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Issue 925
17-23 November 2016



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the Socialist

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■ Tens of thousands protest across US after election result

IT'S SOCIALISM OR TRUMPISM!

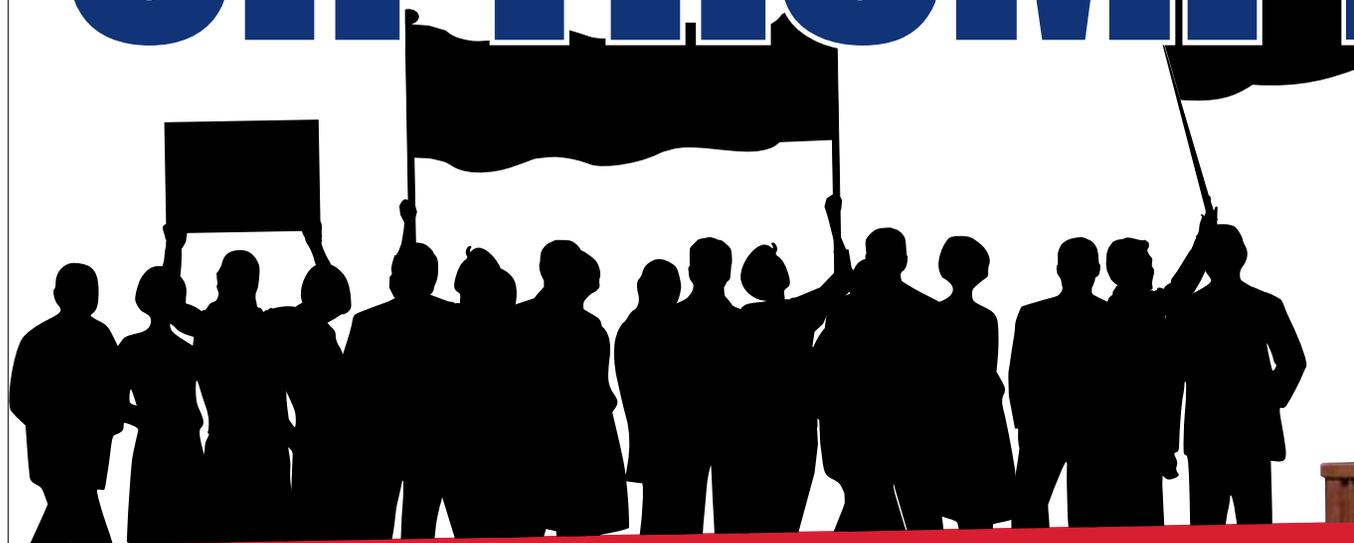


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BUILD A SOCIALIST ALTERNATIVE TO DEFEAT THE RIGHT

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TRUMP VICTORY SHOWS THE RIGHT CAN'T BEAT THE RIGHT

■ Urgent need to transform Labour into a party of the working class



What we think

The election of Donald Trump as president of the United States contains lessons for the left internationally. It shows the horrifying consequences of the failure to build a mass working class alternative to cut across reactionary right-wing forces and ideas - and the urgency of doing so in all countries. In Britain these lessons need to be taken on board by the movement around Jeremy Corbyn.

This election exposed the myth of the right wing's idea of 'electability'. The same attack used against Jeremy Corbyn of needing a more electable 'centre ground' figure to unite around in the Labour Party was used to drum up support for Hillary Clinton. The right attacked left winger Bernie Sanders' stand against Clinton in the Democratic Party primaries, claiming Clinton was the only viable candidate to beat Trump.

The vocal, militant minority are disguising the fact that the 'silent majority' are put off by these ideas, and want someone more 'realistic' - so goes the argument. The Democratic machine threw everything it had behind Clinton, ignoring the fact that many polls showed (and continue to show in hindsight) that Sanders had a better chance of beating Trump. For them, anything was better than a Sanders victory and the hope and expectations that would raise among a radicalised working class. The same is true here. As the Socialist Party has pointed out, if an early general election is called the Blairites would prefer a Tory victory in order to undermine Corbyn's leadership.

But Clinton failed. Even the most hated candidate in the history of US presidential elections could not be defeated by the establishment Democrat candidate. Could there be any clearer sign that the era of 'the Third Way' - represented in Britain by the Blairites and in the US particularly by the Clintons - is over? It gained ground in an era where capitalism had achieved a temporary stability and the collapse of Stalinism had been used to advance the idea that neoliberalism was the only way.



A socialist programme can offer an alternative vision to those who, in desperation, turn to the false promises of the right in anguish at their conditions

But that is in the past. Working class people at the sharp end of capitalism's crisis and austerity are roaring out for something new. That's why Sanders in the US and Corbyn here have gained such support - and why they and those like them are the ones with the real potential to win elections against the populist right.

It was good that in Corbyn's statement on Trump's election he recognised it as "an unmistakable rejection of a political establishment and an economic system that simply isn't working for most people. It is one that has delivered escalating inequality and stagnat-



Jeremy Corbyn with Blairite Hilary Benn meeting US President Barack Obama in April

ing or falling living standards for the majority, both in the US and Britain." It is clear that the same rejection is taking place here - a glimpse of which was seen in the Brexit vote.

But Clinton's counterparts in Britain - ie the establishment being rejected - are in the same party as Corbyn! They are the very same right wingers attacking him at every turn and hoping for another opportunity to move against him. The US election backs up the need to boldly fight against and defeat these Blairites to create a party that stands firmly in the interests of the 99% - the kind of party that would be capable of winning against the Tories, Ukip and the far right.

Bold fight needed

Unfortunately Corbyn's statement stopped short of this. He said: "I have no doubt, however, that the decency and common sense of the American people will prevail." This implies that the vote was a moral question, rather than a political and class one. It is not 'decency' that needs to prevail but leadership and a bold fight against the right. To be successful, Corbyn and those around him need to boldly come out for a programme to transform Labour and to transform the lives of working and middle class people.

That means opening up the Labour Party to all anti-austerity forces, allowing them to affiliate on a democratic, federal basis. It means inviting back into Labour all those socialists who have been expelled or excluded

from membership by the Blairite party machine (see page 6). It also has to involve being clear and open about what alternative is necessary. In his statement Corbyn refers to "the need for a real alternative to a failed economic and political system". The failed system is capitalism and the alternative is socialism. Bernie Sanders won huge support for declaring himself a 'democratic socialist' and calling for a 'political revolution against the billionaire class'. We need this kind of fighting talk from Corbyn - and for it to be turned into action.

A socialist programme, including nationalising the biggest companies and banks under democratic working class control and management, is a real alternative to the chaos of the system which is leaving behind a forgotten, alienated and furious majority. Such a programme would allow the policies that have made Corbyn popular - like a £10 an hour minimum wage, building council housing and investing in, rather than cutting, public services - to become a lasting reality. Such a programme can offer an alternative vision to those who, in desperation, turn to the false promises of the right in anguish at their conditions. It can mobilise them instead to fight with Corbyn and the left.

The election of Trump should not demoralise us. It should reinvigorate our struggle for mass, socialist parties of and for working class people.

■ **Read full analysis of the US presidential election by Socialist Alternative (co-thinkers of the CWI in the US) on the following pages**

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

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Socialist councillor Kshama Sawant speaks to anti-Trump demonstrators at a protest organised by Socialist Alternative in Seattle



FAILURE OF THE

DEMOCRAT ESTABLISHMENT

■ Working people, minorities and women must fight back

■ Election showed burning need of a new party for the 99%

Following Donald Trump's presidential victory we publish an analysis by Socialist Alternative (SA), our co-thinkers in the US, written by **Philip Locker** and **Tom Crean**. They explain how Clinton and the Democrats lost the election and why Trump's brand of 'anti-establishment' right-wing populism registered with a section of voters. However, there has been an immediate fighting response by tens of thousands of workers and youth to Trump's racism and bigotry in protests across the US. Socialist Alternative has been instrumental in organising these protests.

People in the US and around the world awoke on 9 November to one of the most shocking political upsets in living memory with the election of Donald Trump as president.

It was the culmination of an election cycle when ordinary Americans rose up against the political establishment and against the destructive effects of globalisation and neoliberalism.

"This was expressed both on the left, with the campaign of Bernie Sanders which galvanised millions for a "political revolution against the billionaire class," and, in a distorted way, on the right with Trump's campaign.

But Trump did not just run as the alleged defender of the "forgotten men and women" in

working class communities. He also ran the most overtly bigoted and chauvinist campaign of a major party candidate in modern times.

"He created a space for white nationalists and open white supremacists to come out of their holes and try to reach disaffected white workers and youth. This is a very dangerous development.

Vote

However, we completely reject the notion - relentlessly pushed by liberal commentators, trying to deflect from the staggering failure of the Democratic Party - that the bulk of the white working class shares Trump's racism and xenophobia.

Clinton actually won the popular vote by a narrow margin. Trump only got 47.5% overall,

with tens of millions of the poorest and most downtrodden Americans not voting.

Trump's vote was first and foremost a vote against Clinton and the establishment; it was a vote for a "change agent" against a consummate representative of the corporate status quo.

Many responded to his attacks on the "rigged system" and corporations who move jobs overseas. What was tragically missing was a clear choice on the left that could offer an alternative to the seduction of right populism.

Socialist Alternative stands with the millions of women who are disgusted by the election of an open misogynist and correctly see it as a step backward; with Latinos who fear that mass deportations of undocumented workers are about to ramp up to unprecedented levels; with Mus-

lims and African Americans who fear that Trump's hate speech will incite more violence and the growth of a far-right force.

Protests

We immediately called protests in cities around the country to make it clear that working people and the oppressed must stand together and prepare to resist the attacks of the right. And to build a genuine political alternative for the 99% against both corporate dominated parties and the right so that in 2020 we will not go through this disaster again.

It needs to be underlined that the outcome of this election was not just a shock to tens of millions of progressive workers, women, immigrants, people of colour, and LGBTQ people but also - for quite different reasons

- to the ruling elite of the United States.

The majority of the ruling class see Trump as temperamentally unfit to govern. The ruling class see a Trump presidency as potentially deeply damaging to the interests of US imperialism at a time when its global power is waning, particularly in the Middle East and Asia, challenged by Russia and especially by an increasingly assertive Chinese imperialism.

They strongly object to Trump's vociferous rejection of free trade deals and the dominant capitalist economic doctrines of the past 40 years. But the truth is that globalisation is stalled. Its engine of trade has gone into partial reverse. The Trump vote has some parallels with the Brexit vote in Britain to leave the EU earlier this year,



Hated President-elect Donald Trump photo Gage Skidmore/Creative Commons

lose than to be tied to a programme that really spoke to the interests of working people and the poor.

Disgracefully most union leaders threw their support and millions of dollars behind Clinton in the primaries while an important section of trade unionists and several national unions backed Sanders. In this way, the labour leadership helped to prop up Wall Street's candidate against a pro-working class challenge.

Clinton limped into the general election as a deeply damaged corporate candidate. What received the most attention in the media was the State Department email scandal.

But the continuing Wikileaks revelations also confirmed in detail and underlined the picture that Sanders had painted in the primary: that Clinton was a servant of Wall Street who said one thing in private speeches to bankers who handed her millions and another in public.

Blame

Liberal apologists will seek to blame the white working class, Bernie Sanders supporters or even Jill Stein's voters for the outcome. But as we have repeatedly pointed out the Democratic Party long ago abandoned even the pretence of defending working class interests.

For decades they implement-

ed or supported one neo-liberal measure after another: from "ending welfare as we know it," expanding mass incarceration, pushing through Nafta (North American Free Trade Agreement) and repealing Glass-Steagall (banking regulation) under Bill Clinton, to bailing out the banks after 2008 while millions lost their homes under Obama.

After the 2008-09 economic crash, the left gave Obama a pass. The Democrats controlled Congress and did little to help the working class in the worst crisis since the 1930s. This opened the door to the Tea Party (conservative-right Republican faction) to mobilise opposition to the bailout of Wall Street and anger at the politicians.

Clinton ran her campaign solidly focused on the message that Trump was an existential danger to the Republic and that "America was already great".

Hillary's donors did not want her stressing issues like the minimum wage or ending college debt for fear of raising expectations among fired up working people.

It could be argued that Hillary had no credibility as a progressive so what could she do? Well what she did was make Tim Kaine who supported TPP (Trans Pacific Partnership - Pacific Rim countries' free trade deal) and bank deregulation her vice presidential candidate instead of someone like Elizabeth Warren.

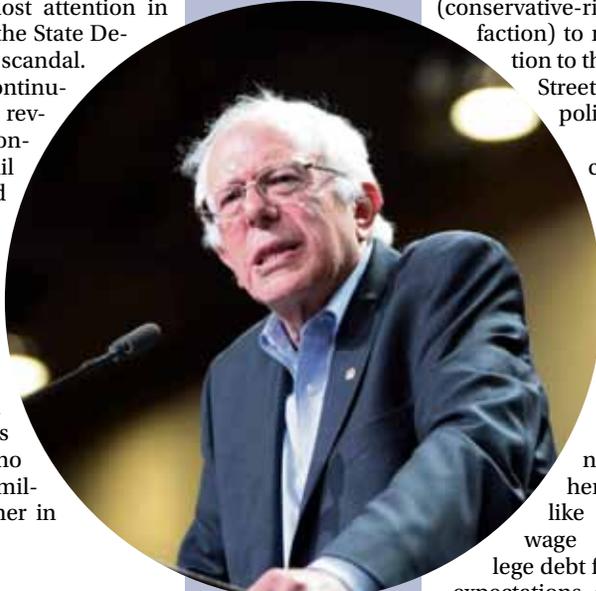
She refused to promise not to appoint a bunch of Goldman Sachs personnel to her administration. All of this was completely uninspiring to the millions of people hungry for real change. It is therefore no surprise that Clinton was unable to enthrone greater voter turnout.

In the past few years we have seen a profound political polarisation in the US with the growth of support among young people for socialism and Black Lives Matter (BLM), while there is a growth of open xenophobia and racism among a minority of the population.

Driving seat

But the overall trend in American society has been to the left, expressed in support for marriage equality, a higher minimum wage and taxing the rich. This election does not change that underlying reality but it clearly puts the right in the driver seat with control of the presidency, both houses of Congress and the bulk of state legislatures.

A large section of the white



Bernie Sanders photo Gage Skidmore/Creative Commons



Tragically missing was a clear choice on the left that could offer an alternative to the seduction of right populism

about Clinton.

In the primaries, the Democratic national committee did everything it could to stack the deck for the establishment's chosen candidate, Hillary Clinton, against Sanders, in which polls showed him consistently doing much better against Trump.

This speaks directly to the fact that a significant element of Trump's eventual electorate was open to a genuine working class argument opposing the power of Wall Street and their free trade agenda while calling for a \$15 minimum wage, free college, single payer healthcare and massive investment in green infrastructure.

But the truth is that the Democratic leadership would rather

which also reflected a massive rejection of globalisation and neo-liberalism by the British working class.

The ruling class also fear that Trump's crude racism, xenophobia, and misogyny will provoke social upheaval in the US. In this they will certainly be proved right.

Shock

At a deeper level, perhaps the most shocking aspect of this outcome for the ruling elite - including the corporate executives and the political establishment and corporate media outlets who serve them - is that the way they have dominated politics in this country through the two party system is broken.

In election cycle after election cycle, the primaries have been used to weed out candidates who are not acceptable to corporate interests. Then the electorate would be left with the choice of two 'vetted' nominees. The corporate elite might strongly prefer one or the other but they could live with either. Ordinary people were then left with the choice of picking a 'lesser evil' or voting for a third party candidate with no chance of winning.

All that changed in 2016. First, Bernie Sanders raised \$220 million without taking a dime from corporate America and came very close to defeating Hillary in the rigged Democratic primary. Trump was also largely shunned by the Republican 'donor class' and the last two Republican presidents and the most recent Republican nominee were very public in rejecting him.

It is still staggering that the outcome of the primaries left people with a choice between the two most unpopular major party candidates of the modern era. Exit polling showed 61% of voters had an unfavourable view of Trump and 54% said the same



Socialist Alternative endorsed the Green Party's presidential candidate, Jill Stein (centre), who won over 1 million votes photo Patrick Ayers, other photos from Socialist Alternative

Socialist Alternative helped organise anti-Trump protests across the USA following the Republican's shock victory



New York



Seattle



Philadelphia



Boston



Oakland

Disillusioned

Neither Trump nor Clinton got 50% of the vote. And while Clinton got a very slightly larger share of the popular vote than Trump, she got two million fewer votes than Obama in 2012 and fully nine million fewer than Obama in 2008.

As Jacobin magazine pointed out: "Clinton won only 65% of Latino voters, compared to Obama's 71% four years ago. She performed this poorly against a candidate who ran on a programme of building a wall along America's southern border, a candidate who kicked off his campaign by calling Mexicans rapists."

"Clinton won 34% of votes of white women without college

degrees. And she won just 54% of women overall, compared to Obama's 55% in 2012. Clinton, of course, was running against a candidate who has gloated on film about grabbing women 'by the pussy'."

Clinton also did not excite younger black voters, many of who sat out the election. And she lost in white working class communities where Barack Obama won handily in both previous elections.

The Democratic establishment played a dangerous game in this election - and they lost. It will be working people, communities of colour, and women who bear the brunt of their failure.

have been tragically borne out. If Sanders had continued to run all the way to November his presence would have radically changed the character of the race. He would have almost certainly forced his way into the presidential debates and we would right now be discussing the immediate question of forming a new party of the 99% based on the many millions of votes he would have received. This is a massive opportunity missed.

Socialist Alternative supported Jill Stein of the Green Party who received just over one million votes because she also put forward a platform that substantively spoke to the interests of working people. Stein's campaign had many limitations but, despite them, her vote in a small way indicates the massive potential that exists for the development of a mass left alternative.

The election of Donald Trump is a disaster which will have many negative consequences. But it is also a phase in the ongoing process of political and social upheaval in the US.

Capitalism and its institutions are discredited as perhaps never before. This process continued right through the end of the general election with the FBI interjecting itself into the political process and Trump relentlessly talking about the "rigged" political system.

There will inevitably be

widespread despair in sections of the left and a feeling that all attempts to move society forward are useless. It is absolutely essential to push back against this mood. Real change comes from the bottom up, from mass movements in the workplaces and the streets.

Counter-revolution

Trump's victory represents the 'whip of counter-revolution'. There will be chaos and provocations which will impel millions into defensive action.

This is why those who have been radicalised in the past period must redouble their efforts to build a real mass movement for change, independent of corporate control. The social movements of recent years and especially BLM

show the potential.

But it also essential to see that Trump will inevitably disappoint his supporters. "Building a wall" will not create millions of good jobs to replace those lost to automation and trade deals. And though he talks about investing in 21st century infrastructure, he is also committed to even further massive tax breaks for billionaires like himself.

A mass movement against Trump will need to appeal directly to the white working class and explain how we can create a future where all young people can have a decent future rather than trying to recreate the 'American dream' by deepening racial division. Such a future can only be achieved with socialist policies.

working class and middle class did indeed use this election to underline their utter rejection of the Democratic Party and also the establishment of the Republicans. In a distorted way, tens of millions were looking for a way to oppose the corporate elite.

We do not close our eyes to the growth in support among a minority for far right ideas but it is revealing, for example, that exit polls showed that 70% said undocumented immigrants "should be offered legal status" against 25% who said they should be deported.

This is why it is absolutely

tragic that Bernie Sanders was not on the ballot. We urged him to run as an independent as early as September 2014 when he first raised the idea of a presidential campaign.

Warning

When he decided to run within the Democratic Party primary we disagreed with accepting this framework but continued to engage with his supporters in a discussion about how to achieve his programme and the need for a new party.

Our warnings about the consequences of supporting Hillary

Socialism Today

The Socialist Party's magazine

November issue includes

- **Left-wing populism** Corbyn insurgency is part of international left-wing wave, writes Peter Taaffe
- **Spain** Spain's social democratic crisis and the class struggle, by Juan Ignacio Ramos

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Secret hospital closures: bosses must come clean

Sam Gleaden
Lambeth Socialist Party

NHS England has secret plans for closing A&Es and even a whole hospital, according to an investigation by the King's Fund think-tank.

NHS England has told local health managers not to reveal plans or engage with the public, instead relying on an expensive team of management consultants to organise the restructuring.

Leaks show that Merseyside alone plans to 'merge' four hospitals to cover a £1 billion shortfall. This is all in order to close the huge funding deficit of the NHS - £2.45 billion just this year.



Leaks show that Merseyside alone plans to 'merge' four hospitals to cover a £1 billion shortfall

This deficit comes from a steady decrease in government funding, as well as the outrageous costs of the 'internal market' system, and 'PFI' financing. Scrapping PFI and creating a truly nationalised health service would cut out the need for

competing health providers, saving billions leeches off by the private sector.

The recent wave of spending reviews have been misnamed 'sustainability and transformation plans' (STPs). When translated from Tory to English, that means further privatisation and spending cuts.

This is to justify lucrative sell-offs like the recent £700 million NHS contract for Virgin Care. The public outrage contracts like this provoke meant NHS England specially advised its managers on how to block Freedom of Information requests on STPs.

Scheming

A fully publicly owned NHS under democratic workers' control and management would have no room for scheming management teams.

The government hopes that by hiding spending cuts, it can stop burgeoning grassroots campaigns from gaining traction. Campaigns like #HandsOffHRI in Huddersfield, which the Socialist Party has played a key role in.

Earlier this year, #HandsOffHRI mobilised the biggest demonstration Huddersfield has seen since 1918. We link essential campaigning like this across the country to the need for an anti-austerity mass workers' party based on socialist policies.

■ National march to save our NHS: 4 March 2017, central London



Health workers and campaigners marching against cuts at Whipps Cross Hospital, east London photo Paul Mattsson

SUPPORT THE CAMPAIGN TO READMIT EXPELLED SOCIALISTS



Hannah Sell
Socialist Party
deputy general secretary

75 socialists, with more than a thousand years' membership of the Labour Party between them, have collectively applied to the Labour Party's national executive committee (NEC) to be readmitted.

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

Among the 75 are members of the Militant editorial board, including Peter Taaffe, now general secretary of the Socialist Party; Tony Mulhearn, one of the leaders of the struggle of Liverpool City Council in the 1980s; Dave Nellist, previously Labour MP for Coventry South East; and Chris Baugh, assistant general secretary of public sector union PCS.

Our application has already been widely reported in the media, including the Guardian, Mirror, Times and BBC. As anticipated, much of the commentary has repeated the old smears.

Kevin Maguire in the Mirror, for example, quoted Peter Taaffe saying "Jeremy [Corbyn] represents a new era: democratic, open and so on." But he then accuses the Militant Tendency of not being "open" or "appearing democratic".

However, it is precisely because of our open and very democratic

approach, today and in the past, that Socialist Party members are participating in this joint application.

It explains that "because many of us who found ourselves outside the Labour Party rightly continued the struggle for socialism through membership of other organisations, we know that our applications for readmittance will be denounced by the establishment media as 'left-wing infiltration'."

"But we have no wish to hide our background. We urge the NEC to boldly undercut the media's attack, not only by admitting us into membership as individuals, but by deciding favourably on requests for affiliation from any socialist organisation that so applies."

Corbyn

The election of Jeremy Corbyn as Labour leader represents an opportunity for the Labour Party to be rebuilt as a clearly anti-austerity, socialist party, with an open and democratic structure.

However, it is clear that the Blairites remain determined to return Labour to being a pro-capitalist and pro-austerity party - and therefore to undermine and, when possible, remove Jeremy Corbyn.

There is a real danger that, on the basis of further compromises and retreats in a vain attempt to pacify the right, the opportunity to change Labour could be wasted.

We are campaigning for the Labour Party NEC to support our application when it meets on 22 November. We call on all trade unionists and

socialists to campaign in our support in order to strengthen the struggle for a socialist Labour Party.

When asked about our application on the Andrew Marr show, Jeremy Corbyn pointed out it was a matter for the NEC, and would depend whether the individuals concerned were members of a "proscribed organisation".

However, the very notion of 'proscribed organisations' sprang from the witch-hunt against the left in the past, which Jeremy rightly and trenchantly opposed. We call on all lefts on the NEC, including Jeremy, to support our application.

In the few days since it has been launched, over 300 trade unionists and Labour Party members have signed the petition (all in a personal capacity) to support the application.

They include Janice Godrich, PCS president; John McNally, PCS vice-president; Fran Heathcote, Katrine Williams and Marion Lloyd, PCS NEC; John Reid, transport union RMT NEC; Suzanne Muna, general union Unite NEC; Jane Nellist and Simon Murch, teachers' union NUT NEC; and Ian Hodson, bakers' union BFAWU president.

Please add your signature and urge others to do the same. If you are in Labour-affiliated union, urge any representatives your union has on the Labour NEC to support us.

■ For the full text of our application, the petition, and more detail on who has supported it so far, go to: socialistparty.org.uk/main/readmit_expelled_socialists

Super-rich investigated

One third of 'high net worth individuals' are under investigation by HM Revenue and Customs, says the National Audit Office.

Those with wealth of over £20 million - about 6,500 people in the UK, the 0.01% - could owe £1.9 billion in missing tax. Tax collectors estimate about £1.4 billion of this went to advertised tax-avoidance schemes.

The Socialist welcomes Revenue bosses turning their attention from attacking staff to taxing the super-rich. But we say: investigate the lot of them! How does anyone 'earn' over £20 million?

It's unlikely to be through work, that's for sure. It's most likely to be money workers have made for them, which they claim to own. Taxing some of that back is all well and good, but workers produced it, and the working class should own the lot.

Nationalise the banks and top corporations. Take the wealth off the 1%. For a democratic socialist plan of production, not just begging capitalist thieves to hand some of their loot back.

£1.5TRN HOUSEHOLD DEBT NATIONALISE THE BANKS!

Laurel Fogarty
Kingston Socialist Party

The average adult in the UK is now a whopping £30,000 in debt. This is 113% of the average annual income. The total household debt in the UK has rocketed to over £1.5 trillion.

90
A home is repossessed every 90 minutes

Families are feeling the pinch. These numbers translate into real suffering for ordinary people, with

be nationalised to operate in the interests of ordinary people. Right now, the bosses use them to bury the working class under increasing mountains of unpayable debt.

For young people in particular, this sudden uptick in private debt is crippling.

As students are forced to take out massive loans to fund their education, they also face fierce battles against low wages and increasingly insecure employment.

306
Landlord possession orders filed every day

The fight for free education goes hand in hand with the fight for better working conditions and a £10 an hour minimum wage without exemptions. We need coordinated strikes and a mass party for workers to fight and win these battles, to give young people the hope of a debt-free future.

a reported 17 homes repossessed every day - or one every hour and a half - this year.

For renters the effects are similar, with 306 landlord possession orders filed every day, as rents are pushed up and wages stagnate.

Resistance

This shines a stark light on the vital need for a cap on rents, a mass programme of council house building, and an effective resistance to evictions as rent arrears accrue.

A huge amount of this massive debt is paid in interest on mortgages, credit cards, and loans - bald profits for the banks and their shareholders.

This naked profiteering in the face of crippling debt, evictions, and repossessions shows that these greedy financial institutions must



Unmanageable debt is causing spiralling repossessions and evictions photo Erich Ferdinand/Creative Commons

Court win against bedroom tax not enough

Disabled rights campaigners outside the Supreme Court photo Amalia



Amalia
Socialist Party disabled people and carers' group

Top judges have ruled against part of the Tories' hated 'bedroom tax' benefit cap.

Campaigners against benefit cuts and sanctions gathered outside the Supreme Court on 9 November for the ruling in relation to seven bedroom tax cases.

This was about people who are disabled, and their carers - but also single mums and children fleeing domestic violence.

The court decided in favour of two cases concerning severe disabilities. As campaigners put it, "some justice was done".

But unfortunately the victims of domestic violence were left without any exemption by the state in relation to the bedroom tax.

A campaigner from 'Single Mothers' Self-Defence' argued this is also about children's safety. In combination with the other attacks on wel-

fare, these women are driven into poverty. Poverty means they are not safe, and can't protect their children who are often taken away from them.

After the ruling, campaigners raised their placards and talked to the media, emphasising that the struggle continues until all justice is done, and that this government has blood on its hands.

Deaths

They chanted slogans such as "axe the bedroom tax!" and "no more deaths from benefit cuts!" Some held a banner with the names of people who have died as a result of benefit sanctions.

This small victory does not mean the bedroom tax is illegal. The judiciary exists to defend the bosses' system, not challenge it.

Jeremy Corbyn has spoken against the bedroom tax and benefit cap. But he must demand Labour councils refuse to implement them. To really fight the cuts means kicking out the Blairites who back them.



SOCIALISM 2016: ELECTRIFYING AND POWERFUL WEEKEND PUTS SOCIALISM ON THE AGENDA

Saturday night rally: 'The centre cannot hold'

James Ivens
Lambeth & south west London
Socialist Party

“Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold” - WB Yeats during an earlier revolutionary time. Claire Laker-Mansfield, Socialist Party national youth and student organiser, chose these words to open 2016’s exceptional Rally for Socialism.

Stood in front of a giant’s fist in five colours, stamped with the words ‘Resist Trump’, Claire explained: “Trump’s rise is a symptom of the profound failure of the capitalist system.”

“There are those who argue the left should enter a period of political mourning and despair. Here, we say: don’t mourn. Organise.”

Darletta Scruggs of Socialist Alternative, the Socialist Party’s co-thinkers in the United States, reported huge openness to our ideas. They have already led mass protests.

“In the US, for decades, the word ‘socialism’ has been used as a taboo word, it has been stigmatised. But for a socialist organisation of 900 members to make a call and mobilise 40,000 people shows the correctness of socialist ideas.”

“Within 27 hours we had 400 on-line applicants signing up to join our organisation.”

Trump v Sanders

Socialist Party general secretary Peter Taaffe asked “why is it that a misogynist, a racist bigot, a representative of big business par excellence, was allowed to come to power? The simple answer is that his opponent Hillary Clinton stood for more of the same.”

Peter noted the overwhelming majority of “the real working class and youth were behind Bernie Sanders.” And Sanders’ failure has an urgent warning for us. “Don’t compromise with the right.”

The Socialist Party wants to play a

full part in fighting to claim Labour for the working class. But if Labour does not readmit us, “that’s not a tragedy.”

When 18 million people refused to pay Thatcher’s hated poll tax, bringing down the policy and ending her career, who organised them? “It wasn’t the Labour leaders. It wasn’t the general council of the TUC. It was Militant,” the forerunner of the Socialist Party.

And there have been important victories recently too.

Two million school students struck in Spain in October against attacks on education, led by militant socialists in Izquierda Revolucionaria. In two months, they have recruited over 3,000 more students to the student union they play a leading

role in. Juan Ignacio Ramos, Izquierda Revolucionaria general secretary, reported: “We have built active groups of the student union in more than 500 secondary schools, in more than 90 universities.”

Izquierda Revolucionaria was once part of the Committee for a Workers’ International, along with the Socialist Party. “24 years ago, our paths separated in a painful split.”

Hoarse at times with passion, and waving his fist defiantly, Juan declared: “Now we are retying the knot of the common history which unites our organisations!”

A thundering cheer burst out as we took to our feet. There was uproarious applause and chanting of “¡El pueblo, unido, jamás será vencido!”

Residents of the Butterfields estate in east London saved their homes. Anna Palumbo was one of them. “I’m here tonight to testify that if you fight, you have a chance to win.”

“We faced intimidation and bullying. But we decided to fight. We decided not to budge.”

“Our amazing Linda and Nancy Taaffe - with other amazing members of the Socialist Party - organised us, led our marches, raised our voices to



Butterfields tenants, Anna (centre)

the media. They wiped out our tears when we lost our hope.”

“And we won.” Another ringing standing ovation.

Public sector union PCS defeated a mortal threat this year. Chris Baugh, PCS assistant general secretary and Socialist Party member, read from an HM Revenue and Customs management document.

Instead of taking on tax dodgers, it proposed “to achieve the complete degradation of PCS’s organising capability.” The government tried to choke the union by stopping members paying dues directly from their wages.

In response, the PCS re-recruited 152,000 of the 160,000 members the government had de facto removed from the union. They beat the Tories!

Sean Hoyle, president of militant transport union RMT, is still fighting a vital battle. Rail bosses “want to scrap safety-critical guards to ‘save’ £20 billion - wrong phrase - to collect £20 billion to hand to privateers.”



Sean Hoyle

Opportunity

Socialist Party executive committee member Judy Beishon reported that pharmaceutical company “Glaxo-SmithKline made £1 billion from the collapse of sterling. And what did they do? They immediately announced massive dividends. They give to their class. Tonight, you have the opportunity to give to yours.”

This financial appeal raised tens of thousands. The Butterfields tenants gave £100.

Sean said: “Rule number one in our ‘Bible’ [RMT rule book] is that we must ‘strive to replace the capitalist system with a socialist order.”

“It has never been more necessary to spread the ideas of socialism,” said Peter.

Darletta concluded: “Let’s build a society our children can be proud of. We have the opportunity to win. And I say: let’s get free, family!”

Struggle, internationalism and socialism, these ideas - and how powerful they can be in action - electrified the magnificent rallies and workshops of the Socialism 2016 weekend.

Around 1,000 working class fighters, socialists and people who are socialist-curious, trade union militants and students participated. All the central questions of how we build a wall of resistance against Trump, austerity and capitalism were addressed.

New attenders were blown away by the energy and seriousness of the Socialist Party. Experienced members drew confidence from the new ranks filling out the party.

The £26,313 that was raised in the rally fighting fund appeal, the £2,000 literature sales and £1,000 raised by sales of artwork by Alan Hardman is an indicator of how inspired those who attended are to take up the challenges to fight for socialist change.

Sarah Sachs-Eldridge, Socialism 2016 organiser

WHAT YOU THOUGHT

I can’t stop thinking about Socialism 2016. It was the first time I attended and I was so impressed with the passion, strategy, knowledge and awareness of people’s situation which was expressed by all the speakers and the response from members. Organising such an event is a tall order and there was nothing that was left out - truly brilliant. I became a member of the Socialist Party straight away.

Marian O’Brien, new member, west London

What a weekend of lively debate and fun. The sessions I attended were informative and interesting and there’s never a dull moment at Socialism!

Sally Griffiths, Salford

I was hugely impressed by all of the speakers at the rallies and the enthusiasm and passion shown by the large



All photos by Paul Mattsson unless otherwise stated

crowds. It was really uplifting and inspiring to see so many people who are dedicated to driving real social change in one place and these rallies had a real ‘rock concert’ atmosphere. Roll on Socialism 2017!

James Hinchcliffe, Manchester

The Saturday night rally was best for a long time. It’s great to celebrate victories like Butterfields, hear about the work of our comrades in US and their immediate bold response to Trump’s election. It was heartening to retie the knot with Spanish comrades and wonderful to see so many talented and dedicated young comrades. Our younger visitors thought the créche was great - like being on holiday!

Heather Rawling, Leicester

Socialism 2016 was one of the best events I’ve ever attended. It was very inspiring to hear activists from around Britain and the world! I was particularly moved by the heroic Butterfields housing campaigners who spoke about their victory. And as a disabled member I had

the chance to discuss disability issues in times of austerity.

Amalia, Tower Hamlets, east London

As a fairly new member of the Socialist Party this was my first Socialism weekend and I was certainly very impressed. It was excellent to be part of a vibrant celebration of socialist thought and to listen to and interact with a wide range of people and opinion. The highlight for me was Saturday’s discussion around TUSC and our relationship with the Labour Party, with Dave Nellist, TUSC national chair, and RMT President Sean Hoyle as speakers.

Greg Price, Manchester



As this was my first Socialism event, I didn’t really know what to expect. The discussions taught me a lot and opened my mind to new ideas. The passion and motivation of speakers surrounding their chosen topics was heart-warming and it was amazing to see such meaningful and civilised discussion between comrades. I started the weekend with doubts about joining the Socialist Party but due to the welcoming atmosphere and a sincere desire by all comrades to engage in politics and to genuinely take action in changing the problematic world we live in, I see now that there is no other party that shares the same viewpoints and ideas as me and so have been swayed to join.

Wajiya, west Midlands

Attending Socialism 2016 has been a truly inspiring experience for me. At a time when capitalism is only capable of offering us cuts, austerity, unemployment and a future of misery for the majority, the programme and ideas of revolutionary Marxism are proving to be tremendously

relevant, as a way out of the problems faced by youth and the working class. Socialism 2016 has given me a deeper understanding of the methods and traditions of Militant. See you again at Socialism 2017!

Alberto Fernández, Izquierda Revolucionaria and Stoke Socialist Party

We have the ideas, drive and passion to do something significant to the world. I am beyond inspired to help our people and be educated through our daily struggle.

Rebecca Storey, Northumbria University

As a new member it has been a great place to get a better understanding of the party and socialism as a whole. After Donald Trump’s election I needed something to lift the gloom and this weekend has done just that. A valuable experience with the added benefit of being thoroughly enjoyable.

Sean Laws, South Tyne and Wear

Organising the resistance

Scott Jones
East London Socialist Party

“Politics has been turned upside down.” Irish TD (MP) Paul Murphy, in the midst of fighting outrageous charges of false imprisonment, summed up Socialism 2016 perfectly when speaking at the ‘Organising the resistance’ rally which closed an inspiring weekend of discussion and debate.

Paul could go to jail next year as the Irish state attempts to find him guilty of spurious charges relating to a peaceful sit-down protest in Jobstown, Dublin, in 2014 against the hated and now defeated water charges in Ireland. Paul said: “We will make them rue the day they came after us and our trial will be class struggle in the courtroom.”

Resistance ran through the rally as Isai Priya of Tamil Solidarity kicked off by detailing not only the plight of and attacks on refugees, but the fight-back: “We have only got any rights because we have fought for them.”

She was followed by Zoe Brunswick, a medical student from Manchester, who has been fighting on two

fronts - standing alongside the heroic junior doctors in their battle and fighting against attacks on students.

She urged support for both the 19 November student demonstration and the national NHS protest on 4 March 2017.

Nancy Taaffe, a Socialist Party activist speaking about the ‘We won’t move’ housing campaign which campaigned alongside the Butterfields tenants, said their victory was down to organising, mobilising and resisting the threats intended to make them move.

Socialist Party deputy general secretary Hannah Sell closed the weekend by describing the role the Socialist Party can play as capitalist crisis continues and anger grows: “A century ago workers realised that progressive capitalism doesn’t exist and formed the Labour Party. The working class will enter struggle and will draw socialist conclusions.”

Hannah described our role in the fight to support Jeremy Corbyn, as the hundreds of thousands of people who have entered struggle to support him is a real opportunity to build a party of the working class.

Michael Crick debates Militant’s history with Peter Taaffe

The debate between Michael Crick, well known Channel 4 journalist and the author of the book ‘Militant’, and Peter Taaffe, general secretary of the Socialist Party, generated great interest. 120 attended and 100 were locked out, unable to get in the room.

Peter began by quoting from Michael’s comments on the BBC Radio 4 programme. The thing about Militant was that they were “brilliantly organised, brilliant orators. They plan things, know what they’re doing and they keep at it. They’re committed, they put the hours in, they go to meetings night after night after night and they commit huge amounts of their own personal income and their lives!”

Peter then suggested, tongue in cheek, that in view of the highly complementary remarks on Militant,

perhaps Michael would consider joining the Socialist Party! However, Peter showed that the real purpose of Michael’s book was to strengthen the hand of Labour’s right wing in their attack on Militant in the 1980s. The republication of this book now had the same purpose.

Michael responded by attacking us for allegedly acting in an underhand fashion for not admitting that we were organised. Peter countered that we never denied we were organised but our real crime was that we were better organised than the right. Moreover, Michael admitted that he had acted in an underhand fashion by sending agents into our ranks to secretly record what was said at meetings of Militant.

A very robust debate followed, which Michael said he enjoyed. You can judge the merits of both sides when the video of this discussion is carried on the Socialist Party website soon.



Paul Murphy
photo Dave Gorton



Michael Crick
(left) photo Leicester Socialists

MASS PRISON OFFICER WALKOUT OVER HEALTH AND SAFETY



Lincoln photo Nick Parker

In the last issue of the Socialist we published an article by a prison officer detailing the reasons for the crisis in prisons and calling for action. On 15 November action was taken.

Thousands of prison officers up and down the country walked out of their workplaces taking unofficial strike action. This is over cuts and privatisation that has led to increasing deaths in custody including homicides, incidents of self-harm and assaults among prisoners, plus a 43% rise in assaults on staff in the last year.

The Socialist was snapped up at Wormwood Scrubs by prison officers eager to read the article by one

of their own - one bought the paper for £10. Rob Williams, NSSN national chair, addressed the picket line bringing solidarity.

Prison officers were handed a letter by management threatening them with disciplinary action for walking out which is a legal right of any employee. The government then won a High Court injunction against the action. Prison officers have been denied their right to strike since 1994.

Around 50 prison officers picketed the prison at Wetherby, Yorkshire, which has been heavily affected by inter-prisoner violence. Staff there told Socialist Party member Iain Dalton that while young offenders' insti-

tutes had been spared the worst effects of the cuts compared to the rest of the prison estate, they still had the same problems of not having enough staff to properly supervise prisoners.

The POA union of prison officers and allied workers has said as many as 10,000 officers took part in the walkout which follows previous unofficial action at branches like Holme House, Wetherby and Wormwood Scrubs.

POA general secretary Steve Gillan said: "The POA has consistently raised the volatile and dangerous state of prisons, as chronic staff shortages and impoverished regimes has resulted in staff no longer being safe."

Deliveroo couriers get organised

Rob Williams
NSSN national chair

The Independent Workers of Great Britain (IWGB) union has launched a recruitment drive among Deliveroo couriers as part of its campaign to secure real employment rights for the food delivery drivers.

The London strikes this summer of IWGB members in companies like Deliveroo and Uber Eats have helped lift the lid on the 'gig economy' where low-paid workers are super-exploited by being seen as individual contractors rather than employees and therefore having few employment rights.

Three weeks ago, two taxi drivers in the GMB union won an employment tribunal against Uber, which should open the door to them being

regarded as workers and therefore entitled to the national living wage, holiday pay, etc. Predictably, Uber is appealing the judgement!

National Shop Stewards Network (NSSN) supporters attended an IWGB organising meeting last week and have been helping the union in its campaign to sign up drivers. The union is targeting a 'zone' in north London to use as a test case to get sufficient numbers of union members to press for a union recognition agreement as a step towards securing collective bargaining, which could benefit the estimated 8,000 couriers throughout the UK.

■ If you are a Deliveroo courier, contact IWGB union couriers branch by emailing clb@iwgb.org.uk and visit the website for more: iwgbcblb.wordpress.com/about



photo M^osieur J/Creative Commons



[News in brief]

■ Drivers' dispute

Not a single bus moved at Arriva's Castleford depot as Unite members took part in a strike across the service in West Yorkshire. The 24-hour strike was taking place on both the issue of pay and driving hours, with Unite seeking a 20p an hour pay increase and a reduction in number of trips between breaks. A couple of young drivers talked of how they had to work for years before coming off the training rate. They also spoke of huge pressures on drivers over sick days, with many working while ill leading to more drivers coming down with illness and needing to take days off. The mood on the picket line was upbeat and determined. Yet despite the shutdown in the service, several workers felt they would need further action to force Arriva to meet their demands.

Iain Dalton, Leeds Socialist Party

■ Sweet strike

GMB has announced four days of strike action and continuous action short of strikes at the York sweet factory, Tangerine. Pickets will be out across every shift and there is a feeling of solidarity both on the picket line and within the factory. One worker said that this dispute is bringing the workers together in a way not seen before,

and there has been a 200% increase in union membership in the months since the workers rejected an initial offer. There have been two days of strikes so far. On the first day only one line from a possible twelve lines was running. Management and inexperienced workers tried to run other lines, but this led to huge amounts of sweets being ruined and having to be skipped. A group of non-unionised Polish workers was also on the picket line and is seriously considering joining the GMB union. They were very clear about their support for the strike and solidarity with their striking co-workers. There was an 82% vote in favour of this action and although talks are continuing there is a feeling that the dispute will go on.

Nigel Smith, York Socialist Party

■ Bin bust-up

Two full days and two half days of strike action plus an effective "work to management rules" by nearly 200 Sheffield GMB bin workers forced Veolia management to increase their pay offer a second time. The 1.9% pay rise over 15 months was accepted by 162 in favour, 19 against and four spoiled ballots. This is the second dispute this year after 17 years with no strike action. Workers have shown Veolia that they will not be bullied by management or scabs, and are increasingly demanding that the Labour council take the outsourced contract back in-house as demanded by the Socialist Party in its petition to the council meeting.

Alastair Tice, Sheffield Socialist Party

photo Durham TAs



Solid Durham teaching assistants strike as 2,000 walk out

Alan Docherty
Teesside Socialist Party

Almost 2,000 teaching assistants (TAs), Unison and ATL members, in County Durham struck on 8 and 9 November against the Labour council that is proposing to cut their wages.

The action disrupted over 100 schools and closed 43 completely. Schools were picketed and strikers were joined by parents and members of the other teaching unions.

On the second morning of the strike 1,000 teaching assistants descended on county hall. The staff lined the street and received massive support from passing commuters.

At 12 noon the teaching assistants rallied at Durham Miners HQ. The hall was packed with standing room only as approximately 1,200 strikers and supporters sang and cheered.

They also listened to speeches from Unison general secretary Dave Prentis and Lisa Turnbull from the Teaching Assistants Activist Committee.

Labour council

The strike was called after pressure from teaching assistants who have had to organise their own campaign to force Unison into action. Durham County Council has started the process to sack all 2,700 teaching assistants and re-engage them on term-time contracts that could cut their pay by up to 23%.

The Labour council claims it has no alternative because it could face equal pay claims because of the teaching assistants' non-standard contract that pays them for 52 weeks a year and time not worked.

Teaching assistants in Durham are paid several thousand pounds a year less than TAs in neighbouring

authorities. These authorities pay all their TAs in accordance with single-status conditions. Yet Durham Labour council is proposing to cut their pay by up to another £4,600 a year and intends to impose the new contract in January after TAs rejected an offer of two years compensation.

Unison has been slow to take action to support its TAs. The TAs have had to organise themselves and Unison's officers were originally hostile to their unofficial organising committee, even trying to block and delay them from becoming accredited stewards. The TAs are now fighting to democratise Unison to ensure it fights for them.

They are determined not to accept any pay cut and are seeking re-grading to bring them into line with TAs in other authorities. Additional days of strike have been called but the dates have yet to be confirmed.

LONDON UNDERGROUND: RMT WINS MASSIVE VICTORY AND ANNOUNCES STRIKE ACTION FOR MORE WORKER

Tube workers' union RMT has secured a victory for London Underground maintenance staff on pensions, pay and night tube working.

All current and new workers from January 2017 will now have access to the Transport for London pension scheme.

Workers will receive a 'protected RPI pensionable salary increase' in every year from April 2015 until April 2019. Plus a consolidated £500 payment in the first year in recognition of the move to a 24-hour passenger service operation.

A further £500 non-consolidated payment will go to all operational staff following the launch of night tube on the Piccadilly Line on 16 December.

The breakthrough has come after years of determined and united campaigning and fighting for a fair deal which has included the use of industrial action.

Thousands of other tube workers have voted to go on strike over two separate disputes. Station workers in the RMT have voted 85% in favour of action over staffing and safety while drivers on the Piccadilly Line have also announced action over a "wholesale breakdown" in industrial relations. About 3,400 workers are involved and the strikes look set to take place in the run-up to Christmas.

General secretary Mick Cash said the "toxic impact of the job cuts programme" had made working on the Tube "horrific".



photo Petr Kratochvil/Creative Commons

Steel workers' pensions under threat again

Welsh steel worker and Unite member

Once again steel workers have been left reeling, bitterly disappointed and suffering from a deep sense of betrayal, since it was announced that Tata Steel will be closing the British Steel pension scheme in January.

Only in May 2015 steel workers voted to take industrial action, which would have resulted in the first major strike the industry had seen in 35 years, as a last resort in the bitter dispute with the company to keep the pension scheme open.

In that dispute the company threatened to close the pension scheme unless steel workers agreed to an erosion of their already weakened terms and conditions. When rumours spread of the possibility of plant closures if steel workers failed to agree to the company's unreasonable demands, unfortunately many historically hard fought for terms and conditions were given up.

A recovery plan drawn up in 2011 saw Tata agreeing to meet its legal

obligations by paying in monies at intervals to address the deficit in the scheme. Now it appears that in a highly cynical move, the company will close the scheme, enabling it to eschew its obligations to its workforce and their families despite the dramatic improvement in the health of the scheme.

Health

Many retired steel workers, having given up their health in the tough, demanding industry, are suffering mentally and emotionally, having also been left in the dark as to how this bad news could affect them and their dependants.

This struggle will be only too familiar to hard-working junior doctors, firefighters, teaching assistants and many other workers up and down Tory Britain.

Very soon the time will come when steel workers will have to decide whether to continue in the race to the bottom as far as terms and conditions are concerned or organise, resist and fight to retain what is left of the previously hard fought-for pensions and terms and conditions.

Southampton Labour must bin Tory cuts!

Southampton Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC) campaigners, including Socialist Party members, staged a protest on 15 November outside the city's civic centre against cuts to the weekly bin collection service. TUSC campaigners pointed out that the cut to the weekly bin collection is only a budget for rats, fly-tipping and increased health problems.

legal no-cuts budget using reserves and prudential borrowing to protect jobs and services," said TUSC

"The re-election victory of Jeremy Corbyn was based on opposition to Tory austerity. Austerity is a choice. Southampton Labour council must reject further cuts and build a mass campaign of council workers, their unions and the city community to demand the restoration of the £100 million government funding stolen from Southampton since 2010."

"To build such a campaign Southampton Labour should call a budget conference of the local trade unions and community organisations to establish the needs of the city and set a budget. Such a stand would receive massive support from those hammered by cuts. If an appeal was made to other Labour councils to follow suit, such a campaign could force a retreat from the government's attacks on local council funding."

"Southampton Labour councillors should refuse to implement Tory cuts or resign and make way for those who are prepared to fight." **Nick Chaffey, secretary and Sue Atkins, chair: Southampton TUSC**



photo Paul Mattsson



The cut to the weekly bin collection is only a budget for rats, fly-tipping and increased health problems

The cuts are part of the huge austerity cuts imposed by the Tory government. "It is time for (council leader) Simon Letts and his Labour councillors to say enough is enough and use the council's powers to set a

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 trade unions. Visit the TUSC website www.tusc.org.uk

Cumbria: Stop axing care home places

Carlisle Socialist Party members handed in a 1,500-signature petition on 9 November demanding that Cumbria County Council scrap its plan to halve the number of care home places.

The protest was featured on ITV Border News and in the local newspaper the News & Star.

"With increasing demand, provision should be increased, not cut. This is especially serious now in Cumbria with the planned closure of cottage hospital beds and the worsening failure of the private sector to provide enough places with the required standard of care," said Carlisle Socialist Party secretary Brent Kennedy.

Campaigners also questioned the council's 'public consultation' exercise. "Family members have told



photo Carlisle SP

us their relatives have recently been turned away from the existing care homes and members of staff have informed us that you are deliberately keeping the homes half empty in anticipation of their closure - in two years' time.

"If this is the case, it raises the question: what is the 'public consultation' for? Is this just a cynical pretence of democratic participation to provide a legal cover for a decision you have already made and are already implementing by stealth?"

Socialist Party Fighting Fund

	£ target	£ received	October-December 2016	Deadline 4 January 2017
Northern	750	1,198		
North West	2,100	1,262		
Wales	2,300	1,065		
East Midlands	1,850	730		
South West	1,800	559		
Yorkshire	3,300	1,018		
Southern	1,600	413		
West Midlands	2,900	671		
London	6,100	1,408		
South East	750	88		
Eastern	1,200	98		
Other	5,650	2,003		
TOTAL	30,000	10,512		

A magnificent **£26,314** was raised for the Socialist Party's fighting fund at **Socialism2016** (reports on pages 8&9). This huge sum included two individual donations of **£1,000** each. But the collection was overwhelmingly made up from much smaller amounts from many low income people (the amount raised will be incorporated into next week's fighting fund chart). Readers who were unable to attend the event are welcome to donate - online socialistparty.org.uk / donate or phone 020 8988 8777

TUSC vindicated in censorship protest

As the democratic credentials of 'official politics' are being increasingly questioned, the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC) recently chalked up a modest victory against establishment efforts to prevent alternative voices from being heard.

In the contests held this May for the directly-elected Mayors of Bristol and Liverpool councils the TUSC candidates suffered what can only be described as political censorship of the election addresses they submitted for inclusion in the mayoral election booklets distributed to every elector.

There are rules about the content of the address, that it should not be used for commercial gain or, regarding its political content, that it must not contain "any material referring to any other candidate".

What the rules don't say, however, is that the candidate cannot refer to "the Tory government's demands for cuts" or state that right-wing "Liverpool Labour is slashing our public services"! But those were two of the deceptions that were demanded by the returning officers in Bristol and Liverpool from the election addresses submitted by the TUSC candidates.

Now, five months later, after formal complaints to the returning officers in the two cities, the national Electoral Commission has conceded that the councils' officers were making their own interpretation of the law when they insisted on amendments to the TUSC election addresses.

In other words what happened was indeed an exercise in political censorship.

Bristol campaigners demand anti-austerity alternative

A letter has been sent to Bristol's Labour Mayor Marvin Rees from Socialist Party member and former TUSC mayoral candidate Tom Baldwin on behalf of the Bristol and District Anti-Cuts Alliance (BADACA).

It follows an earlier meeting held between the mayor and representatives of BADACA to discuss an alternative to the 1,000 jobs (one-in-six posts) being cut by the council at the time. Since then a further £27 million of cuts have been announced which will severely damage vital services provided by the council.

BADACA representatives put forward suggestions for how the mayor could take a no-cuts approach, centred on the need for mass campaigning to turn back the tide of Tory austerity.

The letter largely addresses some of the legal concerns about such a strategy that were raised. Marvin Rees is yet to respond.

How councils can set legal no-cuts budgets is detailed in the Socialist Party's magazine Socialism Today, September 2015 (socialismtoday.org).

PRIVATISATION AND THE 'RACE TO THE BOTTOM'

Casualisation of education - nowhere to run

In the union office where I work, officers report that it is increasingly common to go into an academy school where there is no teaching staff over the age of 40 - in some schools this is as low as 30.

It seems that older teachers can't keep up with the sadistic workload expectations imposed on them by privatisation and find some way to get out.

They increasingly phone us up to enquire about flexible working, early pension take up, or taking a compromise agreement and working for an agency or supply. The "supply" group of teachers is one of the fastest growing sections in our office. This means, in effect, the teaching profession is being casualised.

It's not uncommon for whole chunks of a staff to leave at the end of the summer term as teachers desperately seek a better work/life balance in another school.

Payment by results

'Payment by results' can lock someone on a low pay scale for years and can mean that the only way to drive up your pay is to move quickly from one school to the next and try to secure promotions.

For children and young people continuity and routine can be crucial to a feeling of stability and helping with learning. The fact is many schools now don't have a stable school staff, apart from those on senior leadership levels.

This young workforce is increasing saddled with huge student debt, lives in shared accommodation, travels miles to work and can spend virtually all its weekends preparing for the week ahead. It's also one that lives in fear of targets, assessments, capability procedures and observations.

It's not uncommon now for teachers to be expected to be in at 7.30am in the morning. Some heads are scheduling 'briefings' as early as 8am, making arriving at school at that ungodly hour compulsory.

I took a call from one teacher who told me she was going back to plumbing as she thought the hours were better and at least she'd see her kids!

The strike at the end of last term reflected the pent up frustration and anger. Former Tory education secretary Nicky Morgan's announcement of "every school an academy by 2022", means there is nowhere to run to. The only option is to fight!



Militant trade union action is essential to reverse the disaster of privatisation photo Paul Mattsson

FIGHTING TRADE UNIONS - KEY TO DEFENDING CONDITIONS

I've worked in formerly nationalised industries my whole life. When I worked as a bus driver for one of the privatised London bus companies in the early noughties many of my colleagues were 'ex-LT' (London Transport). This meant that they kept certain conditions like holiday and sick pay which were granted to LT employees before privatisation in the 1990s.

Later I worked for National Express buses, which used to be another publicly owned company. Here, immediately after privatisation, a new pay rate was introduced known as 'market rate' which was



photo Mandy Barry Cades/creative commons

considerably lower than that of established staff. This caused huge anger and resentment with drivers getting less for doing identical work and was finally eliminated

gest single attack at the moment is against having safety critical guards on trains - notably Southern - which the RMT union is fighting.

many years later.

However, as in London, new staff are still recruited on lower sick pay, worse travel facilities and a much worse pension scheme.

I now work for a private train operator. Thanks to determined struggle by the rail unions we have retained the 'final salary' pension scheme and other benefits but the employers are constantly looking for ways to cut costs at the expense of the workforce. The big-

gest single attack at the moment is against having safety critical guards on trains - notably Southern - which the RMT union is fighting.

Health service workers - a history of struggle

Mick Griffiths, Former Mid Yorkshire Unison branch rep

In 1982, National Health Service workers took strike action after being offered a below inflation pay rise by the Thatcher government. The nine month-long national pay dispute only ended when the timid trade union leaders caved in.

Competitive Costs Tendering (CCT) of ancillary services ensued the year following the pay dispute defeat.

Local disputes challenged this but remained isolated. Union leaders agreed to pay cuts in order to keep services 'in house'. Despite this, many services were privatised.

The onslaught continued throughout the 1980s and 1990s using a host of schemes to drive down pay.

In Wakefield we beat back all privatisation and pay cuts attempts. However, at nearby Pontefract the reps allowed the privatisation of nearly all the ancillary services.

During 1995-1996 we faced the ultimate privatisation threat, the Private Finance Initiative (PFI).

Within a couple of years we collected over 25,000 signatures on a petition of opposition to PFI. In February 1991 we lobbied the council to hold a referendum.

The local Wakefield Express ran its own ballot of readers. In league with the council, the Express added an extra question. The council thought that given a choice between PFI and no new hospital, the public would support PFI.

However, our campaign paid off - 83% supported a publicly funded scheme, 97% rejected PFI and an incredible 81% said they would prefer no new hospital to one funded by the private sector!

By 2000 the local health trusts had merged and the new management put out to tender all the support services in an attempt to privatise the lot.

A mass lobby of the trust board and vote for action forced it to bring the Pontefract services back in-house on increased national pay and conditions!

These days all NHS workers' terms and conditions are under attack from government cuts and privatisation. The national NHS union leaders and their unwillingness to launch a serious fightback are responsible for the current situation.

However, the above examples and many others prove that given a lead the members will fight.

Read more online at socialistparty.org.uk

Film: A Street Cat Named Bob Heart-warming tale of neglect by capitalism



Maddy Steeds
Leeds Socialist Party

'A Street Cat Named Bob' is the heart-warming story of a man trying to beat addiction and homelessness with the support of his pet cat. It is based on a true story, and while on the surface it may appear to be a film about a cute cat, at its heart it deals with serious issues in capitalist society.

Government figures say there are thousands of people sleeping on the streets every night, and these figures are increasing every year. The film shows a drug addiction counsellor trying to get a client put into emergency housing so he has a safe environment to live in while attempting to stop taking drugs.

However, the stigma around drug users means he is nearly turned away, as he is seen as less 'deserving' of a home than others. Emergency housing is in short supply, and young families are often in dire need of shelter. But this doesn't mean addicts and other impoverished people do not deserve a basic standard of living too. A socialist programme of mass home building could satisfy both.

Stigma around drug users features heavily in the film. It also shows the difficulties faced by the families of addicts.

UK drug laws mean that even possession of a drug can lead to multiple years of imprisonment, which can put people off looking for help getting clean. The criminalisation of drug use also means there is no regulated, safe way to obtain drugs, leading to even greater risks from using.

Methadone treatment, which is depicted in the film, is a step towards a safe method to quit taking drugs. However, the treatment can be expensive. And so, with ongoing cuts to the NHS, drug users may similarly start being seen as 'unworthy' of NHS treatment.

Socialists must fight cuts and the stigma around addiction. Addicts should be treated as victims, not criminals.

Invest in genuinely affordable housing for all, and fight for a fully funded, publicly owned NHS. We link this to the need for a socialist economic plan - to end poverty, so everyone in society can have food, water and shelter, and a decent, fulfilling life.

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■ One member, one vote

The right wing of the Labour Party has had interesting takes over the years on 'one member one vote' (OMOV) in the party.

In the 1980s, when local parties wanted to deselect right-wing MPs, the right wing, which had vehemently opposed deselection, suddenly decided they were in favour. But only if it was voted on by OMOV, instead of the local Labour Party meeting together and involving elected delegates from local trade union branches.

Now they are equally vehemently fighting OMOV being used for shadow cabinet elections, and are against deselection of MPs by OMOV.

But there is one exception to this rule. OMOV has been introduced for the election of the Welsh representative onto the national executive committee (NEC). The only problem is that only one member will get a vote!

The right wing forced through Labour Party conference, without even a debate, rule changes that are intended to ensure a right-wing majority on the NEC. Part of this means the Welsh representative on the NEC will be 'elected' by just one person - the Labour leader in the Welsh Assembly (currently Carwyn Jones) who will select a frontbench member to attend the NEC.

This has to be the smallest electorate in history. So frightened is the right wing of losing control that it has not even dared allow the Welsh NEC rep to be elected by the Welsh executive committee, let alone by the Labour Party Wales conference.

As the late great Liverpool FC manager Bill Shankly said: "Funny old game, isn't it?"

Dave Reid
Cardiff

■ Busted bus

I caught my last bus recently - not by choice! Where I live, to travel into the nearest town, Malvern, you either have to have a car or use the bus service, which up until a few months ago was running fairly regularly.

First Bus, which took over running Worcestershire County Council's buses, suddenly decided that they weren't making a profit on our route, so were withdrawing it! No notice, just a helpful driver who informed some passengers a couple of weeks before the service disappeared.

Due to the uproar in the various villages, the council was forced to put on a temporary service, although the route was altered so it wasn't very useful, which we all thought was deliberate to ensure that not enough people used it

so that too would be 'uneconomic'.

Sure enough, after the trial period we were informed that it was being replaced by a dial-a-ride service - once a day - which could get you into Malvern early in the morning, and you had to return before lunch! Woe betide you if you have an afternoon appointment or anything else - and, presumably, if the charity minibus is full when you ring the day before, you are told to try another day...

As I pointed out at one of the parish council meetings where our county councillor was present, if the county council hadn't privatised our bus services, this wouldn't have arisen. Speaking to someone on the bus on Saturday, we are still determined to fight on.

Ruthie McNally
Worcester

■ Words not enough

Mere words will not force a Tory retreat. The cant, hypocrisy and callousness of the Tories are displayed by just two of their latest measures.

1. The cuts in benefit entitlements to the unfortunate, which will plunge thousands of families into even deeper poverty. The phoney mantra that work should pay more than benefits is deployed to depict the workless as scroungers, the oldest slander in the book.

2. The rejection of the Orgreave campaign for a public inquiry into the behaviour of the police. This is a monumental

cover-up designed to protect those who gave the police the order to smash the miners by any means necessary, including the use of army detachments. The revolting spectacle of heavily protected police being unleashed with military precision on miners dressed in summer tops and trainers will live in infamy in this country's history.

But words of condemnation are not enough. We need a powerful mass movement to defeat a Tory party bankrolled by hedge-fund managers, private equity spivs, rack-renting landlords and international tax dodgers.

As a first step, Labour councils should refuse to implement any more draconian Tory cuts. Secondly, give full backing to the Orgreave campaigners in their fight for justice.

Tony Mulhearn
Liverpool

■ Reformism warning

I hope our leading comrades have the ear of Jeremy Corbyn and John McDonnell to explain the dangers inherent in left reformism. History is littered with this unintentional betrayal, including recently with Chavez in Venezuela, and more tragically Allende in Chile in 1973.

Trotsky warned the comrades of this in the 1930s. The power of capital must be broken with the democratic public ownership of the banks and financial institutions, along with big business. If this policy is not carried out, our enemies - which include the Blairites - will create the conditions for counterrevolution against a left Labour government.

Jeremy and John must show iron discipline and ruthlessness against our opponents. We must be implacably opposed to all compromises with our enemies, including the Blairites. Because one thing's for sure: they are just biding their time to strike against Jeremy and John.

We must learn the lessons of history to avert what would be a big setback for the working class. We have been warned. Let us make sure it doesn't happen again.

Bill Buchanan
Nottingham



photo Arriva436/Creative Commons

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

Featured letter:
NHS austerity



photo Paul Mattsson

Real cost of NHS cuts

The scale of the funding crisis in the NHS is most often measured in eye-watering figures, but the effect of the cost-cutting and stampede towards privatisation has tens of thousands of human faces caught up in this escalating care nightmare.

Campaigning outside of the Bristol Royal Infirmary, two patients stopped to detail their own case histories.

The first, still dressed in pyjama bottoms, had been due earlier that morning to undergo a cancer operation. He'd been prepped for surgery, and was awaiting taking down to theatre - when he was told that, due to there being no acute beds available, he would have to

go home, even though the surgeons were waiting for him.

Bewildered, angry and close to tears, he said this was the second time the operation had been cancelled. Now, as he stood shivering waiting for a friend to come and pick him up, he despaired of whether he'd get his operation at all.

Another patient had arrived from her home in Torquay and recounted how she had had to travel to Bristol for a scan that her own local hospital had declined to perform, even though staff said they possessed the means to do so. Ferried 108 miles by NHS transport, she was fuming about the cost and the absurdity of having to make a journey for a procedure that had taken just a couple of minutes.

She laughed bitterly at the notion that we still have a national health service, commenting that every trust is in a dog-eat-dog fight to maintain its own sectional budget.

A third patient came out while we were talking and unleashed a volley of abuse against Richard Branson, whose Virgin Care group had gobbled up a lucrative long-term contract to run community care services in Bath. Her hatred for privatisation was visceral, her comments unprintable.

All agreed that the NHS we've grown up with in our lifetimes is in peril. We fight for it or we lose it. Next March's national demonstration to defend our NHS cannot come quickly enough.

Robin Clapp, Bristol



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.

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 replacing fossil fuels with renewable energy and into ending the problems of early obsolescence and unrecycled 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, gender, disability, sexuality, age, and all other forms of prejudice.
- Repeal all laws that trample over civil liberties. For the right to protest! End police harassment.
- Defend abortion rights. For a woman's right to choose when and whether to have children.
- For the right to asylum. No to racist immigration laws.

MASS WORKERS' PARTY

- For a 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.

SOCIALISM AND INTERNATIONALISM

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

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

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STUDENTS AND WORKERS

UNITE AND FIGHT!



Claire Laker-Mansfield
Socialist Students national organiser

“Students and workers: unite and fight!” This chant will ring out on London’s streets on 19 November.

The ‘United for Education’ march taking place that day is the first national demo organised jointly by the National Union of Students (NUS) and University and Colleges Union (UCU) since 2010.

Back then, a 50,000-strong protest sparked a mass movement against the tripling of tuition fees. Six years on, as students and education work-

ers again march side by side, we continue that struggle.

Since Theresa May took office, we have witnessed fresh attempts to segregate young people and label them failures. The clearest example is the plan to turn the clocks back and reintroduce grammar schools.

But the blueprints for segregation don’t stop there. The Higher Education and Research Bill also threatens to create a ‘bronze, silver or gold’ tiered universities system. Meanwhile, viciously cruel cuts to further education will leave thousands of working class people out in the cold.

Despite their rhetoric of ‘aspiration’, the Tories’ real aim is to smash

young people’s expectations. They want us to blame ourselves for the failings of their capitalist system. By labelling swathes of us second-rate, they hope to predispose us towards accepting a life of low pay, insecurity and poverty.

But this march will show that young people do not accept austerity Britain’s paltry offerings. We say education is a right, not a privilege. So as well as declaring our intention to fight every fresh attack the Tories have planned, we are also demanding an education system that works for all, not just the sons and daughters of the rich.

We are demanding a system that

will nurture the talent and potential of every young person, whatever their background. A system that is fully funded, publicly owned, democratically run and universally free at all levels.

So when we chant “students and workers: unite and fight”, we will not be referring to any single demonstration. This must be a slogan that is taken back to every college, school and university. The ‘United for Education’ march must act as a launch for a mass campaign, organised on every campus across the country.

As the march rallies, Darletta Scruggs, a member of Socialist Alternative - co-thinkers of the

Socialist Party in the US - will address the crowd. She will describe the huge protests already developing against the hated Donald Trump across America.

This gives a glimpse of the kinds of movements that can develop all over the world in the next months and years. Socialist Students is organising to help build a mass education fightback all over the country. Join us and get involved.

Join Socialist Students!

- Visit socialiststudents.org.uk/join
- Text ‘JOIN’ plus your name and college to 07749 379 010
- Or call 020 8988 8761