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Chilcot Iraq war report

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#KEEP CORBYN

ORGANISE THE RESISTANCE

Fight the Tories and the Blairites

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STEP UP THE CAMPAIGN TO BACK CORBYN'S FIGHT



What we think

Who controls the Labour Party: Labour MPs or the party's half a million members? With a majority of the Labour MPs refusing to accept Jeremy Corbyn's leadership and now mobilising behind a leadership challenge, this has become the critical key question.

Less than a year ago Corbyn won the leadership of the party by a landslide. But in the aftermath of the EU referendum - when the detested Tories have been more vulnerable than ever - first came the sabotaging no-confidence vote in Corbyn by 172 Labour MPs and then Angela Eagle declared herself a candidate to replace him.

Then the right wing had a concerted campaign to try to push Labour's national executive committee (NEC) into refusing to allow Corbyn to stand for his present position without being required to get nominations from 20% of the Labour MPs and MEPs as his challengers must do. It is a victory, reflecting the enormous pressure from Labour Party members and trade unionists to allow Corbyn on the ballot paper, that this completely undemocratic attempt to remove him from standing has been defeated. Obtaining those nominations would have been a near impossible task for Corbyn in the present Labour parliamentary line-up, so many in Labour's right wing were keen to remove him from the leadership that way. But others feared being seen as making a mockery of democracy and receiving a huge backlash from party members if that route was taken.

Nonetheless the battle is not over. Labour's right wing, with the backing of the capitalist class, remain determined to defeat him. Corbyn could still possibly face the nominations obstacle being ordered by court action taken by Blairites.

Stand firm

The pro-capitalist Blairites have shown that they are prepared to act brutally and decisively to force him out; the worst possible response to that would be to capitulate. In that event Jeremy Corbyn must refuse to accept such a decision and would need to launch an immediate massive campaign of opposition to it, including convening a special labour movement conference involving all his supporters.

Opinion polls suggest that with Jeremy on the ballot paper he will win the leadership vote again. But this can't be taken for granted because the many Labour councillors, MPs, lords and officials who are desperate to see him removed will pull out every stop they can to defeat him, backed up by the big business-owned media.

The orchestrators of the anti-Corbyn campaign - including the likes of Lord Kinnock - are organising a recruitment drive to Labour of their own, encouraging people to join who will vote against Corbyn. Under these circumstances the instincts of many workers will be to sign up to vote for Jeremy. But as the Socialist goes to press it appears the NEC have decided some measures to try to limit this.

The MPs who have been baying for Jeremy's resignation accuse him of placing the party in jeopardy of a split by not meekly submitting to their demands. Meanwhile, while they play up their professed concern for party unity, there have been plenty of reports seeping out of behind-the-scenes discussions among them of preparations for



Jeremy Corbyn mobbed by supporters at Durham Miner's Gala on 9 July photo Paul Mattsson



photo Paul Mattsson



This is a battle between those in the party who represent big business interests and those who want to represent the 99%

a new party based on the Parliamentary Labour Party.

With justification, most supporters of Jeremy Corbyn in the labour and trade union movement believe that unity in the Labour Party on the basis of democratic decision-making and an opening up of the party's structures would be the best way forward. But the political fault-lines are increasingly irreconcilable - this is fundamentally a battle between those in the party who represent big business interests and those who want to represent the 99%.

Programme

The question only has to be asked: unity around what programme? The Corbyn-hostile majority of Labour MPs and councillors want a Tory-lite programme of 'kinder' cuts. Angela Eagle claims to stand on the anti-austerity left, as any other challenger to Corbyn will no doubt also do. But she voted for the Iraq war, and against an inquiry into that war, and for university tuition fees of £3,000 a year; and has no reputation as an anti-austerity champion. The contrast between her position and Corbyn's was shown when she only received 16% of the first preference votes in Labour's deputy leader contest last year, while Corbyn gained 59.5% at the same time in the vote for leader.

Today her campaign opening gambit that she is 'anti-austerity' is designed not to be elaborated on, because incredibly she also declared that she won't challenge Corbyn over policy. Knowing the unpopularity of the many shades of austerity-backing MPs among those oppos-

We have now entered our summer printing schedule. This issue will last for two weeks, with issue 911 beginning on 28 July. Read updates on the situation in the Labour Party and more as they develop online at socialistparty.org.uk

ing Corbyn, rather she decided to attack his leadership 'competence'.

However, this battle - which began the moment Corbyn was elected - is not centrally about character and media skills but is precisely about policy and which class interests the candidates reflect. Far more important than Corbyn's personal attributes is his opposition to privatisation, outsourcing, tuition fees, austerity, war, and all the other policies that made New Labour barely distinguishable from the Tories and led to a massive decline in the Labour vote.

The EU referendum result graphically showed how millions of workers are desperate for an end to the constant erosion of living standards. Since the post-referendum attacks on Corbyn, a reported 125,000 people - and still rising - have joined the Labour Party, with a substantial majority of them most likely supporting his policies. Reports are growing of rebellions against the right wing in local Labour parties, such as in Brighton



While the Tory government has not yet faced a mass movement it has glimpsed the opposition, especially in the Brexit vote



New Tory leader and prime minister Theresa May photo Policy Exchange/Creative Commons

TORY CORONATION IS ATTEMPT AT STABILITY THAT CAN'T WORK

What we think

The new Tory PM, Theresa May, was hastily chosen by only 0.0004% of the electorate on Monday 11 July. In doing so, 199 Tory MPs attempted to act decisively in the interests of the 0.002%, the richest 1,000 people in the country who own the majority of the wealth and control the lion's share of the economy. To achieve this result the leadership campaign of Andrea Leadsom was driven off the road and over a cliff.

Leadsom models herself on Thatcher. But so does May. In fact their CVs almost mirror each other with backgrounds in finance and in being dedicated austerians in parliament. But Leadsom's campaign was seen as a threat to the political stability that big business craves.

The capitalist class fought and fought against the Brexit vote which represented fundamentally a kick-back against austerity and the establishment. Leadsom pledged to trigger 'Article 50' immediately to start formal negotiations to bring Britain out of the EU. The FT, the mouthpiece of the boss class, approvingly says of May: "Sensibly, she has insisted that Article 50, the red button for exit, will not be pressed until early next year at least. This gives her time to formulate Britain's negotiating position before formal divorce talks with Brussels begin."

A more protracted process gives the ruling class time to try and "walk back" the Leave vote in the words of US Secretary of State John Kerry.

While the Tory government has not yet faced a mass movement it has glimpsed the opposition, especially in the Brexit vote. And it has been unable to carry through a number of planned attacks, even before then. Back

in April in the Times, a Tory 'rebel' described the forced academisation of schools "as a 'f***ing poison' that could see parents camped outside popular council-run schools in protest while Tory councils have described the policy as wrong and bonkers." It's estimated that the rebellion could have risen to 40 MPs as they felt the heat in their constituencies. They fear more of this.

The Corbyn effect?

Over the weekend a mini Project Fear was unleashed at Leadsom by pro-capitalist newspapers and fellow Tory MPs. Her campaign manager, Tim Loughton, told the Guardian that "there was evidence that she felt hounded out of the race." He complained of an "onslaught of often very personal attacks from colleagues and journalists" and "spin and underhand tactics". This is only a sliver of the huge campaign that has raged against Jeremy Corbyn.

But it was inspired by the fear of a Corbyn-type situation where the parliamentary Tory party is divided from its membership. The Telegraph reported on a poll published on Thursday 7 July by Leave.EU of 5,000 Tory members which found 56% supported Leadsom to 44% for May.

This mood among the membership prompted Nick Boles, coordinator of the stop Leadsom campaign, to text Tory MPs saying: "What if Theresa stumbles? Are we really confident that the membership won't vote for a fresh face who shares their attitudes about much of modern life?" And so Leadsom was sacrificed.

Continued on page 4

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May's bid for stability unrealistic

> Continued from page 3

But the campaign for a stable environment for profit-making does not stop there. Since entering the race May indicated that she is the 'continuity anti-continuity' candidate in an attempt to claim she can reach out beyond the hated Westminster bubble. She said: "It's not anti-business to suggest that big business needs to change... This is a different kind of Conservatism, I know. It marks a break with the past."

But she is also seeking to indicate that she won't go too far for fear of scaring the bosses, saying the government should "continue with its intention to reduce public spending and cut the budget deficit". So more austerity - but with some meagre gestures towards the working class.

The financial markets may have picked up in response to the risk of a nine-week blue-on-blue battle being averted and the hope that an early general election will now not take place. But the idea that May can deliver stability is a pipedream. For example, Britain's trade deficit widened in the first quarter of 2016 to its biggest since the early days of the 2007-8 financial crisis.

'Compassionate'

May's nods towards a break with Cameron's austerity are similar to the failed Miliband general election campaign of 2015 when he spoke about 'compassionate capitalism' and called for workers' representatives on company boards, etc. Her proposals to break with Osborne's austerity targets are an indication of how, shaken by the Brexit vote, the capitalist class is not confident to continue with promoting endless austerity. Now is the time for the trade unions to go on the offensive to demand a general election and to bring all the many struggles together in a 24-hour general strike against all cuts. In the absence of such a response the capitalist class can regroup.

This year the amount of wealth owned by the richest 1% of the world's population has surpassed that owned by the rest of us. Only working class struggle, including the building of fighting democratic mass organisations, for socialist change can end the nightmare of austerity and capitalism.

And May is not only recycling the failed ideas of Miliband but also of Cameron, booted at Wimbledon for his role in bringing misery to the lives of millions, who also once spoke of so-called 'compassionate conservatism' which was for him a byword for vicious capitalist austerity.

CHILD POVERTY RISES BY 200,000 IN A YEAR



photo Matt J Newman/Creative Commons

Lucy Nuttall

In the space of just one year, 2014 to 2015, the number of children living in poverty in the UK has risen by a staggering 200,000. This brings the total number to 3.9 million, according to the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP).

A YouGov survey earlier this year reported that four out of five teachers in England and Wales see children arriving at school hungry. These damning statistics show the abject failure of capitalism to provide a decent standard of living for the 99%.

In response to these rising levels of deprivation, Work and Pensions Secretary Stephen Crabb stressed the importance of understanding "the root causes of poverty". His career as a Tory politician revolves around enforcing them! Ceaseless austerity, privatisation and welfare cuts cause immense suffering for ordinary people, transferring wealth from the poorest and most vulnerable to a tiny super-rich minority.

3.9 million

UK children living in poverty (DWP)

Many Tory policies are a direct attack on poor families, making it an increasingly difficult struggle for parents to provide for their children.

For example, limiting child tax credits and housing benefit to just two children. The draconian Housing Act which will effectively end social housing, crushing working class communities. And the discriminatory bedroom tax punishing social housing tenants, especially households with disabled members.

Children - and all working class people - deserve a life free from poverty. The Socialist Party calls for an immediate £10 an hour minimum wage, secure jobs and housing for all, and the reversal of all austerity and privatisation.

We link this to the need for a fundamentally different society, run in the interests of the working class. Only by fighting for a socialist world can we permanently end poverty.

■ HSBC jailbreak

George Osborne successfully pressured US prosecutors not to press criminal charges against London-based bank HSBC in 2012. A US Congress committee report on 11 July made the revelation.

HSBC had been laundering money for drug barons and terror groups, and aiding international sanction breaking for regimes including Iran. In his role as chancellor, Osborne pleaded with the US Department of Justice, claiming criminal charges could destabilise the economy.

The Socialist recalls the banks doing that just fine on their own in 2007-8. They did not face serious repercussions then either. Osborne's real concern was no doubt to keep his super-rich mates out of jail.

Even the sector's so-called regulator, the Financial Services Authority, "weighed in very strongly" against charges, said one US Treasury employee. HSBC got away with a fine.

At base, the law and its enforcers under capitalism exist to protect private profit, not challenge it. The Socialist says: nationalise the banks and finance sector under democratic workers' control. Try the banksters for their crimes against the working class.

■ Rail fail

Commuters with banners and megaphones protested against privatised rail operator Southern's appalling service in London's Victoria station on 11 July.

The incompetent, cash-guzzling firm is notorious for delays, cancellations and overcrowding. Short journeys can take several hours, and some passengers say the service has cost them their jobs. Southern is trying to scrap guard service on trains, which has provoked strikes.

Privatising services only drives up prices while encouraging bosses to cut corners and staff to boost profits. The Socialist backs transport unions RMT and Aslef in their industrial action, and angry commuters demonstrating for passenger rights. Renationalise public transport under the democratic control of workers and passengers.

Welsh Assembly to scrap 'right to buy'

Jaime Davies
Caerphilly and Rhondda Cynon Taf
Socialist Party

The Welsh Assembly has announced it plans to scrap Thatcher's ruinous 'right to buy' policy in Wales. The Socialist Party welcomes this move - but this alone will not be enough to solve the housing crisis.

Socialists fully understand working class people deciding to buy their council homes after Thatcher introduced the policy in 1981. Home ownership can provide partial security against the instability of life under capitalism.

We also welcome the Welsh Assembly's decision to abolish the right to buy within the next year. It is one of the fundamental causes for the shortage of housing in Wales and across the UK.

While ex-council homes have

been on the market for the past three and a half decades, councils have not replaced them. Private sector buying and renting is very expensive, and not able to make up the shortfall.

Although welcome, the assembly's decision doesn't go far enough. In order to truly tackle decades-long queues for council housing and meet demand, particularly from young people still stuck at home on low wages, the Welsh Assembly must commit to a mass house building programme. In the process this would create the opportunity for a lot of unemployed people to gain skilled jobs.

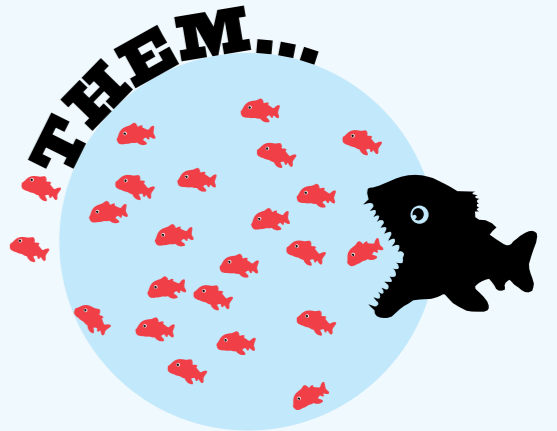
Devolved and local governments across the UK should follow suit by abolishing the right to buy. And go further - plan mass building of council homes, and cap private sector rents, so that affordable homes are guaranteed for all.



Labour right winger Angela Eagle's bid to topple Jeremy Corbyn did not start well. Press walked out of her launch conference halfway through due to developments in the Tory leadership race.

Meanwhile, her Alan Partridge-esque "I'm with Angela" Facebook meme (above) has attracted thousands of comments. Almost every one is some variation of "#ImWithCorbyn". At time of writing, there's over 44,000 of them.

■ Thanks to Eagle-eyed Ash Grey for the tip



■ Theresa May

War in Iraq

Voted for

1,033,000

Estimated casualties between 2003 and 2007 as a result of the conflict (ORB, 2007)

Benefit cap

Voted for

64%

Of people affected by the benefit cap are single parents (Mirror, 2015). This autumn it will lower even further, while the cost of living continues to rise

Income

Theresa May: £117,350 (declared taxable pay, 2014-15) plus MP's expenses

UK median disposable income: £25,600 (ONS estimate, October 2015)

Bedroom tax

Voted for

Three in four

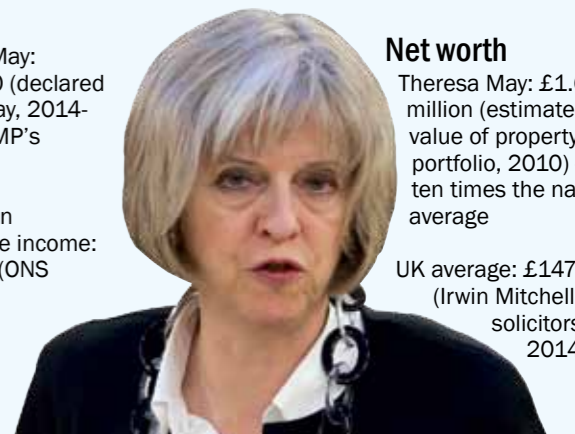
Benefit claimants hit by the bedroom tax had to cut back on food to pay it; 46% had to cut back on heating (CCHPR/Ipsos Mori, 2015)

Tax dodging

Voted against measures to reduce it

£122 billion a year

Estimated combined cost of illegal tax evasion - £85 billion, legal avoidance - £19 billion, and non-payment - £18 billion (PCS, 2014)



Net worth

Theresa May: £1.6 million (estimated value of property portfolio, 2010) - over ten times the national average

UK average: £147,134 (Irwin Mitchell solicitors, 2014)

■ This isn't just any pay cut...

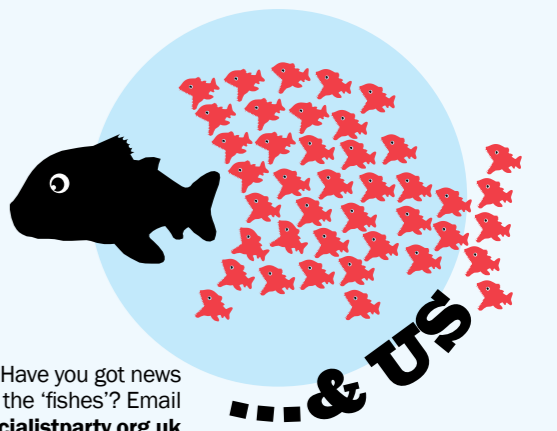
... This is an M&S pay cut. The retailer has announced plans to slash premiums for Sundays, bank holidays and unsocial hours, affecting 7,000 workers. It will also cut pensions contributions for 11,000.

This is an attempt to pass a dip

in sales profits onto hard-pressed staff.

Management is trying to hide the cut by also introducing a basic rate increase of 15%.

The Socialist says: make the bosses pay! Take the loss from their profits, not our wages.



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photo Paul Mattsson

Nine-month prison sentence for fleeing ethnic cleansing

Vlad Bortun

Abdul Rahman Haroun, a 40-year-old Sudanese refugee, was sentenced to nine months in prison for trying to reach the UK by walking the Channel Tunnel.

However, Abdul - who fled Darfur in 2004 in fear of ethnic cleansing - will not have to serve the sentence, because of the time he had already spent in prison awaiting trial. His sentence was based on a 19th century law - the Malicious Damage Act 1861 - which prohibits "obstructing an engine or a carriage using a railway".

The political nature of this Kafkaesque decision is obvious: to dissuade refugees from trying to come

to the UK. It fits with the wider anti-refugee policy of the Tory government, which - together with its French counterpart - has been spending millions on erecting walls and fences around the tunnel's exits.

Asylum must be backed by investment in social housing, education, healthcare and jobs for all - refugees and the local population alike

Such a strategy is not only cruel, but utterly bankrupt. People will keep trying to cross the channel, and many of them will keep dying, suffocated, electrocuted or run over by trains - just as the EU's 'deterrence' approach has only led to more boats sinking in the Mediterranean.

Granting immediate asylum to people fleeing war and persecution - including many unaccompanied children - should not be an issue in 2016 for one of the richest countries in the world.

This policy must be backed by public investment in social housing, education, healthcare and well-paid jobs for all - refugees and the local population alike. We all are victims of the same oppressive and bankrupt capitalist system.

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Angry prison officers walk out over reforms

Prison officers in England and Wales staged unofficial walkouts on 8 July in protest against proposed reforms. The Prison Officers Association (POA) is angry that its members have not been consulted over the government's plans to change the way prisoners are supervised - which it believes could lead to redundancies. In a joint letter, the POA's national chairman, Mike Rolfe, and general secretary, Steve Gillian, say the reforms will lead to a diminishing of workers' rights and add that they make "no apology" for asking members to call the walkout meetings.

Wormwood Scrubs

Wormwood Scrubs POA branch secretary introduced the meeting of 70-80 officers outside the prison gates with an honest warning: "You are all aware that you will lose an hour's pay if you stay out this hour till 9 am." No one moved! "This is already a minor victory, as the governors had originally threatened to deduct a half day's pay. But when they found out it was a national action they had to retreat as they couldn't get a bus load of alternatives to stand in."

Other very pertinent questions were raised: "What is the next step?" asked a young woman officer. Another officer, who once faced armed police when trying to get donated food supplies through to striking miners and their families in 1984, asked what plans there were to link up with other unions. Rob Williams, National Shop Stewards Network chair and Socialist Party member, explained the action of many other sections of workers over this period and how the other union leaders and the TUC need to urgently act on this while they are faced with a very weak government. Keith Dickinson

Leeds

Around 100 POA members walked out for a gate meeting at HMP Leeds to express their opposition to chronic understaffing in prisons. POA members told us about their frustrations, expected to juggle responsibilities to keep prisons running, while being understaffed and paid well below what their responsibilities should entail.



The prisons are at breaking point. Overcrowded, under-resourced, and now facing privatisation by the odious Tory government minister Michael Gove

At the meeting, comments were made by speakers linking the 'reforms' to the prison service to those affecting education and health. Prisons will be expected to function like

academy schools and foundation hospitals, effectively attempting to break up a national service.

Iain Dalton

Liverpool

Over 100 members of the POA held a one-hour mass meeting outside HMP Liverpool.

Mark Fairhurst, POA national executive committee member, told me:

"We want to avoid things like this, we want to engage with our employer and come to a satisfactory arrangement to protect the terms and conditions of all our members."

"Unfortunately, we're not in a position to do that because our employer has decided that they're not going to consult with us, they're not going to engage. We won't be intimidated like that, we will stay strong and we will do whatever is within our power to protect the terms and conditions of our members, and also the safety of both prisoners and staff."

Hugh Caffrey

Swansea

Around 60 POA members met outside Swansea prison. Tony Thomas, Swansea POA branch secretary, reported that across the prison service there has been a big increase of violent attacks on thousands of members as staff struggle with reduced staffing and the inevitable increased workloads.

Further protests and action seem inevitable and solidarity from the wider trade union movement will be vital in helping to achieve a satisfactory conclusion.

Alec Thraves

NEW THREAT TO IMPOSE JUNIOR DOCTORS CONTRACT MUST BE MET WITH STRIKE ACTION

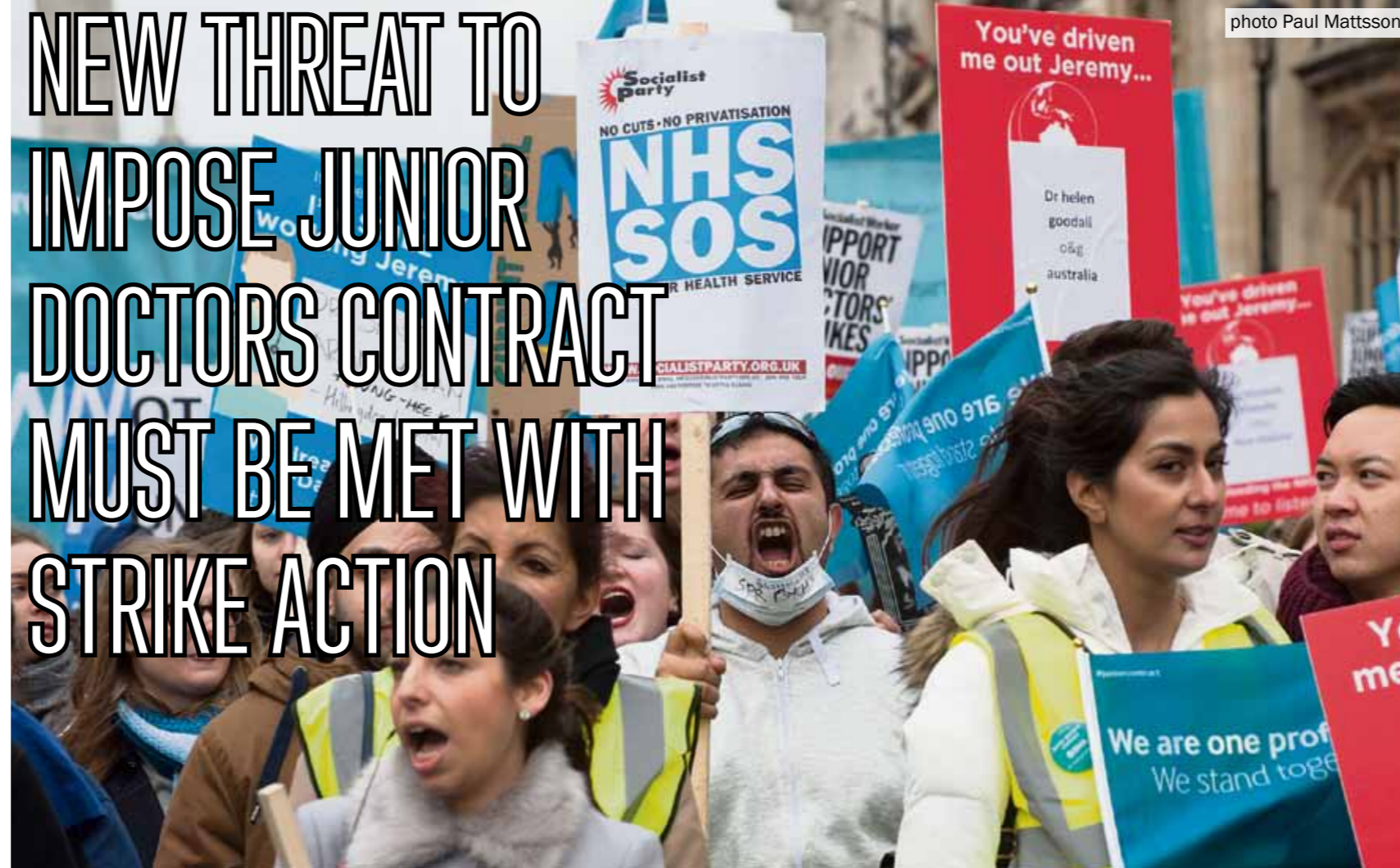


photo Paul Mattsson

Following news that junior doctors in England voted by 58% to 42% to reject the terms of their proposed new working contract, health minister Jeremy Hunt is again threatening to impose the contract on them.

As Yannis Gourtsoyannis of the BMA junior doctors' committee said at the recent National Shop Stewards Network (NSSN) conference: "We have come a long way in the last year. Our action was unprecedented in the NHS, probably the single most positive thing in NHS politics

in decades. We are finally having a fight."

With teachers, college lecturers and many other groups of workers having to take strike action against this austerity-driven Tory government and greedy employers, junior doctors have set a great example and should now approach the TUC and coordinate further industrial action.

The only reason Jeremy Hunt backed down from imposing an earlier rotten contract and reopened

negotiations was a series of determined strikes of the junior doctors, with overwhelming public support. This new threat must also be met by strike action.

Unacceptable

Junior doctors felt that negotiators had conceded too much and the compromise deal has now been thrown out. Clearly a majority of junior doctors believe that their loss of earnings and a lack of proper oversight on working excessive

hours in an increasingly fragmented NHS were unacceptable.

The Socialist Party has mobilised public support for the junior doctors' previous pickets and demonstrations and once again we will support further action to secure a just deal and workable contract.

As Yannis concluded at the NSSN conference: "Now is the time to ramp things up, government capitulation on the contract is possible. We also need to defend Corbyn and show the government the door."

Vote Chas Berry for Napo national chair

BOLD LEADERSHIP AND AUSTERITY FIGHT NEEDED

Socialist Party member Chas Berry, currently vice-chair of the National Association of Probation Officers (Napo), is a candidate in the union's election for national chair. Ballot papers go out on 15 July and voting closes on 25 August. Chas outlines his election programme:

Our challenge is how to stay relevant to our established members while appealing to the broader, more diverse and generally younger group of staff likely to enter the workforce in future. Decent pay, quick progression 'up the scale' and manageable work-

loads are what members tell me they want, and these are the priorities around which we can unite and rebuild our union. This starts with defending national collective bargaining and increasing our membership density in existing workplaces.

We cannot stop there, however. In the rapidly changing criminal justice and family courts sectors we can extend our influence by attracting new members with a recruitment strategy that does not limit itself to our traditional base of support.

This will be tough but I think our union is uniquely placed to achieve it.

As national vice-chair for the past two years I have the knowledge and experience to lead the officers group and provide some continuity while

we make the changes necessary to adapt to the new environments. Many activists recognise me as a socialist and anti-austerity campaigner.

I will bring combativeness to the chair, recognising also the full range of views on the most effective ways of promoting our collective interests.

Confidence will be restored when members start to see improvements they can measure.

This requires bold leadership and a willingness to link our day to day struggles with the wider trade union movement in the fight against austerity. I believe I can provide that leadership.



Chas Berry on a demonstration

Unite policy conference 2016 Blairite coup, Trident and cuts dominate opening days

Socialist Party reporters

The first two days of Unite the Union's biennial policy conference was dominated by the attempted Blairite coup in the Labour Party. General Secretary Len McCluskey in opening the conference attacked the Blairites and made it clear it was a political attack on Jeremy Corbyn.

Unite have to make it clear they completely oppose this coup and at the same time give unequivocal support to Corbyn remaining as Labour Party leader. Many delegates made it clear to Socialist Party members that if Corbyn is kept off the ballot paper it raises the call for disaffiliation and the need for a new party.

The other big debates have included Trident, just days before MPs vote on its renewal. The conference voted for an executive council statement on Trident which opposes it and calls for diversification of the thousands of jobs, many who are Unite members, that rely on it. However, the statement calls for this only when a government is in place that Socialist Party members voted against the statement because there

were better motions but the statement is still stronger than the previous position.

Another big debate took place on the issue of cuts and Labour councils. A motion moved by Danny Hogan from Greenwich council workers' branch, and seconded by Cathy Smith from Bromley, called on conference to back the call for Labour councils to set legal no-cuts budgets.

Support

There was a lot of support for this, however an executive council statement was passed instead which only gave the impression of dealing with these issues.

In the debate Andy Ford from Warrington pointed out the stand of former Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC) councillor Kevin Bennett who was the only Warrington councillor to vote against cuts and support Jeremy Corbyn but was forced out of the Labour group. And Ted Knight, leader of Lambeth council which fought the cuts in the 1980s and was surcharged, raised the no-cuts stand of his and Liverpool council and accused current Labour councils of facilitating the cuts.

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[News in brief]

Workers hit the roof

GMB members at roofing manufacturer Redland in Cale Lane, Wigan, have taken five days of strike action in defence of their shop steward who has been dismissed by the company in dubious circumstances. Last year the company tried to force him out with a severance payment and confidentiality clause. When he refused they tried until he was involved in a minor road collision with a parked vehicle and then dismissed him, even though it was an accident and he reported it straight away. Strikers told me that no-one else would have been dismissed over such an incident. The GMB, and the GMB members on the site, have stood by their rep, and the strike also got support from the bakers' union from the Hovis site down the road. They reported excellent support from Wigan Trades Council over the week of the strike.

Andy Ford

Supermarket crisis

The announcement at the beginning of July of the closure of the Netto chain, on the back of the collapse of My Local in June, marks another stage in the crisis of the big supermarket chains. Having saturated the possibilities of developing 'big-box' out-of-town supermarkets, the past few years have seen supermarkets attempting to consolidate market share in other avenues such as convenience stores and discount shops - especially given the success of Aldi and Lidl in the latter format.

My Local started life as Morrisons' late entry into the convenience store format in 2011 in an attempt to rival the likes of Tesco Express and Sainsbury Local. Now it is being wound up, Morrisons will have to cover part of the losses as it is liable for many of the stores' leases. Greybull Capital, as with all investment funds, is willing to gamble on cheap investment opportunities, while limiting its potential losses. The return of Netto, on the other hand, was a joint venture between Sainsbury's and Danish owner, Dansk Supermarked Group. In its previous incarnation, it had been sold off to Asda in 2010, but 20 new stores were opened under the joint venture. In this case Netto was actually operating in line with expected earnings, but is still being wound up, as Sainsbury's buyout of Argos and Home Retail Group takes place. Both companies are still making huge profits elsewhere and in these circumstances companies are happy to throw their workers on the scrap heap. Retail unions must fight to save these jobs.

Iain Dalton



Prison officers 'meeting' at Wormwood Scrubs, west London photo Rob Williams

Judy Beishon
Socialist Party executive committee

The 2.6 million-word Chilcot report in essence acknowledges that the devastating war on Iraq and occupation was a completely unjustifiable act of military aggression, by making it clear that it was not necessary. Families of the UK army personnel who died or were seriously injured in Iraq, and the millions of Iraqi people whose lives have been shattered by the war and its consequences, have particular reason to be outraged anew.

While there is nothing fundamentally new in the report, the conclusions are more candid than is usual from establishment circles and they are the strongest official condemnation of the war yet. The report - which incredibly took seven years to compile - contains evidence that goes beyond previous inquiries and revelations in exposing the role played by intelligence bosses, government ministers, military generals and Whitehall advisors.

As expected, Chilcot has refused to make any recommendation on whether there should be prosecutions and in some ways tries to partially exonerate then prime minister Tony Blair, for instance by judging that Blair made no deliberate attempt to mislead people.

Court
But despite this muddying of the waters, there is plenty in the report that shows that Blair should - as the Socialist Party has argued - be taken to court for the appalling atrocities he ordered and others he set in chain, and it will fuel more demands for this justice. In the court of public opinion, Blair is rightly branded a war criminal.

This is certainly the view of many of the families of soldiers who were sent to Iraq, some who have described Blair as a "bloody murderer" and the "one terrorist that the world needs to be aware of". They are considering a private prosecution.

There's anger that it is 'beyond the remit' of the International Criminal Court to place the likes of Blair on trial, but it can place on trial British soldiers who are accused of wrong-doing. This reflects that court 'looking after its own', ie, the representatives of the most powerful states globally, that maintain its very structures.

Blair's huge self-enrichment on the back of his period in public office - he's now a millionaire many times over, including from advising dictatorships like the Kazakhstan regime - adds to the anger people feel towards his crimes.

Complicit
Also with blood on their hands are other former ministers closely involved in the decision to launch the invasion, like Gordon Brown and Jack Straw. But complicit were the hundreds of MPs who voted in parliament for the war, including a majority of the Labour MPs and almost the entire block of Tories.

Their concurrence - and in many cases goading for war - is now reflected in a degree of closing ranks around Blair, including by David Cameron, who echoed Chilcot's arguments that Blair didn't "mislead" anyone and played a "legitimate role in advocating government policy."

Blair, after all, was representing the interests of those of Britain's capitalists who were keen to benefit - alongside US imperialism - from 'regime change' in Iraq. As the Socialist Party and Committee for a Workers' International (CWI) have explained in many articles over the years, it was a war for Iraq's vast oil reserves and to promote western imperialism's geopolitical interests, military power and prestige.

To proceed with the war, Blair and US president Bush concocted a web of lies, in particular claiming that Saddam Hussein had weapons of mass destruction (WMDs) which he could use within 45 minutes at any time.

Chilcot makes it clear, once again, that WMDs no longer existed in Iraq and there was "no imminent threat from Saddam Hussein". He criticises the planning for the aftermath of the invasion as "wholly inadequate" and the poor equipping of the British military forces.

photo Molly Cooper



He also delves into the legality of the war, which according to his forensic examination was based on Blair just insisting at the time that his own "unequivocal view" was that Iraq was breaching UN demands to disarm. Chilcot pointedly remarks: "The precise basis on which Mr Blair made that decision is not clear."

Chilcot elaborates on Blair's obsequious crawling behind Bush, publishing 31 notes Blair wrote to Bush - including one that began with the words "I will be with you, whatever," showing that evidence of WMDs wasn't the central issue for Blair.

The report has focused media attention on issues such as the legality of the war, who was consulted at the top and when, and how 'evidence' was produced and interpreted. However, while the lack of democracy in Saddam's Iraq was a major feature of Blair's propagandising for going to war, the issue of democracy at home has deliberately not been under the spotlight.

Blair had no mandate to go to war from the British population, a majority who opposed the war before the invasion. A phenomenal two million people demonstrated against it in London on 15 February 2003 - the largest ever political demonstration in the country.

Internationally
Internationally too, never before had there been such a high degree of opposition to a war. 3 million people demonstrated in Rome, 1.5 million in Barcelona and millions more in many other protests across the globe. In the United States half a million marched in New York and there were large demonstrations in 150 other towns and cities.

A CWI statement in February 2003 quoted American columnist Thomas Friedman writing: "I have had a chance to travel all across the United States since September, and I can say without hesitation there was not a single audience I spoke to where I felt there was a majority in favour of war... I don't

care what the polls say, this is the real mood."

But Bush and Blair, having already spearheaded what they at that time viewed as a fast victory in a war to remove the Taliban in Afghanistan, were banking on a similar speed of events in Iraq and a victory that they hoped would undermine the opposition. They were set on pursuing a sick adventure driven by the oil and gas tycoons in the US Republican right, who saw it as completing the work of their first Gulf war in 1990-91.

They seized on the terrible 9/11 attacks to justify invading Iraq, when in reality 15 of the 19 plane hijackers involved were originally from the western powers' ally Saudi Arabia. At that time there was no evidence of any terrorist activity based in Iraq.

Yet one of the dreadful consequences of the war on Iraq was the creation of the conditions for the development of firstly Al-Qaida and then Isis, both of which grew out of brutal assaults carried out against Sunni areas and the mass

impoverishment of what became a discriminated-against Sunni population.

The CWI foresaw the sectarian conflict that could open up under the impact of imperialist occupation and warned about the dangers in many articles. For instance a CWI statement on 7 February 2003 said:

"In reality, the US could be drawn into an economic, national and ethnic abyss... with civil war looming as a real prospect... The legacy of an attack on Iraq will be a colossal spiralling of threats from Islamic terrorists bent on revenge against the war that appears to them to be 'against Islam.'"

Instead of one Saddam, the CWI predicted, there could end up being three or more repressive dictators in Iraq as a result of the unleashing of unbridled capitalist struggles for spheres of influence based on ethnic groups, words that are tragically coming true.

Bush and Blair's actions have created an Iraq with devastated infrastructure, governed by a cor-

rupt, unpopular regime, and with brutal warfare today taking place between government forces and Isis. The population is suffering almost daily suicide bombings and other atrocities, one of the worst being an attack in Baghdad on 3 July that killed 250 people.

Distrust
Some commentators have rightly drawn a line from the mass opposition to war in Iraq in 2003 up to the EU referendum. Leave result today, because that war was a major contributory reason for the high level of distrust that has built up towards establishment politicians.

The pro-capitalist politicians in parliament are no doubt hoping that the Chilcot inquiry will help to counter this distrust and disillusionment by giving them the opportunity to appear to be willing to investigate and acknowledge mistakes, and keen to introduce more 'rigour' into decision-making on such serious matters as going to war.

But no matter how far future

governments go in being more careful and considered with their evidence and procedures, that won't stop them from going to war if they deem it to be in the interests of those they represent in big business and the ruling class generally. Since the Iraq war, Britain joined in with the bombing of Libya and Syria and elsewhere in the region.

The only way of stopping Blair and Bush in 2003 would have been to develop the mass opposition movement beyond the level of the magnificent demonstrations, into a movement of organised, workers' action - including an escalating series of strikes if necessary.

At the same time, the workers' movement needs to take steps forward in building a political alternative - which today means developing a large party firmly based on the anti-war, anti-austerity ideas of Jeremy Corbyn.

Incredibly, after the publication of the Chilcot report, Labour MP Ian Austin heckled Jeremy



2004 cartoon by Alan Hardman

Corbyn in parliament, shouting "you're a disgrace" and "shut up", when Corbyn was criticising the Iraq war. Any Labour public representatives who are pro-war regarding Iraq or Syria, or pro-austerity, should face reselection contests.

Suffering
Responding to the Chilcot report, Blair still defends his decision to go to war, arguing that Iraq would eventually have suffered even worse deterioration and misery had Saddam not been removed. His warped reasoning is that when the Iraqi people would have turned to removing Saddam, that dictator would have dug his heels in like Assad in Syria has, and the death toll and devastation would then have been of Syria's proportions.

But this is skipping over what happened in the Arab Spring in Egypt and Tunisia, where forceful mass movements removed the incumbent dictators.

It is also deliberately ignoring the fact that Syria's people have,

like Iraqis, massively suffered from direct interventions by regional and world powers - partly to cut across revolutionary movements developing from below during the Arab Spring. They have sponsored different fighting forces, flooded in arms and dropped many bombs from the air.

It is the task of the Syrian people, the Iraqi people and those anywhere, to overthrow their dictators or right-wing governments, with support offered by workers' movements internationally. The Arab Spring showed that mass movements in the Middle East are well capable of performing that task, but its lessons don't stop there.

The period of those movements, magnificent as they were, also showed that in their aftermath the gains they achieved can be eroded and taken away if enduring, democratic socialist, mass-based workers' organisations aren't built that can challenge the power of the capitalist class. This is a crucial task in both the Middle East and globally.

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US ERUPTION: BLACK LIVES MATTER!

Continued from page 16

Philando Castile died in the back seat of his car. His death was live streamed by his brave girlfriend, Diamond Reynolds, to show the world he was innocent. Diamond was held overnight in police custody - without food or access to her traumatised daughter - after the murder of her boyfriend.

This injustice was correctly met with mass protests and direct action that Socialist Alternative members participated in.

The killings of Alton and Philando sadly confirm the reality described in the remarkable speech by actor and activist Jesse Williams at the recent Black Entertainment Television Awards - police terror and systemic racism in society.

The recent acquittals of the Baltimore police officers in the Freddy Gray case, and non-indictment decision in the Jamar Clarke case, have confirmed for this generation that the US criminal justice system is rigged against workers and people of colour. There is one set of laws for the super-rich, like Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump, and another set of laws for black workers and youth.

The two rebellions in Ferguson and Baltimore in 2014 and 2015 respectively rocked the very core of US society. Hundreds of thousands of young people and black workers expressed their rage at law enforcement, the political establishment, and what has become known as the 'black mis-leadership class'.

Legislation

Over 40 bills were introduced to curb police terror and enhance accountability to the community. The Department of Justice and President Obama's 'Task Force on 21st Century Policing' reports acknowledged the numerous violations and police misconduct across the US. Yet the racist police murders, mass incarceration, militarisation of the police and rampant economic injustices continue.

Louisiana's state governor, Democrat John Bel Edwards, has signed the "Blue Lives Matter" bill into law. This makes the state the first in the US where police are protected under hate-

crime legislation.

As USA Today highlighted over a year ago, "President Obama has signed into law a measure that will require instant nationwide 'Blue Alerts' to warn about threats to police officers and help track down the suspects who carry them out." City, state and federal governments fortify the 'blue wall' with militarised law enforcement that mainly serves to protect the property, prestige and power of the super-rich 1%.

Since Ferguson and Baltimore, there's a heightened class and racial polarisation, along with a developing anti-establishment mood, due to the crisis of capitalism.



The times we are living through demand a concerted effort to challenge the system of capitalism and racism head on

Donald Trump has been whipping up racism with his rhetoric. Hillary Clinton defends the policies of her husband that led to mass incarceration and more militarised police. The times we are living through demand a concerted effort to challenge the system of capitalism and racism head on.

In several cities around the country, there were protests to express utter rage at the police killings in Baton Rouge and Falcon Heights. In Dallas, Texas, at a peaceful march, snipers fired on police, killing five and injuring seven.

We oppose terrorist methods. As well as rightly repelling the majority of workers, they have historically been shown to be a failed method of fighting oppression.

Capitalism can more easily drum up support for the oppressive institutions of the state when tragedies like the murders of random law enforcement officers take place. Workers' civil liberties and human rights will be further undermined by the state under the cover of pursuing the suspects.

These acts can and will have a negative effect on the Black Lives Matter banner, putting the struggle against police terror on the defensive, and further criminalising the movement and its activists. The deaths of New York police officers Rafael Ramos and Wenjian Liu in December 2015 brought Black Lives Matter protests to a halt, and allowed the right to viciously attack the movement.

To win victories against racism and poverty, we need mass demonstrations and a political alternative. Union leaders should support Black Lives Matter in more than just words - by mobilising their members to attend protests. This must connect the fight against police violence to the struggles for good jobs and pay, health care, education and public services.

Movement

Shanelle Matthews, director of communications for the 'Black Lives Matter Network', stated recently: "We're decentralised, and all of the chapters work autonomously." Police killings place an urgency to centralise and coordinate our movement's actions, ideas, and message. Especially since the corporate media, the two parties of big business, and law enforcement will go on the offensive after Dallas.

A united working class movement, using the methods of mass protests, civil disobedience and strikes, based on demands to end institutional racism and guarantee decent jobs and homes - and free health care and education - for all, will be most effective in fighting racial and class oppression.

As we approach the Democrats' and Republicans' annual conferences, we need a massive mobilisation. This must highlight police terror, the inability of the Wall Street agenda to solve workers' problems, and the role of both parties in the rise of the prison state and endemic inequality.

Our movement should prepare for marches and possible Occupy-style actions in Washington, DC, to demand justice for all victims of police terror as we head towards the general election in November.

The time is now!
Read more at socialistalternative.org



photo Mina Boromand

Reader's comment Majority support migrants staying - fight hate crime

Amalia
EU migrant

Online reports of hate crime were five times higher than an average week in the seven days from the EU referendum polling day. The media

and establishment want to suggest that anti-migrant abuse surged overnight purely because of the result.

But research from pollster ICM has found 84% of the public supports letting EU migrants stay. This includes 77% of Leave voters, and 78% of Ukip supporters. And police

have said that overall reports rose by 42% in the weeks both before and after polling day - showing the specific result was not necessarily the key factor.

In the event of a Remain vote, racist incidents would also have been likely to increase - we could even have seen revenge attacks. The pot was already stirred. True, the result has temporarily emboldened a very small hard core of racists and fascists. But these people could have made even bigger long-term gains from the anger at a Remain vote saving the establishment - and the racist policies the Tories would have continued to enact.

The establishment - both Tories and the Blairites - have been scapegoating migrants for decades. In May last year, Labour under Ed Miliband produced a "controls on

immigration" mug as part of its election campaign. Gordon Brown before this used the divisive slogan "British jobs for British workers".

But it is austerity - not immigration - which is responsible for the destruction of services. Socialists fight for decent jobs, pay and homes for all. This is the only way to stop the bosses making us compete, leading to falling standards for everyone.

Unlike the Socialist Party's anti-racist, internationalist Leave campaign, attacking migrants was a central strategy for both the official Leave and Remain camps. Cameron started the campaign with negotiations to limit migrant rights, and promised more if he won the referendum. He said during the campaign that "after six months, if you haven't got a job, you have to leave."

And now his successor, fellow

Remainer Theresa May, is refusing to guarantee our right to stay. She says she is using this - our lives and livelihoods - as a bargaining chip with the EU. In truth the bosses have no interest in deporting 4% of their workforce and consumer base. But this anti-migrant posturing adds to the atmosphere of uncertainty and fear.

Given all this build-up, the 84% support is an impressive rejection of anti-immigrant lies. But the rise in attacks must be fought hard.

It's times like this when a socialist, working class voice is needed to fill in the political vacuum left by Blairism, and address the issues of austerity and financial insecurity most of us experience day to day.

Read more at socialistparty.org.uk, 'United working class resistance can cut across racism'

POLICE RACISM STILL LETHAL IN BRITAIN

James Ivens

A storm of proud fury swept through Brixton, south London on 9 and 10 July as hundreds marched against police racism. 3,000 followed in Manchester on 11 July. Other cities plan to join them.

The latest racist police killings in the US, on 5 and 6 July, inspired the protest. But in the UK just the week before, hate-crime monitor Tell Mama reported that anti-Muslim incidents rose 326% in 2015. Marchers were clear they were marching against racism at home as well as abroad.

As recently as 2014, Metropolitan Police shot dead a black man, Jermaine Baker. Their killing of Mark Duggan in 2011 initiated the London riots. UK police are disproportionately likely to kill black and Asian people in custody or shootings, according to Advocacy group Inquest.

Last year, the Independent found almost all forces are still many times more likely to stop and search black people. In London, black people are three times more likely to face searches than white people - in Dorset, 17.5 times more likely.

Meanwhile, unemployment and poverty are still markedly higher in black and Asian communities.

The rhetoric and policies of both the official Leave and Remain camps in the EU referendum have exacerbated racist division. But clearly, racism rose aggressively well before the vote to leave, and is not limited to EU migrants.

The 9 July Brixton demonstration heard from a series of impassioned black speakers. Many called for

an end to austerity and building of council homes. The Socialist Party supports these demands, and spoke to protesters about the fight to defend Jeremy Corbyn's anti-austerity Labour leadership.

Deep sadness mixed with fiery defiance as the demonstration took to the streets. A second rally took place on the steps of Brixton police station, home to a number of horrific black deaths in custody.

Cops in Brixton were also responsible for shooting a blameless black mother, Cherry Groce, and then attacking the resulting protest. This sparked the 1985 Brixton riots.

Bus drivers, most of them black, honked and cheered as the march stopped traffic. A black firefighter high-fived protesters from the window of her returning fire engine. At its peak, around a thousand were marching and chanting "No justice, no peace - no racist police!"

The demonstration held the five-way junction off Windrush Square, chanting: "Are any of us going to get arrested today? No! Do they have any reason to arrest us? No!" Police stood aside helplessly.

This resolute and dynamic protest, matched by the march the next day, was essential to boosting confidence and expressing anger. The Socialist Party links this to the need for democratic community control over police policy and hiring.

The capitalists and their politicians rely on racism, among other things, to keep workers divided. As Malcolm X explained, "you can't have capitalism without racism."

Join the Socialist Party to fight for a society free from discrimination and oppression, run democratically in the interests of the 99%.



On the Brixton march
photo James Ivens

Join the fightback!
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THOUSANDS MOBILISING TO #KEEPCORBYN

London

An all-London meeting was called at very short notice on 6 July by Momentum to organise support for Jeremy Corbyn. The chair reported that 2,000 were in the venue. As well as Jeremy, other speakers included Matt Wrack, general secretary of the Fire Brigades Union, Jon Lansman, chair of Momentum, Diane

Abbott MP, and several others. Matt Wrack made a hard-hitting speech, condemning the back-stabbing MPs and pledging full support for Corbyn in the expected leadership challenge. Jon Lansman talked about the plans that have been made to defend Jeremy and he reported that already 100,000 have joined the Labour Party since MPs passed their motion of no confidence. Rhea Wilson, young member

candidate for the Labour NEC said that the party was now reaching breaking point. **Socialism** Unfortunately, Jeremy could not attend the event in person, but he recorded a short video message, where he said he stood for the redistribution of wealth and for socialist values. The meeting was unanimous in condemning the attacks on the democratically elected leader of the

Labour Party, and the audience was clearly very enthusiastic to take up the fight. One shortcoming of the meeting was that no call was made to welcome in all left forces to participate in the struggle. At a meeting of Tower Hamlets Momentum a few months ago, Jon Lansman made it clear that I and other Socialist Party members would not be welcome to participate. I hope that in the new circumstances,

now battle lines have been drawn, the need for left unity will lead to a rethink. Another worrying feature of the contributions was that there was no recognition that the traitor Labour MPs have, by their own actions, once and for all put themselves outside the ranks of the movement. Any move to welcome them back and let bygones be bygones would be disastrous. **Pete Dickenson**

Birmingham

More than 500 people turned out for the Momentum organised Keep Corbyn rally on 7 July before marching to the Birmingham Council House in Victoria Square, where the crowd was addressed by a range of speakers. These included Labour councillors who had signed an open letter in support of Jeremy Corbyn against the Blairite coup in the Labour Party.

Ex-Respect councillor Salma Yaqoob correctly identified the need for Labour parliamentary and council candidates committed to anti-austerity policies in action not just words - to rapturous applause from the crowd and passers-by.

Council cuts

Socialist Party and ex-PCS executive member Kevin Greenaway took Salma Yaqoob's argument further, saying councillors should be repeating Jeremy Corbyn's policies in the council chamber - fighting funding cuts and job losses at every level.

Socialist Party members argued for an inclusive open conference of anti-austerity activists both inside and outside of the Labour Party, which was warmly received particularly from young Labour members.

Many people said they wanted to come to our meetings to find out how to defend Corbyn and his anti-austerity ideas.

Theo Sharieff



York rally photo Iain Dalton

Plymouth

Plymouth Momentum organised a rally at short notice in the city centre on 9 July to defend Jeremy Corbyn. Momentum speakers discussed the need for openness and an embracing of Corbyn's "new kind of politics". It was disappointing therefore that Momentum Plymouth members attempted to prevent Socialist Party members from

handing out leaflets.

The leaflets were calling for Corbyn to organise a conference of all left forces inside and outside the Labour Party to come together to prepare for the battles ahead. The overwhelming majority of people were supportive of the idea, with a number of people taking handfuls of leaflets to distribute at their workplaces.

We sold more than 20 copies of the Socialist and had some excellent discussions with people who wanted to discuss a strategy to defend Corbyn. It is by uniting, discussing and organising that we stand the best chance of defending Corbyn, building on support from inside and outside the Labour Party.

Ryan Aldred

York

"Blairites out, Corbyn in," said many of the placards that set the tone at the York Momentum 'Keep Corbyn' rally on 8 July.

Over 100 people gathered in St Helen's Square, to denounce the attempted Blairite coup - in the week the Chilcot report came out which denounced Blair for launching the disastrous Iraq war.

The protest seemed to bring together lots of new people - both Labour Party members people and those not in the Labour Party but are active rank and file trade unionists, and who felt that the ideas being put forward by Corbyn were ones they could get behind.

Socialist Party member Iain Dalton was also able to address the rally, unlike recent ones in nearby Leeds, or indeed many of the previous meetings of Momentum in York. He offered Socialist Party support and pointed out that pressure from below was pushing most trade union leaders into backing Corbyn.

Iain also urged the need for all who support Corbyn, whether inside the Labour Party or not to come together in this campaign and that a conference of these forces could help plan out the next steps in the battle with the Blairites.

■ This issue of the Socialist goes to press on 12 July - for more updated reports on the campaign to defend Jeremy Corbyn see socialistparty.org.uk



Corinthia Ward photo Helen Pattison

Why I joined:

"I NO LONGER FELT ISOLATED FROM POLITICS"

Corinthia Ward

Growing up in the 1990s and early 2000s I only ever knew Labour as the party who gave us Tony Blair, privatisation, tuition fees and the Iraq War. When I reached voting age I was told Labour was meant to be the party for working people but during my whole life I had seen no evidence of this.

I knew the Tory party were not to be trusted as I heard the horror stories of Thatcher, however, I was also too familiar with the horror stories of Labour from my own personal experience.

Innocent people

My earliest memory involving politics was sitting in front of the news as a child and seeing the first UK bombs hit Iraq and in my mind I saw innocent people and families dying. Knowing there wasn't a parliamentary party who fought for my interests or for that of people like me made me feel helpless and isolated throughout most of my life.

In spring 2015 I attended a Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC) meeting in my local town due to a leaflet being put through my door. There I saw TUSC chair Dave Nellist speak as well as my local TUSC candidate Ted Woodley.

It was the first time I had ever heard people fight for the things I believed in; ending tuition fees and fighting for nationalisation.

It was through my involvement in TUSC that I was introduced to the Socialist Party and went to a branch meeting. There I learnt about the party's history (as Militant) and the issues which they fight for.

Talking with people at the meeting meant I no longer felt isolated from politics and was able to connect with like-minded people. Everyone involved in the branch had been welcoming and friendly and it didn't take me long to join.

Being a member of the Socialist Party has not only enabled me to find my political voice but also to understand politics on a class basis, giving me confidence to fight for issues I believe in and I feel more empowered than I did before.

But overall, the main point when talking to someone about why they should join the Socialist Party is how you will no longer feel alone or isolated. To know there are people on your side and feel the same as you.

With the surge in support of Jeremy Corbyn, it's an exciting time to be a socialist. The opportunity exists for a mass anti-austerity party completely different to the Labour Party I grew up with.

Fight back is on to save NHS services

Steve Score

A massive attack has been launched on NHS congenital heart services in England. Patients, families and health workers will not accept it and we will fight back. As a parent whose 15-year old son had open heart surgery only seven months ago at one of the threatened units, Leicester Glenfield Hospital, I am furious.

NHS England has announced that three hospital trusts in Leicester, Manchester and London will have to stop complex surgery on people born with heart problems. Five other trusts will have to stop providing other heart services and procedures.

Four years ago the NHS nationally tried to 'centralise' services and were defeated by campaigns and legal challenges. The medical arguments they put forward are flawed and it is the billions of pounds of 'efficiency savings' (read cuts) required of the NHS by this government that are really behind it.

Leicester Glenfield heart unit is one of the best and has pioneered



Campaigning in Leicester photo Steve Score

certain treatments in this country.

The care and support they gave my son was fantastic and makes you proud of the achievements of the NHS. Kids need their friends and family around them when they have long stays in hospital, centralisation would mean greater distances to travel for family as well as for appointments for the child.

Leicester had the first Ecmo (Extra Corporeal Membrane Oxygenation) machine in the country - allowing patients, especially children and babies, to survive heart or lung failure. It now has 50% of the

country's paediatric capacity.

The children's heart service is much loved, with charity fundraising providing many of the facilities including Ecmo. A battle now has to be launched. The trade unions should play a key role alongside NHS staff, patients and families.

Leicestershire Against the Cuts is holding an emergency planning meeting on 13 July to discuss the campaign. We want to save the unit in Leicester, but we also want to avoid the attempt made last time by the NHS nationally to play one hospital off against another.

SALES OF THE SOCIALIST THROUGH THE ROOF SINCE THE REFERENDUM

Since the EU referendum sellers of the Socialist have been hitting the streets providing analysis of the rash of resignations and political crisis hitting the establishment parties, with hundreds snapping up copies. The Socialist spoke to Martin Reynolds in Waltham Forest:



Martin selling the Socialist photo Sarah Sachs-Eldridge

Following the vote to leave the EU establishment politicians have panicked, leading to a number of resignations and a coup against Jeremy Corbyn. The EU vote saw a number of protests organised by pro-EU supporters who were mainly young people repulsed at the racist policies and media propaganda. I've joined them on the streets including outside Downing Street the day after the EU vote. I spoke to a number of the 200 or so people there and explained the socialist case for exit and sold eight papers. These youth had never heard the socialist case for exit.

Streets

I then went to Parliament Square on 27 June following the announcement of Hillary Benn being removed from the shadow cabinet to a rally in support of Corbyn. I sold 34 copies of the Socialist contributing to 90 sales since the EU referendum.

Most of these are sales based on supporting Corbyn against the attacks from the right-wing Blairites in his own party and the media, who have been relentlessly attacking him since his election as Labour Party leader ten months ago.

Donate today!

If you agree with what you read in the Socialist, consider making a donation to the Socialist Party's fighting fund:

■ pay by card via 020 8988 8777 or socialistparty.org.uk/donate

■ cheques payable to 'Socialist Party', PO Box 24697, London E11 1YD

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Facebook Socialist Party Summer Camp 2016

www.socialistparty.org.uk/summecamp/

steve.glennon@tesco.net





Irish Republic: Repeal the eighth amendment!
ROSA activists (for Reproductive rights, against Oppression, Sexism and Austerity), including CWI Ireland members, shown campaigning for a woman's right to choose. They are demanding a referendum to repeal the eighth amendment to the Irish constitution which prohibits women's abortion rights. Anti Austerity Alliance TD (MP) and Socialist Party Ireland member Ruth Coppinger has a #repealbill up for debate in the Dail (Irish parliament) in October. Campaigners will use the run up to that debate to put as much pressure as possible on all TDs to vote in favour.



China: Solidarity with striking Walmart workers
CWI members in Hong Kong express solidarity with striking Walmart workers in mainland China. China has been hit by unofficial strikes at Walmart stores in at least four cities after company bosses imposed new rotten work contracts. The workers' strikes are unprecedented because they are coordinated - using social media - in a police state where strikes are usually confined to one workplace or city. See chinaworker.info



Brazil: CWI member contesting council seat
Marzeni Pereira is a LSR (CWI) member, a leading water workers' trade unionist who was sacked last year for exposing the water crisis in Sao Paulo. He is standing as candidate for the Sao Paulo council, as part of the PSOL party which LSR participates in as a revolutionary socialist current.

SPAIN: DISAPPOINTMENT FOR LEFT IN RE-RUN GENERAL ELECTION

Mass mobilisation and struggle necessary for real change



The anti-austerity party Podemos, led by Pablo Iglesias (above), failed to capitalise on the weaknesses of the main capitalist party, the conservative PP photo Podemos/Creative Commons

Viki Lara
Socialismo Revolucionario (CWI, Spain)

The results of the 26 June re-run general elections in Spain were without doubt very disappointing for many activists, and for broad layers of workers and youth. All opinion polls pointed to the much-coveted 'sorpasso' - ie the alternative left overtaking the ex-social democratic PSOE as the main opposition to the right-wing PP (People's Party).

However, the results saw the Unidos Podemos left alliance (involving Podemos, United Left and others) lose over one million votes compared with the elections on 20 December 2015.

Despite this loss of votes, the alliance maintained its 71 seats in the parliament, and Unidos Podemos

will have an important weight in opposition to the next government.

These results also consolidate the new political panorama following the last years of struggle, and the crisis of the two-party system. The PP and PSOE remain far from the dominant position they enjoyed before the crisis.

Many will have been puzzled by the growth of the vote for the PP, which won more than 600,000 extra votes compared with December 2015, despite a lower turnout.

The PP has been embroiled in corruption scandals. This includes the conversations of the interior minister, Fernández Díaz, with the anti-fraud office, openly seeking to damage Catalan nationalist politicians, and also the implication of many PP politicians in the Panama Papers tax avoidance scandal.

However, the PP's rise in votes can be explained by the polarised atmosphere in the election campaign,

and the concentration of right-wing votes around the PP in response to the expectation that Unidos Podemos would make big gains.

For example, the right-wing populist Ciudadanos party lost over 400,000 voters, who surely will have 'returned home' (to the PP) for these elections. A certain perception of economic improvement - though weak with little impact on living standards - will also have partially benefited the PP.

Though these elections were called in order to resolve the governability crisis produced by December's elections, these results reproduce a situation of relative paralysis.

The PP, with its 137 seats, is still far from an overall majority (176 seats). Even to be elected in a 'second round' of voting in parliament (where the incoming president needs only to get more votes for than against, not including absten-



The most important factor explaining the results of the elections is the near absence of struggle and mobilisations in recent years

tions), the formation of a government is not guaranteed.

However, although new elections cannot be completely ruled out, it is far more likely that some variant of a 'grand coalition' arrangement is put together. This will probably be a minority government of the PP propped up by the abstention, or votes in favour, of PSOE and Ciudadanos.

As Socialismo Revolucionario has previously commented, the most important feature in this emerging situation will be the instability and weakness of the next government, whatever its composition.

It means a government much more vulnerable to the pressure and demands of 'the street' and mobilisations of the working class, than was the last majority PP government.

No matter how 'reinforced' the establishment may feel after these elections, it is clear that they will not be able to resolve the current crises. New tensions will emerge and become big headaches for the new government - from the imposition of cuts to the national tensions intensified by these election results.

In Catalonia and the Basque country, where the left alliance won the elections, the idea that 'Spain' cannot be reformed will be strengthened, boosting the pro-independence movements.

New struggles

After 2011 a new period of very significant struggle opened up in Spain - the Indignados' '15M movement', indefinite strikes in many workplaces, various general strikes, the massive 'marches for dignity', etc.

However, for more than two years there has been a lull in these struggles, coinciding with an electoral cycle, beginning with the European elections in 2014 and growth of the anti-austerity party Podemos.

Now, a new weaker government opens the possibility not only of earlier elections if the PP is not allowed to complete its term, but also of a return to mobilisation in the streets against the new austerity policies which the government seeks to impose.

A mass campaign of mobilisation and struggle would still have been necessary, even if the left had won, in order to resist the pressure of the EU and the capitalist establishment, which would try to force austerity and stop any attempts to implement pro-worker policies.

There has been much speculation about the reasons for the fall in support for Unidos Podemos. Some have questioned the usefulness of the alliance, others the lack of clar-



A strategy of workers' struggle linked to socialist policies is needed to address Spain's pressing social problems

ity in the campaign's discourse and programme. For others still the question of who the electorate 'blamed' for the repeat elections (among sections of the less politicised population some will have blamed Podemos), and also the campaign of fear launched against the left.

Electoralism

All of these factors will have played some role. However, Socialismo Revolucionario understands that the most important factor explaining the results of the elections is the near absence of struggle and mobilisations in recent years.

This is linked to the policy of the leadership of Podemos and the left - which prioritises institutional and electoral politics, linked to a political vision which sees change taking place through the governing institutions.

The reality of government, for example in the so-called "cities of change" (major cities such as Barcelona and Madrid where the left heads the local government) has shown the limits of such an approach. In Madrid, for example, the left lost over 100,000 votes compared with December's elections.

Instead of reformism there is a need for a political approach which challenges the limits of capitalism.

Another problem of the Unidos Podemos coalition is that it was essentially formed as a pact between the leading circles of Podemos and United Left, instead of a united front democratically built from below, involving the rank and file.

The role of such rank and file structures is key in giving an impulse to activity and campaigning, and building the necessary struggles in the coming months. As is discussing and clarifying, democratically, the programme necessary to solve the country's fundamental problems of poverty, inequality, mass unemployment, housing evictions, cuts and rising university tuition fees.

These themes were practically absent from the media-based

campaign of Unidos Podemos, which was centred much more on how a new government would be formed and in the exchange of accusations between the different parties.

Building for a future election victory which brings a working class party to power in the Spanish state in order to really change things and improve living standards, needs to be based on the following pillars: more organisation from below to build a really democratic movement of those we aim to represent, a clear programme of rupture with capitalism and austerity, and mass mobilisations to defend our rights and reverse the attacks of the past.

This means linking immediate reforms to the need for revolutionary socialist policies.

This must begin with a process of debate, in social movements, the trade unions and in the ranks of Unidos Podemos and the parties which make it up. The lack of a serious analysis and debate could bring people to the false conclusion that there is nothing that can be done.

Though the levels of disappointment are great due to the high expectations everyone on the left entertained, we cannot forget that more than five million people voted consciously for real progressive change. This is a significant base of accumulated support built up through the struggles of the last years, and the potential is still far greater.



What we stand for

The Socialist Party fights for socialism - a democratic society run for the needs of all and not the profits of a few. We also oppose every cut, fighting in our day-to-day campaigning for every possible improvement for working class people. The organised working class has the potential power to stop the cuts and transform society.

As capitalism dominates the globe, the struggle for genuine socialism must be international.

The Socialist Party is part of the Committee for a Workers' International (CWI), a socialist international that organises in over 40 countries.

Our demands include:

PUBLIC SERVICES

- No to ALL cuts in jobs, public services and benefits. Defend our pensions.
- No to privatisation and the Private Finance Initiative (PFI). Renationalise all privatised utilities and services, with compensation paid only on the basis of proven need.
- Fully fund all services and run them under accountable, democratic committees that include representatives of service workers and users.
- Free, publicly run, good quality education, available to all at any age. Abolish university tuition fees now and introduce a living grant. No to academies and 'free schools'!
- A socialist NHS to provide for everyone's health needs - free at the point of use and under democratic control. Kick out private contractors!
- Keep council housing publicly owned. For a massive building programme of publicly owned housing, on an environmentally sustainable basis, to provide good quality homes with low rents.

ENVIRONMENT

- Major research and investment into replacing fossil fuels with renewable energy and into ending the problems of early obsolescence and un-recycled waste.
- Public ownership of the energy generating industries. No to nuclear power. No to Trident.
- A democratically planned, low-fare, publicly owned transport system, as part of an overall plan against environmental pollution.

WORK AND INCOME

- Trade union struggle to increase the minimum wage to £10 an hour without exemptions as an immediate step towards a real living wage. For an annual increase in the minimum wage linked to average earnings.
- All workers, including part-timers, temps, casual and migrant workers to have trade union rates of pay, employment protection, and sickness and holiday rights from day one of employment.
- An immediate 50% increase in the state retirement pension, as a step towards a living pension.
- Reject 'workfare'. For the right to decent benefits, education, training, or a job, without compulsion.
- Scrap the anti-trade union laws!

For fighting trade unions, democratically controlled by their members. Full-time union officials to be regularly elected and receive no more than a worker's wage. Support the National Shop Stewards Network.

- A maximum 35-hour week with no loss of pay.

RIGHTS

- Oppose discrimination on the grounds of race, gender, disability, sexuality, age, and all other forms of prejudice.
- Repeal all laws that trample over civil liberties. For the right to protest! End police harassment.
- Defend abortion rights. For a woman's right to choose when and whether to have children.
- For the right to asylum. No to racist immigration laws.

NEW MASS WORKERS' PARTY

- For a new mass workers' party drawing together workers, young people and activists from workplace, community, environmental and anti-war campaigns, to provide a fighting, political alternative to the pro-big business parties. Support the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition as an important step towards this.

SOCIALISM AND INTERNATIONALISM

- No to imperialist wars and occupations.
- Tax the super-rich! For a socialist government to take into public ownership the top 150 companies and the banking system that dominate the British economy, and run them under democratic working class control and management. Compensation to be paid only on the basis of proven need.
- A democratic socialist plan of production based on the interests of the overwhelming majority of people, and in a way that safeguards the environment.
- No to the bosses' neoliberal European Union! For a socialist Europe and a socialist world!

Join the fightback!
Join the Socialists!

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FIGHT RACISM

- For jobs, homes and services for all
- Solidarity with #BlackLivesMatter

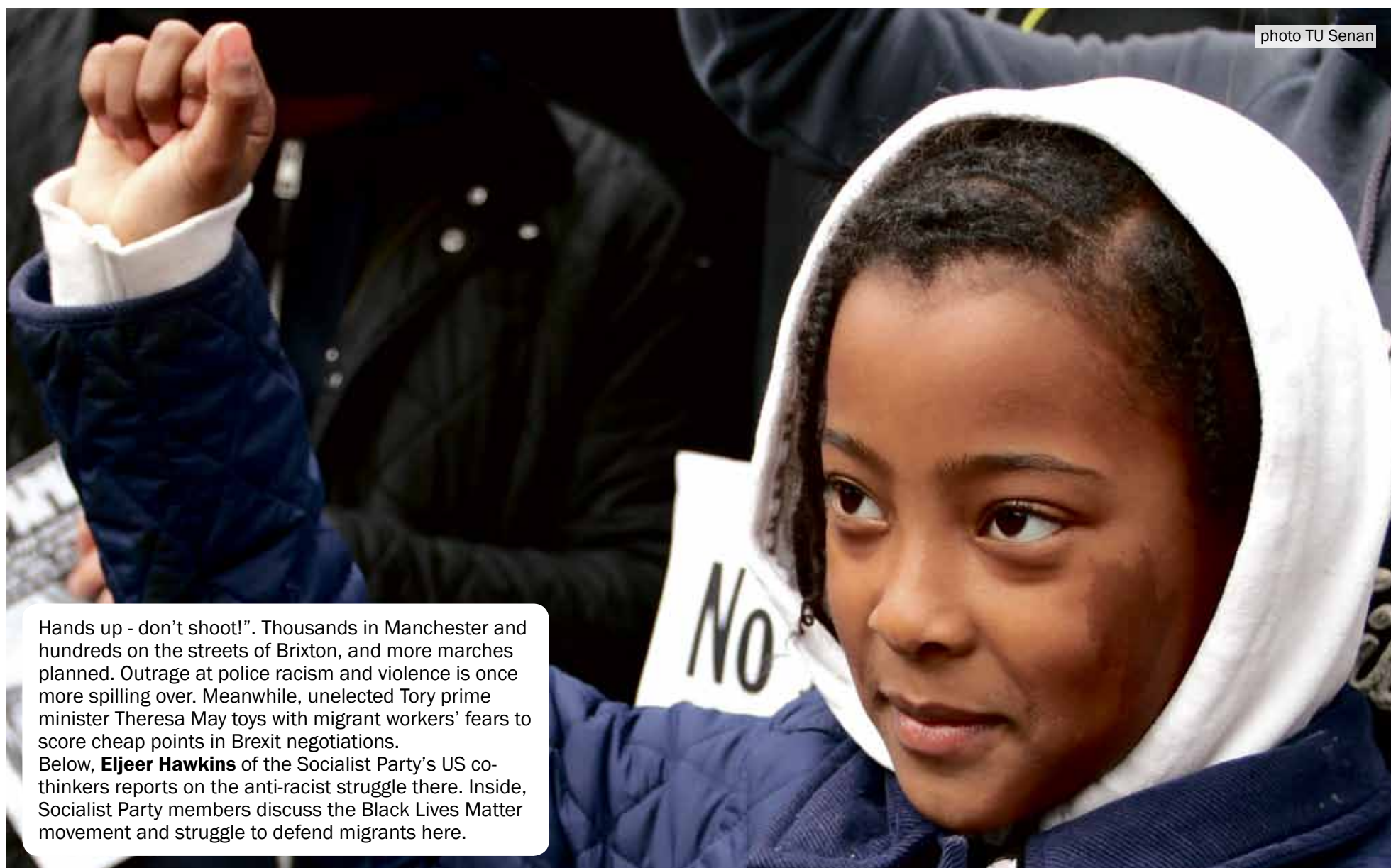


photo TU Senan

Hands up - don't shoot!". Thousands in Manchester and hundreds on the streets of Brixton, and more marches planned. Outrage at police racism and violence is once more spilling over. Meanwhile, unelected Tory prime minister Theresa May toys with migrant workers' fears to score cheap points in Brexit negotiations.

Below, **Eljeer Hawkins** of the Socialist Party's US co-thinkers reports on the anti-racist struggle there. Inside, Socialist Party members discuss the Black Lives Matter movement and struggle to defend migrants here.

At least 136 black people have been killed by US police in 2016 so far (Guardian, 7 July).

On top of police violence, the black community faces disproportionate unemployment, poverty, a lack of access to social services and mass incarceration. Much-needed protests are erupting throughout the country against the two latest atrocities, the murders of Alton Sterling and Philando Castile.

Unfortunately, five police have been killed

by snipers in Dallas. These types of actions will not win justice against racism - if that was their intention. They will only serve to strengthen the authority and militarisation of the police, and undermine the strength of Black Lives Matter mobilisations.

Socialist Alternative will continue to participate in mass demonstrations against racism, poverty and police violence, and put forward methods to broaden the movement and win victories.

15-year-old Cameron Sterling could not

hold back sobs as he spoke after the death of his father. Alton Sterling was killed by law enforcement officers in Baton Rouge, Louisiana on 5 July while selling CDs outside a convenience store.

Alton's death, and Cameron's reaction at the press conference the following day, are stark reminders of what it means to be black in the United States today. Alton's death is painfully reminiscent of Eric Garner's death on the street in Staten Island, New York on 17 July 2014, killed by a police officer using

an illegal choke hold.

Within 24 hours of this, in Falcon Heights, Minnesota, police stopped Philando Castile - along with his girlfriend and four-year-old daughter - for a busted tail light. Philando would be shot four times as he reached for his licence.

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