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the Socialist

Formerly **Militant**

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photo Derek Bridges /Creative Commons

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photo by Pinar Mustafa of Greece /Creative Commons

NO COMPROMISE WITH LABOUR RIGHT

#KEEPCORBYN

The next few months will decide the fate of the Labour Party. Although he claims to be 'as radical as Jeremy', the leadership challenger Owen Smith is in reality the candidate of all those with a vested interest in keeping the Labour Party a safe, New Labour-style version of the Tories.

The stakes couldn't be higher. Labour was set up 116 years ago by trade unionists, socialists, women suffrage campaigners, the working class co-operative movement, and others, as 'our party'.

But over the course of 20 years under the leadership of Blair, Brown and Miliband it was completely transformed into another party of big business and the 1% capitalist elite.

Jeremy Corbyn's unexpected victory in last summer's leadership election created an opening to roll back the New Labour transformation. His anti-austerity message, and support for trade union rights, free education, council housing etc, changed the terms of political debate. Even Tory prime ministers are now forced to speak of 'working class families struggling to get by'

from the steps of Downing Street!

But because Jeremy Corbyn's victory offered the hope of change, a showdown with the capitalist establishment and their representatives within the Labour Party was inevitable. And now, as the Socialist warned from the outset, the two-parties-in-one are in a desperate fight for control of the Labour Party brand.

The immediate task is to mobilise for Jeremy Corbyn's re-election. But also to organise to ensure that this time victory is consolidated by remaking Labour as a working class, socialist party that really can be the voice of the 99%. > Continued on Page 2



photo Paul Mattsson



LABOUR AT THE CROSSROADS

What we think

Continued from front

The Labour Party right-wing were never going to accept Jeremy Corbyn's leadership. Standing behind them are the capitalist establishment, the 1% elite, who have benefitted enormously from the transformation of Labour into Tony Blair's New Labour and the domination of political debate by pro-market ideas which that allowed.

It was not for nothing that the former Tory deputy prime minister Geoffrey Howe said of Margaret Thatcher that "her real triumph was to have transformed not just one party but two", with New Labour's embrace of capitalism.

While for example, average household incomes have only just returned to the levels at the start of the 'great recession' in 2008, the richest 1,000 people in Britain have more than doubled their wealth to £547bn in the same period. The New Labour era was good for the elite.

Establishment

The Labour right have shown how ruthless they are prepared to be to defend the interests of their establishment backers. Only the protests of thousands of Labour members and trade unionists secured a narrow majority on the party's national executive committee (NEC) to stop Jeremy being effectively excluded from the ballot paper.

But this attempted coup having failed the right went on to plan B and limited the franchise compared to last summer's election, after Jeremy and other supporters had literally 'left the room'.

Also, for the first time since world war two, all regular party meetings have been closed down, removing the chance for ordinary party members to hold anti-Corbyn MPs and councillors to account. Angela Eagle's Wallasey constituency party has been suspended and the election of new, left-wing officers of the Brighton & Hove District Labour Party, the biggest local party unit, annulled.

Local parties should defy these edicts and continue meeting, or #Keep Corbyn meetings should be organised independently, including by trade union branches - and involving Corbyn supporters inside and outside the Labour Party.



A party of struggle, even with fewer MPs but a fighting socialist programme, would have a bigger impact in defence of the working class than a party with a couple of hundred MPs but which accepts the policies demanded by capitalism

After all, the dictatorial rule-or-ruin approach of the Labour apparatus in this battle gives a glimpse of the type of regime that will operate if Owen Smith were to win. The idea that the social movement developing around Jeremy Corbyn could conduct an effective struggle within the confines of the Labour Party in the event that he is unseated from the leadership is utopian.

By the same token, it is clear that if Jeremy Corbyn is re-elected this time his victory must be properly consolidated. This means taking on the main bases of establishment Labour, in the Parliamentary Labour Party (PLP), the national party apparatus, and locally, the big



Jeremy Corbyn photo Paul Mattsson

majority of Labour's 7,000 councillors.

Challenging the latter will be vital to show in practice what an anti-austerity party really is, in contrast to the actions of the Labour right. It does not mean a party voting for cuts! The fact is that Labour councils this year will be sacking three times the number of workers who are losing their jobs from the collapse of BHS, denounced by MPs as 'the unacceptable face of capitalism'

Pressure

If Jeremy Corbyn is re-elected he must organise for Labour councils to defy the Tories, including refusing to implement the new Housing and Planning Act, with local parties pressing councillors who refuse to fight to resign. The situation where council Labour groups and not the members decide council policy must be reversed.

The national structures of the Labour Party would also need to be opened out and democratised. To mobilise the maximum possible support, there should be a return to the founding structures of the Labour Party which involved separate socialist political parties coalescing with the trade unions and social movements like women's suffrage campaigners and the co-operative movement.

That federal approach applied to today would mean allowing political parties like the Socialist Party and others involved in the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC), and anti-austerity Greens, to affiliate to Labour as the Co-op Party still does.

While mandatory re-selection would allow local parties to replace their MPs at the next general election, more decisive action would need to be taken before then to bring the parliamentary party into line. MPs should have the Labour whip only if they agree to accept the renewed mandate for Corbyn and his anti-austerity, anti-war policies.

It is necessary to take on the forces in Labour defending the capitalist establishment, not seek 'unity' around

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Local Labour parties should defy these edicts and continue meeting, or organise #Keep Corbyn meetings independently

their agenda. Their attempted coup has shown that if there was a Corbyn-led Labour government they would play a similar role to those parliamentarians who joined Syriza as it overtook Pasok, the Greek equivalents of New Labour, but who were then to the fore in pushing for it to capitulate before the interests of capitalism.

Party of struggle

A party of struggle, even with fewer MPs but a fighting socialist programme, would have a bigger impact in defence of the working class than a party with a couple of hundred MPs but which accepts the policies demanded by capitalism. Winning new support it could regain the seats that may be temporarily held by anti-Corbyn MPs and go on to win a general election.

The right-wing have moved against Jeremy Corbyn and the most important question now is how the social movement that has begun to mobilise in his defence can be organised for the battles to come.

We have now entered our summer printing schedule. This issue will last for two weeks, with issue 912 beginning on 11 August.

Read updates on the situation in the Labour Party and more as they develop online at socialistparty.org.uk



Thousands of people have attended rallies in support of Jeremy Corbyn over the last few weeks. A few are reported here. More detail and further reports of Corbyn rallies, Labour meetings and motions in defence of party democracy are at www.socialistparty.org.uk

MOOD AT TOLPUDDLE TO DEFEAT THE BLAIRITES

Robin Clapp
South West region Socialist Party secretary

This year's Tolpuddle Martyrs rally was the largest since 1984 when Tony Benn and Arthur Scargill led the procession through the otherwise sleepy Dorset hamlet at the height of the great mineworkers' strike.

As the cradle of trade unionism in Britain, the Martyrs represent the heroic struggles of workers to fight for the right to organise and to engage in effective industrial action, rights that have been severely eroded in the last 30 years. Trade unionists now face huge additional legal impediments through the inflicting of the 2016 Trade Union Act.

It was heartening therefore to hear Jeremy Corbyn denounce the Act and condemn successive Tory governments for imposing the most draconian anti-trade union laws in the developed world.

His vision of a world in which 21st century technologies could be made to work for the benefit of humankind and his denunciation of inequality in the workplace and in wider society were warmly received by a largely supportive



Tolpuddle photo Matt Carey

audience.

Blairites on the contrary kept their heads down and those Labour MPs across the South West who have spent the last month attacking Jeremy Corbyn instead of the new Trade Union Act and all the other blows raining down on us, were absent from the event, having been made aware that their presence would be unwelcome.

Many people took our leaflets and indicated a willingness to fight

to the end to secure a Corbyn-led government.

Support for the Socialist Party's arguments was shown by a record sale of 247 copies of the Socialist throughout the weekend and over £200 raised in donations to our party's Fighting Fund.



Grimsby

On 23 July, "N.E. Lincs Unite 4 Corbyn" held a successful rally in support of Jeremy Corbyn in Grimsby attended by 140 people. Three weeks previously a public meeting of over 80 on the initiative of the Socialist Party had set up the campaign. It brought together Corbyn supporters from inside and outside the Labour Party determined to build a campaign in North East Lincolnshire in the face of the hostility shown towards their own party leader by the MP and local councillors.

Speakers at the rally from the Socialist Party shared the platform with members of the Labour Party, the local chair of the Trades Council, Malcolm Moreland, a representative from Scunthorpe Momentum and young Labour member from Louth. Angela Greenfield

Reverse Derby council cuts

Well over a hundred attended an enthusiastic rally for Jeremy Corbyn in Derby. But it was noticeable that one or two people were having a go, saying they would never support Labour. They were not Blairite or right wing, but were teaching assistants employed by the Labour controlled Derby council.

These members of Unison took strike action after new contracts were imposed on them on 1 June, cutting their wages by thousands of pounds a year. They see Labour imposing massive cuts to jobs and their terms and conditions.

There is a wave of enthusiasm for Jeremy Corbyn's anti austerity programme reflected in the new mem-

bers joining Labour and the supporting rallies. But a no cuts policy will be needed to overcome the legacy of Labour cuts in local government in the eyes of many workers on the receiving end of these attacks.

Nuneaton

Momentum Nuneaton and Red Labour North Warwickshire organised a well-attended rally for Jeremy Corbyn in Nuneaton town centre on 23 July. It attracted the attention of shoppers who stopped to listen to the many excellent speakers.

Paul Reilly brought solidarity greetings from Nuneaton Socialist Party and the Nuneaton branch of the RMT, of which he is the branch secretary. To applause he reported how he had moved a motion at the recent RMT conference to support Jeremy Corbyn which was passed unanimously.

Anger against 'traitors' sweeps Portsmouth Momentum

"All is forgiven!" So claimed Christine Shawcroft, a Labour National Executive Committee member, when asked for her message to the 172 MPs who had declared 'no confidence' in Jeremy Corbyn. It was not the answer the 90 Momentum supporters packed into a standing-room-only meeting at Portsmouth's Rail Club had come to hear.

There was more to come. "When Jeremy wins again, our message will be that now is the time for the Parliamentary Labour Party to respect the members' decision", Christine Shawcroft declared.

It fell to RMT transport union president Sean Hoyle to point out that it was either extreme political naivety or simple cowardice to think the Blairites would ever respect the membership when they had just disenfranchised the 100,000 of its number.

"Make no mistake, there has been an organised attempt to get rid of Jeremy from day one", Sean said. "You cannot negotiate with

these people. Their interests are not the same as ours. It's time for them to go".

Sean outlined that while his union is not affiliated to Labour, the RMT has long supported Jeremy Corbyn and would continue to stand by him. Now, Sean told the audience, is the time to be bold; to use the campaign to defend Corbyn to move the centre of power away from MPs to the membership.

"And let us be honest", Sean said, "why should we fear a split? I'd rather have a party with half a million members and 40 MPs who are loyal to those members, than a party led by 172 traitors. It's time for the tail to stop wagging the dog".

Like Christine Shawcroft's, Sean's speech was not what many of the audience had expected. Unlike Christine, Sean had clearly articulated their anger. When the applause ended the

floodgates were opened to contributions from the floor which unananimously echoed his call.



Sean Hoyle photo Paul Mattsson

Jeremy Corbyn's Live Launch for the North West filled the 1,800 seat Lowry Theatre in Salford. He received a rock star welcome and standing ovation photo Paul Gerrard



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

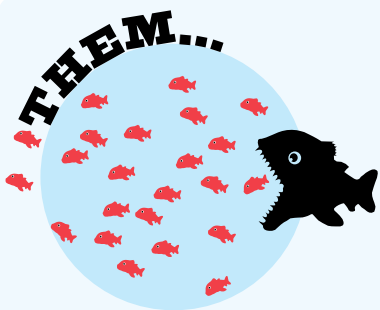
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Academy expenses

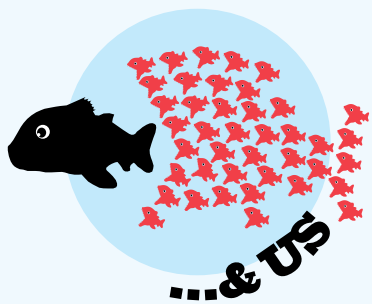
Taxpayer-funded semi-privatised 'academy' schools have haemorrhaged millions on bloated salaries and lavish expenses for executives.

Luxury cars, five-star hotels, holiday-home broadband, first-class travel, Michelin-starred restaurants, private health care... on top of six-figure pay. New research by Channel 4's 'Dispatches' and the Observer has found the top 40 academy chains spent a cool million on executive expenses since 2012.

The chief exec of the Academy Transformation Trust, Ian Cleland, 'earns' £180,000 a year. Apparently this is not enough to cover his commute. His expenses include leasing, servicing and insuring a Jaguar V6, and £3,000 of first-class rail tickets.

In March, Cleland threatened staff redundancies to cover what he claimed was a £500,000 funding shortfall. Teachers' union NUT took national strike action on 5 July against forced academy status, unbearable workloads, and a series of other government attacks on pay and conditions.

The Socialist says: scrap academies. For fully funded comprehensive education for all, under the democratic control of teachers, parents and the community.



Have you got news for the 'fishes'? Email editors@socialistparty.org.uk

Tories plan further fee hikes for uni students

Aidan O'Toole
Coventry Socialist Students

The Tories want universities that meet their backbreaking 'teaching excellence framework' targets to be allowed to increase the cost of their courses with inflation. Universities including Manchester have already announced their fees will rise to £9,250 in 2017, before parliament has even considered the measure.

The future is looking bleak for young people. Houses are unaffordable, jobs are low-paid and insecure, and education is becoming more and more elitist.

Universities received £9 billion in tuition fees last year, the highest amount ever. The government has cut central funding to £3 billion.

Rising tuition fees, along with the end of student grants, are increasingly pushing working class people out of higher education. Working class and some middle class students have to decide if a life of debt is worth a degree, which isn't a guarantee of employment. And that's only if they can afford to rent accommodation and feed themselves during the course.

It is no surprise that Jeremy Corbyn's call last year to scrap tuition fees resonates with so many young people. Anger is clear among students who feel like they are putting themselves in a lot of debt for not much gain. The 2016 Student Academic Experience Survey found that two thirds of students felt their degree didn't give value for money.

The Socialist Party says education is a right and should be free for all. It should not just be a privilege for the super-rich who can afford extortionate fees and high living costs, relying of the bank of mum and dad. We fight for an end to fees, cuts and closures in higher education, for a living grant for all students, and for the return of EMA student payments in further education.



Sir Philip Greed

Billionaire BHS boss Sir Philip Green "extracted hundreds of millions of pounds" from the doomed department store, says a new Commons report. It calls him the "unacceptable face of capitalism".

The superyacht collector - net worth £3.7 billion (Forbes) - ran the firm onto the rocks while making huge personal profits. 11,000 jobs will go, starting with 700 from 30 outlets closing on 30 July. The chain's pension fund has a deficit of over £570 million.

Green bellyaches that the report is "biased and unfair". He protests he is "sad and sorry" for the plight of his former workers. Not quite sad enough to rescue those jobs or pensions, of course.

Take his money. Take it all off him. He didn't create it, that was the thousands of workers he has scuppered. Use it to safeguard their jobs and pensions. Nationalise BHS under democratic workers' control. That would at least mean competent management for once.

Guardian journalist Aditya Chakraborty points out that the young people who took electronics or bottles of water during the 2011 London riots received a total of 1,200 years of jail time. The Socialist will settle for 1,000 years for Green. When it comes to the capitalist system itself, we say throw away the key.

Donate today!

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

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Open University - open to who?

Caroline Vincent
Open University student

The Open University until recently offered affordable part-time correspondence courses at degree level, but has been subject to the same changes in funding as traditional brick universities.

In fact, it had an even bigger hike in fees. In 2012, the cost of a 60-credit module - a sixth of an Open undergraduate degree - rose more than threefold, from £700 to £2,500. Since then there have been further annual increases - this year it has risen to almost £2,800.

298%

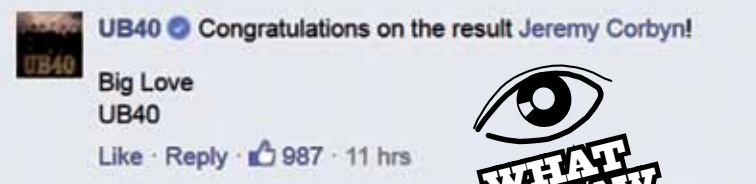
Increase in cost of Open University course modules since 2012 (£700 to £2,786)

While still cheaper, this expense is at odds with the founding principles of the Open University. A Labour government established

it in 1969. It was there for those who may not have had the best educational advantages, or who had been failed by their school experience and written off as non-academic. This second chance has been diminished by a £90 million loss in government funding.

Tuition fee loans are available. But for many would-be students, the thought of almost £17,000 of debt, often on top of other debts like mortgages, is unappealing.

This has been illustrated by a 28% drop in enrolment. Fees have made the Open University prohibitively expensive for the very people it was set up to help.



Birmingham reggae group UB40 came out in support of Jeremy Corbyn on Facebook on 12 July. The dub stars - named after a dole claim form - gave right-wing challengers Food for Thought, apparently sick of their Promises and Lies. When Corbyn made it onto the leadership

ballot paper, they declared they Can't Help Falling in Love with his anti-austerity platform.

The Socialist spent some time trying to come up with a cheap pun on 'Labour of Love', but decided instead to take the Higher Ground.

FAWLEY REFINERY STRIKE IN DEFENCE OF PAY AND MIGRANT WORKERS

Fawley oil refinery,
Hampshire photo Nick/
Creative Commons



On 14 July members of Unite from contractors Nico at the Fawley oil refinery in Hampshire took strike action against the super-exploitation of migrant workers from Italy and Bulgaria who are paid £48 for a 10 hour shift, instead of the £125 they should.

This is a flagrant breach of the national agreements for work at Fawley and other sites across the country. Picketing at the main entrances, strikers got excellent support from Esso employees and other contrac-

tors on site.

This is the first official strike at Fawley since the 1980s and shows how the mood against the race to the bottom is growing.

"We may be nearing retirement but how could younger workers or our children come here and live on wages like that?" explained one of the strikers.

"We are here to say that all workers on this site should be paid the agreed rate for the job."

Nick Chaffey

BROOKES WORKERS CONTINUE THE FIGHT AGAINST 2 SISTERS



RF Brookes picket line 18 July photo Dave Reid

Production at RF Brookes slowed to a virtual standstill on the second day of the second strike in Rogerstone near Newport on 18 July. Agency workers who had been bussed in to break the strike were sent home as production ground to a halt. About a hundred workers supported the picket line.

As previously reported in the Socialist, the company are cutting shift allowances, overtime payments and under-paying young workers in response to the introduction of the National Living Wage.

One worker described how some have been bullied to sign a new reduced contract, each worker is

being taken into a room with: "one chair in the middle of the room, door closed, sign here. The union is not allowed in with the person - supposedly that's legal, which it only is if they haven't asked to be accompanied?"

But the intimidation is being resisted. The mood on the picket line was very firm - quite a lot of the other pickets have toughened in response to company attacks.

The general feeling was this dispute can be won!

Dave Reid and Mariam Kamish

■ For more see socialistparty.org.uk/articles/23253

Unite policy conference backs re-selection of Labour MPs



photo Paul Mattsson

Delegates to Unite conference

The Unite policy conference took place in the midst of the crisis in the Labour Party. As we reported in our last issue, the first two days were dominated by Trident and whether Labour councils should set legal no-cuts budgets. On both issues, executive council statements were carried which blurred the union's position to avoid controversy.

But on the last day, the attempted Blairite coup against Jeremy Corbyn was brought centre stage as conference overwhelmingly passed motions firstly backing Corbyn and then committing Unite to campaign for mandatory re-selection of Labour MPs.

The drama within Labour played out throughout the week and undoubtedly hardened the position of the union.

As delegates got to Brighton on 9 July, they were met with the news that Tom Watson had called off a planned meeting the next day with Len McCluskey and John McDonnell to try and resolve the situation. This caused a real sense of anger and betrayal at his role, particularly because of his connection to Unite.

Initially, the executive council was going to ask Unite LE1228 branch to remit their re-selection motion. But this changed as the executive coun-

cil convened to evaluate their attitude to the motion just as Labour's NEC was meeting to decide how the leadership election was going to be run and specifically whether Jeremy Corbyn would be automatically on the ballot paper!

Coincidentally, the Socialist Party was holding a very successful fringe meeting as both were taking place with delegates listening to Socialist Party general secretary Peter Taaffe introduce a discussion on the aftermath of Brexit and the right-wing attack on Corbyn.

Euphoria

There was a real sense of euphoria among delegates when news filtered through that Jeremy had got on the ballot paper and a determination that the conference had to send a firm signal that Unite was behind him.

Conference later heard speeches from Corbyn and McDonnell. Socialist Party member and Unite LE1228 branch secretary Kevin Parslow then moved the re-selection motion.

He said, "Unite reps have to put themselves up for re-election every three years, why shouldn't Labour MPs every Parliament? They must be accountable to Labour's membership, not Murdoch's press. They say that they are accountable to voters but where would they be without the Labour ticket?"



[News in brief]

■ Honda walkout

Around 60 Honda workers at the South Marston plant in Swindon downed tools and walked out on 22 July.

Management tried to make them work longer than agreed. Unite the Union which represents workers at the factory have an agreement with the company that shifts are negotiated in advance. Management had acknowledged on 20 July that the shift would end at noon on 22 July. But workers were told they would have to work until 1.15pm instead on the same day.

Earlier this year Unite warned the company was risking a total breakdown in relations and claimed management was treating staff with contempt.

Trade unionists around the country are watching Honda to ensure there is no discriminations now that workers have returned and are ready to act if needed.

■ JCB ballot

Last year JCB installed a small number of CCTV cameras on the shop floor at JCB's Rotherham site in Staffordshire. These cameras were installed during the main summer shutdown period without any consultation with the GMB union who represent JCB workers.

When workers returned, they were furious that these cameras had been installed without any consultation. GMB opposed the installation and prepared to ballot members on this issue. The cameras were then taken down. After discussions GMB accepted that a number of cameras could be used in specific areas that were seen as health and safety hotspots. GMB proposed that the existing number of cameras could be moved to different locations.

This proposal was rejected by JCB. They then proposed installing an extra number of cameras across all JCB sites in the UK. This was rejected by the GMB and a consultative ballot has taken place on this issue.

91% of GMB members at the Rotherham site said they were prepared to take some form of industrial action over this issue.

JCB worker



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CWI school 2016

EUROPE AND THE WORKERS' MOVEMENT AFTER THE 'BREXIT' VOTE

This year's Committee for a Workers' International (CWI - the socialist international organisation to which the Socialist Party is affiliated) summer school met in the aftermath of the UK vote for 'Brexit' in the 23 June referendum. Delegates from 34 countries attended.

The referendum result has undoubtedly shocked the capitalist class in Britain and worldwide and the school's first session discussed these important developments and their effects in Europe, introduced by **Peter Taaffe** from the CWI's International Secretariat. **Kevin Parslow** summarises the key features of Peter's speech and the debate which followed.

Europe - Britain in particular - is now at the forefront of developments. Because of the 'weight' of British capitalism, Brexit represents a giant boulder dropped into a lake. There will be an immediate ripple effect but the repercussions will be felt for months and years.

To give a measure of the potential scale of this crisis, the UK has the second biggest economy in the EU and fifth in the world. As a comparison, its economy is 15 times bigger than Greece, which confronted ejection from the eurozone and the EU in 2015.

The consequences of the referendum were expressed by a front cover of the Economist magazine entitled "Anarchy in the UK" - referencing the 40th anniversary of the punk rock phenomenon! The rise in discontent reflects how capitalist globalisation has stored up mass indignation, which is used to inflict blows on the elite.

The situation in the UK following the referendum continues to be covered in the pages of the Socialist. However, 'Brexit' has also had huge repercussions internationally. The International New York Times reported "US profits shudder after Brexit"! A

stronger dollar against the pound and euro reduces the value of American companies' earnings in Europe.

In Nigeria, ethnic groups demanding independence are asking that if the UK can have a referendum to leave the EU, why can't they have one to leave Nigeria?

But it is in Europe that the main effects have so far been felt. In the first session of the European Parliament after the referendum, Jean-Claude Juncker, president of the European Commission, asked Ukip leader Nigel Farage: "Why are you here?"

Juncker reflects the deep exasperation and concern that the UK referendum might see calamitous consequences in Europe, even the break-up of the eurozone and the EU itself. The EU establishment is desperately trying to prevent 'contagion'.

There is now deep gloom amongst the European capitalists and their political representatives. Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte, with the far-right, anti-EU Party for Freedom (PVV) ahead in national opinion polls, bluntly stated: "England has collapsed politically, monetarily, constitutionally and economically." In the Netherlands though, 47% of voters would like a vote on EU membership.



photos Paul Mattsson

Brexit has put a new independence referendum in Scotland on the agenda. Scotland's First Minister Nicola Sturgeon would like to stay in the EU. This has been rebutted by the prime minister of the Spanish state, Mariano Rajoy, who has warned of the consequences for European states if this is granted. This would give new impetus to national groups, particularly in Catalonia and the Basque Country, for independence from the Spanish state.

Sinn Féin immediately called for a new poll on the Irish border following the referendum. This risks a new outbreak of sectarianism - which must be countered through a mass mobilisation of workers. Sinn Féin leaders commented that Northern Ireland was forced out of the EU by 'Little Englanders'!

The referendum result has had repercussions throughout Europe. Lucy Redler from Germany pointed out that there was not a week without crisis in the EU. It was a "spring and summer of discontent in the EU": The EU had told Ireland it could not

abolish the hated Water Tax, stronger militarisation of the EU had been proposed and more and more opposition to the 'unreformable' EU was raising its head. But in Die Linke (the Left Party), only she and one other national committee member was opposed to the EU.

Divisions

International Secretariat member Danny Byrne said the EU question has divided the left in Europe and become a microcosm of the difference between a 'reformist' and a 'revolutionary' approach. This was now beginning to open up divisions in left organisations.

The Left Bloc in Portugal and the United Left (IU) in Spain were moving towards a policy of breaking with the EU because of the effects of EU-imposed austerity in these countries.

Peter explained there is a huge eurosceptic mood in most countries. About 53% in an opinion poll in France want a referendum on EU membership; but neither there nor in the Netherlands is a majority yet for

leaving the EU.

Greek workers, following the EU-imposed austerity, are now the most eurosceptic; 92% believe the EU badly handled the crisis. Not so long ago, Greece was the most pro-European country but that was before being placed on the rack of EU austerity. That has led to a collapse in support for the Syriza government. This may hand opportunities to the Nazi Golden Dawn, now the third party in opinion polls.

Andros from Xekinima (CWI in Greece) said that for the Greek working class, the most important development has been Brexit. There is very low mood in Greece following the EU-imposed eye-watering austerity but new battles will come.

The general European economic situation is dire. Because no improvement in conditions is likely, capitalist commentators fear a domino effect through Europe. Italy could be the next country to follow Britain out of the EU exit door. This would just about finish the EU; already discussions have taken place about a 'two-tier'

Europe. There is chronic economic stagnation in Italy. Broad swathes of the population have had no rise in living standards for decades.

There is a crisis in the banking system, including the world's oldest bank. Prime Minister Renzi wants to recapitalise the banks (burdened with €330 billion of bad debts), by government aid or nationalisation. Yet the EU is preventing this because it opposes 'state intervention'!

This is classical neoliberalism and poses further disasters for workers. However, Italy could be the precursor of political developments elsewhere. The populist Five Star Movement has had electoral successes and leads the opinion polls.

Far-right

Germany has seen the rise of the right-wing Alternative für Deutschland (Alternative for Germany - AfD), that started as mainly an anti-euro party, but which has grown to 11% support in opinion polls due to its virulently anti-migrant and anti-refugee propaganda. (AfD is now trying to politi-

cally capitalise on the recent attacks on bystanders by lone refugees in Germany).

Brexit will have important economic effects on Germany. It is reliant on exports to UK, Spain, Italy and Britain, which may be reduced if economic uncertainty takes hold.

Austria has entered a serious political crisis with the presidential elections, narrowly won by the Green party's candidate over the right-wing Freedom Party (FPÖ) candidate. The election has to be rerun over a technicality. The FPÖ is anti-EU and welcomed the UK's referendum result.

Battling against the far right is a key question following the referendum as it can articulate the anti-EU mood and fill the political vacuum left by the former workers' parties. The struggle for new, independent left-wing mass parties is important in this respect.

French workers have been resisting up to now the worst aspects of neoliberalism, including the government's determination to push through anti-working class labour 'reforms', backed by the EU.

Given current polls, President Hollande will be defeated in the first round of presidential elections next year, if he stands. Marine Le Pen of the far-right National Front (FN) is likely to be in the final round of voting.

Le Pen also welcomed the Brexit vote and strongly supports the idea of a referendum in France.

Spain has seen two general elections in the last seven months and the left parties, on the joint Unidos Podemos list in June's elections, lost a million votes between the two.

Viki from Spain said this was disappointing for the working class and youth (see issue 910 of the Socialist). Some believed the Brexit vote had a negative effect on the left's vote as the electorate chose stability, although the left's programme and campaign were not adequate.

In Ireland the Anti-Austerity Alliance/People Before Profit TDs (MPs) in the Dáil (Irish parliament) have been the only ones to welcome the referendum outcome. Irish workers have suffered in the last few years from EU-imposed austerity.

Belgium has also seen a strike wave, and Els from Belgium remarked that on the morning of the referendum result, Belgian workers were on strike. The pickets saw Brexit as a victory while their officials thought it was a mistake!

Poland is symptomatic of developments in Eastern Europe. Governments there have embraced neo-liberalism and the EU but the current politically right-wing nationalist government has taken a certain tilt against the market in the direction of 'state capitalism'.

This is an indication of a partial re-

jection of the effects of the market and the need for a more 'regulated' capitalism including renationalisation. It raises the question of the planned economy and a socialist alternative.

But a storm cloud on the horizon in Eastern Europe is the increased tension with Russia, not just over the Ukraine but also the spreading of Nato's (Western military alliance) tentacles to the Baltic States. EU states in Eastern Europe have hosted military manoeuvres in recent months.

Peter concluded by stating that we face a new disturbed period in Europe. The UK referendum showed that a polarisation is taking place that will not necessarily always take place on clear class lines.

But this is provoking discussion and debate and forcing working people, and then the youth, to attempt to think things out. This will bring new supporters to the CWI.

The undermining of traditional capitalist parties throughout Europe is clear but in the absence of fighting left organisations, we see the rise of right-wing populism, which are largely anti-EU. We cannot see the struggle against the far right as separate to the struggle of the workers' movement against austerity.

In new class struggles we can look forward to the broader development of a socialist consciousness than now. That will then pose the changing of society on socialist grounds.

See socialistworld.net for more from the CWI school as well as coverage of other key political issues and reports of workers' struggles internationally



Refugees are targeted by right populist parties in order to exploit people's fears over immigration and failing public services

Why the Socialist Party opposed the EU



We cannot see the struggle against the far right as separate to the struggle of the workers' movement against austerity

The Socialist Party campaigned in the June referendum against the bosses' EU on a principled socialist and internationalist basis.

We opposed the official leave campaign led by reactionary Tory MPs Boris Johnson and Michael Gove and also the leave campaign headed by the racist and xenophobic Ukip.

Many people rightly revolted by the nationalist, racist bile of 'Little Englander' Tories and Ukip'ers, voted to remain in the EU. But as the Socialist Party pointed out, the EU is no defender of refugees and migrants. On the contrary, barriers are going up in 'Fortress Europe' to prevent the free movement on non-EU people across borders.

The EU's austerity agenda has also allowed populist far-right racist parties to exploit workers' fears over immigration and failing public services.

What 'free movement' exists in the EU is used to allow big business to exploit a cheap supply of labour in a 'race to the bottom' in terms of low pay, zero-hour contracts and poor employment conditions.

Unfortunately, the Labour Party leadership and many trade union leaders fell in behind the remain camp led by the then Tory PM David Cameron - no friend of workers with his austerity-led cuts to jobs, public services and welfare benefits, as well as new anti-trade union laws.

The idea of a 'social Europe' under the capitalist EU is a myth. EU laws and institutions, despite cosmetic window dressing, are there to allow the capitalists freedom to exploit workers.

The Socialist Party maintained that in or out of the EU, as long as we remain under the capitalist profit system, workers will have to struggle to defend living standards against attacks of the bosses. But by exiting the EU one obstacle to fighting back will be removed, as well as dealing a blow to the confidence of capitalism and its institutions which have impoverished working class people throughout Europe.

For more on the Socialist Party's opposition to the EU see articles on socialistparty.org.uk

Socialism Today

The Socialist Party's magazine

The July-August issue includes:

- **EU poll revolt** - Capitalist establishment shattered by Peter Taaffe
- **US election** - Polarised, radicalised and deeply divided by Brian Koulouris
- **Spain 1936** - Revolutionary promise by Tony Saunois



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Campaigns/Party News

An explosion in sales of the Socialist

Just like Martin Reynolds (issue 910), I've seen an explosion in sales of the Socialist since the EU referendum, I have sold 135 copies!

Key to this has been getting out on the streets to talk to people, whether street campaign stalls, at demonstrations or doing our now regular paper sale at the city centre train station before our branch meeting. 20 copies have been sold this way, with people seeing us the following week to get the latest issue and giving us their details to come to meetings.

We have attended pro-Corbyn rallies including helping to initiate the first one in Leeds. Our red Gazebo and placards helped us stand out and saw lots of people coming over before and after the rally to discuss with us.

We have also supported four strikes that took place and they're

keen to support the Socialist as a workers paper. One striking branch officer gave me a tenner for two copies for him and the other strike leader.

There's also been movements against racism, including big anti-racism demonstrations in both Leeds and Bradford, and #BlackLivesMatter demonstrations in both Leeds and Huddersfield on consecutive nights - at these last two I sold 20 and 17 papers respectively, with six people giving their details to join the Socialist Party.

There's a massive thirst for ideas to lead people out of the impasse that the Tories (and Blairites) austerity policies have driven us to. If anything it can be difficult to be able to talk to everyone who is interested in what the Socialist Party has to say. That's why we need everyone possible to carry copies of the Socialist prominently and ask everyone we meet to buy one and join us in the struggle for socialism.

Iain Dalton

SHEFFIELD DEMONSTRATES IN SOLIDARITY WITH BLACK LIVES MATTER



photo Alistair Tice

Will Hornett

On 22 July Sheffield's first Black Lives Matter demonstration, a large and vibrant march around the city centre took place, beginning and culminating in big rallies of about 1,000 people.

This demonstration follows a wave of Black Lives Matter protests across the country organised largely by young, black, working class people. These are in solidarity with the massive movement in the USA that

has built up as a response to the racist murders of black people by the police.

In the US in 2015, at least 102 black people were murdered by the police. That is five times the rate of the killings of white people, also horrendous crimes in themselves. In Britain, there is a growing consciousness among young black activists, radicalised by the movement in the US, that the UK is not guiltless.

For example the high profile racist murder of Stephen Lawrence in 1993, the investigation of which was marred by institutional racism and corruption, and most recently,

the death of 18-year old Mzee Mohammed in police custody in Liverpool which is currently being investigated.

This demonstration highlighted the importance of viewing these racist attacks as part of a broader picture of the institutionalised racism, most immediately, of the police.

The point was made by several speakers however that this racism is embedded in more than just the police. It is embedded in the racist immigration services that make it much harder to migrate here as a person of colour than a white per-

Black Lives Matter protest shakes Leeds

Ian and Monique Slattery

The Black Lives Matter movement shook Leeds on 14 July when over 1,000 people gathered in the city centre before marching through the central shopping district.

The protest was organised at quite short notice and mainly through social media and word of mouth.

Those attending were clear that just a single token demo wouldn't be enough and there was an enormous thirst for a plan of action from here.

Our explanations to people about what our leaflets were arguing for turned into a public address as people nearby turned to listen, ask questions and collect more information.

The simple point that capitalism thrives off racism and only by overthrowing the system can we rid ourselves of it was accepted and understood by most we met there.

Following such an outstanding first demo the next steps are crucial

and must include continuing public action and the need for local organising committees to work out where the most effective place to next take Black Lives Matter is.

Over 20 copies of the Socialist were sold and 400 leaflets given out, promoting the Leeds Socialist Party public meeting on 'The origins of oppression and how we fight it' on 8 August.

Leeds meeting: The origins of oppression and how we fight it, 7.15pm, 8 August at West Riding Pub, Wellington Street, Leeds LS1 2DE
Speakers include: Michael Johnson (Socialist Party LGBT group organiser), Amy Cousins (former women's officer, Leeds Beckett students' union) and a member of the Socialist Party black and Asian group.



photo Paul Mattsson

Pent Valley judicial review application blocked

The campaign to save Pent Valley School in Kent has had its application for a Judicial Review refused. The extract below is taken from a joint statement from the campaign and the legal team.

We are naturally disappointed at the decision to close the school but we believe that more importantly it will have a detrimental effect on school students at Pent Valley, and also Folkestone Academy and Brockhill. We remain concerned as to the opportunities afforded Pent valley school students going forward.

We always felt our legal case was sound, but we accept that the reasons given by the court in their refusal reflected the many practical difficulties at Pent Valley.

Those difficulties have been compounded over the years by a council that has refused to properly invest in the school, and when they have done, they have given insufficient

time for those many improvements.

We remain extremely sceptical about the process through which this school has been wound down and concerned at the certainty in which it is said that another school will be opened but without any specific information.

Finally, we do not accept that students from Pent valley will not be affected by the move to other schools, and their move will not result in overcrowding in other schools in the area.

We feel that Kent County Council have not acted in the best interests of the school students and parents throughout this process and that the consultation - notwithstanding the courts generous interpretation - was not conducted with openness and a willingness to listen and consult with parents.

We would like to pay tribute in particular to the local mums, dads, school students and trade unionists who have given their time to defending Pent Valley School.



Pent Valley campaigners photo Pete Fry



The Socialist Party joined thousands who marched on a protest called by the People's Assembly and Stand Up To Racism against racism and austerity on 16 July in London photo Paul Mattsson

Huntingdon anti-racist rally

Crowds took to the streets of Huntingdon on 16 July to march in solidarity with the Polish community and embrace the diverse culture of the town.

The welcome show of inclusiveness was necessary after the vile racism and xenophobia that was exhibited immediately after the referendum.

Racist signs were displayed in residential areas near the homes of Polish families, as well as a primary school, telling them to leave.

The march was a welcome show of inclusiveness to all migrant workers and refugees as well as an important message to those who seek to divide our communities. "Enough is enough, we will accept no more".

The Socialist Party, Huntingdon Labour, Unite the Union and the Greens all showed their support.

Taran O'Sullivan

Read more online at socialistparty.org.uk

Sharrow success

For several years Sheffield South branch of the Socialist Party has held campaign stalls at two community festivals. We extended into a third this year in Sharrow which was a great success. Nearly £200 fighting fund was raised, including 33 copies of the Socialist sold and another £103 from Liz Morton's plant sales.

More importantly, many discussions were held with local residents, including young Labour Party members angry at the right-wing plot against Corbyn in the Labour Party. One young couple stated they had recently got active for the first time because of Corbyn. It is this enthusiasm among

the youth that right-wing Labour politicians are trying to suppress.

One Socialist Party member challenged Paul Bloomfield MP on the Labour Party stall as to why he hadn't supported Corbyn. Understandably, he got no response - except a promise to support him if he wins the leadership election again! So why isn't he supporting him now, given that he was elected less than a year ago?

In addition to the record paper sale, seven people gave their details to join the Socialist Party. Nine members helped on the stall and they can't wait for next year's Festival to come round!

Jeremy Short

Socialist Party Fighting Fund

	£ received	£ target	July to September 2016	Deadline 28 September 2016
Northern	447	750		60%
North West	839	2,100		40%
South West	627	1,800		35%
Southern	490	1,600		31%
Wales	636	2,300		28%
East Midlands	277	1,850		15%
South East	106	750		14%
London	705	6,100		12%
West Midlands	251	2,600		10%
Yorkshire	316	3,300		10%
Eastern	70	1,200		6%
Other	295	5,650		5%
TOTAL	5,064	30,000		17%

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Socialist Party Summer Camp 2016

www.socialistparty.org.uk/summecamp/

steve.glennon@tesco.net



Barcelona 1936 - THE PEOPLE'S OLYMPICS

Scott Jones

For a brief moment 80 years ago, in a hint of what Spain as a whole would become, Barcelona became the focus of opposition to fascism.

In July 1936, 6,000 athletes arrived in the city, greeted by banners and bunting welcoming them. They were no ordinary athletes; the socialist hurdlers and the anarchist shot putters were there for the Olimpiada Popular, the People's Olympiad.

The event's official flag depicted three figures in red, yellow and black clutching a single standard, the figures represented unity and equality of women and men, white and black.

This was the alternative Olympics, designed to upstage the official games taking place 900 miles away in Berlin where, week's later, athletes would be greeted by 'siege heils' and swastika flags.

Two cities, two Olympic games. One that didn't take place and one that never should. The 'people's



in Berlin, as troops and planes were being prepared for the coming vicious war in Spain, the official Olympic Games went ahead

games' and the 'Nazi games.'

It was in 1931 that the seeds were sown when Berlin beat Barcelona to host the 1936 games. But by the time the games rolled around, the world had changed.

In 1933 a parliamentary coup installed Adolf Hitler as chancellor allowing the Nazis to stamp their jackboot on German society. The Olympics then became an opportunity to flaunt this power and showcase the new Germany to the world.

Meanwhile, in 1936, a left-wing Popular Front government was



elected in Spain, which decided to boycott the Berlin Olympics and host its own games in Barcelona. Athletes from 22 countries accepted the invitation with large contingents from the USA, Britain and Scandinavia.

There were also teams made up of exiles from fascist Germany and Italy and another team representing Jewish exiles.

The majority of the athletes knew the reason they were there. Not just for sport but in solidarity against fascism, as most were sent by trade unions, socialist and communist parties and other workers' organisations.

But the games would never take

place. On the eve of the games the fascists and nationalists of Spain, led by Franco and assisted by Nazi Germany and Mussolini's Italy, launched a coup d'etat to overthrow the country's left-wing, republican government.

Fighting fascism
Unsurprisingly, the thousands of radical youth in Barcelona for the games supported the government but 200 of them went further and heroically pledged to stay and fight.

They recognised that this was not a domestic issue for the Spanish people but an attack by fascism. They became the first international volunteers in the Spanish civil war,

including the famous swimmer Clara Thalman, later a hero of the French Resistance, who stayed to fight in Spain.



in 1936, a left-wing Popular Front government was elected in Spain, which decided to boycott the Berlin Olympics and host its own games in Barcelona

The same conclusion was drawn by others and in the end over 2,500 men and women from Britain and Ireland voluntarily travelled to Spain to defend the elected Popular Front government of the Spanish republic against the forces of Franco, Hitler and Mussolini. The 40,000 volunteers from across the globe were an unprecedented example of international solidarity.

While in Berlin, as troops and planes were being prepared for the coming vicious war in Spain, the official Olympic Games went ahead. As well as the thousands who were to take part in Barcelona, many other individual athletes boycotted Berlin, especially Jews and the games also took place without the Soviet Union.

But many other athletes, deemed "racially inferior" by the Nazis, did compete. Fencers Halet Çambel and Saat Fetgeri Aseni, the first Turkish and Muslim women athletes to participate in the Olympics, refused to meet Adolf Hitler due to his attitude to Jews.

Most famously it was Jessie

Owens, a black American, who embarrassed and infuriated Hitler and the Nazis by winning four gold medals.

The Olympic Games, like the football World Cup and other huge sporting events, are always looked forward to by competitors and spectators alike. They are a chance for people to come together and see inspirational acts of skill and prowess. The idea of the People's Olympiad was a marvellous attempt to protest the distortion of these ideals by the Nazis, who used the games to celebrate instead racist ideas of "racial superiority".

Modern games

The modern games, while providing awesome moments like Mo Farah's exploits in London in 2012, have also been hijacked by corporations and capitalism. The 2012 games brought home to people the rampant money making that takes place for big business at these events, leaving little economic or sporting legacy for the working class of London and beyond.

This summer, in Olympic host city Rio de Janeiro, this is even more starkly illustrated as the only banners welcoming athletes and fans are ones saying: "Welcome to hell," held by police and firefighters, explaining their poor pay, or no pay at all, and saying "whoever comes to Rio will not be safe!"

This is driven home by the repeated warnings of the violence and crime that blights the city. Even World Cup winning Brazilian footballer Rivaldo has told people to stay away. Some competitors have withdrawn because of the Brazilian authorities' failure to tackle the mosquito-borne Zika virus.

Brazil is currently suffering a brutal recession and widespread corruption with Brazilian workers and poor recognising, like they did during the 2014 World Cup, that they will be paying the price of no investment in public services for a tournament they will be priced out of attending.



Brazilian workers and poor recognising, like they did during the 2014 World Cup, that they will be paying the price of no investment in public services for a tournament they will be priced out of attending

They will however witness, not sporting achievement, but the sick spectacle of already enormously wealthy corporations making even more out of the Rio Olympics in a city where vast inequality fuels the violence, crime and failing public services that could ruin the games for anyone fortunate enough to attend.

This is a reflection of sport under capitalism, a society as unequal as the contrasting games were 80 years ago. But the People's Olympiad is a flavour, a small glimpse of what sport and its events could be like in a society organised by the working class, a society of solidarity and equality and not one run for profit.



photo Paul Mattsson

Turkey: No to military rule, no to Erdogan's rule For a workers' alternative!

The recent failed military coup d'état in Turkey has been followed by a massive purge of the state machinery and assault on democratic rights by right-wing president Recep Erdogan. By arresting thousands of people, sacking thousands of state employees, imposing a three month 'state of emergency' and mobilising his AKP members, Erdogan is ruthlessly accelerating his drive towards an authoritarian regime. Workers' and left organisations must mobilise to resist these draconian moves and fight for democratic rights. The Socialist carries an abridged version of an earlier article from **Sosyalist Alternatif**, the Socialist Party's Turkish counterpart.

On the night 15 July, a section of middle-ranking generals, ex-generals and colonels of the Turkish armed forces tried to seize power and overthrow the AKP government and president Erdogan.

The military plotters took control of state radio and TV and the biggest private TV channels, from which they broadcasted a declaration announcing the takeover against the 'illegitimate, corrupt and anti-secular regime of Erdogan and the AKP'. They declared a curfew and martial law, arguing in favour of a new constitution.

Competing wings of the state machine were engaged in violent confrontations all through the night, with the police apparatus remaining largely loyal to Erdogan.

The president and prime minister both made appeals to the people to resist the coup attempt. Calls from the mosques were also issued to rally behind the government. A few thousand people, mostly right-wing Islamists and AKP core supporters, poured onto the streets as a result.

Planes and helicopters from the army shot at demonstrations in the two main cities. By Saturday morning, more than 150 state forces on both sides and over 50 civilians had been killed.

The majority of people and all political parties opposed a return to military rule.

Most of the army's ranks are military conscripts who were not ready to line up behind the violence organised by the coup plotters - who are entrenched privileged officers, interested in taking power for themselves. Hence the coup did not find the sufficient social and political base to be carried through.

Growing crisis

A growing political crisis in Turkey has intensified since last year's elections in the context of a mounting crisis in the economy and narrowing social support for Erdogan's regime. The AKP government has used the judiciary and military apparatuses during this growing political deadlock, suppressing opposition voices inside and outside the parliament, and using the army to crush Kurdish opposition.

The ruling party's attempt to force through a constitutional change towards a presidential system is part



Workers' and left organisations in Turkey must resist all forms of capitalist repression photo Paul Mattsson

of the same increasing authoritarian tendency. This repression provided the tools that the coup plotters turned against the AKP itself.

Both sides are only offering a variant of capitalist dictatorship rule over the majority, one in civilian clothes and the other in military uniform.

These methods cannot solve the crisis gripping the country, but only exacerbate it, and will provoke bigger turmoil in the future.

The failed coup will now be used by Erdogan to concentrate power within his own trusted circle, and to clamp down further on democratic rights. This is already being seen, with many judges, civil servants, academics and teachers arbitrarily removed from their posts and the government's intention to reintroduce the death penalty.

These measures are presented to counteract the military plotters, but will be conveniently in place to counteract future struggles against the regime.

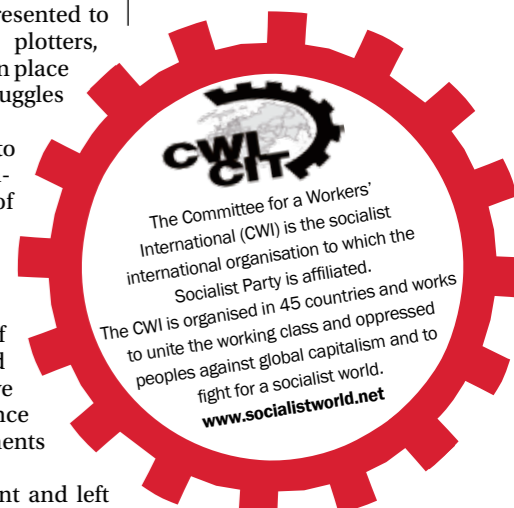
People's resistance to military takeovers cannot be left in the hands of the rotten AKP regime. Mass united action by the judiciary and military apparatuses during this growing political deadlock, suppressing opposition voices inside and outside the parliament, and using the army to crush Kurdish opposition.

The workers' movement and left

organisations need to urgently organise self-defence committees against the violence used by both sides. A third political pole around the working class, the poor and the youth needs to be built against all attacks on democratic and political rights, the state offensive against the Kurdish people, and the neoliberal policies defended by both factions of the capitalist class.

The growing, multi-sided crisis engulfing Turkey is a reflection of the crisis of capitalism on a world scale. Only a struggle for socialist change, linked to workers' solidarity internationally, can put an end to the chaos and violence hitting Turkey.

see socialistworld.net for updates



The Committee for a Workers' International (CWI) is the socialist international organisation to which the Socialist Party is affiliated. The CWI is organised in 45 countries and works to unite the working class and oppressed peoples against global capitalism and to fight for a socialist world. www.socialistworld.net



Youth Fight for Jobs 'Austerity Games 2012', highlighting the Tory-led coalition's attacks on young people's living standards, jobs and education opportunities at the same time as the government handed over billions to corporations to host the London Olympics photo Paul Mattsson

END VICTORIAN WORKING CONDITIONS

Trade union fightback needed

An MPs' report has accused retailer Sports Direct of being run like a 'Victorian workhouse' with appalling rights and pay for workers. But victories by cleaners working in the City of London who won the living wage after 43 days of strike action and a walkout by HMRC workers in Merseyside over pay, show the way to fight back. **Dave Gorton** looks at Sports Direct below:

The report into Sports Direct's working practices by a House of Commons select committee shows the much acclaimed protection of workers' employment rights by the EU is worthless without the traditional workers' organisations - the trade unions - being strong enough to enforce legislation.

The company treated workers "as commodities rather than as human beings" and working practices at its Shirebrook base in north Derbyshire "are closer to that of a Victorian workhouse than that of a modern, reputable High Street retailer."

The irregularities or allegations include paying staff below the minimum wage; a 'six strikes' policy giving "management unreasonable and excessive powers to discipline or dismiss at will"; an employee giving birth in a toilet at the warehouse because she feared losing her job if she called in sick and some workers being promised permanent contracts in exchange for sexual favours.

Workers without a bank account are given pre-paid debit cards to which their wages are paid. They are

charged a £10 one-off fee, a monthly management fee of £10 and 75p for cash withdrawals.

Over 90% of the workforce are employed on zero-hour contracts - legitimate under EU regulations - and often scared to seek help and fight back.

This insecurity is worsened as huge numbers of the workforce are Polish or east European who have been thrust into the area with little assistance in terms of housing or settling in.

The local Labour councils have done little to ease this situation and appear out of their depth in even beginning to tackle the issues of housing, employment and services.

Unite has begun to try and unionise the workforce at Sports Direct and they have done some excellent work in bringing this scandal into the public arena. But more needs to be done by the labour movement in the area.

The Socialist Party calls for an end to zero-hour contracts; a full £10 an hour minimum wage for all workers at the warehouse; workers to be given permanent contracts not subcontracted by agencies and regular health and safety checks.



Youth Fight for Jobs protest against the use of zero-hour contracts at Sports Direct photo Ian Pattison