 58 allegations in the three years from 2012.

Some have resulted in convictions for fraud. [The Perry Beeches Academy Trust](#), which runs five secondary schools in Birmingham, paid nearly £1.3 million to a business which then paid a "second salary" to one of its headteachers, Liam Nolan.

Former Haberdashers' Aske's Federation accountant Samuel Kayode creatively accounted for £4.1 million. He was jailed for nine years.

Sajid Husain Raza is the former headteacher of Kings Science Academy in Bradford, West Yorkshire. His sister Shabana Hussain, a teacher at the school, and Daud Khan, its former financial director, were convicted of a total of 15 charges by a jury at Leeds Crown Court.

And there has been the saga around the 'irregular' financial dealings of Sir Greg Martin, former head of the Durand Academy Trust. He was knighted for his services to education and lauded by Education Secretary

Michael Gove.

[Academy Trusts behave like big businesses](#). They pay their headteachers huge salaries - figures in the hundreds of thousands are considered normal. Meanwhile, they ask staff living with pay freezes to reapply for their own jobs due to 'budget constraints'.

This situation is clearly not sustainable. We must stop academies and free schools. [Fight for high-quality, fully funded, publicly owned and run schools](#), under the democratic control of staff, parents and the community.

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## Homeless told to sleep rough: councils must build housing

Jack Jeffery, homelessness support worker

Homeless charity [St Mungo's](#) has released a report detailing that many of its clients had been advised by councils to sleep rough before they could access services.

This will ring true with anyone who works in housing. A [combination of rising rents, diminishing social housing](#), and vindictive cuts to benefits are pushing more and more people into homelessness.

I work for a homeless charity in London that runs a small shelter for around 30 people. The conditions aren't glamorous; the shelter consists of four large rooms turned into bedrooms in the evening by bringing out camp beds.

Despite this, most mornings there are two to three people sleeping on the step outside. Unfortunately, now it's October, the shelter is already full. The best we can offer them is a place on our growing waiting list as all the other shelters are full.

Right-wing politicians and newspapers often paint homeless people as irresponsible and unable to manage a normal life. However, a look at the government's own statistics shows the most common cause of homelessness is the end of a shorthold tenancy. Hardly surprising in a country where rents soar while wages stagnate.

The new Homelessness Reduction Bill, a private member's bill introduced by a Tory backbencher, is due for its second reading on 28 October.

This might improve the standard of advice given by councils. But ultimately it will do little to help, because a clause guaranteeing all non-priority homeless applicants 56 days of emergency accommodation was deemed 'not feasible' by parliament's local government and communities committee. It is likely to be removed.

[What would end homelessness?](#) Secure social housing, jobs, a living wage and living benefits for all - which will only be won through struggle. It will be never granted by a government which cares more about ensuring Britain is 'open for business' than looking after the people business exploits for profit.

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## Four in five self-employed workers living in poverty

Maddy Steeds, Leeds Socialist Party

Almost 80% of self-employed workers are living in poverty, according to Tax Research UK.

The bosses and their politicians told workers that being self-employed would give us more flexibility - for example, to choose when you work, so you can balance work and family life. However, [the reality](#) is far from the rosy picture painted by the government.

The promises of freedom in being a freelance worker have hidden a loss of financial security. Instead, these workers make 40% less than employees.

Profiteers like the owners of Uber and Deliveroo have used the promise of flexible hours to cut pay and increase their own profits. This system of employment reflects a regression back to 19th century work practices, where workers were only paid for each item they produced rather than the time and effort put into making it.

Workers are not taking this lying down, though. Anger and strikes have forced the Tories to launch an investigation into ['gig economy'](#) firms. Although it is unlikely this bosses' government will do anything meaningful to prevent this exploitation.

However, workers can strike together to demand better treatment - as exemplified by the [Deliveroo drivers' successful strike](#). Collective action is also necessary to win rights such as sick pay and holiday pay.

The Socialist Party fights for an end to zero-hour contracts - instead, we want flexible hours on workers' terms, not the bosses'. We say no to phoney 'self-employment', and yes to well-paid, secure jobs for all, union recognition, and employment rights from day

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## Readmit expelled socialists

More than 60 socialists, with over 800 years of Labour Party membership between them, have signed the letter below calling for their re-admittance to the Labour Party. Many of them were expelled in the past for [supporting the Militant Tendency](#). Others have been excluded or expelled in recent months as part of the right-wing Labour Party machine's attempts to defeat Jeremy Corbyn.

Since Jeremy Corbyn was first elected as Labour leader a battle has raged within the Labour Party. In essence the struggle taking place in the Labour Party is about in which classes' interests it is going to act - the working class majority in society and the middle class with no hope for the future, or the representatives of the capitalist 1%?

For decades it has acted in the interests of the capitalist establishment, consistently supporting austerity, privatisation and war. In the 1980s and 1990s, when the pro-capitalist elements were struggling to establish an iron grip on the Labour Party, one of their first acts was to expel hundreds of socialists, particularly supporters of the Militant Tendency, now the Socialist Party.

Our 'crimes' were leading successful struggles in defence of working class people - notably the fight against cuts by [Liverpool City Council](#) and the 18 million strong movement against the poll tax which led to the resignation of Thatcher.

Today it is clear that the pro-capitalist elements in the Labour Party have not accepted Jeremy Corbyn's victory. On the contrary, they remain determined to use their positions - in the Parliamentary Labour Party, Labour councils and the Labour Party machine - to fight to return Labour to being a reliable tool of the establishment.

On the other side a determined struggle needs to be waged to consolidate Jeremy Corbyn's victory and to transform Labour into a democratic, socialist, anti-austerity party. An essential part of that struggle is campaigning to readmit all those socialists, individuals and organisations, who have been expelled or excluded from Labour because of their socialist views.

This application will be submitted to the Labour Party's November NEC meeting. If you have been expelled or excluded and would like to add your name to the letter please email your details to

hannahsell@socialistparty.org.uk by 4 November, 2016.

We the undersigned call on Labour's National Executive Committee (NEC) to accept our applications for membership of the Labour Party following the [re-election of Jeremy Corbyn](#) as Labour leader.

We are socialists, trade unionists, working class community activists and young people who have been expelled or otherwise excluded from the Labour Party because of our socialist ideas.

We include amongst our signatories former Labour councillors and an MP; elected trade union national executive members and local union branch officers; from labour and trade union movement activists with years of experience, to a new generation of young campaigners. Some of us were expelled 30 years ago or more; others were excluded from membership during the recent leadership election.

Because many of us who found ourselves outside the Labour Party rightly continued the struggle for socialism through membership of other organisations, we know that our applications for re-admittance will be denounced by the establishment media as 'left-wing infiltration'. But we have no wish to hide our background.

We urge the NEC to boldly undercut the media's attack not only by admitting us into membership as individuals but by deciding favourably on requests for affiliation from any socialist organisation that so applies.

Jeremy Corbyn's election to the leadership marked the beginning of a new struggle against a capitalist establishment determined to see off all challenges to their interests and we want to play our part in seeing that struggle through to victory.

Signed,

**Peter Taaffe**, Labour Party member 1960-1983; Editor of Militant (1964-96); Socialist Party general secretary (1997-). **Keith Dickinson**, LP member 1957-1983; Member of the Militant Editorial Board; coordinator of Socialist Books. **Clare Doyle**, LP member 1964-1983; Member of the Militant Editorial Board; organiser for Committee for a Workers' International (CWI). **Lynn Walsh**, LP member 1964-1983; Member of the Militant Editorial Board; Editor of Socialism Today (1997-). **Tony Mulhearn**, LP member 1963-1986. Liverpool District LP vice-president 1972-1980; President 1980 until party suspended in 1985; Liverpool Councillor 1984-87; Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC) mayoral candidate 2012. **Dave Nellist**, LP member 1974-1992; Coventry South East MP (1983-92); Socialist Party councillor (1998-2012); TUSC chairperson (2010-). **Clive Heemskerck**, LP member 1976-1991; Deputy editor of Socialism Today (1996-); TUSC national election agent (2010-). **Hannah Sell**, LP member 1985-1991; LP NEC 1988-89; Socialist Party deputy general secretary (2007-). **Dave Reid**, LP member 1975-1991, Chair LP Wales Regional Youth Committee 1982-84, secretary Socialist Party Wales. **Roger Bannister**, LP member 1970-1986, at time of expulsion was secretary of Broadgreen CLP. Member of Unison NEC (1993-). **Alec Thraves**, LP member 1976-1992; vice president Swansea Trades council. **Bob Labi**, LP member 1966-1995, LPYS national committee member 1971-1976, Editor LPYS paper "Left" 1971-1977, today organiser for the CWI. **Tony Saunois**, LP member 1970-1985. LP NEC 1978-81. **Dave Griffiths**, LP member 1974-1993. Member of West Midlands LP regional executive. **Kevin Bennett**, Labour councillor 2008-2015, TUSC councillor 2015-2016. Suspended and excluded from Warrington's ruling Labour group for opposing austerity. **Steve Nally**, Lambeth LP member 1982 -1992. Secretary of the All Britain Anti-Poll Tax Federation 1989-1992. Socialist Party and GMB member. **Alistair Tice**, LP member 1971-1990. Currently Socialist Party Yorkshire regional secretary. **Peter Harris**, LP member 1976-1984. **Janet Gibson**, LP member 1983-1992, jailed for non-payment of poll tax in 1991. **Keith Gibson**, LP member 1983-1992, leader of Lindsey Oil Refinery strikes in 2009. **Sharon Milsom**, LP member 1981-1985. Now activist in South Yorkshire Freedom Riders. **Elaine Brunskill**, LP member 1984-1995. Socialist Party Northern Region Secretary. **Eric Segal**, LP member 1976-1991; jailed for non payment of the poll tax. Now secretary South East Kent Trade Union Council. **John Boadle**, LP member 1978-1994. **Jim Lakshman Hensman**, LP member 1969-1993. **Kevin Wilson**, LP member 1982-1996. **Ian Page**, Labour councillor 1990 to 1995 expelled. Socialist Party councillor 1995 to 2010. **Paul Couchman**, expelled in 1989. **Bill Mullins**, LP member 1970- 1985, ex-senior shop steward TGWU British Leyland rover Solihull. **Dave Auger**, LP member 1982-1991, Unison NEC. **Mike Forster**, LP member 1972-1993; today Chair of Hands off HRI. **Wally Kennedy**, former councillor expelled 1994. **Teresa Mackay**, LP member 1961-1986. Secretary Ipswich & District TUC; Vice President Sertuc. **James Ivens**, LP member January-September 2016, News Editor, the Socialist (2015-). **Paul Callanan**, LP member December



2015-September 2016, Socialist Party South London organiser. **Ben Robinson**, LP member July-September 2016, Socialist Party National Committee. **Clive Walder**, LP member 1976-1992. Labour member of East Sussex County Council 1989-1992. Currently Chair of Communication Workers Union Birmingham, Black Country and Worcester Branch. **Dave Gorton**, LP member 1982-1992. Trade union activist and organiser 1981-2016. Currently communications officer, National Shop Stewards Network. **Craig Bates**, Unite Community Stafford Branch Equalities Officer. **Josie Shelly**, Unite Community Stafford Branch Treasurer. **Gary Freeman**, LP member 1972-1991. Unison Health Service Group Executive. **Mick Griffiths**, LP member 1982-1996. **Hugo Pierre**, LP member 1983-91. Currently on the National Executive Committee of Unison. **Jane Nellist**, LP Member 1980- 1993. Currently member of NUT National Executive Committee. **Steve Glennon**, LP member from 1970 to 1987; LPYS National Committee 1974 to 1979; Presently a member Stevenage TUC EC. **Norman Hall**, LP member 1976-1992; TUSC Parliamentary & Local Government Candidate. **Pete Dickenson**, LP member 1973-1991; author of 'Planning Green Growth'. **John Dolan**, LP member 1980-1995; currently Chair of Haringey Unison local government branch; Socialist Party member. **Krystyna Koseda**, expelled from Havering LP. **Tony Aitman**, Labour Party member 1964-1986; currently Unison shop steward, voluntary sector, Socialist Party member. **Julia Leonard**, Member of the LP for over 15 years and councillor from 1994 until expelled. **Roger Keyse**, LP member 1968-1995. **Dave Mitchell**, LP member 1979-1989. **Gary Harbord**, LP member 1988-1990. RMT steward and chair Hillingdon TUC. **Pete McNally**, LP member 1974-1992. **Dave Murray**, LP member 1979-1992. **Eleanor Donne**, LP member 1980-92; Branch treasurer Basildon LG branch Unison. **Tom Barker**, LP member August-October 2016. **John Blackall**, LP Member 1982-1992. Liverpool Labour councillor for Kensington 1987 - 1988. **Jim Horton**, LP member 1982-1987. **Jane James**, LP member 1972-1987. **Judy Griffiths**, LP member 1976-1993.

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## Wallasey whitewash must be condemned

### Continued CLP suspension requires labour movement response

Wirral Socialist Party totally condemns the continued [suspension of Wallasey Constituency Labour Party](#) (CLP) and the whitewash of a so-called investigation into alleged homophobic abuse, bullying and intimidation in Wallasey.

We condemn all abuse, which where proven should be dealt with. Tackling proven abuse is a separate matter to the deselection of MPs or councillors which is a political decision. It should be a democratic right for a party's members to choose their candidate, recall their representatives and elect their local organisers.

The report prevents open, democratic debate and discussion by allowing the Blairite infiltrators to continue hiding under the cloak of anonymity.

What an absolute scandal it is that over [1,000 new members in Wallasey have been prevented from participating](#) in the running of the local party. At the behest of this rigged report, the CLP remains suspended into next year. Right-wing local and regional officials will no doubt seek to use this time to attack the left.

This yet again highlights that there can be no compromise with the Blairites, who will stop at nothing to cling onto power. The Socialist Party calls for the opening up of the Labour Party on a [democratic federal basis](#) to build the strongest possible working class alliance to bring down the Tories and their Blairite agents within the Labour Party.

We will be seeking discussions across the Wirral and Merseyside labour movement about the way forward in light of this latest development.

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## Battle in Leeds council over care home closure

Leeds Socialist Party members

The Green, in Seacroft, is among a number of council care homes faced with the threat of closure as a result of [Leeds City Council's programme of cuts](#). The Green provides vital specialist support to sufferers of dementia.

After ignoring the recommendation of the Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Board to keep the Green open, an important step was taken by five Labour councillors signing a 'call-in' of the decision, referring it back to the scrutiny board. Unfortunately, due to pressure of the Labour group leadership one of the councillors involved has since withdrawn his signature.

This has allowed the leader of the Tory group on Leeds City Council to publish a letter in the Yorkshire Evening Post claiming that he and the Tories are the only defenders of care homes - a ludicrous position given it is the government of his party which is cutting local government funding.

In the aftermath of the attempts of Labour MPs to unseat Jeremy Corbyn as leader of the Labour Party, many more Labour Party members in Leeds have become active in their local branches. This has given confidence to these Labour councillors to challenge this decision of the Labour group leadership.

## Consistency

Many Labour Party members wish to see it become a party that consistently challenges austerity and offers a real socialist alternative. The Socialist Party wants to play a full role in helping that possibility become a reality.

Below is a letter by Leeds Socialist Party member Iain Dalton, published in the Yorkshire Evening Post (before we heard about the withdrawal of one of the councillor signatories).

"I would like to add my congratulations to those of Richard Burgon MP for the [Labour councillors who have called in the decision](#) of Leeds City Council's executive to close The Green care home in Seacroft.

[As a Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition \(TUSC\) candidate](#) I have stood in elections to raise the need for the Labour-led Leeds City Council to challenge the government's austerity measures rather than implement them.

If the council doesn't do so, then unfortunately we will have many more cases of essential services like The Green being forced to close as more and more funding is cut from local government.

I offer my support to those councillors in their decision to challenge this closure which stems not only from the severity of cuts like this, but also the anti-austerity mood which has developed since Jeremy Corbyn was elected leader of the Labour Party.

I believe many socialists, trade unionists and others will welcome their stand and seek to support it.

A meeting with those councillors, trade union activists and others would be a welcome next step in mobilising this opposition to the closure of vital services such as The Green."

## Five years on from the March for Jobs

# Jarrow March: an inspiring show of solidarity between workers and youth

Ian Pattison, 2011 Jarrow marcher

Eighty years ago, 200 unemployed workers from Jarrow in the north east of England - a town that relied on the shipbuilding industry, hit hard by the Great Depression - [set off from home, marching 300 miles to](#)

## London to deliver a petition.

In 2011, to mark its 75th anniversary, Youth Fight for Jobs followed in the footsteps of this Jarrow Crusade. We weren't just commemorating long-past pioneering struggles. We were marching for jobs, homes, grants, youth services and free education at a time when youth unemployment reached one million in Britain, and surpassed more the 50% in Greece and Spain.

The conditions of people who are forced out of work today are awful. Benefits do not cover the cost of living or housing. The Tory government secretly sets targets to kick people off benefits.

In 1936 it was worse. The inter-war poverty of the 1920s and 1930s threw millions of workers out of their jobs. The welfare state was still just an idea. The only assistance available - the poor relief - was measly and humiliating.

The first 'hunger march' took place in 1922. There were many more throughout the 1920s and 1930s. Some were organised by trade unions, but most by the Communist Party and an organisation it set up called the National Unemployed Workers Movement.

1936's march is the most famous and celebrated of the hunger marches. This is partly because it has been sanitised by politicians. The radical history of the unemployed movement has been airbrushed out.

Tory MP for Scarborough Robert Goodwill said the Jarrow Crusade had "genuine cross-party support from all sections of the political divide." Despite his apparent sympathy, he made it clear he had no truck with the demands of Jarrow marchers - then or in 2011.

In reality the original Jarrow marchers did face opposition. For example, in one area police encouraged game keepers to stop the march - the game keepers refused. Undoubtedly, if Goodwill had been making trouble in 1936, he would have been egging on the police.

One Jarrow march supporter said: "Robert Goodwill isn't fit to clean the boots of today's Jarrow Marchers." Sadly we never received a reply to our invitation for Goodwill to join the march for a week.

The 2011 Jarrow March consisted of a group of unemployed young people marching from Jarrow to London - between ten and 15 miles a day. We stopped for protests and meetings at many towns along the way, and were joined by trade unionists, students and activists for different stretches - some for an afternoon, some for a week. The march's demands were:

- Create jobs - For an enormous government scheme to create socially useful jobs and apprenticeships paid a living wage, with no youth exemptions. Apprenticeships must offer guaranteed jobs at the end. End all 'workfare' slave labour schemes - benefits should be based on need not forced slave labour. Instead invest in worthwhile employment and training for young people
- Bring back EMA - Immediately reinstate Education Maintenance Allowance payments, expanding them to be available to all 16-19 year olds
- Scrap uni fees - For education that's fully funded, publically owned, democratically run and universally free at all levels
- Save youth services - Stop all closures of youth centres and services. Immediately re-open all abolished facilities and reinstate sacked staff
- Build decent, affordable housing - For a huge house building programme to create jobs and provide high quality social housing at genuinely affordable rates

From the outset Youth Fight for Jobs was clear that we wanted to unite workers, young and old, to fight for decent jobs for all. We didn't blame people in work for youth unemployment. We put the blame at the feet of austerity and the capitalist profit system.

We were clear that workers organised in trade unions are key to changing society. Our Jarrow March took place during the public sector pensions struggle of 2011, which, shortly after our march, culminated in a huge public sector strike in November. That movement demonstrated clearly the potential power of the working class.

## Trade union support

That's why we appealed for support from trade unions - eight national trade unions supported Youth Fight for Jobs already and we got a great response for the march. Trade union general secretaries like the RMT's Bob Crow, PCS's Mark Serwotka, FBU's Matt Wrack, and UCU's Sally Hunt wrote in the press in support of us.

The FBU donated woolly hats and waterproof coats which kept us warm and dry. They also donated use of their campaign fire engine for us to hold our final rally in Trafalgar Square. And I still have my Bob Crow Jarrow March t-shirt. In every town we stopped in trade unionists provided accommodation, social events, rallies, food and meetings.

We used our five-week march to build support across the length of the country for the 30 November strike. We pointed out that this issue was relevant to young people. We were faced with the crazy situation where millions of public sector workers were forced to work longer, denied their right to retirement, while millions of young people couldn't find a decent job.

The pensions struggle wasn't the only big political movement that fed into the anger we wanted to express through our march. Students had been the first to move into action against the Tory-Lib Dem coalition government in 2010.

Tuition fees were tripled to £9,000 a year and EMA college grants were scrapped. 50,000 joined a National Union of Students protest, dwarfing the organisers' expectations. This sparked a wave of protests and occupations.

Frustration poured out in inchoate anger in August 2011. English cities, starting in Tottenham, north London, erupted in riots sparked by the police killing of Mark Duggan. Youth Fight for Jobs immediately set to work in Tottenham, organising a protest against cuts to youth services with Turkish and Kurdish youth organisation Day-Mer.

Internationally, anti-capitalist protest movements like Occupy and the Indignados were springing up as we were marching. During the Jarrow March, Paul Callanan - marcher and national organiser for Youth Fight for Jobs - spoke at Britain's biggest Occupy camp in central London. When he called for free education for all, he was met with rapturous applause.

Long marches weren't new to Youth Fight for Jobs. Our inaugural demo in 2009 was through the poorest boroughs of London to where the G20 world leaders were meeting.

Then in 2010, we marched through Barking where the leader of the far-right racist British National Party, Nick Griffin, was standing to be the MP. We said yes to jobs, homes and services for all, and no to racism.

## The march

Drama began before we even set off from Jarrow. South Tyneside Labour council wanted us to pay thousands of pounds for our right to march. We flatly refused, and, backed up by local trade unionists, forced the police into a total climbdown. 500 marched us out of Jarrow, headed by a brass band.

At the end of the first day in Birtley, we visited AEI cables workers. They were on strike after being sacked at two minutes notice.

We tried to donate to their strike fund, but they turned down our donation, saying they were proud to support us and that we needed it more than they did.

[Thousands greeted us when we arrived in London](#) - including a 106-year-old who had met the original marchers when they arrived in 1936 too. Police did their best to stop Occupy activists marching to join us.

[Hundreds of public and private sector workers united to greet Jarrow Marchers in Hull](#). We received one of our warmest welcomes at our biggest demonstration outside London, which was organised jointly with workers of BAE Systems who were facing 3,000 redundancies.

**Robert Goodwill initiated disgusting press attacks from the Sun, the Telegraph, and the Independent that showed our march was rattling the establishment.** The journalists who did actually march with us admired our resolve.

The Jarrow March was great for increasing Youth Fight for Jobs' profile. Despite media bias, journalists still often come to the campaign to get a comment from ordinary young workers. Their massive resources can't give them a channel to working class people on the sharp end of the cuts like we can.

Ordinary people though, were lifted by our efforts. **As we said in the Socialist at the time:** "As we walked down the pavements and verges of Britain's A and B roads, car horns were beeped and people stopped to wish us well. One woman stopped her car and pressed £100 cash into a marcher's hand, saying she completely supported what we were doing."

I am incredibly proud to have been a Jarrow marcher. Seeing the Tories elected following an economic crisis that exposed their system was difficult. Austerity and unemployment put a question mark over everything in your life. But first hand, nothing has cemented my confidence more in working class people's ability to change the world.

Marching day after day as people came up to you to shake your hand, beep their horn in support, or throw money in your bucket was inspiring. And arriving night after night into town after town of likeminded supporters was a pretty good way to spend October to November 2011.

The issues facing young people then still remain five years on, and they will undoubtedly continue to play a key role in the movement against austerity.

## Get involved with Youth Fight for Jobs today

Youth Fight for Jobs continues to campaign across the country. For example, we are involved, with the BFAWU bakers' union and others, in the Fast Food Rights campaign - demanding a £10 an hour minimum wage, an end to zero-hour contracts and the right of all workers to organise in trade unions.

- See [youthfightforjobs.com](http://youthfightforjobs.com)

## Durham teaching assistant pledges ongoing fight against pay cuts

Elaine Brunskill

**Durham City Council is proposing to sack 2,700 teaching assistants** (TAs) and then rehire them on 23% less pay.

At an event in Durham City centre, which was to raise awareness of the attack on them, teaching assistant Lisa Turnbull talked to the Socialist about the impact of this proposal and their struggle against the Labour controlled council.

Lisa started by explaining:

"It's the utter devastation, made worse by the fact it's a Labour council. I've been brought up to believe that Labour is for working people.

"It's impacting on people's health, their relationships, finances - some have had to sell their houses.

"The campaign is taking up everything. When my daughter wants to meet me she has to come along to these events!"

"If these cuts are implemented I won't be able to help finance my daughter through university and will really struggle to pay my mortgage - that's after 26 years of service.

"We won't accept this at all. We've grouped together as County Durham TA Activist Committee. We are a completely self-organised grassroots campaign."

Teaching assistants have felt let down by their trade unions. Lisa commented:

"Dave Prentis [Unison general secretary] finally came up to Durham to speak to us - he promised way back at the Miners' Gala [in July] that he would come. He has now promised to throw the full financial backing of the union behind us."

Teaching assistants standing next to us were sceptical of Prentis. Certainly TAs will have to ensure pressure is kept on him to fulfil his commitment to back them.

Lisa ended by saying: "Regardless of everything we are going to fight this!"

Unison's strike ballot closes on 19th October.

- Messages of support to: [spartacusannie@gmail.com](mailto:spartacusannie@gmail.com)
- To contribute to the Durham TAs' fund visit: [justgiving.com/crowdfunding/CountyDurhamTeachingAssistants](http://justgiving.com/crowdfunding/CountyDurhamTeachingAssistants)

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This version of this article was first posted on the Socialist Party website on 19 October 2016 and may vary slightly from the version subsequently printed in The Socialist.

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## A day in the life of a midwife

### "Midwives really are expected to look after 15 women plus their babies"

**Laura, Midwife**

The Royal College of Midwives recently published a [survey](#) that highlighted why a growing number of midwives were choosing to leave the profession.

For half of the midwives surveyed who had already left, low staffing levels had driven them out of the NHS. The other half had left because they felt they were unable to provide the quality care that they were expected to deliver to mothers and babies they were responsible for.

These two issues are clearly linked. In an understaffed environment your workload increases, but the time you are afforded to do your job properly does not - it is impossible to provide quality care in these conditions.

### Limits

I work in a busy inner-city London hospital. We far-exceed our capacity as a unit, meaning more babies are born than space allows. And yet we manage.

The anecdotes that have been in the tabloids recently are not exaggerated or embellished. On shifts when numbers are down, midwives really are expected to look after nine, 12, sometimes 15 women, plus their babies, who unfortunately do not count as "patients".

When babies can be on two-hourly infection observations, IV antibiotics and three-hourly blood sugar checks, it is astounding that they still don't class as patients in our workload.

On nights like these when staffing is particularly bad, midwives are forced to prioritise the tasks that, if not performed, would pose a threat to life, and unwillingly neglect the seemingly trivial issues that new motherhood involves.

Maternity units are like conveyor belts - ensure the safe delivery of the baby, ensure the absence of infection and ensure they are sent home as soon as possible so that the next woman can be brought in.

Mothers therefore go home in a healthy state and in a timely manner, but once home can be unable to feed their babies, simply because the midwives have had no time to sit with them and teach them how to breastfeed.

In the UK there is currently already a shortfall of at least 2,600 midwives, and considering the 'exodus' that is expected if conditions in maternity do not improve, this is deeply concerning.

## Cuts

The cuts imposed by the Tories and the inadequate funding allocated to maternity services is demoralising midwives to the point of retiring and putting the lives of working class people in danger.

The Tories have failed to protect the NHS and are **purposefully underfunding** it in order to declare it not fit for purpose. This makes it easy to convince the public that the only way to make the NHS great again is to privatise it.

The **Royal College of Midwives** trade union continues to fight for fairer pay, safer staffing levels and better working conditions for its staff, but without the support from government, midwives and mothers will continue to suffer.

We need a socialist government that will put the lives of its citizens and workers, not the profit that it can reap, at the heart of its healthcare model.

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# Striking Sheffield bin workers picket scabs

Alistair Tice, Sheffield Socialist Party

About 50 bin workers and supporters protested on 22 October against management's use of scab drivers and loaders to undermine the GMB union's industrial action.

**Sheffield bin workers**, employed by Veolia the giant multinational which runs the city's waste management services on a 30 year contract, put in for a 5% pay rise.

When Veolia only offered 3% over two years GMB members voted for strike action and an overtime ban. **Two one-day strikes have been held.**

Veolia has advertised at regional depots offering overtime and overnight hotel stay for scabs to clear the backlog of bins.

So the GMB called a protest at the Lumley Street depot at 6am on 22 October but the scabs had sneaked out early, even though they cannot start tipping bins till 7am. Pickets waited at Bernard Road depot for them to return but again management must have diverted them.

As well as the Socialist Party, it was good to see Momentum supporters on the protest and a few Labour councillors arrived later. Motions are being put at Labour meetings to support the strikers.

The Socialist Party is petitioning the next Labour council meeting calling for Veolia to be stripped of the contract and the service taken back in-house, which is all the workers want.

Two upcoming half-day strikes this week will cause further disruption and be more difficult for management to undermine with agency and scab workers.

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## Crossrail sparks get organised

**Rob Williams, NSSN national chair**

Hundreds of construction electricians crowded into the main conference room at Unite's national headquarters on 19 October to hammer out an action plan on the massive Crossrail project - the biggest publicly-financed scheme in Western Europe.

With management saying that the project is 80% completed and desperate to complete the electrical jobs on time, workers realise that now is the time to put demands to the bosses - direct employment, improved facilities and health and safety, as well as a second tier productivity bonus payment.

This at a time when managers and senior engineers are earning six-figure sums!

This was the biggest show of strength by 'the sparks' since the [victorious struggle in 2011-12](#) to defeat the Besna contract, which the big electrical contractors wanted to impose and would have seen wages cut by 35%.

### Agencies

Since then, workers have been fighting the use of agencies and 'umbrella companies' and other varieties of bogus self-employment which are used by companies to cut wages.

This is why during the early days of Crossrail, a succession of union activists were blacklisted from the job. This included [Frank Morris, who was reinstated](#) after a six month campaign and has since been elected to the Unite executive committee.

It was clear from the meeting that a new and increasingly younger layer of electricians are being mobilised by Unite and its rank-and-file activists and have now launched a new bulletin for the sites called 'Tunnel Vision' (see above).

There have already been instances of unofficial action or 'cabined up' (staying in the cabin instead of working) on sites.

I was able to speak to give the support of the [National Shop Stewards Network \(NSSN\)](#) and to remind the meeting about victories that have been won over the last few years and the potential to achieve a breakthrough now on Crossrail.

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## Unison higher education seminar points no way forward over pay

**Domenico Hill, Bristol University Unison (personal capacity)**

The [Unison higher education sector](#) seminar took place in Brighton 20-22 October. The key issue for union members was the decision by the service group executive (SGE), by the narrowest of margins, not to call strike action over the 2016 pay claim, despite the fact that 55% of those voting were in favour.

A representative of the SGE argued that the turnout had been too low to justify taking action. But a delegate from Brighton University pointed out that the number of members voting to take strike action was almost exactly the same as in 2013, when strike action was taken and won an increase from 1% to 2%.



The SGE tried to blame the education union [UCU for taking strike action on its own in May](#) without exhausting all options, but it's pretty clear from bitter experience that the universities would not shift noticeably on their derisory pay offer, this year from 1% to 1.1%.

This discussion was taken on the last morning of the seminar and little time was allowed for a proper discussion.

## Wage decline

For [eight years in a row](#) university staff have seen their wages decline. The seminar broke up with a sense of anger at the lack of leadership by the SGE, mixed with some frustration and feeling of helplessness.

The key task is to ensure that the left win a solid majority on the SGE so we can finally start standing up for an increasingly low paid and undervalued workforce.

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# Housing campaigners meet to plan resistance to the Housing Act

Paul Kershaw, Unite LE1111 housing branch

The [new housing act](#) will destroy social housing and smash up working class communities while doing nothing to help the desperate housing crisis if fully implemented. Over two hundred people attended the Axe the Housing Act 'summit' on 22 October to discuss how to fight back.

Speaking about the ['Butterfields Won't Budge' campaign](#), the Socialist Party's Linda Taaffe explained how tenants had won by organising a fightback and refusing to move. The charity that had owned their homes sold them to a private landlord to make a killing and tried to push out the tenants but they took a stand with regular street meetings and a bold campaign.

## Vigilant

Niall Mulholland, an activist with the London Co-op Housing Group, was on the panel during the main session and explained how housing co-ops had successfully seen off the act. But co-op activists remain vigilant and committed to the campaign, recognising the need to link-up with other tenants.

Niall's call for the London mayor and councils to immediately take over empty properties for cooperative and other social housing got a strong round of applause.

Islington councillor Mick O'Sullivan explained how the council had called a meeting to explain the need to fight the act and 600 had attended.

They plan more meetings and resistance. Tenants from other areas said they wished their Labour council were more like Islington instead of sending out alarmist letters to tenants saying that there is nothing they can do.

[In Greenwich, where the Labour council has jumped the gun with its pay to stay letters to all tenants](#), local Unite activists and Socialist Party members are campaigning with tenants for the council to do what the Labour conference agreed and "pause".

We say that councillors who attended this summit should all publicly pledge not to vote for implementation and link up councillors who are prepared to fight.

Jeremy Corbyn has attracted enthusiasm for his anti-austerity stand and his support for council housing but Labour councils undermine this when they carry out 'regeneration' involving reductions in social housing or implement cuts.

The Socialist Party has called for Labour councils not to pass on Tory cuts, and for the Labour leadership to pledge to underwrite councils that refuse to cut when in government.

A Green Party councillor echoed this when he called on Labour to reimburse councils that do not sell high value council homes as the act requires. By translating broad anti-austerity statements into a programme of action the Labour Party could build massive support in working class communities.

Housing associations are not required to implement the hated tenant tax - 'pay to stay'. The workshop on housing associations called for them not to implement it. The workshop agreed the proposal by the Socialist Party's Suzanne Muna to meet again to discuss building a campaign.

Suzanne is also a Unite executive member and secretary of the [London Unite housing branch](#), and will be considering how best to take up the increasingly commercialised and unaccountable nature of associations. Introducing the workshop, Suzanne had outlined the profile of the sector highlighting the weak points that could be targeted in campaigning.

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## Why I joined the Socialist Party: "I really can't wait for Socialism 2016"

Calvin Fowler, Worcestershire Socialist Party

I'm a new Socialist Party member, joining in July of this year, but I started attending Worcestershire Socialist Party weekly branch meetings in May. Since I left school in 1988, I've worked in the printing industry, and in 1996 I joined the then GPMU union, now Unite, becoming a union rep in 2001.

I started thinking of joining the Socialist Party a few years ago after seeing stories of people oppressed by the 1% both internationally and locally. In spring of this year I came across the party website, I read various interesting articles, entered my details and was contacted by Pete McNally, a local member.

I attended the meetings that followed and I felt I was among like-minded people. I was given a lot of food for thought by members and the paper. I absorbed the pamphlets given to me, I ordered a few myself from the Socialist Party book shop and now I am a very active member.

I recently set up our [Worcestershire Socialist Party Facebook page](#) and I've just been appointed branch fighting fund organiser when I went to Birmingham to attend the West Midlands Socialist Party finance and paper meeting. I found it really interesting.

I'm so glad I joined, I wish I had back in 1996! I really can't wait for Socialism 2016, see you there!

- For more details and to buy your ticket go to [socialism2016.net](http://socialism2016.net)
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## "We are all Daniel Blake!"

Amalia, Tower Hamlets Socialist Party

The new Ken Loach film ["I, Daniel Blake"](#) premiered at a cinema at Leicester Square, London, on 18 October. The film is about the hard life the main character, Daniel Blake, faces when he needs to access the benefit system after his health deteriorates. Protesters and campaigners who oppose the welfare cuts gathered with their banners, including one bearing the names of the thousands who have died as a result of benefit cuts and held a vigil in their memory. One said: "We are here today to talk about what happens to people in the benefit system, both sick and disabled people and also single mothers and their kids who are being sanctioned

and are being forced to go to food banks. And many of us here have lost loved ones to the benefit system and have also been campaigning for many years. We are all Daniel Blake!"

They called on people to join their cause as any of us might at any time lose our job, become disabled and have to face the nightmare of the benefit system. They also chanted slogans such as: "no more deaths from benefit cuts."

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## US presidential election: The disastrous failure of 'lesser evilism'

**According to one opinion poll, 25% of young Americans would prefer a meteor to destroy Earth than see [Donald Trump](#) or Hillary Clinton in the White House! As Patrick Ayers and Ty Moore of Socialist Alternative (US co-thinkers of the Socialist Party) argue, if ever there was a case for a new political party to represent the 99% then this presidential election is it.**

A majority of those planning to vote for Hillary Clinton will be 'holding their noses' as they cast their ballots on 8 November, motivated by fear of Donald Trump rather than positive support for Hillary.

The problem for Clinton is the more voters learn about her legacy of promoting an aggressive corporate agenda, the more they dislike her.

Liberal commentators have focused on Trump's bigoted hard-core base which, while significant, remains a distinct minority of voters. Fatally missing from most liberal analysis (and political strategy) is that the main fuel powering Trump's campaign is popular rage at the corporate corruption of the political establishment.

Clinton's corporate campaign is incapable of tapping into this mass desire for change. Unfortunately, the failure of union and progressive leaders to offer an independent, anti-establishment challenge to Trump leaves the right wing an open field to exploit the popular anger.

Polls show that [Bernie Sanders, a self-described democratic socialist](#), remains the most popular politician in America, and it remains clear he would be a far stronger candidate against Trump than Clinton.

But as the Democratic National Committee's fierce backing of Clinton proved, the Democratic Party tops are more firmly committed to maintaining their alliance with Wall Street and big business than they are to defeating Trump and the right wing.

Faced with the horrifying prospect of a Trump White House, it is understandable that millions of ordinary people who completely oppose Clinton's Wall Street politics will nonetheless cast a vote for her on 8 November.

### Self-defeating

At the same time, using popular opposition to Trump as a veil, most union and progressive leaders are arguing for a dangerous and self-defeating 'lesser-evil' strategy that endlessly reduces our movements into pressure campaigns on the corporate controlled Democratic Party.

Bernie Sanders himself, who won mass support for exposing Clinton's deep corporate corruption when he stood in the Democratic primaries, is a living demonstration of the corrosive logic of lesser evilism. Since Bernie started heaping praise on Clinton in order to turn out the vote against Trump, his credibility has waned and attendance at his rallies has dramatically dropped off.

The policy of covering up for the corporate character of the Democratic Party remains a central strategic failure of the unions and progressive leadership in America.

This strategy also paved the way for the [Tea Party](#) and their sweeping electoral victories in the 2010 elections for Congress and state legislatures.

When Obama took power amid the 2008 financial crisis, his first act was to bail out the Wall Street banks. These banks showered him with campaign contributions as millions lost their homes.

However the union and progressive leaders were fearful of embarrassing the Democrats. They failed to mobilise the enormous anger at Wall Street into a left opposition movement, leaving Tea Party Republicans an open field.

Wherever the left fails to organise a bold, fighting, working-class challenge to corporate politics-as-usual, popular rage at the failures of capitalism will be channelled behind right-wing 'anti-establishment' figures like Trump.

Socialist Alter-native gathered over 125,000 signatures urging Bernie to run all the way through November and use his massive base of support to build a new party for the 99%.

But now that Sanders endorsed Clinton, we are urging a vote for the Green's Jill Stein in all 50 states to register the strongest possible protest vote against racism and corporate politics, and to help popularise the need for independent politics.

If the unions and the wider left organised a strong working class challenge to Clinton and Trump, they would be far more effective at peeling away Trump's soft supporters, those who are not hardened bigots but rather working class people looking to "kick out the bums" overseeing our corrupt political establishment.

## Jill Stein

We understand why people will vote for Clinton in swing states to block Trump. But [Socialist Alternative is campaigning for Jill Stein](#) throughout the country as the best way, in this period of heightened political debate, to strengthen support for what's most needed: political independence for our movements and a new party of the 99%.

Since the 2008 economic crisis, the "American Dream" has unravelled and opened up unprecedented space for building the socialist movement and launching a new mass party of the left. Capitalism is mired in an ongoing global crisis, and there is no prospect for a return to the previous era of generous social welfare states without mass struggle and a socialist transformation of society.

- Read more on the socialist analysis of the US elections - Socialist Alternative online pamphlet: 'The Failure of Lesser Evilism: Why Fighting the Right Means Building a New Party of the 99%' [socialistalternative.org/failure-lesser-evilism/](http://socialistalternative.org/failure-lesser-evilism/)

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# Ireland: Jobstown protester found guilty

## Attack on democratic rights must be resisted

**Matt Waine, Anti Austerity Alliance councillor and Socialist Party member**

In an outrageous decision, a 17 year-old student who took part in a [peaceful anti-water charges sit-down protest in November 2014](#) has been found guilty of falsely imprisoning the then Tanaiste (deputy prime minister) and leader of the Labour Party, Joan Burton.

Up to 100 protesters gathered outside the Children's Court in Dublin from early this morning hoping that, on the basis of the most flimsy of evidence, the judge would have no choice but to dismiss the case.

The 'evidence' included: He may have said into the megaphone at one stage: "Joanie in your ivory tower - this is called people power". He walked around. He sat down and encouraged others to sit down. He waved his arms. He filmed Joan Burton and said: "Talk to us Joan".

The judge found the protester guilty but passed down a 'conditional discharge', meaning that no sentence will be passed as long as the student shows good behaviour for nine months.

But the precedent has been set. It is now clear that the political and legal establishment is getting ready for [the trials](#) next year, when AAA TD (member of Irish parliament) Paul Murphy and 17 others face similar charges in the circuit court.

## **Water charges**

If found guilty it is likely that some, if not all, will face imprisonment. If Paul Murphy is sentenced to more than six months in prison, he will be disqualified as a TD - a position he won on a wave of opposition to water charges.

This is also about criminalising the anti-austerity and anti-water charges movements. The political establishment is smarting at having been forced into a [major climbdown on a key plank of its austerity agenda, water charges](#).

It wants the message to go out - this is what happens if you step out of line.

But it also fears a growing left movement winning the ears of hundreds of thousands of working class and young people who are disgusted and angry at its brutal austerity agenda.

They are trying to paint those, like the AAA and Socialist Party, who stood up and organised a mass movement of opposition, as 'violent protesters'. As the lawyer in the trial said, this is "a recipe for totalitarianism."

The seriousness of this attack cannot be underestimated. The decision also has important lessons for workers and trade unions. Over the last few months, a resurgence of industrial militancy and strike action by tram drivers, bus drivers, retail workers, teachers and even the police, has put the government on the back foot.

This is the knock-on effect to their claims of a growing recovery in the economy - now workers are demanding their piece of the recovery. But will the courts and the state resort to similar actions against workers taking industrial action? Will workers who picket their employers be guilty of falsely imprisoning their bosses?

'Jobstown Not Guilty' has called for a day of protest on Saturday 29 October across Ireland and internationally to show solidarity with the young student and the 18 other protesters facing trial next year, and calling for the end of this assault on our democratic right to protest.

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## **No right to protest?**

The judge, John King, said the Jobstown protest was 'not peaceful' and the behaviour of the protesters was 'contrary to public order and morality'!

Accordingly, he said, the protest did not attract protection under the constitution or the European Convention on Human Rights.

He said the state 'had a duty to intervene for public safety, to prevent disorder and crime and to protect the rights of others, particularly, Ms Burton'.

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## **Non-fiction: Pitch Black**

# Fighting racism in football

**Tony Aitman, Socialist Party black and Asian group**

Raph Parkinson's [letter in the Socialist issue 920](#) on racism in football highlights an issue which has sadly been long present in the game. A recent book by Emy Onuora - 'Pitch Black: the story of black British footballers' - looks at the history of racism in football, and the effect this has had on the footballers themselves.

There are other books which deal with this, but what sets this book apart from the rest is the detail, the passion Emy clearly has for football, and his socialist perspective. Emy was an active supporter of Militant, the Socialist Party's predecessor, and [Liverpool City Council](#) in its epic battle with the Tory government in the 1970s and 80s. This outlook continues to inform his ideas.

Anyone in Liverpool will tell you I am not the greatest fan of football. 50 years ago I went to my only football match - I know England beat Mexico, but by how many goals and who scored I could not say for the life of me. Yet this book had me engrossed from start to finish.

Pitch Black is a tour de force. From the days when racism overtly showed its ugly face with the throwing of bananas onto the pitch, with greater shows of violence in reserve, to the days when it is hidden in the boardrooms and hospitality suites.

It includes interviews with over 20 current and former players such as John Barnes, Viv Anderson and Cyrille Regis. Pitch Black critically and controversially scrutinises the attitudes of Fifa, the FA and the media over the last half-century. It allows today's generation of footballers and fans to discover the history of the world's most popular sport.

Pitch Black does not confine itself to just events in the UK, but looks at wider implications, such as the infamous South Africa tour of 1982. This revealed the disgraceful roles of the likes of Jimmy Hill and Brian Clough.

Clough, explains Emy, had been one of the original signatories to the formation of a national anti-racist campaign. But he was prepared to compromise his principles when it came to money, which meant appeasing the racist apartheid regime in South Africa at the time.

Pitch Black is an important book for football fans and anyone interested in the struggle against racism. As Emy says: "football reflects society and within society as a whole, racism persists."

The fight against racism in football is integrally linked to the fight to change society. An understanding of its history is vital to anyone involved in that struggle.

## TV: No Place to Call Home

### "We're all three pay cheques away from being homeless"

**Pete Mason, Barking and Dagenham Socialist Party group**

"We can't facilitate" the "wellbeing of the most vulnerable," says Barking and Dagenham council leader Daren Rodwell. This was a frank admission to 'No Place to Call Home', the BBC's distressing account of homelessness in the east London borough.

Barking and Dagenham is facing a "torrent of people" who have been evicted. Housing charity Shelter ranks it second worst in the country.

One woman, Linette, had spent the last four days in hospital due to an attempted suicide. She has lost her job and has no income. She looks far from well. She is asking the council to house her. But it's a "housing options service without any options," and she is turned away.

Once the biggest council estate in Europe, stretching across three constituencies, [the council has continually sold off its stock](#). It is cutting £53 million from its budget by 2020, more or less halving it.

The new housing it is building jointly with the private sector, says Rodwell, is for the "aspirational working class". This reflects the Tory ideology that homelessness, and poverty generally, is the fault of the working class itself. Supposedly we fall into idleness, drunkenness and crime, and only have ourselves to blame for our ills.

The Labour Party was founded on the principle that it was the fault of the capitalist class, not the working class, that the 99% suffers while the 1% gets ever richer, profiting from the labour of its employees.

"People think they are entitled," spouts one Labour Party official, as the programme gives a glimpse of how far the Tory ideology has penetrated. "We can't be the protector in the community." People face a 50-year wait for a house, she says.

"I didn't see this coming" says a former special needs teacher now living in her car. She has gone from contemplating buying a house to worrying about the next meal and being able to wash. "They took the house keys from me."

But the council tells her she doesn't qualify either. The council has "no duty of care" to her. "It's not against the law to be homeless," the housing official says. "We're all three pay cheques away from being homeless." What an indictment of capitalist society!

Alongside the programme's justified moral outrage, fortified with lingering shots of weeping, run unchallenged hints that housing shortages are not due to the destruction of council housing, but immigration.

Many can't see why the council doesn't do more. Some inevitably believe the Tory scare stories about immigration. At the same time, a ruthless private landlord packed 30 migrants into five rooms in Ripple Road, Barking.

Only a [massive programme of council home building to house all](#), regardless of origin, can solve this.

- 'No Place to Call Home' is available on [BBC iPlayer](#) until 18 November

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## Socialist inbox

### Do you have something to say?

Send your news, views and criticism in not more than 150 words to Socialist Postbox, PO Box 24697, London E11 1YD, phone 020 8988 8771 or email [editors@socialistparty.org.uk](mailto:editors@socialistparty.org.uk).

We reserve the right to shorten and edit letters. Don't forget to give your name, address and phone number. Confidentiality will be respected if requested.

Views of letter writers do not necessarily match those of the Socialist Party.

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**Featured letter: Sexism**

## Ched Evans court disgrace

I have been watching the news around the Ched Evans rape case in utter horror.

This case confirms the biggest fear of victims of sexual assault: that your sexual history could be plastered across a courtroom in minute detail if you dare to speak up. Meanwhile, Ched Evans's sex life seems totally unimportant.

What's more worrying is that this case has relied on a former partner of the victim giving details of her sex life as 'evidence' against an unrelated crime. The Ched Evans case also shows how wealth and influence can help quash your conviction.

One barrister told us that in lawyers' inner circles, when they have to defend someone accused of rape, they consciously demonise the victim - calling the technique "sluts and nuts".

It's hugely offensive, but totally believable, that if they can't use a woman's sexual history to falsely invalidate her claims, they use her mental health.

**Helen Pattison, Leytonstone, east London**

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## **In the Ghetto**

This is my rewrite of the sixth verse of the Elvis Presley hit 'In the Ghetto', to update for the [current wave of police violence](#).

Then one night in desperation

A young man breaks away

He don't buy a gun

He don't steal a car

He don't try to run

But he still don't get far

**Pete McNally, Worcester**

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## **Marmite Brexit**

In the recent debates about Brexit, apart from the Tories' dog-whistle pronouncements on immigration, nothing seems to have caught the mood like Tesco pulling Marmite and other Unilever products from its online store.

The spat between supermarket and supplier revolves around the fall in the pound, and Unilever demanding an increase of 10% in prices to compensate for increased costs from imports.

Tesco, on one hand, has pointed out Unilever didn't lower their prices when the pound was up. Meanwhile, it is just a few years since Tesco was exposed for systematically squeezing its suppliers.

While some have argued over which company is more immoral, I prefer to reflect on the fact that I have stood on picket lines with both Unilever and Tesco workers, as their employers sought to attack their pensions and jobs.

Instead of siding with either big business, let's remember that what drives both is maximising profits at the expense of both workers and consumers.



Our response to that must be to demand that such vital companies for supplying foodstuffs to millions are taken out of the hands of the few, and brought into public ownership under democratic workers' control and management, so we can make use of their resources for the benefit of all, not just the wealthy few.

**Iain Dalton, Leeds**

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## **NHS in-efficiency savings**

Theresa May has told the head of the NHS that it will get no extra money, despite rapidly escalating problems that led to recent warnings that hospitals are close to "breaking point".

The previously 'promised' £10 billion extra - which doesn't cover what is needed to run the NHS anyway - will now not be provided. Instead May has said this has to be found in 'efficiency savings' - that's cuts to me and you.

But this language removes us from the reality of what this means for the man and woman on the street who will ultimately be affected by this. It means closing departments like A&E or maternity, or even whole hospitals like Liverpool Women's or those on the Wirral.

Plans have been leaked in a document that is also named in a sanitised way: "[Sustainability and Transformation Plan](#)". Again, to you and me, "sustainability" will equate to job losses and Jeremy Hunt imposing unworkable contracts for the nurses, doctors and healthcare staff, leaving these people who care deeply about the services we use left with no choice but to strike. "Transformation" would appear to mean selling off all that remains attractive enough to people like Richard Branson and his Virgin Care, which runs those services for a profit, putting money before our wellbeing.

There is already a massive strain on things like support services. If you go to get blood tests done, they won't necessarily be processed at the hospital you are at. Instead, now labs will be 'centralised' - meaning that one hospital, for example, in a region, will have that service, and your samples will be sent off to that lab, then you have to wait for the results to come back.

Now I don't know about you, but I wouldn't call that "efficiency". I'd call that watering down the excellent standard of the NHS that we have known and loved. I'd say that it's pretty important that, when you're ill, the doctors can get to the bottom of it as soon as possible.

These plans are being rushed through. They are to be decided on by 23 December. It's not a lot of time, and we can't sit back and let this happen. There is no time to wait for a general election to get the Tories out - we need to act now, make our voices heard before there is nothing left to save.

Let's organise a fightback in the traditional Scouse fashion: loudly! It's our NHS, built by our families, paid for from our hard work, and what it has given us is worth fighting for with every ounce.

**D Thompson, Bootle**

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## **Council consent**

On 14 September, I and other Socialist Party members and campaigners took part in a lobby outside Leeds City Council to support a motion I presented in a deputation to council.

The motion calls upon the council to change the licensing rules for bars and clubs in Leeds so that they must clearly display consent-educational posters, and staff must be trained on consent. The motion was passed unanimously, and I will now be negotiating with the council on how to take this forward.

Leeds Socialist Party's support was visible, and it was the only party that expressed solidarity with the motion, as well as Unite Community members. The event was covered by the local press and has had a good reaction so far.

While this is a small reform, it is a win for victims of sexual violence in Leeds.

**Amy Cousens, Leeds**

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## **South Devon Socialists**

When members in the sunny resort of Torbay in South Devon met in September, we were chaired by a striking junior doctor. We did not have a traditional introduction to our discussion, and instead had a sort of "what the papers say", picking out articles and letters from the latest issue of the Socialist.

[The Hinkley Point article](#) was discussed, along with the feature on the Labour Party, and the report from Greater Manchester of the threat hanging over the firefighters.

Everyone agreed it was a great paper doing a very big job, and wanted all the comrades working on it to get a big thank you. One of the members, who had not sold any papers before, said: "Give me five, and I'll make 'em buy them!"

We are confidently planning to plant the palm tree of socialism in the English Riviera.

**Alex Moore, Totnes, south Devon**

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## **Homeless hounded**

In the cold and rain it hits you just how many more homeless people there are these days in places like Torquay. Young, old, women, men, many still children.

They are in cold, wet doorways and benches, usually alone. No soft clothes or heating on. No one to give them a hug and say it will be all right. Cold, wet, depressed, tired and hungry all because they can't quite manage to keep up with the relentless rat race.

Not much of a crime is it? But what a punishment. And yet capitalist society seems to blame these lost souls for their own demise. Often fleeing abuse or a hideous past towards the streets as services can't cope.

This misery is rooted in a broken system that creates broken people.

Mental health and addictions, of all ages, have never been worse. The housing crisis never been worse. Health and social services have never been at such a crisis point. Decent jobs to just get by are far less likely. It's the capitalist free market, and we are either useful pawns or we are toxic waste.

Let's all get out and fight for socialism, because in a socialist society everyone is treated equally and fairly.

**Nick Slater, Torquay**

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<http://www.socialistparty.org.uk/articles/23838>

