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# the Socialist

Formerly **Militant**

# ORGANISE

# STRIKE

# RESIST!

Post Tory  
conference demo  
meeting with Hannah  
Sell, Socialist Party deputy  
general secretary and Kevin  
Bennett, Warrington TUSC  
councillor

4pm, Sunday 4 October at  
the Briton's Protection  
pub, Great Bridgewater  
Street, Manchester,  
M1 5LE

# SMASH TORY AUSTERITY



How can we bring  
down the Tories?  
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Socialism is back!  
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TUSC: Central in the battle for a working  
class anti-austerity voice > Page 7



# Free school meals cut as poor children go hungry

**Sheila Caffrey**  
Primary school teacher

Tories plan to starve working class kids by cutting universal free school meals for children under seven.

Claims that many families don't want the meals may be true in some leafy paradises. They're certainly not in the working class estates of Bristol, where I teach.

Children queue out the door to attend free breakfast clubs. The same happens at lunch.

Try and find a teacher anywhere who hasn't noticed the improvement in children's concentration and behaviour following a proper lunch. Never mind the long-term benefits for their health and educational attainment.

It is only a year since the Conservatives introduced universal free school meals. It's the only policy I can think of that has benefitted the community where I live and teach.

"A moment of humanity and kindness form the Tories?" I hear you question. Of course not. It was a fig leaf to cover a package of new cuts for schools.

A stuttering Cameron has already tried to backtrack. He claims there are no plans to remove free meals for all under-7s.

Yet Chancellor George Osborne



photo FMSC/Creative Commons

is declaring a cut of 25 to 40% to unprotected budgets. What else are they planning to slash?

Schools have already seen a further cut of about 10% this year. This means the equivalent of 45,000 full-time posts going.

### Death Eaters

Teachers have seen pay, pensions and conditions sliced. Schools are becoming ghost towns. Tory Death Eaters stand tall and boast what a great job they've done reducing budgets.

The Socialist Party says universal free school meals must stay - and be extended to all ages. The teachers' unions, and all in the public sector, must respond to cuts with co-ordinated strikes to reverse them.

### Vampire academies

Council education budgets are being drained of blood by semi-privatised 'academy' schools. A BBC investigation found this policy has wasted £32.5 million.

Councils are forced to pay all costs when private firms take command of the schools, which remain publicly funded. The companies then sell their services back to the academies, syphoning off public cash as profits.



photos Paula Mitchell/Sarah Sachs-Edridge



## ★ VICTORY ★ Social housing tenants hold off council attacks

Residents successfully defended their homes at Fred Wigg and John Walsh Towers in Leytonstone, east London on 28 September.

Waltham Forest's Labour council - via management organisation Ascham Homes - attempted to enter the blocks to remove dividing doors. This is the first stage in their social cleansing project.

Heroically, residents blocked lifts and stairwells in both blocks, with the support of local trade unionists and Socialist Party members.

Resident Trevor (right) said: "The plan to sell off the blocks is ridiculous, there's not enough homes to go round."

"I was out here at 7.45am to protect my home. I've been living here since

1979. The plan to remove the security doors is just making things worse.

"They want to frustrate us and drive us out, so they can get more affluent people in. They're using regeneration to get rid of ordinary people. They're even putting the rent up for people they've moved in temporarily, which just shows what their intentions are"

Ascham Homes even called the police, but after a four-hour stand-off, the residents won! The workers were withdrawn with a promise not to return until

the issue has gone to court.

The Socialist Party has been active in the campaign. We say: no to evictions and self-offs. Build more social housing!  
**Paula Mitchell**

**37%** Conservative party's share of the vote that got it back into government this year - 24% of the whole electorate.

Shiftier bosses accused the union of calling the strike based on only three members. The Evening Standard reports the RMT as actually saying 24 members voted. Control rooms have very small staffs. Workers are fighting for fairer pay and status in line with their duties.

**100%** Share of transport union RMT members in favour of strikes in the Waterloo and City tube line control room.

## Gravy-train Labour MP claims expenses to rent house next door

**Nancy Taaffe**  
Housing campaigner

Money-grubbing Labour MP Pat McFadden has claimed over £21,000 expenses - to rent a house next to one he owns! The shadow Europe minister has access to three homes.

Contrast that with one of the most endearing images of new left-wing Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn. A photo of him on a London night bus was widely shared on social media.



photo Digrits/Creative Commons

at the 2005 election - and boy has he had some ride.

In 2006, he bought a three-bedroom house near the centre of his Wolverhampton constituency for £159,000. He claimed

more than £5,500 for legal fees and stamp duty.

Then, of course, he needed furniture. So he claimed £4,800 for that.

In July 2012 he let this house out, moved next door - and began claiming the rent on his expenses!

On top of this, he has a London home in fashionable (and eye-wateringly expensive) Highgate. He bought it for a mere £799,950 in 2009.



**Pat McFadden prefers to travel by the Westminster gravy train. He boarded at the 2005 election - and boy has he had some ride**

### Careerists

When I was a schoolgirl in London in the eighties, buses had conductors who kept strict order. If Jeremy Corbyn wants a new kind of politics in Labour, he has to call 'last stop' on such careerists.

He will find it makes for a far more pleasant journey for all of us, him included.

## POLLUTION CHEAT VOLKSWAGEN KILLS THOUSANDS FOR PROFIT

**Richard Worth**

Volkswagen, the world's largest car maker, fraudulently fitted eleven million diesel engines with "defeat devices" to rig pollution tests.

This has caused nearly one million tonnes of lethal air pollution a year. That's equal to the UK's combined emissions for all power stations, vehicles, agriculture and industry.

It has taken seven years to be "discovered". But government scientists in Britain have been warning of illegal levels of toxic gases since at least 2011. And European Union (EU) regulators knew about rigging as early as 2013 - but failed to act.

Also, campaign network Transport and Environment says it goes further than Volkswagen. Nine out of ten cars from every major manufacturer breached EU pollution limits when tested in real-world conditions.

Environment charity Greenpeace has uncovered that diesel carmakers employed 184 European lobbyists, costing £14 million. Does this explain it?

The scandal has caused a 30% nosedive in Volkswagen's share value. But the real cost is to us.

The pollutants spewed out by these cars have caused serious



photo biofriendly/Creative Commons

health conditions. Inflammation of the lungs, leading to asthma and bronchitis. An increased risk of heart attacks and strokes. And possibly memory loss and dementia.

Unfiltered 'particulate matter' also causes cancer. Exposure to air pollution hastens death - with 9,500 premature deaths annually in Europe's most polluted city, London.

### Deaths

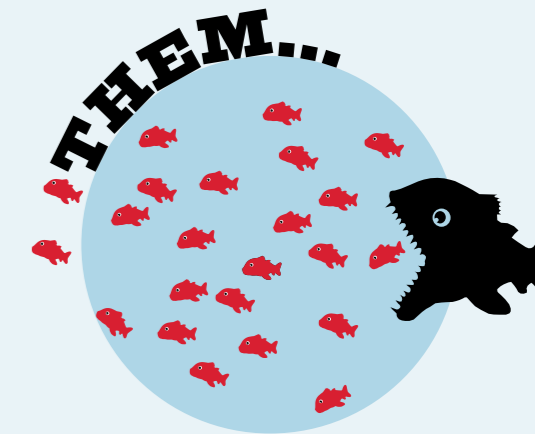
The government estimates the combined impact of nitrogen oxides and particulate matter is equivalent to 52,500 deaths a year in Britain.

Capitalists will do anything for profit. They can't be trusted to care for our health or environment. Poisons that should have been filtered by their engines are being filtered by our lungs instead.

### This is not a drill

Oil and gas company Shell has called off potentially catastrophic Arctic drilling! Has the petroleum giant had some miracle conversion? Has it abandoned its evil-genius-style plans for Armageddon?

Not quite. The firm says its decision was based instead on "disappointing" levels of fossil fuel in Alaskan oil wells.



### Lethal loan sharks

Payday loans are lethal. Mentally ill teenager Kane Sparham-Price died by suicide on the day loan shark Wonga emptied his whole bank account.

Desperate Wonga clients can end up paying 1,509% of their original loan per year due to compound interest.

Meanwhile, failed bank Northern Rock paid only 2.7% interest on its state bailout in the 2010-2011 financial year. The

government paid around 4.2% interest on the debt incurred to buy it!

It's banks like Northern Rock which caused the financial crisis. This gave establishment politicians the cover for cuts which force vulnerable people like Kane over the edge.

A blameless 18-year-old was left destitute - and died. Since 2007, casino cokeheads at the top of UK finance have taken home over £100 billion in bonuses.



### Get out of jail free

If one of us terrorised, tortured and dismembered a harmless animal, we could expect prosecution. Rightly so. Even if it was a pest, there'd be general disgust at flamboyant cruelty.

Unless you're a toff huntsman, of course. Then you can just ask David Cameron to write to the police and get you off.

The latest claim from disenchanted Tory donor Lord Ashcroft is that Cameron intervened to save huntsman pal Julian Barnfield. Ashcroft says the Conservative leader told cops to drop a case against Barnfield for illegal fox hunting.

The super-rich pay establishment MPs to make laws in their favour. When one slips through they don't like, they just tell their lackeys to ignore it.



Have you got news for the 'fishes'? Email [editors@socialistparty.org.uk](mailto:editors@socialistparty.org.uk)



**Nationalise the drug companies**  
photo e-magineArt.com /Creative Commons

**Michael Wrack**  
NHS healthcare assistant

Ordinary people were shocked and disgusted by a gouging capitalist's sudden 5,000% increase in the price of a life-saving drug last month.

'Daraprim' is used to treat the parasitic blood disease toxoplasmosis. Infection is life threatening for those with weakened immune systems.

### Newborns

This includes Aids patients, newborns and unborn children whose mothers are infected. Also cancer patients who have undergone chemotherapy, and people recovering from organ transplant.

Most of us would have nothing but empathy for people in such situations. But Martin Shkreli, chief executive of Turing Pharmaceuticals, seems only to care how he can profit from their misery.

**Have you got news for us?** DEADLINE: Friday before publication date - urgent news: Monday

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# BMA strike ballot JUNIOR DOCTORS FIGHT GOVERNMENT ATTACKS

Zoe Brunswick  
Medical student

In another scandalous attack on the NHS, the government is pushing through a brutal new contract for junior doctors. The new contract, which would take effect from August 2016, threatens to extend 'social working hours', remove the 'banding' pay system and associated safeguards and scrap automatic annual pay progression. These new terms will affect all doctors below consultant level; not only juniors in their mid-twenties but doctors who could have been working for ten or more years.

## Pay cuts

The extension of standard time from 7am-7pm Monday to Friday to 7am-10pm Monday to Saturday could mean a pay cut of around 30% for many junior doctors. GP trainees are hit especially hard as their pay supplement (currently in place to

ensure they are paid the same as their peers) is scrapped.

The end of automatic pay progression will prevent doctors from being able to take time out of training and discourage them from retraining, as their pay could freeze or even fall. This will especially affect women doctors who wish to start families and those who must take time out for ill health.

## Doctors departing

The change in contracts is not only a danger for junior doctors, but also for the patients and NHS as a whole. Doctors who are forced to work long and unsociable hours for low pay are much more likely to make mistakes, putting patient lives at risk.

Many will also choose to leave the country, taking their transferable skills to a place where they are valued. Last week, 1,644 requests for the certificate required to work abroad were filled out in just three days, up from the usual 25 a day.

With record numbers of doctors



Junior doctors protest in London

threatening to leave the country, Cameron's promise of a '7 day NHS' with 'thousands more doctors' is even further from the truth now than it was when first announced.

This dismantling of junior doctor contracts is just another step taken by the Tory government in their quest to destroy the publicly funded NHS and leave it open for privatisation.

## Anger

As raised by a doctor on BBC Question Time (24 September), during the financial crisis bankers were allowed to keep their bonuses as they were deemed too much of an asset to the country to let them leave.

In comparison, this awful new contract being imposed on doctors shows how little the government cares for the wellbeing of doctors and patients alike.



**Record numbers of doctors are threatening to leave the country but bankers are allowed to keep their bonuses to make sure they stay**

However, despite this terrible onslaught from the government, the British Medical Association (BMA), junior doctors and medical students across the country are fighting back.

Thousands of angry doctors marched through central London

on Monday 28 September after a meeting with NHS employers was cancelled.

## Protest

Moreover, thousands of doctors are attending meetings to lobby employers, letting them know that their attack of the NHS is completely unacceptable. Most importantly, the BMA confirmed on 26 September that they will ballot their junior doctors for strike action, a decision supported by a 50,000 strong petition of doctors and members of the public.

The Socialist Party demands an end to privatisation of the NHS and a fair, living wage for all employees. We welcome the BMA's decision to ballot their members and we call for all healthcare unions to organise coordinated industrial action to end the attacks on the NHS.



NHS butchers Jeremy Hunt and David Cameron

## Anger and protest against fire service cuts in Leicestershire

Heather Rawling  
Leicester NUT (personal capacity)

A protest was organised by Leicestershire FBU at the county fire authority HQ in opposition to devastating cuts announced.

Unbelievably they propose closing Leicester Central Fire Station, responsible for around 1,300 to 1,600 call-outs in the city every year and Kibworth Fire Station, covering a wide rural location.

## Jobs threat

The money for frontline jobs and services could be found if there was a political will. Yet these cuts have been described as 'tweaking' by those proposing them!

A meeting of the Combined Fire Authority (CFA) was held in a spanking new office which cost around £8 million to build. There is

Leicestershire firefighters protest outside the swanky £8m building photo Steve Score



also another building at Castle Donington which cost £13 million to build which isn't being used.

It is costing the taxpayer £5,000 a

day to leave it empty. It was meant to be the new fire control centre for the East Midlands - part of a government plan to replace 46 local fire and rescue

control rooms across the country with nine new regional centres.

The CFA includes seven Labour councillors but only two voted

against the cuts. If the Labour councillors responded to Jeremy Corbyn's call to resist cuts, they could use reserves in the CFA of over £370 million to buy time and build a massive campaign to demand more money from the government.

## Campaign

A massive campaign involving the FBU and the general public is needed to fight these cuts.

Gav Lynch, brigade chair FBU Leicestershire, reflected the shock felt at the proposals: "To put them into context, these cuts, in addition to the cuts already agreed earlier this year, amount to 188 operational posts being removed. That's one third of all firefighters in Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service. Clearly this will have huge implications on public safety and firefighter safety."

## Nominate Roger Bannister for Unison general secretary A programme for local government

Roger Bannister  
Knowsley local government branch secretary

Our union is facing huge challenges posed by a government hell-bent on imposing austerity. This affects all sectors of our union, with local government having been particularly singled out for attacks and cuts by central government.

For this reason a strategy to defend local government is urgently needed. Sadly this has been lacking under the current leadership. I intend to use the general secretary election as a platform to ignite a debate about the direction of this union in fighting to defend services and improve pay and conditions.

Our union can no longer continue to simply accept cuts to funding as a done deal and hope it will be restored at some indeterminate point in the future. It must launch a credible industrial and political strategy that demands a grant that funds services necessary to meet the needs of the boroughs.

## Strike action

On the industrial side the union must recognise local government is under attack nationally from central government. Only a national response by the union can hope to turn the tide.

These cuts cannot be fought branch by branch, workplace by workplace. We are a national union and it is time we started acting like it!

If elected general secretary I would begin consultation with branches and local government leadership to urgently draw up a strategy for national industrial action in response to further cuts to

local government funding.

The cuts are deeply political in nature. They require a political response.

Jeremy Corbyn was elected on an anti-austerity platform. The huge response to his campaign shows there is a desire for a different kind of politics.

## Council cuts

As a Nalgo (local government union, now part of Unison) branch secretary in Liverpool in the 1980s I was involved in the struggle of the city council to win back the millions stolen from the city by Margaret Thatcher. (See page 11) As general secretary I would demand a similar approach be taken by Labour controlled councils.

Where Labour councils implement cuts I would call on Jeremy Corbyn to intervene and put pressure on them to oppose austerity. Any Labour councillors that rebel against voting for cuts such as Kevin Bennett (now a TUSC councillor) did in Warrington should be given the full support of the union.

For a number of years our union has held one-day strikes in pursuit of a better pay claim. During the balloting process the leadership has made it clear it would take more than one day of strike action to shift the employers. However, when the time comes this is never backed up with sustained industrial action.

## Pay

Instead our members have been subjected to a morale sapping cycle of one-day actions followed by a settlement when the government offers a few crumbs. We must break with this cycle.

As well as action to fight for better pay we must also take action to



Roger Bannister marching against austerity with Unison photo Paul Mattsson

defeat the new anti-trade union bill which will limit our ability to fight if passed.

Unison is one of the largest unions in the country. It should be

playing the lead role in bringing other unions together with a strategy of industrial action for the widest possible resistance to this attack on our trade union freedom.

## Review: Kill the Bill

Derek McMillan

Do not be misled by the title, it is not advocating extreme measures against the police, nor is it about a Quentin Tarantino film. This pamphlet provides a context for the struggle for workers' rights against the attempts of the rich to curtail them.

## Illegal action

In my lifetime, the two most important struggles which I remember were not strictly within the law. When the government imprisoned five dockers for taking industrial action in 1972, it triggered a wave of wildcat strikes which forced the government into a humiliating climb down.

And who can forget the battle against the Poll Tax which not only



**The most important struggles in my lifetime were not strictly within the law**

defeated the tax but precipitated the political demise of Margaret Thatcher.

Jim Horton provides the historical background to the way in which the state has been used by the rich to criminalise working class struggle.

John McNally, PCS (civil servants union) vice-president, writes about Thatcher's war against the miners and the examples of working class

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solidarity from the past which must inform our actions in the future.

Bill Mullins provides an excellent vivid account of the struggles of the 1960s and 1970s.

## Workers can win

Rob Williams, chair of the National Shop Stewards Network (NSSN), talks about the way ahead and the prospects for working class struggle. It is a mistake to think that the working class will roll over and play dead if the Tories get their way and impose this draconian legislation.

"We don't share the fatalistic attitude to these threatened laws of some of cynics and pessimists in the trade union movement, especially at the top. If they were to get onto the statute book, it wouldn't mean the end of workers' struggle. In fact it could open the door to far more militant action if workers ignore the laws. Actually this is the reason why some Tories and establishment figures are uneasy about Cameron's proposals."

And who better than the NSSN to prod the TUC into action?

## Save our steel

One of the UK's biggest steel-making plants, at Redcar on Teesside, is to stop production after nearly 100 years, with the loss of 1,700 jobs. Steelworkers union Community are in talks with executives of SSI's Redcar plant after the company announced its 'mothballing'. Protests have taken place on 24 September and at the home game of Middlesbrough football club on 27 September. The Socialist Party calls on the government to nationalise the plant, safeguarding the up to 9,000 jobs that rely on the production of steel in the area. The government should be playing a proper role, not just picking up the pieces.

## Pay freeze binned

The threat of strike action by Bromley refuse workers in Unite has 'doubled their money' with an increased pay offer, which sets an example for other firms that provide outsourced local government services. About 100 workers, employed by waste disposal giant Veolia, had threatened three days of strikes after overwhelmingly rejecting a one per cent pay offer - but now after talks the company's improved offer of 2% has been accepted. The stance of the refuse collectors has been described as a wake-up call for other companies used by local authorities in England that they don't have to slavishly adhere to chancellor George Osborne's notional 1% annual pay cap for public sector workers.

## Reinstate John

A recent workplace meeting voted about 80% in favour of calling the CWU Leeds No.1 branch to convene a meeting to organise industrial action if Royal Mail do not reinstate John Vasey and reverse job cuts. There were no votes against. John, a CWU postal rep in Wakefield, West Yorkshire has been sacked on what his work colleagues recognise as stitched-up charges.

## Printing strike

Workers at a Leeds printing plate took part in a 48-hour strike over a below inflation pay offer. About 50 employees, members of Unite at Agfa Graphics, Coal Road, Seacroft walked out between 20-22 September. Unite regional officer Chris Daly said: "Our members don't feel that the management has made any meaningful effort to engage in realistic pay talks, especially as the company is profitable. The current pay offer is paltry."



[News in brief]



photo Paul Mattsson

# We can end cuts, crisis and capitalism



Jeremy Corbyn at the Durham Miners' Gala photo Paul Mattsson

**Hannah Sell**  
Socialist Party deputy general secretary

**S**ocialism is back. For decades the pro-capitalist establishment politicians that dominate parliament have told us that socialism is irrelevant and outmoded.

Now the official leader of the opposition has been elected by a landslide saying he is fighting for a society where: "We each care for all, everyone caring for everybody else - I think it's called socialism."

The Blairite politicians that still dominate Labour's machine, backed by all the forces of the capitalist establishment, are doing their best to extinguish the spark of socialist ideas that has been lit but, whatever happens in the Labour Party, they will fail.

Many of the young people who have been enthused by Jeremy Corbyn's election are anti-austerity, and perhaps anti-capitalist but not yet socialist. But their first taste of socialist ideas are - far from being irrelevant and outmoded - new and exciting to them.

### Jeremy Corbyn

As one young attendee at a Corbyn election rally put it in the Guardian: "People say he is an old left winger or an old Marxist but to my generation his ideas seem quite new."

Her generation has been failed by capitalism. Britain today is a country where a baby is allowed to die living homeless with his parents in a car because they had been evicted from one property and could not afford the extortionate deposit for another. It is a country where more than a million people are forced to use food banks to feed themselves and their families.

It is a country where young people are saddled with a life time of debt if they go to university, have no prospect of secure or affordable housing, and are largely consigned to low paid, insecure work.

### Anti-austerity

It is the growing rebellion at this endless austerity which has led to both Jeremy Corbyn's election and the search for an alternative to capitalism. If you look up 'capitalism' in the Collins English Dictionary it suggests you compare it with the alternative - 'socialism'.

Socialist ideas have been developed over centuries in the course of humanity's fight for a better life. Today they remain the only viable alternative in an increasingly unstable and brutal, capitalist world. It is this reality that ensures that socialism is not a spent force but the wave of the future.

Britain is a rich country. During four weeks of Jeremy Corbyn's election campaign alone the richest 1,000 people in Britain - with a combined

wealth of £547 billion - became £2.3 billion richer.

That £2.3 billion is enough to pay the grocery bills of all users of food-banks for at least two years. The problem in Britain is not a lack of wealth, but the concentration of that wealth in a tiny number of hands.

This is also true globally; according to Oxfam the richest 85 people on the planet - a double decker bus full - have the same amount of wealth as the poorest half of the world's population.

### Super-rich

It is not much to expect a job with a living wage, a secure and high-quality home, and a dignified retirement with a living income. Yet in 21st century Britain these are becoming unobtainable luxuries for millions.

The obstacle to achieving these modest aspirations is capitalism: a system that puts the production of profit for the few - the millionaire and billionaire capitalist owners of industry and the resources of society - before the social needs of the majority

- the multi-billion poor and working class throughout the world.

Capitalism is an economic system which has the exploitation of the working class at its heart. Profit, which provides its driving force is, as Karl Marx - the founder of scientific socialism - explained over 150 years ago, "the unpaid labour of the working class". From this flows all the inequalities of capitalism.

In 2008 capitalism plunged into its worst crisis since the 1930s, which is still ongoing. The crisis began in the finance and banking sector. Yet the bankers in Britain have received £80 billion in bonuses since 2008.

Meanwhile, in one of the biggest con-tricks in history the lie was systematically spread that the crisis was caused by the public sector and that the only solution was privatisation, cuts and austerity. By coincidence the cuts in public spending so far implemented are around £80 billion.

### Tories

The economic crisis is being used by the Tories, on behalf of the capitalist class, to pursue a scorched earth policy against all of the historical gains of working class people - the elements of socialism if you like - that remain; the NHS, the right to claim benefits if you are in need, pensions, the existence of council and social housing and so on. This is an attempt to turn back the wheel of history to the 1930s, or even to the Victorian era.

Despite mass opposition - including a public sector general strike in 2011 - they have so far gotten away with the misery of endless austerity. As the Socialist Party has pointed out, however, in doing so they have stored up enormous anger which would, when it found an outlet, become a powerful movement against austerity. In Scotland this was demonstrated



**In just four weeks of 2015 Britain's 1,000 richest individuals became £2.3 billion richer**



Hundreds of thousands march against austerity June 2015 photo Paul Mattsson



**As one young Jeremy Corbyn supporter put it - 'people say he's an old left-winger, but to my generation his socialist ideas seem quite new'**



**the railways should be nationalised immediately not a penny should go to the fat cats who have made a fortune**



**£80 billion has been cut from public spending, the same amount bankers got in bonuses since 2008**

in the independence referendum, in England it has begun to find a voice in Jeremy Corbyn's election.

The capitalist class, however, are desperate to crush, or if that isn't possible in the short term, to imprison and cow the anti-austerity movement that has begun. To avoid this requires mobilising a movement which stands firmly for the anti-austerity policies on which Corbyn was elected such as nationalisation of rail and the energy companies, a £10 an hour minimum wage, free education, council house building, and repeal of the anti-union laws.

### Wealth

It is clear that even these very modest and limited demands are an outrage to the capitalist class, who will fight tooth and nail against any policy which transfers even a small amount of wealth from their pockets into the pockets of the working and middle classes.

Hence the hysterical indignation at the supposedly 'inflation causing' proposal for 'Peoples Quantitative Easing' (QE); whereas QE for the banks was considered a 'sensible' and 'rational' policy. If the QE carried out so far had been for the people rather than the banks every family in Britain would have had an extra £24,000; this is what is outrageous to big business!

The opposition of the capitalist class to reforms which are in the interests of the majority is not new; it has been the case with every gain our forebears made, from the right to strike to the NHS. History has repeatedly shown that we will never push society forward by attempting to reach a 'reasonable compromise' with the 1%, but only by standing firm and mobilising a mass movement in support of our just and reasonable demands.

It is a mistake, for example, for Jeremy Corbyn to have limited his proposal for renationalisation of the railways - supported by 72% of the population - to a very gradual nationalisation which would mean only a third of railway lines were in public hands by 2025.

Instead of waiting for the current franchises to expire we call for immediate renationalisation of the railways, under democratic working-class control. Compensation should be paid to small shareholders but not a penny should go to the fat cats who have already made a fortune from our railway system.

If a Corbyn-led government was to implement this and other socialist policies it would be enormously popular with the majority, but would face determined opposition from big business and the financial markets. The new shadow chancellor John McDonnell has rightly said he stands for the overthrow of capitalism.

### Media

When asked by BBC journalist Laura Kuenssberg if that is what he wanted he said "it's already happening, bit by bit". But it is not possible to gradually reform capitalism out of existence.

As long as they have power, the capitalist class will always be relentless in taking back any gains won by the working and middle class as soon as they get the opportunity - just as they have spent the last decades trying to snatch back everything gained by previous generations.

Only by carrying through the process of taking control out of the hands of the capitalists through to its conclusion would it be possible to avoid this. This would mean nationalisation not just a handful of industries but the commanding heights of the economy, in order to create the basis

for a socialist planned economy, under democratic workers' control and management.

The capitalist media will shriek that this could never work, pointing to what happened in Russia. But this supposed 'failure of socialism' was nothing of the kind.

### Democracy

For the first time, in an extremely poor country, in 1917 the working class took power and initially began to establish a planned economy under democratic control. They understood, however, that it would not be possible to build a democratic socialist society in one country, particularly not one as poor and economically backward as Russia.

Workers in other countries did attempt to follow 'the Russian road' but tragically did not succeed, leaving Russia isolated and allowing its degeneration into a brutal bureaucratic dictatorship.

The coming to power of a socialist government in Britain or any other economically advanced country in the future would be completely different. Workers and the population are more educated, and have access to modern technology.

### Today

They would not allow a greedy, bureaucratic elite to usurp power. Real workers' democracy would mean the election of all officials, the right of recall and for no official to receive more than the average wage of a skilled worker.

At the same time, if workers in one country were to break with capitalism it would not remain isolated, socialism would spread like wildfire around the globe.

The creation of a society which was able to provide decent housing, free education and well-paid work for all, and also began to harness all the talent and human potential that is wasted under capitalism, would become unstoppable.

## Socialism Today

The Socialist Party's magazine

The October issue includes:

- **Jeremy Corbyn - Facing a right-wing backlash** by Peter Taaffe
- **Women in struggle** - Kshama Sawant answers questions on Jeremy Corbyn
- **Identity politics** - Fighting discrimination and oppression by Hannah Sell



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## The Socialist Inbox

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### The real benefits crisis

A local community worker told me she was knocking on doors asking people what were the most important local issues. "Dogs messing on the pavement," said one young mother. "My children keep getting it on their feet if they play out." She had three children under five – and only one pair of shoes between them. The community worker found she wasn't claiming benefits she was entitled to. All three children now have a pair of shoes. Newspapers have big articles when someone is prosecuted for claiming benefits they aren't entitled to, but are silent on the many more who don't claim what they should. This case had a happy ending – except that the community worker is on a short-term contract so she wouldn't be able to continue her work if grants run out.

**Jon Dale Bolsover**



### Children's art sold

My neighbour's little girl is nine and goes to a junior school academy. I was admiring some wrapping paper that had obviously been made in art at school. "But it's not hers," said her mother. "How come", I asked? "The school was selling the wrapping paper and hers had already been bought by another family." What happened to the money? "The school has it."

what of those children whose artwork didn't sell? But it is the logic of bringing the market place into education and teaching the next generation the harsh realities of capitalism. Education should be free and part of the local authority with democratic control involving pupils, parents and staff.

**Heather Rawling Leicester**

### Bring back closed shop

As a trade unionist and socialist I believe in democracy, the will of the majority. The highest form of trade union organisation was the closed shop. If a union has recognition in the workplace, and those trade unionists democratically agree it should be so, then I believe a condition of employment in that workplace should include membership of the appropriate trade union. Why should any employee benefit from the union's negotiations and not be a member? If an employee is opposed to trade unions they can easily find employment in an unrecognised workplace, although they're likely to be less well paid with inferior conditions and poorer health and safety standards.

**Mark Robertson Unite rep**



### Internet voting

After listening to "Today in Parliament" about the closure of courts around the country and the Tories' reasoning behind it, I have a question. If we are permitted to plead guilty and pay our fines by internet "in the comfort of our own homes on a Saturday evening" - why are we not permitted to vote on a union ballot through the internet?

**Sally Griffiths Eccles**

### Corbyn win's Spanish echoes

I live in Spain. My son, who always said he'd never vote for a politician, came into the room shouting, Corbyn's in! Many Spanish people came up to me that day and said - tell us what has hap-



photo Paul Mattsson

pened, it is all over the papers and social media.

A friend who grew up in Northern Ireland and married a Chilean refugee said: "For the first time in years Jeremy Corbyn has given me something to believe in". Then my sister texted from Manchester, saying we have all got personal emails from Jeremy Corbyn himself thanking us for our support.

He has got people talking, he is seen as dangerous within the Labour Party and the conservative establishment, for all the fun they make of him. And that has to be a good thing!

**Cathy Spain**



### Oppose wars for profit

Unlike most elected Labour councillors and MPs, the first thing Corbyn did after being named Labour's new leader was to support his class. He addressed a huge crowd in London to demonstrate against the racist lies about the refugee crisis by the government and the media. Corbyn spelt out the direct connections between needless wars and the refugee crisis. If we're ever to get to the root



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

cause of the immiseration of the global working class then capitalist wars for profit must be opposed by all means possible.

**Michael Barker Leicester**

### No reply as yet

I received an email appearing as if from Jeremy himself, inviting me to join the Labour Party. I replied congratulating him on his victory and telling him I was now full of hope and inspiration. But, I wrote, I would first need to see that all Labour-led councils refuse to implement any further cuts. I also want to see Labour become once again a true party of the working people, fighting to bring down Cameron and to introduce socialism into the country, before I would consider joining.

No reply as yet.

**Cathy Taylor**



photo Paul Mattsson

### Exciting times

I was absolutely delighted to hear of Corbyn's Labour leadership victory which shows the public appetite for a move away from mean-spirited politics. It is astounding to now hear and read discussions and debates around socialist ideas in the mainstream media following his triumph.

These may be presented with much scorn in some rags, but still, lights may continue to switch on in the public's minds in the months to come. Exciting times for socialism.

**Marie O'Connor Birmingham**

“” Lights may continue to switch on in the public's minds in the months to come. Exciting times for socialism

## Lessons from the past: Liverpool City Council 1983-87



Tony and the other councillors leading one of the demonstrations supporting the council photo Militant

# WHEN A LABOUR COUNCIL FOUGHT THE TORIES

From 1983 to 1987 Liverpool City Council was led by supporters of Militant (predecessor of the Socialist), who at the time were members of the Labour Party. When faced with cuts from central government, they refused to pass them on. Instead, with the slogan "better to break the law than break the poor" they made huge advances for working class people in Liverpool. At the same time they led a mass campaign which successfully demanded funding back from Thatcher's government. Here we reprint an edited version of an interview

carried out last year with **Tony Mulhearn**, one of the councillors and leaders of the movement. Now, no Labour council has acted in such a way. The Labour Party structures that Tony describes as vital in holding the councillors to account have been destroyed. The interview gives an idea of what is possible when socialists are elected and also of the need for Jeremy Corbyn to re-democratise the Labour Party to give those who support his anti-cuts stand a say in the politics of the party's elected representatives.

### ■ When the council was elected big cuts were being made to council budgets by the Tory government. How did you avoid making them?

Between 1979 and 1983 the Tories had slashed £120 million from Liverpool City Council's budget. In addition to that the outgoing local Tory-Liberal administration had left unallocated cuts of £10 million and was making 2,000 redundancies.

We had the choice of either saying there's nothing we can do and implementing the cuts or to fight back. We chose not to implement the cuts and instead to set a 'needs budget', and we launched a fighting campaign.

So, we were in the position that councillors are in today, but we took an entirely different stance.

### ■ Militant supporters were not actually a majority on the council - how did your ideas get carried through?

In those days the local party determined policy. Militant and

its predecessors had conducted a campaign over decades inside Liverpool Labour Party for the adoption of socialist policies. And that's what the District Labour Party (DLP) did, it adopted socialist policies.

And in those days when the party had determined the policy, the councillors had to carry it out. So the DLP concretised what was contained in Clause IV of the Labour Party constitution (its socialist commitment) in relation to housing, jobs and services - all of which the council then implemented.

### ■ What were the biggest achievements of the council?

We built 5,000 houses and flats - gardens back and front in many cases. We demolished some of the worst housing in Western Europe. We then cancelled all monetary cuts and redundancies planned by the outgoing council. We built six new nursery schools. We expanded council services.

We had apprenticeships for council jobs. At one stage we had something

“” We had the choice of either saying there's nothing we can do or to fight back



Some of the houses built by the council under construction photo D Sinclair Inset: Tony Mulhearn with one of the houses, still standing today photo Harry Smith

like 16,000 workers engaged in council projects. So in effect we translated socialism into the language of jobs, the language of houses, the language of nursery schools.

### ■ How did the councillors link up with trade unions and working class people in the city?

The DLP was a fine, democratic organisation. It was made up of trade unions, women's committees, the Young Socialists, party branches and constituency parties, the Co-ops - all had delegates to the DLP. And that was the spring board we used to reach out to wider sections of the working class.

On that basis we were able to mobilise tens of thousands at the demonstrations. And on three occasions 30,000 council workers took strike action to defend the policies of the council.

So this notion peddled by the right wing in the Labour Party, like former Labour leader Neil Kinnock and supported by the capitalist press, that it was some kind of tiny group which had captured control of the council, was nonsense. We

couldn't have achieved what we did without mass support from the labour movement and wider working class communities.

### ■ How did the right wing respond to your success?

They generated a campaign of hysteria in the capitalist press.

Thatcher's minister Norman Tebbit used his position in Parliament to demand of Kinnock - 'what was Labour going to do about the Liverpool extremists?' Bowing to this pressure Kinnock launched a savage attack on Liverpool at the 1985 Labour Party conference.

Shortly after, Labour's right wing suspended the DLP, this was preceded by the unelected District Auditor's decision to fine and remove the 47 fighting Labour councillors from office.

Kinnock then proceeded to conduct the most horrendous witch-hunt against not only Militant supporters but also any lefts who supported building houses and creating jobs.

Nonetheless the socialist legacy of that movement continues in Liverpool to this day.

“” In those days when the party had determined the policy, the councillors had to carry it out

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# Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC) Central in the battle for a working class anti-austerity voice

Sarah Wrack  
Editor of the Socialist

“May you live in interesting times” said Dave Nellist, chair of the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC), in opening its 2015 conference. This old Chinese curse is fitting for the Labour Party right wingers who thought the continuation of ‘politics as usual’ was guaranteed. They have had this view shattered by the surprise landslide victory of Jeremy Corbyn for the Labour leadership - which formed the background to the conference. Over 200 people attended the event in central London, representing dozens of TUSC groups and all of the constituent parts of the anti-cuts electoral alliance. With serious and fraternal debate, the conference firmly asserted that TUSC has a vital role to play in the new political situation opened up by Corbyn’s win - which formed the basis for the main session.

## Labour affiliation

The first platform speaker - president of the transport union RMT, Peter Pinkney - attempted to put to bed any doubt over the RMT’s continued official support for TUSC. He said “it’s wonderful that Corbyn and McDonnell are in” but pointed to the fact that they are still surrounded by many right wingers, including some in the shadow cabinet. “What if the RMT re-affiliated to Labour and then in 12 months Corbyn is ousted and replaced by a rightwinger?” Peter also raised some concerns about Corbyn’s plans. The RMT has consistently argued for the immediate renationalisation of the railways. Corbyn has stepped back from his previous support for this

and suggests renationalising them only as the franchises run out. To thunderous applause Peter responded: “Do what we did in 1945 - take them back, and take them back now!”

“There are now two parties contained within the Labour Party - and a split is likely at some stage.”

Peter Taaffe, general secretary of the Socialist Party, said that there are now two parties contained within the Labour Party - and that a split is likely at some stage. “It’s not a matter of if the right wing will strike, but when,” he pointed out, saying that they hope to first discredit Corbyn. So it is essential that the forces that support Corbyn are strengthened at every level of the movement.

In this sense, the national anti-cuts force that has been established by TUSC is more essential than ever. Peter showed that this

is particularly the case given the obstacles that Corbyn supporters are facing. “The Corbyn surge is looking for a way forward and they won’t find it in the current Labour Party structures.” There is a lack of local meetings where debates can take place, new members don’t have a vote for their first six months, and fundamentally “the machine is still in the hands of the right.”

Given this, Corbyn has to be supported from outside the Labour Party as well - including by TUSC standing in elections against cuts-making Labour candidates. Peter said “if we don’t stand, we are allowing them to cut unchallenged. We have no right to allow workers to lose their jobs.”

## Anti-austerity

Peter was followed by Charlie Kimber, national secretary of the Socialist Workers’ Party. Corbyn’s victory confirms, he said, what TUSC has argued - that the mood against austerity is as strong here as it is in Greece or Spain. “We should be with Jeremy Corbyn against the right. But that doesn’t mean joining the Labour Party, it means continuing to develop a socialist alternative.”

The final platform speaker was Will McMahon of the Independent

Socialist Network (ISN). Will emphasised again the importance of Corbyn’s victory: “A battle is about to commence. On the one side is Jeremy Corbyn and his supporters and on the other is the class enemy.”

Dave Nellist, who was a Labour Party MP in Coventry from 1983-92, commented that he has been asked by many people since the leadership election if he will be re-joining Labour: “And I tell them, it’s great that there’s a Corbyn-led Labour Party. But Coventry doesn’t have a Corbyn-led Labour Party... the Labour council there are planning the next round of cuts... So there’s still a role for TUSC.”

“With serious and fraternal debate, the conference firmly asserted that TUSC has a vital role to play in the new political situation opened up by Corbyn’s win - which formed the basis for the main session”

This point was echoed throughout the rest of the day. RMT member Sean Hoyle pointed at the TUSC banner: “Look at that banner, ‘no to austerity’ - that’s what we think. And I still don’t think that’s what the Labour Party thinks.”

Warrington TUSC councillor Kevin Bennett laughed that, despite him resigning from the Labour Party in February, he was the only Warrington councillor who supported Corbyn in the leadership race. “If all Labour councils



TUSC during the 2015 general election campaign photo Paul Mattsson



Standing room only at the conference photo Dave Nellist

stood against cuts, what a message that would send. It could bring the Tories to their knees.”

However, not all speakers were so unequivocal about needing to press for a principled opposition to all cuts. Jenny Sutton, a member of the Socialist Workers Party who has stood for TUSC a number of times in Tottenham, correctly argued in favour of a united front approach - TUSC supporters working together with those who have been enthused by Corbyn’s campaign and have joined Labour. But she also said that “there can’t be any hard and fast rules - that they have to be in the Labour Party or have to be out of the Labour Party or have to be opposed to all cuts.”

## Anti-cuts

The Socialist Party would argue that being openly 100% anti-cuts is an essential basis for a united front approach. Taking a firm no-cuts line is the best lever to pressure others in the movement to act.

Suzanne Muna, a Socialist Party member who sits on the executive of Unite the Union, explained (in a personal capacity) how Unite ended up supporting Corbyn (they were initially expected to back Andy Burnham). “The Labour Link was under big threat at Unite rules conference - my branch was one of

those that submitted a resolution calling for disaffiliation.”

Suzanne explained that it was this threat that made the executive vote to back Corbyn - that if they didn’t, people like her would “get their way”.

The second session concentrated on the 2016 council elections. Clive Heemskerck from the TUSC steering committee set out that these elections would have been important because of the huge cuts facing local government, and the powers councils have to resist them. But

following Corbyn’s victory they are even more so - there is now no excuse for Labour councillors to be voting for cuts against their leader’s anti-cuts mandate.

## Councillors

The handful of TUSC councillors who have presented alternative needs-based budgets to councils have carried out pioneering work - of which TUSC should be proud, Clive said. He listed the

ways in which councils refusing to implement the cuts has been made easier since the heroic stand of the Liverpool City Council in the 1980s (see page 11).

Clive encouraged all local TUSC groups to make full use of the TUSC model letter to councillors (asking to meet with them to discuss joint campaigning against cuts and for no-cuts budgets) as a real campaign tool. “National events will be clarifying the dividing lines in the Labour Party. But we need to work out on the ground who is prepared to fight.”

This approach was widely supported from the floor. Wayne Naylor, a former councillor in Leicester who left the Labour Party to make a stand against cuts, talked about putting forward an alternative budget there. “We put it forward with a lot of pride. No one supported us in the council so we took the message out to the streets in the TUSC election campaign.”

Socialist Party member Nancy Taaffe recounted the battle of the residents of Fred Wigg and John Walsh towers in Waltham Forest,



Unite executive member Suzanne Muna photo Paula Mitchell

“The Socialist Party would argue that being openly 100% anti-cuts is an essential basis for a united front approach. Taking a firm no-cuts line is the best lever to pressure others in the movement to act”



Warrington TUSC councillor Kevin Bennett

who are resisting ‘regeneration’ of their estate (see page 3).

Sonia, the leader of the campaign, has written to Jeremy Corbyn asking for him to intervene to stop the Labour council’s plans. Nancy argued that, if Corbyn adopts an approach of putting unity inside the Labour Party over all else, he will be unlikely to do this. “We have to stand with the working class every time. We’re with Corbyn, but we’re with Sonia first.”

The final session of the day discussed what position TUSC should take to the referendum on European Union (EU) membership. John Reid from the RMT council of executives stated clearly the RMT’s position, which is that the EU is an anti-working class capitalist club. The RMT AGM this year agreed to campaign for a progressive ‘No’ coalition.

## European Union

Socialist Party deputy general secretary Hannah Sell agreed, calling for a “socialist, internationalist, anti-racist campaign that highlights the international interests of the working class.”

She demonstrated the various ways that the EU damages the interests of workers - enabling the bosses to pay lower wages to workers from other countries, demanding further privatisation of public services, etc.

We cannot, Hannah argued, leave the ground open to reactionary right-wing forces such as Ukip to be the sole voice of the ‘No’ campaign.

Mark Thomas, speaking for the Socialist Workers Party, agreed with the first two speakers. The EU was central, he said, in forcing austerity on Greece “taking up the mantle of what the IMF have done for decades to neo-colonial countries.” Referencing the Syrian toddler who was pictured drowned in the Mediterranean, Mark put paid to the lie that the EU ensures freedom of movement - “look at Aylan Kurdi.”

The ISN has a different position to the rest of the constituent parts of TUSC. Ed Potts argued that a position of ‘exit with socialist policies’ is inadequate because it will not

be an option on the ballot paper. A withdrawal from the EU would be a victory for reactionary forces, he said. In response to points on the role of the EU in imposing austerity in Greece and elsewhere, Ed argued that campaigning for Britain to unilaterally exit from the EU would be ‘deserting our European brothers and sisters’.

In the vote that followed the discussion only nine of those present voted against the motion from the TUSC steering committee. The motion agreed to register as a ‘permitted participant’ in the referendum to conduct an independent campaign against EU membership (while guaranteeing the right of TUSC supporters who wish to do so to campaign in a different way and produce their own material).

## Free movement

Those who spoke from the floor generally agreed. For example, Vladimir Bortun, a Romanian living and working in Britain, commented that although it could be said that he had personally benefited from Britain’s membership of the EU, he was still in favour of campaigning to exit. “We can support free movement without supporting the EU.”

Judy Beishon of the Socialist Party’s executive committee disagreed with the ISN and said that it is not automatic whose victory a ‘No’ vote would be. She said that we need to differentiate between the motivations of the working class who will vote against EU membership and the motivations of the ‘No’-campaigning right-wing and Ukip. The EU is seen as “remote, undemocratic and a gravy train.” A vote against the EU could well be seen as a vote against the establishment and against the government.

The motions passed at the conference will now be referred to the national steering committee of TUSC. The event set a firm basis to move forward towards May and beyond, ensuring that TUSC continues to place itself central in the struggles of workers and young people and the battle for a mass working class, anti-austerity political voice.

“The final session of the day discussed what position TUSC should take to the referendum on the European Union”

Visit the TUSC website  
www.tusc.org.uk



The Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC) is an electoral alliance involving the RMT transport union, the Socialist Party, other socialist groups and leading members of other trade unions. In May TUSC stood over 130 candidates in the general election and over 600 in the local elections.

TUSC groups are active all over the country - visit the website and get in touch to get involved, including by thinking about standing as a candidate yourself



The opening sessions, from l-r Will McMahon, Peter Pinkney, Peter Taaffe, Charlie Kimber and Dave Nellist photo Paula Mitchell



photo Senan

**USA: Socialists breaking 'political stagnation'**

Socialist Alternative Seattle city councillor, Kshama Sawant (above), is seeking re-election on 3 November. Socialist Alternative (co-thinkers of the Socialist Party) and Kshama have been to the fore in successfully championing a \$15 an hour minimum wage, and campaigning for rent controls against the vested interests of big business and its Democratic Party allies in the city.

A recent New York Times article discussing 'third parties' said: "It's no coincidence that the newest third-party politician elected to office, the Seattle city councillor Kshama Sawant of the Socialist Alternative party, rode to victory in 2013 in part by calling for a \$15 minimum wage. Now that movement is going mainstream, with a number of cities following suit. Third-party movements in America have helped break political stagnation and enable the country to shift direction at critical times." Socialist Alternative added: "What's causing 'political stagnation' is an establishment that puts corporate profits over our communities. We can see this on full display in education.

"The Washington State Legislature has handed over billions to Boeing in tax handouts and created 600 corporate tax loopholes, all while short changing our children and educators by billions, forcing Seattle teachers to go on strike.

"Seattle's richest 1%... is absolutely dedicated to defeating Kshama and any movements of the 99%. They see unseating Kshama as instrumental in solidifying the Democrat-run City Council as a compliant body to advance corporate interests."

The campaign for rent controls to make housing affordable is also gaining ground in the election. Kshama commented: "Nothing would upset the real estate industry more than to see the only city council member who can't be bought re-elected and ready to continue the fight for affordable housing".

■ Kshama condemned the Obama sanctioned recent visit of China's dictatorial president Xi Jinping to the USA, starting in Seattle. She denounced the systematic violation of human rights, democratic rights in general, and workers' rights in particular by the Chinese government and US corporations operating in China.



photo Senan

**Kazakhstan: workers solidarity action**

On 28 September a protest took place outside the London office of Kaz Minerals plc, demanding action to alleviate the suffering of that company's workers and its victimisation of activists. A representative of the workers, Berik Zhagiparov is in London as a guest of the National Shop Stewards Network (NSSN - www.shopstewards.net) and individual unions. Berik is drawing attention to the fact that every month, on average, two workers are being killed working for Kaz Minerals in Zhezkazgan. Workers' wages have also been reduced, meaning they can't support their families. Workers who speak out about their wages and conditions have been illegally sacked. See also www.campaignkazakhstan.org

# EU MINISTERS SQUABBLE WHILE REFUGEES DROWN

Steve Score

As the horrors facing millions of refugees multiply, the splits between the leaders of the European Union (EU) demonstrate their inability to solve the crisis. People fleeing the devastation of war, repression and poverty, caused by political instability and capitalism, face nightmare journeys in an attempt to reach what they hope is safety.

On the way thousands have drowned in the Mediterranean and thousands more have come up against razor wire fences, tear gas and police violence as they are impeded on their route.

Pictures of the plight of these refugees have resulted in a wave of support from many people across Europe, but their governments have not shown the same sympathy.

On 22 September - after months of arguing between the different ministers inside the EU and against the opposition in particular of the eastern European governments - they decided on a new quota scheme to distribute 120,000 refugees across Europe. 66,000 are to be 'shared out' this year and the rest a year later. Even as this was passed senior EU diplomats were being quoted as saying it will never be implemented.

The British government stands aloof from this, with Prime Minister Cameron only pledging to take 20,000 from inside Syria over five years. But this compares to the 480,000 refugees that have made it to Europe so far this year. Millions more refugees remain outside Europe.



photo Paul Mattsson

An estimated two million are in Turkey for example.

The EU leaders all wish to maintain 'Fortress Europe', but are split on how many to allow in.

**'Hotspots'**

Their main plan, to date, is to spend more money (although still inadequate) on aid to refugees in camps outside Europe and to increase funding to transit countries in the hope they can prevent more refugees coming in.

EU ministers want to establish 'hotspots', ie detention centres, in Italy and Greece to process large numbers of asylum claims, while beefing out coastguard and border regimes (Frontex) on the southern edge of Europe.

At the same time they are fingerprinting refugees as they arrive in Italy and Greece in an attempt to contain them to their allocated

destinations and deport those they deem as 'economic migrants' rather than refugees.

This will not work. Whatever barriers are placed in their way, the desperation caused by the appalling situations in their home countries pushes people on.

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) pointed out that unless the war in Syria ends, there could be millions more on their way.

One of the central reasons for these mass movements of people is the military interventions of western governments in Iraq, Afghanistan and Libya for imperialist motives, notably 'regime change', but carried out under the pretext of 'stopping terrorism' and for 'democracy'.

These military campaigns have created further instability and even more repression, allowing reactionary sectarian movements such as Isis to grow.



Public sympathy with the plight of refugees has not been matched by EU leaders photo Paul Mattsson

Yet the refugee crisis is being used to argue for further military action by western governments. France has already started bombing missions inside Syria, and Cameron also wants to extend action from Iraq to Syria.

New fault lines are being opened up within the EU, already divided over the economic crisis.

On the one hand EU governments want to keep out as many refugees as they can, but on the other they want to maintain the 'free movement of labour' within the so-called 'Schengen zone' in order to allow the maximum exploitation of workers within Europe.

However, this huge movement of refugees is threatening the Schen-

gen agreement. Germany, which is short of labour, opened up one of its borders to the new wave of refugees but then closed it very quickly.

Ultimately, lasting solutions to wars, sectarian violence and poverty can only be achieved by ending imperialism and capitalism internationally.

**Revolutionary struggle**

To that end, united movements of the working class and poor need to be built - such as were glimpsed during the 'Arab spring' revolutionary movements of 2011.

These movements must be encouraged and embraced by the workers' movement in the advanced capitalist countries.

In the meantime, the right to asylum must be defended within Europe. Resources need to be directed to helping refugees.

But at the same time, resources - which could come from the currently untaxed profits and assets of the super-rich and giant corporations - need to be used to deal with the problems facing all working class people within Europe.

Deploying such resources would also cut across resentment being whipped up by right-wing politicians and organisations against new arrivals. This means action on housing, low pay, jobs and services. The big business governments of Europe will not be able to deliver on that - only a socialist movement can.

## Hungary's xenophobic right-wing government

The Hungarian government led by Viktor Orban has been the most vociferous of any EU state in blocking the northward flow of refugees. **Tilman M Ruster**, SLP (CWI, Austria), examines Orban's regime.



Viktor Orban

Since 15 September, Hungary has been in a state of emergency. The leader of the right-wing Fidesz party, Prime Minister Viktor Orban, announced it in order to "protect the borders". Along with building a razor wire fence along the border with Serbia, he announced harsh measures against refugees, including the setting up of "transit zones" which lay outside EU laws.

Under pressure from the neo-fascist Jobbik opposition, Orban has gone all-out to spread fear about refugees and the idea of Hungary being a "besieged fortress". He connects his agitation against immigrants with agitation against Roma people.

Orban's re-election in 2010 was based on racism and nationalist resistance to the EU and the Troika (European Union ministers, European Central Bank, International Monetary Fund).

In 2008 the former social-democratic government accepted the

first bailout/austerity package in the course of the international financial crisis. Hungary had been hit hard by the crisis. Orban got elected using strong rhetoric against the Troika and the widely hated social democrats.

Although his ultimate goal is to save capitalism, Orban likes to portray himself as a fighter against banks and big business.

Most crucially, however, is the struggle of the government against the trade unions and the rights of the workers' movement. Every strike must first be approved by a Fidesz-loyal court, which basically is never the case.

Various forms of employment are used to undermine the already extremely low minimum wage. And attacks have been made on the payment of union fees by employers and the state.

A new workers' party is needed in Hungary to formulate a programme and to organise mass opposition. The foundation of such a party could begin around a 24-hour general strike, when the demands from the initiatives around issues like refugees rights, freedom of the press, internet control, and resistance to housing evictions would be absorbed.

Approximately 40% of the electorate did not vote in the last elections.

**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.

- 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.

**RIGHTS**

- Oppose discrimination on the grounds of race, sex, 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.
- Trade unions to disaffiliate from the Labour Party now and aid the building of a new workers' party! 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!

**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.

**ENVIRONMENT**

- Major research and investment into

**Join the fightback!  
Join the Socialists!**

www.socialistparty.org.uk 02089888777





## CALLING ALL:

### anti-austerians, trade unionists,

### Corbynistas, socialists

### and members of the 99%!

[www.socialism2015.net](http://www.socialism2015.net)

Come to

# Socialism 2015

a weekend of discussion and debate, 7 & 8 November, central London

**A** debate is taking place – how can we fight austerity, can it be stopped, what is the alternative, who are our allies in this struggle, who are our enemies, what type of world do we want to live in, what can we learn from the history of resistance, what can we learn from Greece and other movements against austerity.

This debate is taking place on campuses, in workplaces, in meetings, in the pub.

Socialism 2015 will bring together around 1,000 people – involved in both the debate and the movement. Among them will be students, trade union activists, housing activists, long-standing socialist fighters from the days of Militant (forerunner of the Socialist Party who were expelled from Labour for standing with

the working class), people who are new to socialist ideas and curious, and many, many more.

We will discuss and debate ideas and how they can help guide the mass anti-austerity movement we need to build.

Who was Leon Trotsky and why is everyone who challenges the Blairites dubbed a Trotskyist? Is Marxism still a relevant tool for anti-capitalism?

And what can we learn from each other – people who 20 years ago played leading roles in the anti-poll tax movement that led to Thatcher's downfall, people who are today playing a pioneering role to organise unorganised super-exploited workers, and others both suffering from and fighting the vicious austerity agenda.

**Socialism 2015 is a weekend of discussion and debate on how to fight austerity and change the world. It takes place in London on 7 and 8 November.**

Keynote speakers so far include:

- Socialist Party general secretary **PETER TAAFFE**, author of *Marxism in Today's World and The Rise of Militant*,
- **PAUL MURPHY**, Anti-Austerity Alliance TD (MP) in Ireland and leading figure in the campaign of mass non-payment against the water charges,
- **JAWAD AHMAD**, singer and activist in the International Workers and Youth Movement in Pakistan,
- **ANDROS PAYIATSOS**, Greek socialist from Xekinima, at the heart of mass struggles against austerity, and
- **HANNAH SELL**, leading socialist activist and author of *Socialism in the 21st Century*.

**DON'T MISS IT!** 10% off ticket prices until 6 November

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