There is so much empty noise around Brexit - so much so that Banksy’s artwork depicting MPs as chattering monkeys has been put back on public display.

Outside parliament protesters holler through megaphones as the scaffolding upon which political interviews are conducted gets higher and higher.

There’s a cacophony of noise. And yet there’s a silence.

There’s the silence of what should be being said: That now nearly three million children are living in poverty (see page 4).

That ‘survival sex’ - essentially sex work - is being turned to by thousands of women as they lose their benefits due to Universal Credit and the imposition of cruel sanctions.

That some schools now don’t teach the full week - opening for just four days - because of school budget cuts.

That working-class women are dying 100 days earlier because of austerity - living for eight fewer years than richer women, with the gap widening.

With a few exceptions, there’s a screaming silence from the trade union leaders too. They have failed to articulate the desperate situation in working-class communities.

And they have failed to mobilise their members in struggle to get rid of this rotten Tory government, or to fight for a Brexit in the interests of workers - for the socialist alternative to the EU.

Then there’s the faint, hardy audible, voice of Jeremy Corbyn. On top of that, there is no doubt that there has been a conscious policy by the capitalist media attempting to turn the volume down on Corbyn and Corbynism, especially as the Brexit crisis has intensified.

We’re subjected to endless interviews of Blairite MPs like Jess Phillips praising Tories like Oliver Letwin, or Tom Watson funnelling all calls for a general election down the blind alley of a second referendum.

We say break the silence. We have to fight for a general election now - in the trade unions, the workplaces, the colleges and working-class communities.

A general election is not inevitable in the short term. Pro-capitalist politicians are divided on many things. But they are united in wanting to keep Corbyn out.

Really, they are afraid of all those who stand behind him - of the millions of working-class people who could be mobilised into action if they see the opportunity to fight for genuine, socialist change.

The real aim of all pro-big-business politicians - Leave or Remain - is to keep the door firmly shut on that. Nonetheless, the depth of this crisis means we could end up stumbling into a general election regardless of these politicians’ intentions.

If one is called, it should be treated as the starting gun - signalling the ending of this establishment-imposed silence and the beginning of the real fightback.

This needs to be a fight that demands an end to the humiliation of poverty, insecurity and the lack of good jobs - things that could start to be achieved by the election of a Corbyn-led government with socialist policies, and the unleashing of a proper fightback among working-class people.

Break the silence. General election now!
Parliamentary 'Brexishambles' continues
CORBYN AND WORKERS' MOVEMENT MUST LEAD
FIGHT FOR GENERAL ELECTION AND SOCIALIST ALTERNATIVE TO EU BOSSES' CLUB

Y


day again as we go to press, the immediate future of the plans for Britain leaving the EU is
uncertain. Three attempts at passing May’s withdrawal deal in Parliament last year failed by
rounds of MPs on an alternative plan
on the issue of the creation of a<br>

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3m kids from working families in poverty: fund homes and childcare

Hannah Doole
Birmingham Centre Socialist Party

In the UK, 2 million children from working families are now living in poverty, imperilling the Department for Work and Pensions. And more than a third of children are living below the government’s official poverty line – the Townsend Foundation.

These numbers are linked to spiralling unemployment and mortgage costs. Many households are being forced to spend half of what they earn on rent and the price of private sector property can now cost over the next few years: one in five households in the Low Pay Coalition.

The solution remains the generation born between 1945 - owning a de-
cent living, affording a decent home, and putting food on the table for your family - is vanishing fast. It used to be achievable for some with one parent working full-time, but this has become a dream for families working full-time.

Along with the rise in housing costs, there is an increase in fees for children. For a child in year 8 at one school in South-

one, on average, £12.22 a week for a breakfast club, £23.44 a week for full-time care, and the Family and Childcare Trust estimates that after these costs, parents are left with insufficient funds for all the other expenses they face. One team from Ealing told us that after nursery fees and bills are paid, $24 a week is what is left for food and other expenses. On top of this, many parents are push-
ing family budgets to the brink and other areas of dependency than they have or peer-to-peer sharing, and two in five are living below the government’s official line of poverty.

In Birmingham, the Labour run council is willing to sell off its schools to private childcare companies. The Blantyre are kinase families is either-

nary pay cuts, cuts to benefits and two in five are living below the government’s official line of poverty. But how can this be the case? And how can we make sure we can’t afford our rent, and how can we get our benefit payments to pay the rent,

Finding answer means ending the Tory government, and handing the Blantyre Council and government agencies the power to decide the future of our education system.

These answers also mean ending the Tory government, and handing the Blantyre Council and government agencies the power to decide the future of our education system.

Grenfell Tower
photographs James Kenna

Cancer-causing chemicals and other
generally hazardous toxic have been found close to Grenfell Tower: in the Tetra Pak, the building's flammable cladding, and the building's cladding was upgraded.

The toxic Grenfell fire residue threatens survivors: full health screening now!

Andy Bevan
Leeds South West Socialist Party

Haven’t the Tories and Blantyre got enough on their plates with the Grenfell Tower fire disaster? As investigation by the Grenfell has shown adverse effects of the缇

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Greenwich Unite Unite

The Unite Union has blasted Greenwich's local government for not listening to the workers, its own local union, and all the local people. It has also accused the council of not listening to the residents of the town, and of not paying enough attention to the community. The council has been criticized for its handling of the situation, with many local residents feeling that they have not been given enough information on what is happening in the town. Local government has told the council that it needs to improve its communication skills and that it needs to be more transparent about what is happening in the town. Local government has also said that it needs to do more to involve the local community in the decision-making process.

Greenwich Unite Unite demands outsourced workers at failing back-in-house

Unite has expressed its anger at the decision of the council to bring back-in-house the work of the workers who have been working on the building site for several months. It has said that this decision is a setback for the workers and that it is unfair that they have been given less money and fewer benefits. Unite has also said that this decision is a betrayal of the council's promise to improve the working conditions of the workers.

Well-supported strike against cuts at Sheffield school

The school governors in Sheffield are set to make thousands of cuts to the school's budget. The cuts include reducing the number of teachers, cutting the number of lessons, and cutting the number of students. The school governors have been criticized for their decision, with many local residents feeling that the cuts are not necessary and that they are unfair to the students.

Westfield school governors refused to answer their emails

The school governors have been accused of not answering their emails, and of not responding to the concerns of the parents. The governors have been criticized for not being transparent about what is happening in the school, and for not listening to the parents.

THOUSANDS OF HONDA WORKERS MARCH IN SWINDON TO SAVE THEIR JOBS

Nationalise Honda now!

Over 3,000 people marched in Swindon on 30 March in protest at the closure of Honda’s plant in the town. It is understood that the company plans to close the plant and move its production to Japan. The workers have been informed that their jobs are at risk, and that they will be unemployed if the closure goes ahead.

Chesterfield hospital privatisation plans

Chesterfield Royal Hospital is going ahead with plans to introduce a wholly owned subsidiary company, Chesterfield Support and Facilities Services, to run the hospital's catering, cleaning and portering services. The decision has been met with criticism by the hospital's staff, who have threatened to strike against the move.

Outsourced workers at the UK Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) have been protesting their conditions and poor working environment. The Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) is taking action on the issue of part-time contracts for its union members. The union members have been campaigning for better conditions and a full-time contract since the start of the year. The DHSC is working with the London Living Wage to ensure that all union members are paid at least the London Living Wage.

Rail cleaners' walkout

Members of the RMT transport union have called for a walkout on 9 April. The union is demanding a raise in pay, an end to outsourcing, and an end to zero-hours contracts. The union is also calling for a reduction in the working week to 35 hours.

 PCS strikers mean business

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Get the latest union news...

Union News... National Shop Stewards Network bulletin. Available every week at shopstewards.co.uk and by email subscription.
PCS ELECTIONS: SUPPORT SOCIALIST CANDIDATES TO DEFEND
PCS AS A DEMOCRATIC, LAY MEMBER-LED CAMPAIGNING UNION

The Tories snapped national civil service pay bargaining in the early 1880s in a classic divide and rule tactic. This has led to deep cuts in living standards, in a classic divide and rule tactic, in a classic divide and rule tactic. The attacks on pay and conditions that we are going to get the pay rise we deserve. On top of pay caps and freezes, that the Tories are in crisis, hanging by a thread, we need to apply pressure to prepare the joint campaign plans and assert the case for a sustainable and well-funded civil service.

The Tories are in crisis, hanging by a thread, a division in the middle class, a division in the public sector. After announcing a further 1% pay cap in April, it is now time that the PCS was a catalyst in mobilising opposition to this.
Financing the fightback

Fred Ray

Department, came to the meeting in financing the Socialist Party.

March to discuss the crucial task of aren't financially accountable to the Vote for socialist mayor

made to youth services, children's cuts in benefits, welfare rights ser -

cial care, has been slashed by council services, excluding so-

n Leicester, spending on all

Travelodge - which has recently an-

In the second part of the meet -

East Midlands Socialist Party

Discussion and debate

at Leeds Trans Pride

Michael Johnson

Leeds Socialist Party

Transphobic hate crimes are going up. These people have gained some legal protections but still face high levels of harassment and assault.

There could be a sociological reason for this. The political campaign to force the money needed from the beneficiaries of the cuts to sit out and create the situation for a campaign that involves making inroads and
campaigns

Socialist Party members played a crucial role in the Trans Pride march. We are now looking at the possibilities of holding a Trans Pride Day of Visibility.

There was a clear call to action on the march to defend trans rights.

The Socialist Party joined

when for campaigning - printing leaflets, banners, transport, and so on /and filming captions, and to increase the number of people involved.

We discussed the importance of keeping families in our minds when we are trying to build and build move.

Among the positive suggestions made is the idea that Socialist

Socialist Party members should maintain standing finance is an important part of building the Socialist Party in particular.

Read ‘Taking trans rights forward’ at:

Socialists say we need a workers’ Brexit at Young Labour debate

Leicester Socialist Party member Tom Barker put the case for a workers’ Brexit at an EU debate, organised by Leicester Young Labour

n the past year the only speaker to speak in the house was the shadow transport secretary, Tom Brake.

Tom Brake then put the case for the workers’ Brexit. He laid out all the other speakers expressed illusions that the EU helped protect workers’ rights, and put forward a Remain position.

Socialists say we need a workers’ Brexit at Young Labour debate

Leicester Socialist Party member Tom Barker put the case for a workers’ Brexit at an EU debate, organised by Leicester Young Labour.

The meeting demanded the A&E remain open.

The Socialist Party, that it remains two parties in power. There cannot be a socialist alternative to an EU referendum, that we are not only committed.

The meeting demanded the A&E remain open. It overwhelmingly condemned the cuts to the local NHS, put out a statement of the loudest blocks on the march

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Yorkshire: Build on the victories to save our NHS

Campaigns and trade unions came together to march through Leeds city centre and we did. But despite the government’s chaotic pa-

ricise over Brexit, the Tory plans to destroy our health service are still on.

Socialists say we need a workers’ Brexit at Young Labour debate

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40 years after Three Mile Island disaster

- Nuclear fission - dangerous, dirty and expensive
- Socialist policies for safe, clean and cheap energy

Martin Powell-Davies
Socialist Party national committee

On the morning of 28 March 1979, pumps feeding water into the steam generator at Three Mile Island's No.2 (TMI-2) nuclear reactor near Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, USA, failed. Emergency shutdown systems appeared to have worked correctly - but they hadn't.

Like all nuclear power plants, TMI-2 used the heat energy produced by nuclear fission reactions to turn water into steam. Just like a power station burning coal or gas, the steam pressure then turns a turbine that spins the electrical generator. However, nuclear fission doesn't just generate energy. It also produces dangerous waste products like radioactive caesium, iodine, strontium and plutonium. Some remain highly radioactive for hundreds of thousands of years. The 1986 Chernobyl disaster, when a fire in the graphite core of a nuclear reactor released radioactive plumes for ten days, fuelled public opposition further. In the USA, over 100 orders for new reactors were cancelled and no new plants were approved until 2012.

*‘Green’ energy*

The advocates of nuclear power then tried to reinvent fission as ‘green’ energy since, unlike burning fossil fuels, it does not generate the greenhouse gases that cause climate change. However, the 2011 Fukushima disaster then provided another deadly reminder of the disastrous consequences of systems failure in a nuclear power station.

The disaster at Chernobyl was a product of an impatient, unaccountable Stalinist Soviet Union bureaucracy pressuring technicians into a reckless experiment aimed at speeding up repair times. Fukushima was the product of a reckless private operator, the Tokyo Electric Power Company, ignoring the risk from tsunamis and earthquakes. But could these risks be avoided if nuclear power was part of a nationalised energy system under workers' management?

A genuine safety culture could reduce risks but, just as at Three Mile Island, the chance of human error and mechanical failure is always present. Even if an accidental re-release of radiation is avoided, every radioactive reactor eventually has to be decommissioned, at huge cost, when the power station closes. They can't just be dismantled like an old factory. The radioactive material has to be safely and securely stored for many thousands of years before its contents could be safe to release into the environment.

A 2018 government report estimates the cost of cleaning up just the UK's 17 nuclear sites could be over £200 billion.

Many of the UK's nuclear power plants are already operating beyond their originally planned lifetimes as it is. The Hunterston B reactor in Ayrshire has been out of action ever since 370 hairline cracks were found in its ageing graphite core. They can't be mended so EDF, its private operator, has applied for permission to increase the safety limit to 700 cracks instead!

The fact that only one new UK nuclear power station is under construction, Hinkley Point C in Somerset, is because the economics of nuclear power is now so clearly flawed.

This white elephant, a legacy of New Labour's Tony Blair and Gordon Brown's support for the nuclear industry, will, if its technical flaws are overcome, end up being the most expensive power station ever built. The cost will be met by bill payers through a deal that guarantees that EDF will be paid about twice the actual going rate for the new reactor's electricity output.

Not everyone has struck lucky like EDF. Hitachi and Toshiba have pulled out of their plans to build other new nuclear power stations planned for Wales and Cumbria. In Pennsylvania, the remaining Three Mile Island No.1 reactor is itself facing shutdown this year - not through any accident but because it's been making a financial loss.

Socialist policies

Instead of continuing to subsidise risky and expensive nuclear power, urgent investment is needed in renewable sources, while rapidly improving energy efficiency.
The following letter was printed in the Liverpool Echo on 26 March

Racism in football
The Merseyside Pensioners Association has deplored the abuse being levelled at black footballers, disgustingly displayed at the England v Montenegro match on 25 March.

We believe this abuse should be stamped out immediately, if it is not dealt with in a serious way, it could embolden the far right - whose presence continues to pose a threat and act as a diversion from the real causes of society's problems.

We condemn the racist language aimed at an Asian family at the Liverpool v AC Milan ‘Legends’ game on 23 March, reported in the Liverpool Echo.

We reaffirm our belief that shortages in housing and social provision are caused, not by people whose religion or origins are perceived as ‘different’, but by an economic system which is the message of the far right, which is the far right, which is the message of the far right, which is the far right, which is the message of the far right.

We believe this abuse should be stamped out immediately. If it is not stamped out immediately. If it is not stamped out immediately. If it is not stamped out immediately.

In fact, it is precisely because we understand the gravity of the situation that we advocate such action.

Bernie, on the other hand, cautions that the council’s reserves can be used only in “emergency situations” - as if we’re not currently in one.

Yet, since Mayor Anderson’s 2012 prediction that “people will die” due to his council’s cuts, more than 60 homeless people have died in the city. If this is not an emergency, what is?

And in any case, Bernie’s claim that reserves can only be used in “emergency situations” is itself debatable.

For example, in 2008 two Lewisham Socialist Party councillors proposed that ‘general’ reserves be used to avoid cuts. The borough’s chief financial officer accepted - without reference to the supposed need for an ‘emergency situation’ - that the funds could in principle be used “on a once-off basis to support service provision.”

Moreover, Liverpool Council documents state that ‘controllable earmarked’ reserves can be used on a short-term temporary basis for other purposes” - like avoiding current cuts “provided the funding is replaced in future years”.

Tacked together, the above points suggest that Liverpool’s council could use its ‘general’ and ‘controllable earmarked’ reserves - which total £51 million - to reverse its current council tax hike and avoid the up to £21 million of cuts it reportedly plans to make by April 2020. The time bought could be used to launch a mass campaign to win the money back from central government.

As for Bernie’s question about what will happen if this strategy is adopted: the answer, in my opinion, is that it will force this weak Tory government to retreat.

The alternative is the council’s current building fund - Liverpool Council has promised to use ‘general reserves’ - including the housing revenue account - for building a new premises.

Alex Smith
Liverpool

Sydney climate change march
The 15 March climate change demo in Sydney city centre was very big, lively and well informed. Lots of ‘old-uns’ like me were there cheering and clapping the youth on.

Young people are well informed on the environment, which is higher up the political agenda than in the UK.

Australia’s many extreme weather events are bringing home what environmental destruction and climate change really means long term. The political class is under real pressure over this issue and the youth on the move are rattling many cages.

The Greens and independents like the Animal Justice Party may make electoral gains but neither directly challenges capitalism.

Australia hasn’t had a recession like in the UK but many people haven’t had a wage rise for years and it’s expensive to live here.

The environment is the touchstone for many issues affecting the youth and working class here.

Steve Nally

Honda and Lucas
The terrible situation at Honda in Swindon has got me wondering on the future of workplaces in particular industries throughout the UK.

In 1978, the Lucas Aerospace shop stewards committee came up with an alternative plan that advocated the production of socially useful products.

Shouldn’t we be talking to the workers at Honda, BAE Systems and Trident, for example, to see how their skills could be used in a more positive way - rather than for manufacturing weapons of mass destruction or making cars that can damage the climate?

Alongside these conversations we should act proactively - fully supporting the workers in the fight to save jobs while encouraging and participating in the development of ideas of how the skills these workers have can be used for the benefit of all and not just in the pursuit of their bosses’ profit. I believe this is important enough to warrant serious discussion and planning.

Harry Gammon
Hull

Oxford uni imperialist?
The i newspaper reported on 22 March that Oxford University, the educator of British imperialists and the establishment for generations, is hiring a researcher to study whether the university had a role in colonialism and British imperialism.

This follows the campaign against the statue of arch-imperialist Cecil Rhodes and his links to the university by students. They are clearly in denial! They could just admit their role and spend the money on something else!

Clare Wilkins
Nottingham

Socialist Party building fund
As regular readers of the Socialist will know, the Socialist Party is currently under threat of eviction from our national headquarters.

We believe that it is essential that our HQ remains based in the capital city, therefore we have launched a building appeal for a new premises.

We do not have any rich backers. Our branches are based in working class communities, among workers, students and young people who have been hammered by austerity, debt and low pay. But our members and supporters have been prepared to make a sacrifice to ensure that we have the funds we need.

Your donation, however big or small, will make a difference.

You can make a donation at socialistparty.org.uk/donate and include ‘building fund’ in the comments
For the right to vote at 16.

Defend abortion rights. For a 
woman’s right to choose when and 
how to have children.

Compensation to be paid only on the 
run them under democratic working 
ownership the top 150 companies 
government to take into public 
control their pensions.

Environment

No to the bosses’ neoliberal 
tax cuts and welfare cuts, increasing 
taxes on the rich and defending 
the tax and welfare safety-net.

A maximum 25-hour week with no loss 
of pay, a replacement for zero-hour 
contracts.

No to imperialist wars and 
the arms trade.

Workers’ rights and freedoms

No to imperialist wars and 
the arms trade.

Defend free trade unionism. 
No to company management 
and the CBI’seregulate unions. Make 
unions facing new challenge after 
last year’s ‘Janus’ Supreme Court 
verdict, which ‘permits private 
employer to require employees to 
waive the right to union representation 
and pay union dues directly to them’.

Survivors’ families of the crashes 
who have been refused compensation and 
who have been denied justice.

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Fighting for Labour to be transformed 
into a genuine socialist party.

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Youth are taking up mass protest action as a means of defending our planet from the ravages of environmental destruction. Fed up with the decades-long lip service paid by mainstream politicians, institutions and big business to tackling climate change, young people have bravely stood up and decided to fight for their future themselves.

Over the past few weeks we have seen an incredible display of walk-outs, protests and student strikes all over the world. An estimated 1.4 million people have taken part. And with more action planned for 12 April, this fighting determination shows no signs of cooling.

These demonstrations couldn’t have come at a better time. Last week it was reported that the five biggest oil and gas corporations have splurged over $1 billion since the 2015 Paris Agreement on misleading climate-related branding and lobbying. Moreover, just 100 mega-corporations are responsible for over 70% of all global emissions.

In plain and simple terms, these capitalists would much rather spend eye-watering sums of money spreading outright lies to protect their profit system than to save our planet.

Socialism

The climate strikes are proof that, for many people, this status quo of toothless climate agreements, corporate green-washing and laying the blame on individuals’ consumption will no longer be tolerated.

There is a growing recognition that the capitalist system must be scrapped, and the popular slogan of “system change not climate change” is a clear testament to that.

The system change we need is socialist change. It would mean planning production in an environmentally friendly way, based on a democratically run nationalised economy. Socialism would mean gearing resources to human need, not private profit.

Only when working people take the world’s vast resources, technology, and human potential, out of the hands of those who exploit us and into our own hands, will we truly be able to steer the planet away from capitalism’s destructive course.

Therefore it’s vital that the youth strikes continue to build internationally - linking up with the trade unions and the wider working class. Such collective action would hit the bosses where it really hurts - their profits. Then, capitalism and its representatives will really begin to feel the heat!