

Corbyn's leadership victory

A new era for the 99%

Now organise to fight for a socialist alternative

For decades the Palace of Westminster has been almost completely devoid of serious disagreements. All three of the major establishment parties - the Tories, Labour and the Lib-Dems - have agreed on the central questions such as the supremacy of the 'free market', support for privatisation and public service cuts, the necessity of austerity and the need to undermine workers' rights to make Britain more 'competitive'.

Nine members of the Socialist Campaign Group of MPs, isolated on Labour's weak left wing, were very often the lone opponents to the endless attacks on the rights of working class people. Despite their best efforts they resembled prisoners occasionally smuggling out a note to the population outside.

But now the world has been turned upside down. The Blairites - who have considered Labour as their possession for decades - are now the 4.5%: the woeful result for the most right-wing Labour leadership candidate Liz Kendall. Jeremy Corbyn and John McDonnell, the most prominent MPs in the Socialist Campaign Group, are the leader of the opposition and the shadow chancellor. The pro-austerity consensus has been smashed with Jeremy Corbyn's election as leader of the Labour Party with an overwhelming 59.5% of the vote. The hopes have been raised of millions who want to see a society for the 99% not the 1%. This is a tremendous step forward.

The Socialist Party has long argued that the potential exists in Britain for a mass anti-austerity, workers' party. We have pointed to the five million mainly working class people who have stopped voting Labour since 1997. Profoundly disillusioned with the establishment parties many have stopped voting altogether, some have voted Green, for the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition, or even for Ukip in order to protest against the establishment. The austerity-lite of New Labour held no attraction to them.

An outlet for voiceless anger

We have argued that - if it could find an outlet - the up until now voiceless anger at austerity could very quickly become a powerful force. In Scotland it found an outlet in the independence referendum and then in the SNP landslide at the general election. In England and Wales it has now found an unexpected channel in Jeremy Corbyn's campaign for Labour leader. No-one, least of all Jeremy Corbyn - who initially stood because it was 'his turn' - expected this outcome.

The possibility of building a powerful mass party can be seen from the events of the last few days. We have consistently fought for such a party. We considered it more likely to come into being from forces outside of the Labour Party - as has been the trend in most countries - given the Labour Party's transformation into a capitalist party.

The lack of democracy in the Labour Party and growing levels of working class alienation from it meant a movement within the Labour Party structures was not the most likely scenario. Nonetheless, we have no fetish about by what route the crisis of working class political representation would be solved and have never excluded the possibility of Labour swinging left. As long ago as 2002 we argued that, "under the impact of great historic shocks - a serious economic crisis, mass social upheaval - the ex-social democratic parties could move dramatically towards the left" (Socialism Today September 2002).

However, the reality is that the Corbyn surge has mainly not come from within the Labour Party but from 'outside' - new members and registered supporters who were attracted by the hope of something different. This is a new party in the process of formation which will face relentless attack from the 'old' pro-capitalist New Labour.

Ironically, it was Ed Miliband's further decimation of Labour Party democracy which created the conditions for this completely unintended consequence. Tom Baldwin, Ed Miliband's aide, has made it crystal clear that the intention of the Collins Review was to remove the final vestiges of trade union 'influence' in the Labour Party. In doing so, however, Miliband inadvertently opened the election to hundreds of thousands of people who were enthused by Corbyn.

The registered supporter scheme, where anyone could sign up for the price of a pint, enabled 105,000 people who did not want to commit to joining the Labour Party to vote in the contest. Another 55,000 of them were 'purged' and prevented from voting - including trade union leader Mark Serwotka - in a desperate bid to prevent Jeremy Corbyn winning.

It made no difference. More than 80% of the £3ers voted for Corbyn. Others - including students who could join the Labour Party for £1 and ex-members returning joined the Labour Party in order to vote for Corbyn. They joined a largely empty party. The turnover in Labour Party membership means that only a minority of those who voted in this election were eligible to vote in the 2010 contest. As a result, although the Blairite candidates combined vote among the full members was higher than Jeremy Corbyn's he still came top - with 49% of the vote - in the members section as well.

Enthused millions

Jeremy Corbyn's victory has left the right wing of the Labour Party on the back foot and enthused millions. The question is how best to consolidate and extend on this success. Winning the leadership of Labour is a very long way from transforming the party as a whole. In attempting to do so, Corbyn and his supporters will face the determined opposition of not just the right-wing dominated Parliamentary Labour Party and Labour machine, but also of the capitalist class.

The Financial Times editorial the day after Corbyn's victory described it as a 'catastrophe' for 'British politics itself' despairing that: "it places a maverick far-left figure at the head of a mainstream political party". Thatcher considered Blair and New Labour her greatest success. Labour had been transformed into a party that could be relied on to act in the interests of the 1%. There will now be a huge campaign to try and extinguish the anti-austerity flame that has been lit with the election of Jeremy Corbyn as leader.

The right wing of the Labour Party are on the back foot because of the scale of Jeremy Corbyn's victory. Their dreams of 'getting rid of him by Christmas' have had to be dropped. Nonetheless, it is clear that the Labour right will attempt to imprison and undermine Corbyn with the aim of removing him as soon as possible. They will not be reconciled to a Corbyn/McDonnell leadership by calls for unity and attempts to build a 'broad church'. To win requires building on the popular movement against austerity that found a voice in his election campaign. Unity has to be built around clear anti-austerity policies.

The shadow cabinet is a mixed bag. The appointment of John McDonnell as shadow chancellor, to the horror of the capitalist class, shows a willingness to oppose austerity. The same cannot be said of all of the appointees. The shadow justice secretary, the Blairite Lord Falconer, has a record of introducing draconian anti-democratic legislation. Heidi Alexander, the shadow health secretary, has previously supported privatisation and closure of hospitals. Andy Burnham, the shadow home secretary, showed how right-wing he is at the start of the leadership election campaign, supporting further benefit cuts and opposing the mansion tax as "the politics of envy".

Of course many on the right of the party have refused to serve in the shadow cabinet, but there is an element of a division of labour, with those inside the tent trying to imprison Jeremy Corbyn, and others trying to sabotage from the back benches.

To defeat the onslaught Jeremy Corbyn will face going beyond the constraints of the right-wing dominated Labour Party machine or the niceties of Labour's constitution, recast by Blair.

As a starting point we would urgently encourage Jeremy Corbyn to organise a conference of all those who have supported him, plus the many trade unions - including non-affiliated unions like the RMT, PCS and FBU - which support a fighting anti-austerity programme. The Socialist Party would participate in such a conference and would encourage all other anti-austerity campaigners to do the same.

A campaign needs to be launched to recreate Labour's democratic structures. Labour 'moderates' are already bleating that the left will 'seize the party's levers of power' under Corbyn's leadership. What they mean by this is "giving more control over policy to the annual conference and the National Executive Committee and less influence to the Parliamentary Labour Party" (The Independent 11.09.15). In other words restoring some of the party democracy that existed in the past!

They are also hysterically attacking any attempt to re-select MPs. Yet the right to re-select MPs just means the democratic right of a party's members to replace an MP that has voted against the party's policies. That should be uncontroversial. However, it is not a surprise that it upsets Labour MPs who have voted for welfare cuts, austerity and war. A fight needs to be launched to implement every one of the democratic measures which so terrifies Labour's right wing, including restoring the rights of the organised working class, via the trade unions, within the party, introducing mandatory reselection of MPs and more.

This does not mean simply returning to the party structure which existed thirty years ago. The Labour Party was founded by the trade unions, as part of a struggle by the organised working class to create its own political voice. Nonetheless, from the beginning Labour was a capitalist workers' party - with a working class base but a pro-capitalist leadership, but the

working class was able to influence it via the party's democratic structures. An essential part of the transformation of the Labour Party into a capitalist party over recent decades was the removal of the trade union vote within the party. This should be restored, but on a more democratic basis; fully accountable to rank-and-file trade union members.

At the same time a Corbyn-led Labour Party needs to reach out to all those opposing austerity, including community campaigns and other political parties. A new constitution could be based on the original, federal constitution of the Labour Party. Even today a few remnants of that federal constitution remain, with some MPs standing on behalf of the Cooperative Party under the Labour Party umbrella. Why couldn't that be extended to allow anti-austerity parties and campaigns to join with Jeremy Corbyn's Labour Party as affiliates, while maintaining their own independent identity, just as the ILP and John Maclean's British Socialist Party were able to do in the first twenty years of the party?

Welcoming approach

Such an approach would be able to reach out to the millions, particularly of young people, who are anti-austerity and enthused by Jeremy Corbyn's victory, but are nervous of any hint of a 'top-down' party, particularly given their experience of the Labour Party. The dangers of a top-down approach were demonstrated in the mid 1990s by the stillbirth of the Arthur Scargill-led Socialist Labour Party.

Jeremy Corbyn has up until now rightly taken a flexible and welcoming approach to the movement that has sprung up around him, but any insistence by his campaign that the only way to support Jeremy Corbyn is to sign up as a Labour Party member under the existing constitution would be a mistake, which potentially could act to repel potential supporters.

At local level anti-austerity alliances will be needed to bring together all of those who want to fight the cuts. This is urgent. Council services have already been cut by 39% and will face further catastrophic cuts next spring. Jeremy Corbyn has rightly made the call for councils to stand together and refuse to implement government cuts.

Some of Corbyn's supporters however, like Owen Jones, are now emphasising the importance of him being seen to be 'moderate' and 'reasonable' and therefore argue that Labour councils should continue to implement Tory cuts. This would be a terrible mistake. A Corbyn-led Labour Party will be popular if it is prepared to oppose austerity. Miliband showed clearly that implementing it with a sad face will never enthuse potential Labour voters.

It is hoped that many Labour councillors will now heed Jeremy Corbyn's call and begin to oppose austerity instead of carrying it out. Where they do so the Socialist Party will fully support their stance. But unfortunately given the character of the majority of Labour councillors (only 6% of them backed Jeremy Corbyn) it is likely that many, probably the majority, will continue to implement government cuts.

Where this happens they should be opposed by anti-austerity activists at the ballot box. This will strengthen the hand of Jeremy Corbyn and the anti-austerity movement as a whole. TUSC is already writing to Labour candidates for next May's election in order to discuss with them their attitude to voting for cuts, with a warning that we will aim to stand against all those who continue to close our libraries, lay off council workers, evict victims of the bedroom tax and all the other cruelties that come with voting for cuts.

On a national basis it is vital that Jeremy Corbyn continues to put forward the very popular policies which won him the leadership election such as nationalisation of rail and the energy companies, a £10 an hour minimum wage, free education, council house building, and repeal of the anti-union laws.

It is nonsense to suggest these are unpopular with the general public. After all 68%, 67% and 66% support renationalisation of the energy companies, the Royal Mail and the railway companies respectively. The latest polling from Lord Ashcroft has been ignored by the capitalist media, because it showed 52% of people agree that a 'radical socialist alternative would be a good thing'.

'People's QE'

However, it is also necessary to go beyond the very good demands Jeremy Corbyn puts forward. He has raised the popular idea of 'people's QE' but has not drawn all the conclusions about what would be necessary to implement such a policy. He merely calls for 'meaningful regulation of the banking sector' rather than for nationalisation of the banks under democratic control, for example.

The experience of Syriza in Greece, where the leadership of an anti-austerity party capitulated to the pressure of big business and is now implementing austerity, shows that defeating austerity requires a determined struggle with a clear goal. Endless austerity and growing inequality are not an accident; they flow from the needs of capitalism, where profits of a few have been restored at the expense of the majority.

To permanently end austerity requires a break with capitalism. That means calling for the nationalisation - under democratic working class control - of the major companies and banks that dominate the economy. Only in this way would it be possible to begin to build a democratic socialist society planned to meet the needs of the majority instead of having, as at present, a society driven by maximising the profits of the 1%.

The most important single consequence of Jeremy Corbyn's victory is that these issues - how can inequality be ended and austerity be defeated and, above all, what is socialism and how can it be achieved are now being discussed widely. A new generation is hearing about socialist ideas for the first time. This is a great step forward which must now be built on.

TUSC asks: how far are Labour councillors willing to go?

The Socialist Party is part of the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC) - an electoral alliance involving the RMT transport union, leading members of other trade unions and other socialist groups and individuals.

In the May parliamentary and council elections TUSC stood 750 people against Labour in 120 towns and cities. On 26 September TUSC is holding its conference - one of the first left wing meetings to discuss the changed situation in light of Jeremy Corbyn's victory.

Local TUSC groups are also making plans to send the following letter to all Labour candidates in next May's local elections, asking for a meeting to discuss how far they are willing to go to back their new leader's anti-austerity stance.

Dear Councillor,

We are writing to you as a local Labour Party councillor to try and arrange a convenient time for you to meet a delegation of trade unionists and anti-austerity activists to discuss how we can build on Jeremy Corbyn's call for councils to stand together and refuse to implement government cuts.

The Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC), co-founded by the late Bob Crow, is determined that working class people should not pay for a crisis that we did not cause, and we are happy to work together with Labour representatives who take the same stance.

We believe that Jeremy Corbyn is right to highlight the potential that councils have to resist austerity. English councils still control budgets totalling £114 billion pounds, over one fifth of all public spending, and have more financial powers than is commonly realised. Even the previous Con-Dem government's 'localism agenda', continued by the new Tory government, is dual-edged. Aiming to 'devolve the axe' to councils to cut local public services, by giving local authorities a 'power of competence' to do "anything apart from that which is specifically prohibited", the Tories have potentially given councils a greater power to resist - if they use it. TUSC has a core policy platform for local councils which can be found on our website at www.tusc.org.uk

In the last couple of years TUSC has worked with councillors in Southampton, Hull and Leicester to present legally compliant no cuts budgets to the annual budget-making meeting. Based on the use of reserves and councils' borrowing powers, they were designed in each case to buy time for the council to organise a broad public campaign to compel the government to restore its funding. Unfortunately, on each occasion, the alternative budgets were rejected by the majority Labour groups.

One reason for doing so was that each council Labour group felt itself to be facing the government's cuts on its own. But surely that wouldn't be the case now, with Jeremy Corbyn as Labour leader? TUSC believes that in the new situation opened up by Jeremy Corbyn's victory, there really is no reason why Labour councils should not come together and refuse to implement the Tories' brutal austerity agenda.

That is why we would like to have a face-to-face meeting with you to discuss the possibilities of joint action against austerity, based on our council joining with others to present no cuts budgets at the budget-making meetings in early 2016.

■ TUSC conference 2015

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NSSN rally calls for mass action to 'Kill the Bill!'

Scott Jones

There was standing room only as hundreds of trade union activists attended the National Shop Stewards Network (NSSN) rally and lobby of the TUC in Brighton on 13 September. There were cheers and applause when the chair, Linda Taaffe, mentioned the victory of

Jeremy Corbyn in the Labour Party leadership election, demonstrating how it has lifted the confidence of all those who oppose austerity.

Along with this new mood is an ever-growing call for the TUC to call for mass, coordinated strike action to defeat the vicious new anti-trade union bill. Andy Richards, president of Brighton Trades Council, in opening the rally committed the trades council to supporting this action. This in many ways set the tone of angry opposition from each speaker to the anti-trade union laws and a commitment to fighting them.

Mick Cash, RMT transport union general secretary, deplored that there is some opposition to generalised strike action on the TUC general council, in contrast to rank-and-file reps and members, demonstrating the importance of the lobby.

Rob Williams, chair of the National Shop Stewards Network, said:

"The victory yesterday by Jeremy Corbyn has changed everything. The vote we saw yesterday was a political revolution. We must build a mass movement against austerity and the anti-union laws.

The message must be simple - 'Cameron: we are going to take you down. Your anti-union bill and your cuts, you're going down because we are mobilising against you'.

If this goes into law, we want mass coordinated strike action."

Mark Serwotka, leader of the PCS civil servants' union, called for united coordinated action on pay before going on to say:

"You have to pinch yourselves that a Labour leader is saying things that all of us agree with. If we are going to see any of those policies realised, we will not get that just through what Jeremy Corbyn and the Labour Party do in parliament.

If Jeremy Corbyn wants to win on those policies, he absolutely needs a mass vibrant movement. He needs the six-and-a-half million trade union members to ensure that we have that vibrant campaign through strikes, demonstrations, local campaigns, occupations."

Mark finished by stating that we must not allow the new laws to stop strike action and if the government follow through on their threat to use agency staff as scabs, there "must be mass pickets to stop them."

Unite executive member Suzanne Muna, a rep in the Unite housing workers' branch, speaking in a personal capacity, called on the TUC to "act as the collective voice of the trade union movement" and to not only oppose the current anti-trade union bill but "repeal all the anti-union laws".

Dave Ward, CWU general secretary, hit headlines in the summer for his claim that there was a "virus" in the Labour Party and that Jeremy Corbyn was the "antidote". He spoke of his and the CWU's commitment to developing their relationship with the NSSN and said: "The NSSN is at the core of what trade unionism is all about."

He was followed by John Vasey, a sacked Royal Mail rep, who is awaiting his appeal for unfair dismissal. John was sacked on a charge connected with alleged non-delivery of election material and spoke about the culture of threats and victimisation that is in place at his

workplace and across Royal Mail. The NSSN calls on everyone to support John's campaign for reinstatement.

In every contribution the demand for the TUC to provide leadership and act boldly was raised. Ronnie Draper, leader of the bakers' union, said that he and "thousands" of other union members were prepared to go to jail for coordinating 'illegal' strikes if the new Tory laws are passed. He said: "I don't want to go to jail comrades - but I tell you, I will. And there will be thousands of others willing to as well."

He stated his belief that because of the government's plans to "gag" trade union members and make picketing almost illegal, the 2015 TUC congress is the "most significant for years." He ended by highlighting victories like at Gunstones bakery and in Pizza Express as guides to action and what can be achieved.

Isai Priya, a young Usdaw shop steward in Tesco and Tamil Solidarity activist, spoke (in a personal capacity) about the current refugee crisis and the role the workers' and trade union movement can play, finishing with a demand to bring more migrant workers into trade union membership: "Go out and recruit a migrant worker today!"

Another young activist, Corinthia Ward from Youth Fight for Jobs, described the brilliant anti-austerity action they organised in Birmingham during the summer and how Youth Fight for Jobs wants to link up with trade unions to fight for a £10 an hour minimum wage, taking inspiration from the fight for \$15 an hour in the United States.

"Prison officers have been criminalised when taking strike action for 21 years", reported POA general secretary Steve Gillan. "Since 1994 we have not been allowed to take lawful action. Our mantra is, if our members want to take action, we will." He ended the rally by explaining that this mantra should be taken on by all in the trade union movement as the Tory government looks to silence trade unions.

After the rally, a lobby took place outside the TUC congress as delegates arrived, with the NSSN supporters waving placards demanding to 'Strike together to defend trade unions!'

Cameron's Trade Union Bill is an extension and deepening of Thatcher's laws of the 1980s that were shamefully retained by the New Labour governments of Blair and Brown and delegates to TUC, from Unite, NUT, Usdaw and others spoke further during the lobby on the need to defeat it.


Organised from below, growing pressure on the tops of the TUC, allied to those unions and workers determined to take action, alongside the momentous victory of Corbyn, can lay the basis for historic steps forward in the months ahead.

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This version of this article was first posted on the Socialist Party website on 15 September 2015 and may vary slightly from the version subsequently printed in The Socialist.

'Socialism is popular' confirms Lord Ashcroft

Dave Murray

Electability is a funny old thing. Jeremy Corbyn is not supposed to have any, yet now he is leader of the Labour Party.

Of course it isn't as simple as that, we are told. Just being elected doesn't make you electable - the election of Jeremy Corbyn to Labour's leadership makes the party less electable, apparently.

Well, maybe not, according to plutocrat pollster Lord Michael Ashcroft (KCMG, PC)*. In his latest report - "Project Red Dawn" - he finds that 52% of voters believe that a radical socialist Labour Party would be a "good thing" and that 43% believe that it could win a general election.

Ashcroft tries to discount the figures, making reference to his "own time helping to drag the Conservative Party back towards electability", and putting forward the idea that a defeated party can tend to turn its back on the very people it needs to win, concentrating instead on its own unpopular set of core beliefs.

This is a reminder that pollsters are also propagandists - and a warning to those on the left who advise Jeremy to water down his principles.

37% of those that Red Dawn asked think "it matters very little which party wins an election, since the parties end up doing the same thing once in government and nothing improves for people like me".

Comments from focus group participants include things like, "I honestly believe that, maybe not in the next ten years but maybe the next 20 years, we're actually going to have a French Revolution. Everyone is going to go against the government."

The report reveals a deep fund of discontent with the system, it is here that a movement against austerity will find its power.

- Knight Commander of the Order of Saints Michael and George, member of the Privy Council. The former Tory Party treasurer is worth £865 million, much of which he made (according to Lord Justice Peter Smith of the High Court) doing "the kind of thing which brings the City into disrepute".

[Correction to names in this article was made on 22.9.15]

Ministry of Justice : Stop this privatisation scandal!

Tessa Warrington

Michael Gove, Tory hatchet man and Minister for 'Justice', last seen terrorising the education system, is now at the centre of the looming privatisation of court fine collection. Aggressive American outsourcing giant Concentrix is currently the only bidder for the £675 million contract, work currently undertaken in-house by the National Compliance Enforcement Service (NCES).

The contract involves chasing those who are struggling to pay the criminal courts charge, a set charge imposed on all convicts, regardless of means. It penalises the poor, who are pressured into pleading guilty as the fee can be up to ten times higher if convicted after pleading not guilty.

No other company is bidding for this contract as, unsurprisingly, chasing poor people for money does not bring big returns.

For MoJ employees like myself the reality will be the replacement of permanent jobs with low-wage temporary positions and aggressive target-driven management so that Concentrix can boost their profits at the expense of workers.

Track record

Concentrix already has a poor public sector record in HMRC, where they sent speculative letters to thousands on low incomes accusing them of tax credit fraud.

Clearly nothing has been learned from the disaster of the Serco and G4S tagging contracts or reckless privatisation of probation services. These failures not only put people at risk but cost the public millions and resulted in little-to-no recourse.

The priorities of capitalist politicians are blatant. They chase and imprison the poor for money they don't have, but let fraudster bankers and tax-evading companies run rampant - without criminal charges or attempts to recoup the billions they have stolen from the public.

The PCS civil service union had success last year in fending off privatisation in Land Registry. Disability demonstrators over work assessment and PCS workers in Department for Work and Pensions also forced infamous Atos into dropping its government contract.

If MoJ workers in PCS, alongside probation workers in NAPO and legal advisors in the Criminal Bar Association take action together, we could make this contract so unappealing that Concentrix drops it, leaving no other bidder. We can stop privatisation.

Them & Us

Filthy rich

The Financial Times (12 September) included a supplement called: 'How to spend it - special men's style edition'.

Readers of the Socialist will no doubt be rushing to buy the featured items, such as the passport holder at a giveaway £220, or the trilby for a mere £375, or the backpack - a snip at £6,220.

But the look really won't be complete without the £238,000 titanium watch (take it out of your bonus payment).

Thanks to Dave Gorton

Wales bust

By the time of the next general election many households in Wales will be considerably worse off both financially and in the services they rely on, than today.

According to a report by the Bevan Foundation, poorer families, by 2020, will face a £40 a week drop in income, with fewer low-skilled jobs available. To add to the gloom it goes on to predict higher rates of cancer and diabetes, a 60,000 shortfall in new homes, a risk of electricity blackouts and water shortages, and a £1 billion cut in spending on services.

All this will come under the combined stewardship of a Tory central government and, to date, a Labour-run Wales Assembly.

Housing sell-off

Despite a desperate shortage of affordable housing, council homes continue to be sold off under the Tories' right-to-buy legislation. Many end up in the hands of private landlords.

These valuable properties are being sold off based on valuations years out of date. According to the Guardian, councils have disposed of 130,000 council homes over the last decade at discounts of up to 70% on their market values - costing the public purse a staggering £4 billion.

Reach for the sky

According to the Office for National Statistics London house prices over the summer reached a new record average of £525,000 - up £12,000 in July alone.

Bristol: Hands off our NHS protest

Over 100 people came out on a lunchtime protest in Bristol against the £28 million privatisation of NHS Children's Community services. Speakers attacked the profiteering by companies bidding for the contract, including multi millionaire Branson's Virgin Care.

Following a march, we occupied the foyer of the Community Health Partnerships chanting "Whose NHS? Our NHS!" A petition of over 6,500 was handed in calling for mental health services, school nursing, physiotherapy, occupational therapy and other services to remain in the NHS.

Mike Luff

Refugee crisis: Imperialist countries bear major responsibility

Robert Bechert, Committee for a Workers' International (CWI)

It is the ruling classes of the imperialist countries who bear the major responsibility for the current situation.

Historically, British and French imperialism largely drew the boundaries and initially created most modern states in the Middle East. Then, along with US imperialism, they worked to maintain their local allies and agents in control. Oil and weapon companies have especially profited from this region.

In 2014 Saudi Arabia was the world's biggest arms importer, spending \$6.4 billion on weapons, 10% of the total \$64.4 billion world arms trade. UAE imported a further \$2.2 billion's worth.

But it is not just 'ordinary' capitalist trading that the big companies profit from. A year ago the EU's ambassador in Iraq, Jana Hybášková, told the European Parliament's Committee on Foreign Affairs that some unnamed European countries were buying cheap oil from, and effectively helping fund, Isis.

Significantly she refused to name who was involved. As usual for capitalism, profit comes before human or democratic rights.

Dictatorship

However, when imperialism's interests are threatened they intervene, usually suddenly highlighting democratic issues as a smokescreen. But local despots could, and still do, rule unchallenged if they do not act against the interests of imperialism.

Thus Saddam Hussain was unopposed by western governments, in fact supported by them in the 1980-88 Iran-Iraq war, until he invaded Kuwait in 1990.

It is US and British imperialism which, above all, have the immediate responsibility for what is happening now in the Middle East. It was their 2003 invasion of Iraq that set off a chain of events which, in the absence of a successful movement by the Iraqi working people themselves, has resulted in sectarian division, violence and civil war.

While fighting to defend the right to asylum, the demand for emergency programmes, funded by the rich and those which have profited from exploiting the Middle East, is essential.

Now we have elements among the imperialist nations trying to exploit the growing refugee crisis as an excuse to justify renewed military intervention in the region.

Under the banner of trying to help solve the crisis, France has announced that it will begin air strikes in Syria, while the British government has begun drone attacks and is considering asking for parliamentary agreement for wider air strikes. But this will not help stop the flow of Syrian refugees.

The addition of a few French and British planes to the US planes already bombing Syria, while adding to death toll, will not make much strategic difference to a situation that has spiralled out of western imperialism's direct control. The aim of Paris and London is to try to prepare the way for possible wider intervention and for the British and French governments to have more of a 'say' in what happens.

Socialism

Socialists are clear that it is only the united action of the working people and poor in the Middle East that can end the civil war, defeat the sectarian forces, overthrow the tyrants, win democratic rights, and break the chains of imperialism and capitalism.

The revolutions that began in 2011 in North Africa and the Middle East gave a glimpse of how action by working people can bring change. Tragically many of 2011's opportunities were lost because the mass movement did not have a clear programme on how to achieve its goals.

To prevent that happening again the building of independent movements, with socialist policies and tactics, of working people is necessary. Such movements can put an end to the sectarian divisions, wars, repression, poverty and fight for a world free from capitalist exploitation where the use of the globe's resources is democratically planned in the interests of the mass of humanity and not the ruling classes.

Full article available on www.socialistworld.net

A Socialist Party article '[Solidarity with refugees - Defend the right to asylum](#)' can be read by clicking here.

Stop Tory military 'mission creep'

Prime Minister David Cameron is using the plight of Syrian and Iraqi refugees to demand UK parliamentary assent for use of "hard military force" against Isis in these countries.

Cameron says the refugee crisis can only be resolved by ending the wars and conflicts in Syria, Iraq, etc, but then hypocritically supports the UAE and Saudi Arabia regimes' bloody military intervention in Yemen - creating a new refugee crisis.

The PM is still smarting from the government's 2013 defeat in the Commons to extend UK military air strikes in Iraq into Syria. But even before obtaining 'permission' he has ordered targeted assassinations of Isis fighters in Syria by pilotless drone aircraft.

Cameron's new political argument - that the refugee crisis can only be stopped by, effectively, fuelling sectarian conflict in the Middle East - is, however, perverse. 'Mission creep' by the Tory government will not make Iraq and Syria safe for persecuted religious and ethnic communities, but it will further the regional ambitions of the UK government and other western powers. Western controlled "safe areas" would be used as bases for further intervention.

Imperialism

But many western strategists, mindful of Libya's disintegration after Cameron's previous military campaign, are wary of getting too involved in Syria. Socialists are clear that only united action by the Syrian people themselves can crush both the tyrants and sectarian fanatics.

Scandalously, according to a BBC Newsnight survey, many Labour MPs appear set to defy the new Labour Party leader, Jeremy Corbyn, and vote with the Tory government for further imperialist military intervention.

Merchants of death

In March 2015, the UK government supplied £5.2 billion worth of arms export licenses to countries listed as being of "human rights concern" by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, including Saudi Arabia, Libya, Syria, Ukraine and Russia.

And while wars and violent civil conflicts rage in the Middle East and elsewhere, creating a massive refugee crisis, arms manufacturers and sellers are raking in sales and profits. These 'merchants of death' will be displaying their wares at the ExCeL arena in London between 15-18 September.

British arms companies secured export deals for weaponry worth £8.5 billion and security equipment worth £3.4 billion in 2014, the second largest arms exporter behind the USA.

Northern Ireland Executive crisis

Only united working class can overcome poverty and sectarian division

Michael Cleary, Socialist Party Northern Ireland

The devolved government administration in Northern Ireland is in danger of total collapse. A crisis erupted in the aftermath of the killing of ex-IRA member Kevin McGuigan in Belfast on 13 August.

His murder is widely assumed to have been carried out by the Provisional IRA (PIRA - an Irish republican group which agreed to end its armed struggle as part of the 1998 Good Friday peace deal) in revenge for the killing of one of its prominent commanders, Jock Davidson, on 5 May.

Days later the Chief Constable of the Police Service of Northern Ireland stated that IRA members were involved in the McGuigan murder and that "the Provisional IRA still exists". A political storm then erupted.

Prior to his statement there was a widespread belief that the PIRA exists in some form. But an admission from the state that it still exists, is armed, and is prepared to use its arms, led to a sharp reaction.

Resignation

The Ulster Unionist Party (UUP) quickly pulled out of the Executive in response. After an opinion poll showed that 80% of Protestants supported the UUP move First Minister Peter Robinson of the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) announced the resignation of all of his party's ministers but one. He has stepped aside but another DUP minister, Arlene Foster, is acting in his role for the next six weeks.

The Executive was already in crisis before the recent events. Over the summer there were clear indications of behind the scenes talks however, and an agreement to break the impasse on so-called "welfare reform" was likely in September. The indications are that both the DUP and Sinn Fein would prefer the Executive to remain in place.

A solution to the crisis is likely to centre on the establishment of a new body to make assessments about alleged PIRA activity, similar to the "Independent Monitoring Commission" which oversaw the status of all the paramilitary ceasefires between 2004 and 2011.

If the talks fail, and the Executive collapses completely, what happens next is uncertain. The Secretary of State, Teresa Villiers, has the power to call an immediate election but will hesitate to do so.

She no longer has the power to suspend the Assembly and return to direct rule, as she once did, but emergency legislation could be passed at Westminster to allow this to happen.

The most likely scenario is a long period of prolonged negotiations between the DUP and Sinn Fein.

Paramilitary

Whatever happens next the latest crisis only serves to underline the plain fact that the 'peace process' has not delivered on any of its promises. None of the problems facing working class people in the North have been solved, including the dominance of paramilitary groups in working class areas.

Potentially, the working class is also the only force which is capable of challenging the paramilitaries and the sectarian political parties. However, this requires the establishment of a new mass left political party, seeking to unite Catholics and Protestants in a common struggle for a better life, in order to provide workers and young people with a real alternative.

For background material on the peace agreement/the national question in Ireland, and on workers' struggles, see www.socialistparty.org.uk and www.socialistworld.net

Greek general election

The next issue of the Socialist will analyse the results of the 20 September general election in Greece. The election was called after the governing Syriza party split and lost its parliamentary majority.

The crisis in Syriza resulted from the capitulation of its leadership under Alexis Tsipras to the austerity agenda of the European Union ministers, bankers and capitalists - despite a majority of Greek voters rejecting a new tranche of austerity measures in a referendum on 5 July.

Xekinima, the Socialist Party's counterpart in Greece, is giving critical support to Popular Unity - a left wing breakaway faction of Syriza - in the election.

See the article 'Greece 20 September elections - No to the Memorandum parties!' on

www.socialistworld.net

7½ out of 8 victory for Doncaster council workers

Steve Williams and Alistair Tice

Day one of a planned ten day strike by 200 Doncaster council workers, fighting imposed new shift patterns and weekend working:

7-30am, North Bridge council depot. 50 guys on the gates. "Hi there, we're from the Socialist Party, come down to give you our support".

"Strike's off mate! Council gave in, about 9-20pm last night, made them sign a deal taking all their proposals off the table. We've won, for now."

Doncaster Labour council was trying to force nearly 300 workers who work Monday to Friday in the Highways, Streetscene and Grounds maintenance departments onto new contracts involving working 11-hour shifts and 26 weekends in a year.

Unison, Unite and GMB members all voted by 70-80 odd per cent to take industrial action. And no messing about with one-day strikes. A ten day strike coinciding with the St Leger horseracing festival next week was due to begin this morning.

The council chief executive Jo Miller attacked the trade unions: "I am disappointed that the unions are taking deliberate, targeted and unnecessary strike action when Doncaster is on show to the rest of the world for its jewel in the crown - the St Leger festival - that is known to millions internationally. This appears to be an extraordinary own goal by them and I urge them to reconsider."

Well actually Jo, yours is the own goal. It was management that "with impeccable timing" according to the GMB rep, broke off negotiations after nine months, and now it's you that's had to reconsider despite your threats about "illegal strike action".

One union steward told us that his daughter works in the council's Civic building where management were asking yesterday if admin staff would volunteer to pick up litter at the racecourse!

Near-complete council climbdown

At the mass meeting at 8am, Unison branch secretary Jim Board said that of the eight conditions that members regarded as red lines, management had conceded on 7½ of them. In effect, council Plan A was off the table.

It will come back with a Plan B but had agreed that it cannot include imposing new shift patterns or weekend working on existing staff; and no compulsory redundancies.

"Confidence is sky-high now" said Richard, a new union steward. "We've taken a kicking for the last five to six years and some have left the union. Now we can get them back.

"It's solidarity that's won it for us. All three unions united together - they took the Highways lads out of the scope (of the agreement) to try to divide us but they'd already balloted and said they'd stick with us on strike, hats off to them."

The council will come back with new proposals but it has to go through consultation again. That takes us up to Xmas and the New Year. Another good time to strike! If need be.

This version of this article was first posted on the Socialist Party website on 4 September 2015 and may vary slightly from the version subsequently printed in The Socialist.

Parliament protest against the anti-union bill

On 14 September trade unionists and activists came together to protest against the second reading of the Tories' anti-trade union bill. For about an hour workers organised by the BFAWU, NSSN and others lobbied outside parliament. It took place as delegates at the TUC Congress were discussing the possibility of co-ordinated action against the bill.

There was a perceptible buzz around the subsequent rally when we were addressed by new shadow chancellor John McDonnell who said it was time for the "trade union leaders to step up to the plate" with regard to taking general strike action.

A question was also asked by Claire Laker-Mansfield on what role Labour would play, will councillors refuse to implement attacks on facility time and check off? Catherine West MP fudged the question, merely pointing out that she had been on picket lines before.

Neil Cafferky of the NSSN was the last speaker, he said that the union leaders "cannot abdicate their responsibility on this". But he did say that we cannot afford to wait for right-wingers who are dragging their feet. The more militant union leaders organise a "coalition of the willing" to fight the Tories every step of the way.

Paul Callanan

Support Teesside construction workers: Pay the rate!

It's 5:15am and traffic is already starting to back up due to an ongoing protest by construction workers at the massive Wilton chemical plant on Teesside. This is one of a series of planned protests (see the Socialist issue 3-9 September).

There are protesters on each of the gates, leafleting workers as they arrive on site. The protest is peaceful and good-natured but the Unite, GMB and Ucat members involved are serious and determined.

Pressure

The protests are designed to pressure engineering giants Sita/Sembcorp to stop using agencies to undercut agreed industry pay rates. Contactors building the new 'Energy from Waste' plant

at Wilton have been accused of exploiting cheap migrant labour and undercutting skilled workers living in Teesside.

Until recently it has been difficult to prove these contractors are paying less than the rate for the job.

However representatives from the three unions visited the site on 17 August with interpreters, and got first hand evidence that most of the migrant workers were being paid less than half the going rate. At the same time local skilled workers on the protest explained they were being laid off!

The Teesside construction workers have been joined on the protests by others from Manchester, Liverpool and Hull in a fantastic show of solidarity.

In return, workers from Teesside took part in a similar protest in Liverpool on 4 September. In this case protesters targeted Carillion, who are building the new Royal Liverpool Hospital, again undercutting agreed rates by exploiting migrant labour. Liverpool construction workers also accuse Carillion of consulting a secret database of blacklisted workers.

No race to the bottom!

The protests are not against the migrant workers, we're fighting for everybody to get the agreed rates of pay. We need to stop this happening across the country, or they'll use cheap labour everywhere and price local skilled workers out of a job.

The protests will continue until a wage audit takes place and Sita agrees to ensure agreements are honoured.

Teesside Socialist Party

Protesting against Sports Direct's 'workhouse conditions'

On the same day as Sports Direct's AGM, Unite the Union held a protest at Sports Direct's headquarters in Shirebrook.

Protesters were dressed as Victorians, because low pay, body searches and bullying management are among the workhouse conditions reported by those who work at Sports Direct.

Over 90% of workers are on zero hours contracts with no guaranteed hours.

Mike Ashley, a major shareholder, has a 'six-strikes' sweatshop policy. 'Strikes' can be given for leaving work early through illness, taking too long to go to the toilet or being too sick to come to work.

Members of Unite also held up cards spelling 'we support you' in Polish, as many of the employees at Sports Direct are Eastern European. There were over 100 protesters outside Sports Direct (on Wednesday 9th September) and over 2,000 packs with Unite membership forms were handed out.

Elaine Evans

This version of this article was first posted on the Socialist Party website on 11 September 2015 and may vary slightly from the version subsequently printed in The Socialist.

Workplace news in brief

Probation strike

Probation workers in Unison took three hours of strike action on 14 September in an ongoing dispute over pay. Socialist Party member Steve Score supported a picket line in Leicester and spoke to Steve Jeggo, Unison Probation East Midlands assistant branch secretary and local convener: "We are here because of the 0% pay rise we were offered last year. We have now been privatised we but will get no more than 1% for the next four years. It shows the current government thinks that probation workers are worth nothing. This strike has managed to successfully close down 'unpaid work', no vans are leaving the site today. Very few have crossed the picket line and we have had tremendous support from service users." The strike is followed by a work to rule, and there are more battles in the pipeline over job losses.

Construction walkouts

Hundreds of workers at Sellafield nuclear plant walked out over health and safety concerns. Employees of 14 construction firms are involved in the impromptu walkout, which saw contractors fail to return to work following a planned three-and-a-half hour strike on Wednesday, turning the action into a three-day stoppage. The Unite members have planned another full day of action on 23 September.

Unison GS election

Nominations remain open until 5pm on the 9 October in the Unison general secretary election. If you agree that Unison needs a fighting strategy to beat the cuts and win for members, we urge your branch to nominate Socialist Party member Roger Bannister who currently has 5 nominations.

Burston school strike anniversary rally

On a sunny Sunday afternoon the week before Jeremy Corbyn's victory was announced, many hundreds of high spirited labour movement activists flocked to the Burston rally in Norfolk.

Many came particularly to hear Jeremy Corbyn, who called for "socialism and social justice". Jeremy is a frequent guest at the annual event which celebrates the longest strike in history - the Burston school strike of 1914-39.

Andy Beadle

Youth Fight for Jobs demonstration in Hull

Around 35 trade unionists and activists supported a Youth Fight For Jobs protest on 12 September outside McDonalds in Hull. Young people were attracted to the demonstration by demands for a £10 an hour minimum wage and the fight against zero-hour contracts. They are keen to get more involved in the future as well.

The protest had a very positive response from the public and those involved from the GMB, Unite, RMT and NUT unions. The Socialist Party who supported the demonstration sold 50 copies of the Socialist newspaper and raised £40.

Fight austerity in education!

- **Free education**
- **Stop the cuts**
- **Defend and extend student grants**

Claire Laker-Mansfield, Socialist Students national organiser

Education is a privilege. At least it was for Cameron and Osborne: Eton, Oxford and then the well-trodden path to the Tory front bench. How different an experience to that of the average young person in austerity Britain and students arriving on campus this year?

Student debt, super-expensive housing and the prospect of graduating to low-paid and insecure work will be on the minds of many.

But despite the ferocious attacks the Tories are planning on education, including the abolition of grants and stealthy tuition fee increases, there is some cause for optimism. There is optimism because this summer has seen an enormous upsurge in opposition to this government and its austerity programme.

Jeremy Corbyn

Thousands have filled the streets in protest. And Jeremy Corbyn has been swept to victory on the crest of a huge wave of enthusiasm for free education, anti-cuts and left-wing ideas. Politics is changing and young people are right at the heart of this process.

We know that despite what the Tories claim, getting your head down and working hard is not enough to secure a decent future. If we want to live lives in which insecurity, debt and poverty are no longer 'the norm', we have to fight back. That's why this autumn must be an autumn of revolt.

For students, that means building campaigns on our campuses to fight all cuts, and strongly re-asserting the demand for free education.

On a national level, the protests on 4 October at Tory party conference and the student demo on 4 November are important dates to be mobilising for. Over the summer, representatives of the National Union of Students have raised the idea of student strikes.

Movement


A strategy of organising mass walkouts of students, as part of a united fightback involving workers and trade unions taking action, could build the kind of movement necessary to defeat austerity in education.

To achieve this, NUS should be working with student unions, local campaigns and groups including Socialist Students right from the start of term - organising protests and other actions to build up momentum and raise the confidence needed to walk out.

Socialist Students aims to put itself at the heart of the fightback on every campus and in every college. Join us!

Socialist Students

On most campuses we hold weekly meetings to discuss the politics of changing the world. Join us and get involved!

- Text JOIN plus name & uni/college to 0774 937 9010  0774 937 9010
- @socialiststudents
- socialiststudents.org.uk

Students join campaign for affordable housing!

Sebastian Robyns-Landricombe, Cardiff Socialist Students

As students, we've all felt it. That grim punch to the gut that comes with the first of every month. I'm talking about rent.

When we arrive at university it's as if we're opening up the next exciting stage of our lives. University - we're told from knee high - is 'the best time of your life'.

However, our families tend to wince when we mention the costs - and I'm not talking about the nice 45K debt the average student leaves with now. I'm talking about the monthly cost we pay just for the right to have a roof over our heads.

Spiralling rents

The cost of university halls has doubled in the past ten years - with Cardiff first year students paying an average of £95 a week.

The problem becomes even more apparent when you decide to move into a house, or flat. In the last three years alone, monthly private rent has increased by a harrowing 25%. That's all before we start talking about agency fees and bonds.

The Guardian estimates that at this moment the price of purpose-built student accommodation and private housing consume 95% of the average student's maintenance loan.

So what's the cause of the sky-rocketing rents we have no option but to pay?

The answer is simple, a shortage of housing stock that allows predatory pricing and exploitative practices.

The university, the private landlords and the money-grabbing agencies think they have an entirely captive market. They think they have the ability to charge as they please, and are doing just that.

It's not just students who are being shamelessly exploited either. Cardiff Council has reported a massive increase in the demand for homeless services and support services for those unable to make ends meet.

Is it any wonder why so many students have to rely on part time jobs, or that painful phone call to mum and dad, or even drop out? Is it any wonder food banks are so busy?

We have a choice to make, do we either lie back and just accept the situation - or do we do what students have been doing for generations, and show them we're not going to take it!

Action

That's why Cardiff Housing Action Group was set up. It's a group that's fighting to end the rent rip-off, by imposing rent caps and abolishing agency fees.

On 17 October the 'Wales March for Homes' will be flooding into the streets around Cardiff city hall to demand an end to exploitation of Cardiff residents. It's great that Cardiff University Student Union has agreed to support the march. Socialist Students is calling for an effective campaign to encourage as many students as possible to participate.

We are calling NUS Wales and the NUS nationally to back the march too.

So if you're sick of worrying about whether you can afford to enjoy being a student, take a stand and make the change yourself. Join us and say no to student exploitation, and yes to a better future for us all!

www.socialiststudents.org.uk

- Slash rents: for genuinely affordable university accommodation
- Stop privatisation! Bring privatised halls back 'in-house'
- Local authority rent controls to stop spiralling costs for all

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Refugee Lives Matter - large turnout for demo

Paula Mitchell, London Socialist Party

Thousands upon thousands of people thronged through central London on Saturday on the Refugees Welcome Here demonstration. Started as a Facebook event by a couple of individuals, this demo quickly became a mass event as it caught the attention of so many people who have been moved to act because of the government's callous attitude to the refugee crisis.

Such phrases as "We are all human" were painted on many homemade banners.

This was a display of basic human solidarity, alien to the capitalist politicians who seek to divide us against each other. Socialist Party placards were extremely popular and lots of people were happy to give a donation for them, as they agreed with the slogans that proposed how the crisis could be solved:

"Refugee lives matter! Take the wealth off the 1%! Jobs, homes and services for all!".

A very diverse march, it was nonetheless predominantly young. Many on it would have been out on the streets marching against austerity on 20th June. Many of them were the same people who had enthusiastically signed up to support Jeremy Corbyn in the Labour Party leadership election.

In fact that election result was announced as people were arriving for the demo, and was met with elation - everyone was talking about it. Responses ranged from the confident "The Blairites won't be able to stop him, there's too many of us" to the serious "This is just the first step, now we have to organise".

Copies of the *Socialist* sold like hotcakes and at least 40 people applied to join the Socialist Party or asked for more information about us.

EU ministers slamming door shut

An acrimonious meeting of European Union (EU) interior ministers in Brussels failed to agree a binding resettlement programme for 120,000 refugees currently in Europe.

Instead, it came up with a 'voluntary' programme of accepting 40,000 refugees into the member states.

And despite previously preaching lofty 'European ideals' and defending the Schengen Agreement of open borders, the German and Austrian governments have swiftly reintroduced border controls to stem the northward flow of refugees.

At the same time the right-wing Hungarian government has sealed its border with Serbia using razor wire and troops.

So while many people in Europe support a humanitarian approach to the refugee crisis and defend the right to political asylum, EU capitalist ministers are slamming shut the door of 'Fortress Europe'.

Dave Carr

This version of this article was first posted on the Socialist Party website on 15 September 2015 and may vary slightly from the version subsequently printed in *The Socialist*.

'Save our Island homes'

Amalia

Housing Association One Housing Group (OHG) is feeling the pressure of the organised residents' Save Our Island Homes Campaign on four estates in the Isle of Dogs, east London.

OHG has been circulating a "myth-busting" letter trying to reassure the residents about Project Stone, (according to which about 2,000 homes across four estates will be "redeveloped" and 9,000 new homes will be built. But only 30% will be given back as 'affordable' housing, see the Socialist issues 866 and 867).

As one resident said: "If Mick Sweeney's (chief executive of OHG) trying to make amends he's really going about it in the wrong way, he's showing his contempt for local people."

Labour's Tower Hamlets Mayor, John Biggs, and the council, have come out against OHG proposals. They have suspended OHG as "preferred partner" of the council, which is a good first step.

To support the council's opposition we aim to show the strength of feeling of residents on this issue by holding a lobby of the next full council meeting on 16 September.

We will be calling on the Mayor and council to:

- Enable residents to have a vote on the OHG plan
- Refuse planning permission if tenants and leaseholders vote against the plan
- Bring the estates back under council control

Please come and demonstrate to our elected representatives what you think about the OHG plan.

Lobby of Tower Hamlets council: Wednesday 16 September 2015, 6-7:30pm

Town Hall, Mulberry Place, 5 Clove Crescent, E14 2BG

'Collectathon': Sell the Socialist; Donate to the Socialist Party!

Ian Pattison , the Socialist campaign organiser

The Socialist Party, along with our weekly newspaper, the Socialist, has been present at almost all of the 100 rallies (and overflow meetings too) that Jeremy Corbyn spoke to in the run-up to his landslide victory.

Crowds thronged to hear an alternative, snapping up Socialist Party leaflets and eagerly buying copies of the Socialist.

Since Jeremy Corbyn announced his candidacy, the Socialist has carried articles in every issue about his victorious campaign. These include reports, tweets, photos and comment from our members and supporters.

This week's edition of the Socialist includes pages of analysis setting out what we can do to support Jeremy in his battle against the right wing. Throughout the summer the right-wing

media used the Socialist Party and the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition to try to attack Jeremy's campaign.

Unlike the Socialist newspaper, the establishment press is owned by the rich and powerful 1% and is covered in big business advertising. But despite their best efforts they failed to undermine Jeremy Corbyn's run, each time accelerating his level of support.

The Socialist is unashamedly 100% anti-austerity. We have no rich backers; we are only able to effectively campaign for socialist ideas because of the donations and support of working class people like you.

If you enjoy reading the Socialist, can you take out a subscription? You'll receive the paper delivered to your door every Thursday, and we'll be able to clearly plan our finances - www.socialistparty.org.uk/subscribe

Royal Mail has been privatised and that means postage costs have increased. We're raising the price of a subscription slightly to £4.50 a month (just £6.50 with the Socialism Today magazine) so we can still guarantee a weekly 16-page, full colour socialist newspaper.

Fighting Fund

Every quarter Socialist Party members raise £25,000 for our fighting fund. We have some way to go to reach our July-September target. We're having a Collectathon fortnight from 18 September to Friday 2 October to help us reach that target. What can you do to help?

- Waltham Forest Socialist Party are raffling off Leon Trotsky's collected writings for just £2.50 a ticket (five for £10 - see advert below).
- Socialist Party members at the 12 September refugee rights protests were selling placards that we had put together. Protesters were happy to donate.

Many Socialist Party members will be busy helping Socialist Students when students return during these weeks. If that's the case, what two weeks can your Socialist Party branch set aside to raise the money?

Don't wait until then, the Socialist has a freshers' offer - students can get a copy of our latest newspaper along with the Socialist Students magazine, Megaphone, for just £2. Many students buoyed by the Corbyn surge will be happy to donate.

You can help straightaway by making a regular or one-off donation yourself - www.socialistparty.org.uk/donate

Twelve hours in the life of a carer

Noreen Bailey, Carer

I am an adult carer, having fostered three boys at home. Two of them are dependent for all their needs on me and my husband John. Our eldest is now 44 and came to us aged 14; our youngest came to us at 18 months and is now 24.

Our middle son is autistic; he joined our household when he was two years old and is now 25. We also have a grown family who are all married with families of their own.

Friday morning, 12.30am: I have just finished ironing and put it away, just going to wash the cups and put things ready for breakfast. The lads have been in bed since 10.30pm. I can hear our eldest shouting and laughing.

This is a nightly thing so I go in and make sure he is OK and check on our youngest and middle son - both the others are asleep. I put music on low to see if it will settle him down. After about an hour it does.

At 1.40am, our youngest son is shouting and banging his head. I see he needs changing so I clean and change him, then put him back to bed. I put his music on and eventually he too goes back to sleep.

It's now 2.05am. I make myself a drink and go to bed, which is actually the settee, as it has been for 15 years. The boys need their own bedrooms and someone downstairs with them.

I turn the lights off and our eldest son starts shouting again. I wait about 15 minutes and then get back up to see if he is ok. He needs changing and I have to call John as I can't change him on my own.

Once we have sorted him out and got him back in bed I make more tea and put the TV on.

Sleep

By this time it's 3.15am and I can't get to sleep so I catch up with emails to my friend Norma who runs 'SEARCH' with me - a support and campaigning organisation for parents of children and adults with disabilities.

After finishing my emails I return to the settee and doze off. I am woken at 5.30am by my son laughing, knowing it's time to get up. I make myself tea and toast, then go in and hoist our son into the shower room.

Once ready I hoist him into his wheel chair and then clean up and take him into the living room. Now it's time for his meds. Once they are given I make his breakfast and put his splints and boots on.

It's 7.30am. I make sure our youngest son has got everything in his bag for the day centre. John is up and he is taking his own meds as he is a diabetic.

It's now 8.40am and I call our middle boy up who hates mornings, but we get through with a bit of persuading. Once he is showered and ready it's 9.30am and time to get the boys to the day centre.

This is where the fun starts.

First we have to get our middle son in. He tries every excuse in the book to stay at home. We eventually load the boys in the car which requires much effort.

I should have a great waist line but it doesn't work like that! It just makes my back ache really takes its toll on John who is 69 and has fought cancer. I am 68. We're not getting any younger.

Transport cuts

We did have help with transport but it was stopped by Salford council nearly 18 months ago. So we have to endure four trips a day going to the day centre.

Our campaign over transport still continues, we have done everything, emailing and lobbying. Two families took the council to court and won transport back but just for them. So we've re-launched our campaign with a Salford Against Cuts leaflet and an online petition.

We even went to see our MP who says she is an anti-austerity Jeremy Corbyn supporter. But she says she can't interfere with decisions made by the Labour council!

By this time it's almost 10.15am. Most mornings we go home and I catch up with my cleaning and arranging meetings for 'SEARCH' and any other campaigning work.

It's now 11.45am. I make phone calls to other parents to see how they are doing and if there is anything our group can help with, before preparing dinner.

This is a part of one day in my life. Once a week I also go to Socialist Party branch meetings which I love. Members have been very supportive over the last year.

TUSC

I was also Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC) candidate for parliament in May for Salford & Eccles.

I did not get the seat but did get 517 votes which I was very proud of. TUSC has the best manifesto for a better future.

One day we all will need care in one shape or another. The way things are going with this government and even Labour councils, it won't be provided.

Carers help keep the country running but suffer in silence; it's about time we were heard.

It's sad that we carers don't get the help we should; our council just doesn't care.

I think of all the carers that don't have family or friends like me to help them.

This is why I joined the Socialist Party. They are a group of people that fight beside us and I am so proud to say I am a member.

Queen celebrates longest reign - let's make it the last!

Tracy Edwards

Not a month goes by without enduring the fawning tones of the British establishment and its media supporters spewing out gushing sentimentalities about the royal family. There's no escape.

The latest drivel celebrates the Queen becoming the longest reigning monarch in British history. But she's the "longest reigning" simply because she is still alive, not because 'she's earned it'. She is the Queen because she is the Queen!

Despite a publicly funded retinue of hundreds of royal household staff to keep the monarchy show on the road, the media repeatedly says that she is 'hard working'. This is an absolute insult to the rest of us who struggle to maintain our public services despite an avalanche of government spending cuts.

The Queen and her family represent the biggest welfare scroungers ever, costing us £334 million a year. The royals and their institutions exist to maintain an illusion of nobility for British capitalism.

Relics from a feudal past, these parasites have been paraded as a symbol of 'security' and 'stability' in a world torn apart by conflict and poverty, despite the fact it's their capitalist system that causes human suffering and war in the first place.

The monarchy and aristocracy is rotten to the core. Friendly with warlords and dictators, they swan around the world maintaining imperialism and selling weapons.

In 1975, against a background of economic crisis and rising worker militancy, the monarch's reserve constitutional powers were used to topple Gough Whitlam's Labour government in Australia. If, in the future, a left-wing government is elected, the monarchy could become a rallying point for reaction.

So the monarchy isn't a nice and fluffy British institution that aids our tourism industry as the media would like us to believe. The current Queen is the longest reigning UK monarch, but let's hope she's also the last.

Theatre review: 'An angry call for revolt'

Kate Jones, Socialist Party Wales, reviews Iphigenia in Splott, written and directed by Gary Owen, Sherman Cymru theatre, Cardiff.

Effie is a working class girl in an area of Cardiff hit hard by cuts. No work, no hope, shops boarded up, library and swimming pool closed, streets littered with dog shit. Is there nothing

for her but getting drunk, having a laugh, getting laid? She challenges all these expectations of her, head on.

Effie is based on a character from ancient Greece, whose story was told in a drama by Euripides - Iphigenia in Aulis.

Faced with being sacrificed to appease the gods and save the honour of the Greeks, she accepts her destiny. She can take it.

The modern-day Iphigenia - Effie - can take it too, she can take everything life and austerity Britain can throw at her. In the course of 75 minutes of intense performance we discover just what she has to take to appease today's gods, the capitalist system.

Working class

She challenges the audience directly - what happens when she, and the working class, can't take any more?

The play gathered rave reviews, and a major award at the Edinburgh Festival for young Welsh actress Sophie Melville. The Guardian reviewer described it as "an angry call for revolt".

But cuts mean theatre companies find it increasingly hard to get funding to stage and tour experimental and challenging dramas like this. Venues are closing or can only put on sure-fire hits like tribute bands.

Austerity Britain

Sophie Melville completely owns the role of Effie, but how many other talented young performers never get the chance of a break in austerity Britain?

And without the funding to tour local community venues, how many working class young people will even get to see original live drama at all?

Iphigenia in Splott is showing in London shortly. Worth seeing.

Comedy review: Leopardoptera

James Ivens reviews Leopardoptera, the latest stand-up show by James Ross

"You can relax. There's no trick questions - this isn't an Atos work capability assessment." The Daily Mirror justly placed this shrewd aside in the top three gags at this year's Edinburgh Fringe.

But socialist comic James Ross has more to offer than throwaway one-liners.

He is unabashed in his Marxist politics and gabby smarts. Unlike some left-wing intellectuals on the circuit, he avoids the traps of cynicism and aloofness.

James's observational humour is generous and proudly feminist. No rape 'jokes' here - he only attacks the powerful.

In the absence of a plot, combustive energy and fierce intelligence drive Leopardoptera, his latest hour-long show. He founds a religion around an audience member. He relives the castaway psychosis of working from home. In one routine, he explains the strategic considerations of where to stand in a row of urinals.

James revels in the unconnectedness of his material, giving it the irresistible momentum of a drunk on an obstacle course.

But that's not to say it's sloppy. Quite the opposite. His wit sparks off in all directions, never missing an opportunity for more laughs - as befits his improv background.

If there is any drawback, it is that the audience must occasionally run to keep up. But that is a small price for an outstanding hour of warm, inclusive and detailed comedy.

Leopardoptera UK tour

- Liverpool Comedy Festival, 20 September, 81 Renshaw, Renshaw Street, 4.45pm
- Greater Manchester Comedy Festival, 6 November, Taurus, Canal Street, 8pm
- Leicester Comedy Festival, 7 February, Looking Glass, 68-70 Braunstone Gate, 7.30pm

'Front room' and benefit gigs

James is planning a UK tour of people's front rooms, in an attempt to "get comedy out of the clubs and bring it to the people". If you and ten or 20 friends can cram into a living room, get in touch!

He is also available for benefit gig bookings. Contact james.martin.ross@googlemail.com.

Monthly comedy nights in London

Monthly at the Rag Factory, off Brick Lane

www.facebook.com/quantumleopard

Thoughts from the web

Congratulations to @Corbyn4Leader 60% of 1st preference votes, new leader of the Labour Party! Build a working class Labour out of New Labour

Dave Nellist, Trade Unionist & Socialist Coalition Chair

Congratulations @jeremycorbyn - victory for socialist ideas and principled politics. Good luck in struggle to make Labour a left party again.

Paul Murphy, Irish Socialist Party TD (MP)

If @stellacreasy can be a member of The Cooperative Party and #LabourParty, hmm, wonder if I can be a member of Socialist Party & Labour??

Nancy Taaffe

Women in high places and gender equality are two very different things #justsayin
#corbyncabinet

Jacqui Berry

#Corbyn victory! Now he needs to mobilise mass movement kill off new labour for good

Paul Callanan

Corbyn will be Rapunzel - at the top of the tower but a prisoner nevertheless - unless he acts decisively against the right wing and democratises the party.

Ross Saunders

JC romps home convincingly! This a great victory for the anti-austerity movement and should give confidence to us all in the trade unions and on the left. Questions that had been confined to the margins such as what type of change do we need and how do we get it as well as socialism are now surely back on the agenda, and I'm convinced Marxist ideas will also become more popular!

PD Hunt

Ramsey MacDonald, Denis Healey, Roy Hattersley, Neil Kinnock, Tony Blair, Peter Mandelson, Alistair Campbell. Liz Kendall, your boys took one hell of a beating!

Nick Parker

Not everybody was pleased. The editorial in City AM, a city freeby with a daily diary page called The Capitalist, talks of Corbyn putting "Labour's moral authority at risk". The paper's headline was "Labour's lost it."

It rails against John McDonnell's plans for tackling the 'casino economy' including increasing taxation on people earning over £100,000 a year. They are worried about the bank accounts of the rich 'losing it'. But their class has for decades had three major political parties backing it and they are weeping, and trying to organise against, the prospect of Labour leaving that fold.

Roger Shrives