

[Socialist Party](#) | [Print](#)

# Strike to save the NHS

## Support for socialism on doctors' demo

**Paul Callanan, Socialist Party London**

Twenty thousand doctors and health workers marched against Tory health secretary Jeremy Hunt's vicious attacks on pay and conditions in London on 17 October.

Thousands more demonstrated in Nottingham and Belfast.

London's mainly young march was angry and determined - but also lively and optimistic about taking on the government. Doctors' union the British Medical Association (BMA) called the demo.

Thousands more wanted to be there. Blue placards throughout the march bore the names of doctors who were working at the time of the demonstration. Hunt's claim that the NHS is not a "24/7" service was proven false.

Hunt's so-called reforms would see junior doctors' normal hours extended from Monday to Friday 7am to 7pm - to Monday to Saturday 7am to 10pm. There will be no extra money for unsocial hours. It effectively amounts to a 30% pay cut.

Longer hours mean doctors are more likely to make mistakes - putting patients' lives at risk.

Loud cheers went up for every speaker at the rally who called for defence of the NHS. Thousands on the march chanted "Hunt must go", "NHS! NHS!" - and "BMA! BMA!" The BMA, traditionally a very conservative body, is now seen as an organisation that will fight for the NHS and its workers.

It is clear from the reactions Socialist Party members got on the demo that the tide is turning against the Tories.

There was also support for socialist ideas.

Socialist Party leaflets were snatched up by crowds looking for a strategy to defend the NHS and beat back the tide of austerity.

One junior doctor turned to his friends after taking our leaflet and said: "I voted Conservative in May, and now I'm a socialist!"

## Strike

The BMA is now balloting for strike action. This would be the first time doctors have walked out since 1975.

There is a huge mood among them for a fight. One doctor commented: "I don't know one junior doctor that doesn't want to go on strike"!

The decision to call a ballot has been supported by a 50,000-strong petition including doctors and the public. Doctors must now be prepared to take that action and see it through until they win.

The attacks on junior doctors are a part of a much bigger attack on the NHS. It is vital that all the

unions representing health workers co-ordinate action. A wider call for solidarity from the rest of the trade union movement would win huge support.

This is a hated government with a majority of just 12 seats in parliament. In spite of their recent triumphalism after winning May's election, they are weak. A 24-hour general strike could stop them in their tracks - and kick-start the kind of movement we need to consign them to history.

---

"I don't know one junior doctor who doesn't want to strike. Many doctors remember the four-hour strikes called by health workers' unions over pay last year, and thought they were a farce. I think most feel a strike should last at least a week."

**Donal Bradley, Manchester Royal Infirmary**

---

"I was a medical student in 1975 - the last time junior doctors went on strike. The BMA and senior doctors then were mostly concerned about defending their right to carry out private practice. Many of its leaders had campaigned against the NHS before it was set up in 1948. At times I felt overwhelmed with emotion. Thousands of young doctors cheering every speaker who called for the defence of the NHS, chanting "NHS! NHS!" and "BMA! BMA!" What a massive change!"

**Jon Dale, Mansfield Socialist Party**

---

## **1% now officially owns more than half the world's wealth**

**Claire Job**

We now live in a world where the richest 1% of the population owns more than half the wealth. And the poorest half owns less than 1% - according to the latest Credit Suisse Wealth Report.

This is a world where crippling cuts send thousands flocking to food banks. At the same time, those at the top find their riches mounting. They are untouched by the economic crisis that gave rise to the Tory lie "we're all in it together".

### **Chaos**

But we are not! The working class is paying for the economic chaos of the capitalist system. It's a system wielded by those of wealth for the benefit of themselves and their friends.

The middle class, too, is getting squeezed. More and more see the need to ally with the working class in struggle. Look no further than the pay battle faced by junior doctors for evidence.

The Tory cheats trumpet falling unemployment figures. But most new jobs are low-wage, part-time, or self-employed posts - with no sick or holiday pay.

They hide the fact that in Britain, 63% of children living in poverty are in a family where someone works. Tory plans to decimate tax credits in April are estimated to mean poverty for an extra 200,000 children.

What do you expect from the bosses' politicians?

The prime minister and chancellor received ideological training at exclusive super-rich clubs in Oxford. Supposedly, burning a £50 note in front of a homeless person was an initiation ritual.

But it's workers - the 99% - who make all the wealth the 1% controls. We build the products and run the services.

It's not enough to be angry. Turn that anger into action. Join the Socialist Party - fight for socialism. Join the fightback today (see page 5)!

---

## **Damning report on unsafe NHS staffing levels delayed by Tories**

'Heather', NHS nurse

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (Nice) - guideline setter for NHS procedures - allegedly held back a vital report on Tory instructions.

Nice did not publish damning research on NHS safe staffing levels - after health secretary Jeremy Hunt apparently intervened.

### **Problem**

Inspectors at two-thirds of NHS hospitals have identified low staffing as a problem.

No nurse will be fooled by any attempt to conceal grim statistics on the NHS staffing crisis. We work through our breaks and on our days off to clear the caseload.

Delaying publishing results by "rolling the Nice research into work by NHS England" shows this government wants to hide the effects of its attacks.

Nice is an organisation under pressure. It agreed to delay the report on the ridiculous assertion that it would be "confusing" - made by a civil servant working for Hunt.

Nice now expresses concern that releasing its bleak staffing figures will "generate public interest". Somehow this is meant to impede NHS improvement. It's a disgrace.

The NHS belongs to all of us. It is right and proper that those of us who work in and use it should be kept fully informed of all developments. It is difficult to imagine how safe staffing can somehow be divorced from attempts to improve the NHS.

### **Cowardly**

Nice's failure to respond to Freedom of Information requests, and its retreat before the government, are cowardly acts. They are not in the public interest.

Tory attacks are supported by the overall failure of unaccountable statutory bodies like Nice to stand up for the best interests of patients. The Socialist Party campaigns for the NHS to be fully nationalised under the control of democratic committees of workers and patients.

---

## Cutting the cord

Hospital departments which care for newborns are dangerously understaffed. Premature baby charity Bliss has found 64% of neonatal units have too few nurses. 70% of intensive care units hold more babies than is safe. And two in five units don't support parents of premature babies with mental health specialists.

---

## Labour MP refuses to back strike, draws parallels with Enoch Powell

Jim Fitzpatrick, MP for Limehouse and Poplar in Tower Hamlets, east London, refused to back striking cleaners on 14 October.

Members of transport union RMT on the Docklands Light Railway (DLR) are fighting low pay.

Fitzpatrick's reason? In 1968, some dockers walked out against the sacking of racist Tory minister Enoch Powell.

---

**Tower Hamlets TUSC @towerhamletTUSC**

Looking forward to seeing @FitzMP on #DLR #picket 2moro after @johnmcdonnellMP called for MPs to support strikes

---

**Jim Fitzpatrick @FitzMP**

I don't give any issue "unconditional" support. I remember dockers striking/marching in support of Enoch, 'nuff said.

---

**Tower Hamlets TUSC**

How about supporting @RMTLondon DLR cleaners & security strike 4 pay justice & workplace agreements 2 be followed?

---

**RMT London @RMTLondon**

Interesting response. Is that a maybe? @FitzMP

---

**Niall MacLaughlin @nmac94**

Is Tower Hamlets Labour taking the piss? You can't support workers stuck on poverty pay because racists went on strike once?!

---

# Them & Us

## Rents rocket...

Rents have hit a record high. Tenants now pay on average £816 a month.

And since David Cameron came to power in 2010, there has been a 79% increase in rough sleepers in London.

On top of that, Hull has hiked council tax for an entire street - rather than downgrade one overcharged property. Residents in one of the identical homes rightly complained they were charged more than the rest. The Labour council cynically responded by raising everyone else's rates!

## ...landlords profit

Meanwhile, landlord Tory MP Philip Davies doesn't think his tenants' homes should have to be "fit for human habitation". He spoke against a legal update that would make this a requirement.

Last year, Davies tried to block legislation which would have stopped landlords kicking out tenants for requesting repairs. He is an organiser for ultra-austerity pressure group the Taxpayers' Alliance. And he thinks disabled workers should receive less than the minimum wage.

Davies extorts profits from our basic human need for shelter. Meanwhile, he rents a London home in a plush Westminster postcode - at our expense.

UK landlords have made £177 billion in rising house prices over the past five years. And that's just the property value - it doesn't include profits from rent.

---

## Game of two halves

It says a lot about modern football when it's hailed as unusually good news that ticket prices aren't rising even further. This is what the BBC's annual price of football survey has found.

Replica football shirts cost an average of £42, or £33 for children. The cheapest season ticket in England is £120, at Eastleigh - in the fifth tier of English football. Incredibly, this is still more than at Bayern Munich, Germany's leading club and recent European champions.

Compare this pricing out of working class fans to the alleged six-figure bribes handed to Fifa executives in brown envelopes. And the £1.35 million payment (for reasons unexplained) given to Michel Platini, favourite to be football's next top dog.

The world's most popular sport is increasingly turning ugly and being made as unequal as the society it is part of. Let's kick the millionaires out of football, reclaim our game and fight for socialism.

**Scott Jones**

---

## What we saw

## "Homeland is racist"

Political thriller Homeland was targeted by graffiti artists hired to help with set dressing.

The Fox drama centres on counterterrorism agents. This includes flagrant propaganda for US imperialism's racist attacks in the Middle East and at home.

Designers didn't think to check what the Arabic slogans meant. One reads "Homeland is racist" - another says "Homeland is a joke and it didn't make us laugh".

## Corbyn campaign: an opportunity for raising socialist ideas

**The Socialist Party was recently approached by New Statesman magazine to respond to the election of Jeremy Corbyn as Labour leader. Unfortunately our answers were not used in the resulting article. Below are the responses of Socialist Party general secretary Peter Taaffe to the questions asked.**

**Does your party view Corbyn's rise as Labour leader as positive, negative or neutral? Why?**

It is overwhelmingly positive, because it reflects the mass rejection of austerity, visible in the recent massive TUC demonstration in Manchester. This was preceded by an angry march of junior doctors in Westminster a few days before, which shows that the circle of discontent with the government's unremitting austerity agenda has spread out from the working class to sections of the middle class.

Corbyn was elected by a landslide, which represents a rejection of the right-wing Parliamentary Labour Party and their discredited Blairite policies. This has opened up an entirely new period in British politics.

**Are there elements of Corbyn's vision for Britain that match those of your party?**

Yes, his campaign has raised the idea of socialism, which is the aim of our party. This has opened up a wider discussion in the labour movement and society on how to defeat capitalism.

**Which of Corbyn's policies are in line with your own, and which differ?**

There are important elements of Corbyn's programme which we would support: the rejection of capitalist neoliberalism, nationalisation of energy companies and railways (which is enormously popular) and the abolition of tuition fees - which are a terrible burden on young people, who were the most enthusiastic supporters of his candidacy.

We oppose Trident and all nuclear weapons. Scrapping Trident and using the money to fund public services would help ease the burden of austerity from working people.

We don't think he should backtrack on opposition to the capitalist European Union, which seeks to impose austerity on Greek workers and the rest of Europe. We will argue for an 'Out' vote in the referendum but on the basis of a socialist campaign and not in alliance with the far right.

We agree with much of his programme but we argue that it cannot be fully realised within the

framework of capitalism and that real socialist change must be fought for. Of course, this will be resisted by Labour's parliamentary right so Corbyn's supporters have to organise against them.

**What are the most important social and political issues for your members?**

The need for a programme to solve the problems of working people in housing, education, the workplace and the struggle against the government's dictatorial anti-trade union bill.

A crucial issue is the extra £20 billion cuts proposed for this parliament, which must be resisted. As John McDonnell said, "Austerity is a political choice not an economic necessity."

We want Labour councils to oppose the cuts and draw up needs budgets, which would receive mass backing. The political instrument for realising this can only be done with a new mass party of the working class. There is a big element of this in the Corbyn movement. The Corbyn surge is important but it won't last forever unless it is organised and fights for lasting change.

If the right continues to resist the will of the members for socialist ideas, then they must be taken on. The Corbyn campaign has within it, in reality, elements of a new party in the process of formation.

**Have you seen members of your party jump ship to become part of Corbyn's movement over recent weeks?**

On the contrary, we are getting many people joining us because of our analysis of what Corbyn represents and the possibilities for durable change. We are an openly socialist party, and workers and young people are looking for socialist ideas. There have been no significant movements out of our party.

**Do you view members joining or supporting Corbyn as a positive or negative phenomenon?**

As stated above, either joining or supporting Corbyn is positive because it has opened up discussion as to how the left can participate together. The barriers between Labour and those outside are beginning to be knocked down. If the Labour Party opens up and develops into its historic traditions of a federation, then there can and will be opportunities to strengthen the Corbyn campaign, both inside and outside the Labour Party.

Would your party consider working with Corbyn or encouraging members to support his campaigns? Why or why not?

Yes, we would. The right is organising against him, so Corbyn and his supporters have to mobilise inside and outside Labour to prevent the right from neutralising or removing him.

We will join in broad campaigns at local, regional and national levels to transform the situation through a programme against austerity. If Corbyn and his supporters meet a brick wall inside Labour, they should form a new party, for the reasons explained above.

**Would you define your party as radical? Is Jeremy Corbyn radical?**

**Yes, although 'radical' is a misused word; it has been used to describe reactionary Thatcherite Tories, the far right and right-wing political Islam.**

We believe Jeremy is a radical socialist and so is our party. Our class needs radical socialist policies and we put these forward in our programme.

# How can workers resist capitalist cuts and closures?

A stuttering capitalist world economy has jeopardised steel making in the UK. Already the Redcar plant on Teesside has been closed, Tata Steel has announced huge job cuts throughout the country, and Caparo Industries steel division has gone into administration. Other manufacturing plants, such as Crown Packaging, are also closing or facing big job losses, wrecking livelihoods in working class communities. Such calamities also undermine Tory chancellor George Osborne's boast of a sustained economic recovery in the UK.

But workers do not have to accept the inevitability of closures and unemployment. Recently, striking workers at Air France cornered their job-slashing bosses, literally ripping the shirts off their backs!

The workers' militancy has been rewarded with concessions to planned 2,900 job losses as part of the company's 'restructuring programme' (despite the company reporting a €1.6 billion annual profit).

The UK trade unions representing manufacturing workers should demand the nationalisation of plants threatening large-scale redundancies and a plan of continuing production as part of a socialist economy.

---

## Nationalise to save jobs and communities

### A JCB worker

The steel industry is "in crisis" and needs "life-saving surgery", Gareth Stace the director of UK Steel has warned. Tata Steel announced 1,200 job cuts at sites in Scunthorpe and Lanarkshire. This follows the closure of SSI's plant in Redcar, Teesside where 2,200 jobs have been lost.

It is estimated that for every sacked steelworker another seven jobs will go in the supply and service industries. Construction equipment companies Caterpillar and JCB have already shed hundreds of agency workers and are now making redundancies from their full time workforce.

500 staff workers at JCB will go in the next few days and shop floor redundancies are set to follow. This April, JCB announced its second best annual profit margin in its 70 year history of over £300 million.

### Cutbacks

Caterpillar employs over 100,000 worldwide and has announced it will cut its workforce by 10,000. It wants to close 20 manufacturing facilities over the next three years and is not ruling out the closure of its Desford plant in Leicester with the loss of 1,500 jobs. Metal Box in Wales is also threatened with job losses.

Gareth Stace appeals to Tory business secretary Sajid Javid to honour promises he has made to address some of the challenges facing the industry. Yet the response from Mr Javid was "there is no straightforward solution to complex global challenges" facing the industry.

In other words, let global capitalism run its course in determining the livelihoods of thousands of skilled workers. This crisis is a result of the continuing economic catastrophe caused by the billionaire bankers, speculators and spivs. We will not pay for this with our jobs.



The trade unions cannot allow this to happen and in the first instance should immediately convene a national joint conference of all the unions involved. This should be led by the shop stewards from the various plants to plan a united fightback against these redundancies.

The unions should be demanding the opening up of company accounts to inspection by the workforce and opposing all jobs losses. Private and public workers need to unite to fight the jobs slaughter.

Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn has re-popularised the idea of nationalisation through his election campaign, raising the idea of renationalising the rail industry (although he would do this on a gradual basis). He and his supporters should boldly make the same call to save these steel jobs.

Outright nationalisation should be on the basis of genuine democratic workers' control and management.

A step too far? In 1971 Rolls-Royce engines in Derby went bust. Workers took to the streets with demonstrations. Such was the anger that the Tory Heath government was forced to nationalise it in 24-hours.

---

## **'You bailed out the banks now save our steel industry'**

**Matt Dobson, Socialist Party Scotland**

Scotland's two remaining steelworks at Motherwell (Dalzell) and Cambuslang (Clydebridge) are threatened with closure by Tata steel. This came out of the latest steel crisis summit on 16 October.

The closure threat came while the Scottish National Party's (SNP) national conference took place. First Minister and SNP leader Nicola Sturgeon announced she would "leave no stone unturned" and would set up an emergency taskforce involving employers and trade unions to try and save Scotland's steel industry.

The SNP has already come under pressure to take action by nationalising the Tata sites, with finance minister John Swinney being asked about this directly in media interviews.

Public anger is being expressed over the lack of protection for Scotland's steel industry with the SNP government awarding contracts to Chinese steel suppliers for the Forth road bridge contract in 2012.

As the experience of the SNP taking a pro-big business stance over ScotRail and Calmac ferries shows, it's likely the SNP, unless forced by mass pressure, will only ask for a Westminster subsidy. Or they may use Scottish government funds and try and get the taskforce to agree a short-time working arrangement to keep Motherwell and Cambuslang open.

The Socialist in Scotland spoke to Callum Munro, communications and research officer for the trade union Community: "Community want all options on the table of the taskforce, everything should be done to avoid compulsory redundancies. Community is willing to discuss the issue of 'short-time working' which has happened before. But the issue of temporary nationalisation of these assets shouldn't be discounted which has also worked previously in the steel industry".

The recent example of Redcar shows the trade unions may need to act quickly to prevent mass redundancies. Soon after SSI announced the "mothballing" of the steelworks, while the Tory government put no pressure on SSI bosses, liquidators stepped in and closed the site in a fortnight.

## **Fightback**

In the view of the Socialist Party Scotland it is critical that the trade unions, such as Community, mobilise a fightback of the workforce for nationalisation of the steel industry and no redundancies.

This would quickly gain active mass sympathy from the public. Action is needed before Tata bosses are given grace to walk away leaving workers on the scrapheap, as SSI did in Redcar.

Mass pressure, organised by the workforce trade unions, should be brought to bear on the SNP government to nationalise the Motherwell and Cambuslang plants. Also for united mass action with the workforces at threatened Scunthorpe and Port Talbot, Tata sites and all steelworkers, demanding nationalisation of the steel industry.

Scottish Labour leader Kezia Dugdale has also said "everything should be done to save Scotland's steel industry jobs".

If Labour under Jeremy Corbyn is now an 'anti-austerity' party Corbyn and shadow chancellor McDonnell - who claimed that speaking to the devastated families in Redcar changed his view of whether voting for the fiscal charter was the correct tactic - should make a clear call for nationalisation.

Labour should give full active support to a mass campaign for nationalisation. This would give confidence to trade unionists, the workforce and communities threatened with devastation by these closures.

Already there is mass public outrage at the steel bosses' economic vandalism, reflected in the homemade placard of a Redcar steelworker shared widely on social media: "You bailed out the banks now bail out/save our steel industry".

Tory ministers are also joining the chorus of steel bosses complaints about green taxes, the strong pound and high energy costs - lobbying at the crisis summits for state subsidies for private corporations, lower business rates, a relaxation of emissions targets and state compensation for high energy prices.

While the pressures of the world market are real, it's certain Tata and other steel bosses are trying to force governments to either subsidise their profiteering, or they will move production to lower cost workforces abroad.

The Tory government cannot be trusted. It is involved in lucrative deals over Chinese investment in the development of the UK's nuclear energy sector. We need mass pressure to bring the plants into public ownership.

## **Subsidies**

It is also likely that even if a subsidy was agreed by Westminster or the Scottish government, Tata - like all major corporations - would prioritise profits over long term investment in jobs. Also, a subsidy could not permanently overcome pressures of the world market.

Steelworkers may also be asked by companies and the government like Tata to give up hard fought terms and conditions through short time working as the price of protecting jobs through a subsidy.

The record of the Tory Westminster and SNP Scottish governments show they would rather workers' pay the cost of this crisis than big business.

Recently the workforce at Tata has shown a willingness to fight back, returning a huge mandate for strike action in the national strike ballot in May over pensions that brought Tata bosses to the table with a serious offer.

Full article on [www.socialistpartyscotland.org.uk](http://www.socialistpartyscotland.org.uk)

---

## Redcar - more than a century of steelmaking at stake

John Malcolm, Teesside Socialist Party

The remaining SSI steel workers at Redcar finished their final shift on Friday 16 October marking the end of 160 years of steel production on Teesside. 2,200 workers are facing redundancy in an area of high unemployment and high levels of poverty.

The closure of the Redcar Steel plant will have a far wider impact on the local economy and service industries. The Tory Government has announced a package of £80 million to support workers to gain new jobs.

However, what jobs are likely to be on offer? It is also reported that the redundancy payments will come out of the £80 million as SSI has gone into receivership.

This the second time in five years that the plant has faced closure. The last time was under a Labour government and at the following general election the Redcar Labour MP lost her seat to the Lib Dems. The plant only reopened in 2012 due to investment from SSI.

Local Labour MP's have been supportive and have raised the issue in parliament, one even going as far as to call for renationalisation of the steel industry. Local Tory MP James Wharton, however, has called it a "distraction" from the Northern Powerhouse - a government quango set up to revitalise the northern economy.

The steel industry has been significantly reduced since it was privatised under the Thatcher government following a bitter industrial dispute in the early 1980s.

Unfortunately when faced with the prospect of the current closure, Community, the union representing the majority of the workers, failed to launch a campaign or put forward a strategy to defend their members' jobs and keep steel production on Teesside.

There remains a high demand for steel but many projects are being built mainly with steel imported from China. This is the same as in the production of wind turbines and other projects.

Tariffs on steel imports, as raised in the recent steel summit, will do little to save steel production in the UK. Under capitalism, saving jobs in one sector of industry through tariffs on imports will lead to jobs losses elsewhere as a result of higher prices.

Only renationalisation can save the industry with a programme to use steel in socially useful construction projects.

---

## World economy: 'biggest danger to capitalism is capitalism'

**Redcar steel plant to close after a century of production, raw material prices collapsing, China's economy slowing, the ongoing euro crisis... Robin Clapp examines the world economy's deepening woes.**

Eight years on from the crash that led to the great recession, the global monetary system remains unreformed and unstable. Recovery has been very weak by historical standards.

Yet, despite the euro crisis, worsening instability in the Middle East and now the emerging panic in developing economies as a result of China's slowdown, stock market prices have generally continued to rise.

The reason is simple. The world's main markets have been pumped full of stimulants in the form of quantitative easing (QE), money creation programmes adopted by central banks.

These, coupled with unprecedentedly low interest rates, have been the oxygen masks that have allowed the patient to imagine they are recovering. In reality they now threaten to become triggers for the next economic crisis.

There has been no attempt to redress the main structural problems of the past three decades. The top 10% of US households took almost all of the income gains when the US economy was recovering between 2009 and 2012. The other 90% saw their living standards fall.

Productivity growth in the UK remains chronic as evidenced in a recent damning speech by Bank of England deputy governor Jon Cunliffe: "In the ten years prior to the crisis, growth in the hours worked in the UK economy accounted for 23% of overall economic growth.

## **IMF**

"The mainstay of economic growth, the other 77%, came from growth in productivity. Since 2013, only 9% of UK annual economic growth has come from productivity improvement. The remaining 91% has come from the increase in the total hours worked."

Now the IMF warns of an increased risk of a new global financial crash because of the worldwide impact of China's retrenchment and a dramatic decline in world trade which contracted by 8% in the first half of 2015.

It points to instability and recession hanging over economies including Brazil, Turkey, Australia and Malaysia that could knock 3% off global GDP (total output), downgrading its forecast for global growth in 2015 to 3.1% - the weakest performance for six years.

When the US eventually puts interest rates up, households and firms from Indonesia to Turkey that have borrowed trillions of dollars, face sharp rises in interest and repayment costs in terms of their local currencies.

## **Nose-dive**

Ominously, figures show that total net capital outflows from the 19 largest emerging market economies in the 13 months to July were almost double the net outflow during the nine months following the 2008 banking collapse.

The great crash of 2007-2009, the still unresolved euro crisis and now the nose-diving of developing economies as the Chinese economic juggernaut stutters, are all feeding off of each other and exposing capitalism's impasse.

These economic uncertainties have forced the US to postpone even a minute rise in interest rates at this stage, in recognition of the dangerous conjuncture of deflationary pressures, tit-for-tat currency devaluations and paralysis that stalk the world economy.

Rarely have so many central banks been so ill-equipped to manage another recession, with almost all

having much less room for financial manoeuvre than in 2007.

## **Socialism**

US factory orders fell more than expected in August and last month business activity in New York contracted for the first time in eight months, evidence that weaknesses in the global economy are washing onto American shores.

This echoed the World Bank's warning that weak consumption, anaemic investment and low inflation could feed on each other in a deflationary spiral, leading to entrenched global stagnation.

No wonder the chief executive of Unilever has warned that "the biggest danger to capitalism is the operation of capitalism itself".

Production for profit can never deliver long term economic stability. Crises like this are not an exception for capitalism, it's the way the anarchic profit system operates.

The only way out is the socialist alternative. The economy can't be left in the hands of big business, which exists only to make a profit.

Instead, workers should own and control the wealth that they produce. Only democratic socialist planning can deliver a stable economy where production is geared to meet people's needs.

---

## **Chinese tiger looking mangy**

China's slowdown fills the capitalists with dread. It is clear that the slump in the stock market reflects a broader economic tightening, with the official GDP growth rate halving to 7.4% since 2007.

Imports have fallen, while exports have also slowed, despite measures to stimulate growth. In August, activity in China's factories shrank at the fastest pace in almost seven years.

With \$4 trillion of foreign currency reserves and interest rates still above 4%, Beijing possesses more economic room for manoeuvre than its western competitors.

But China's deceleration is causing mayhem across the world economy, given its previously insatiable appetite for raw materials which accounted for half the global demand for nickel, aluminium and copper.

The effects have been felt everywhere with the FTSE-Indexed Glencore mining company, which owns a vast array of mines from Chile to Norway, seeing its share price collapse by 40% since May.

## **USA**

Falling prices, caused by a slump in demand for oil and other commodities, have already had knock-on effects for oil and mineral-rich countries that rely on the income from commodity sales and this has been massively reinforced by the faltering performance of China.

Factory-gate prices have fallen across Asia, reflecting excess capacity in industry and making it harder for companies to service the debts they ran up in the boom years.

Recent International Monetary Fund (IMF) research has found that a quadrupling of corporate loans in emerging economies over the decade to 2014 was driven mainly by the flood of cheap QE money made available to quick profit-chasers by western central banks.

Money had flowed into fast-growing developing countries while western interest rates were at rock-bottom, but the possibility of an imminent US rate hike has seen those funds start to flow back out as investors look towards higher-yielding US assets, with the consequence that emerging markets are expected to suffer a net capital outflow this year for the first time since 1988.

---

## **Germany: refugee crisis and the fight against the racist right**

Sascha Stanicic, Sozialistische Alternative ('SAV' - CWI Germany)

Angela Merkel, Germany's chancellor, is working on an image overhaul. During the Greek euro crisis, protest placards showed her in a Nazi uniform because of her policy of imposing draconian cuts on the Greek people.

Yet, recently, there were even proposals to nominate her for the Nobel peace prize because of her policy in regard to the refugee crisis.

### **Angela Merkel**

When the refugee crisis in Hungary was close to a violent escalation in August, Merkel opened Germany's borders for those desperate refugees. This was an unexpected step by a government which was not known for a humanitarian approach to refugees and asylum seekers.

However, there was soon a strong reaction to the chancellor's opening of the borders from within her own political camp.

More than 800,000 refugees are officially expected to come to Germany this year. When a similar situation developed in the early 1990s, mainly because of the civil war in the former Yugoslavia, the capitalist establishment unleashed a strong racist campaign, claiming that many asylum seekers were simply 'economic refugees'.

As a consequence, in 1993 the German constitution was changed, with the votes of today's government parties, the CDU/CSU and the social-democratic SPD (plus the liberal FDP which is not represented in parliament today), and the right to asylum severely restricted.

### **Establishment**

Another consequence was that the far-right felt motivated by this state racism and was able to grow in numbers and influence. In these years asylum seekers' hostels and migrants' homes were burned down by fascists.

A mass anti-racist movement developed in which the CWI-led Youth Against Racism in Europe (YRE) played a key role, winning hundreds and thousands of young people not only to anti-racist but also anti-capitalist and socialist ideas, and establishing a tradition of mass direct resistance against Nazi meetings and marches.

In the early 1990s, East and West Germany had just re-unified. The West German capitalists took over the East German economy, exploiting their workers as cheap labour, with millions falling into mass unemployment.

Today the economic and social background and the interests of the German capitalist class are different, which leads to a different approach to migration and the refugee crisis. For many years, German capitalists complained about a lack of skilled workers.

This is partly because they failed to invest in training, and also because of the decline in the German population. They see the influx of refugees as an opportunity to get trained workers on the cheap.

Also, the German government has been part of the alleged 'war on terror'. Not to give help to the desperate victims of the so-called Islamic State in Syria would have been seen as hypocritical.

Also, over the last two years, Germany has seen an anti-Islamic, racist movement under the banner of Pegida and the rise of a new right-wing populist political party, Alternative für Deutschland (AfD). This was viewed by the majority of the German ruling class as a threat to stability.

Merkel also saw the opportunity to restore her personal image and the image of Germany after her government came under massive criticisms for its role in the euro crisis.

## **Austerity**

At the same time the establishment differentiated between 'war refugees' and alleged 'economic refugees'. In particular, asylum seekers from the west Balkan states were labelled as 'unjustified asylum seekers' (including Roma).

Pictures of desperate refugees in Hungary and the dead body of three-year old Aylan Kurdi on a Turkish beach led to a wave of solidarity from the German population for the refugees who arrived in Munich, Berlin and other cities. For a while the mood tilted in favour of refugees.

Scandalously, the state rested on civil solidarity work to care for the refugees. State infrastructure has been allowed to erode and no preparations were made for the foreseeable refugee crisis.

At the same time, the far-right and right-wing populist forces seized the opportunity to step up their mobilisations. These forces can play on social fears among the population - reinforced by existing housing shortages and rising rents in many cities.

Also, the government announced budget cuts 'because of the refugees' and pro-capitalist commentators demanded the scrapping of the minimum wage of €8.50 an hour for refugees.

The right-wing AfD is gaining in polls while Merkel's approval ratings have gone down. This is a stronger phenomenon in parts of eastern Germany where Pegida has made gains.

Consciousness is rapidly changing, and in recent weeks there has been a trend against the refugees again. Within just one month, the numbers saying that Germany has more advantages than disadvantages from migration fell from 45% to 35%.

The tone of the government parties has changed again. One conservative politician after another says that there is a limit to how many people Germany can take.

A set of measures has already been agreed by the government which are meant to make deportations easier and to worsen the conditions for asylum seekers who have come to Germany. Border controls to Austria have been re-imposed.

But the situation is a real dilemma for the ruling class, reflected in tensions among the government parties. Merkel still adopts a more conciliatory tone and rejects all demands to further change asylum legislation.

It reflects the fact that there are different interests at stake and the capitalists have no solution to the situation.

2015 has seen the biggest number of strikes for many years. Some disputes were long and bitter, in particular at the state-owned railway company, Deutsche Bahn, the German Post company and among social and kindergarten workers.

## **Socialism**

However, union leaders failed to develop these disputes into a political class movement for the redistribution of wealth from the top to the bottom of society.

Yet the potential for mass resistance against the capitalist establishment was expressed in Berlin on 10 October, when 250,000 marched against the free trade agreements, TTIP and CETA, including a large number of trade unionists. SAV members found a high interest in socialist ideas, with record sales of our paper, Solidarität.

The tragedy in this situation is that Die Linke (Left Party) seems incapable of using either the strikes or the polarisation in society to build and put forward a clear strategy to fight back and undermine racism and nationalism.

Instead of turning all its fire against the established parties and capitalism, it works together with the 'democratic' government parties against racism, which is bred by those same parties.

However, SAV members within Linksjugend (the youth wing of Die Linke), together with others, formed BAK Revolutionäre Linke (Revolutionary Left national working group). This is a radical, socialist current within the youth wing that stands for combative, anti-capitalist policies and is now working with young people in 28 cities.

BAK RL launched a campaign which has the aim to fight for affordable homes for all, for the right to stay for migrants, against the root causes of people fleeing and to make the rich pay. This is an attempt to combine the fight against racism and the necessary solidarity with refugees, with the social issues posed and the fight against capitalism.

Full article on [www.socialistworld.net](http://www.socialistworld.net)

---

## **Merkel's 'no-deal' deal**

In recent days, under pressure from her right-wing MPs and the media, Germany's Chancellor Angela Merkel is attempting a volte face on admitting more refugees into the country.

She jetted off to Ankara to persuade Turkey's despotic president Recep Erdogan to stem the flow of refugees into Europe with a €3 billion sweetener, visa-free access for Turks to the Schengen area, and to "re-energise" talks over Turkey's membership of the European Union (having recently opposed Turkey's application).

But as one political commentator remarked, Merkel is "offering Ankara concessions Europe has no wish to make in return for actions Turkey has no intention of taking."

---

## **International news in brief**



## **Iberian political school**

Members of Socialismo Revolucionario (CWI, Spain and Portugal) recently held a successful weekend school to discuss the major political issues gripping the peninsula, including the national question in the Spanish state and the recent Catalan referendum.

There was also a public 'European forum' attended by over 40 people; speakers included Irish Socialist Party member and Anti-Austerity Alliance TD (MP) Paul Murphy, who put forward a programme for defeating the capitalists' austerity attacks on the working class.

---

## **Hong Kong: Socialist Action steps up election campaigning**

Members of Socialist Action (CWI, Hong Kong) have been hitting the city's streets with a vibrant display of posters in support of their candidate Sally Tang Mei-ching contesting the forthcoming district council elections

---

## **USA: Happy birthday Kshama**

A successful Socialist Alternative fundraising election campaign social event was held on the birthday of the party's incumbent Seattle councillor, Kshama Sawant. The 3 November election will pitch Socialist Alternative (SA) against the Democratic Party.

Kshama and SA has been to the fore in successfully championing a \$15 an hour minimum wage, and campaigning for rent controls against the vested interests of big business and its Democratic Party allies in the city.

---

## **For a fighting, socialist Unison general secretary, back Roger Bannister**

**Roger Bannister, Knowsley Unison branch secretary and general secretary candidate**

Unison members need a general secretary with a proven record of fighting for them, who is prepared to put their interests first. Unison cannot carry on as it is, punching below its weight, while members live daily with the threat of redundancy and cuts to pay and conditions.

As a lifelong socialist and anti-austerity activist I have every confidence in our members' ability to turn back the attacks coming from this vicious Tory government.

As a branch secretary I represent members on a daily basis in disciplinary, grievance, at sickness absence hearings, and in collective bargaining forums.

When necessary I am prepared to organise industrial action so that members are treated fairly in the workplace. On that basis I have been able to achieve many good agreements for members, including a reduction in the working week across the council workforce and pay increases for many local government workers.

As a National Executive Council member since Unison was formed, I have supported fighting policies

to defend ordinary members, and have consistently opposed the divisive, politically motivated and illegal witch hunt of left activists in the union.

## Support

Serving on the Industrial Action Committee has enabled me to argue for support for members when they demand the right to strike.

As a member of the health and safety committee I have been able to support and help to extend this vital aspect of the union's work. Bad employers must not be allowed to put Unison members at risk!

For a number of years our union has called strike action in pursuit of various claims including pay. During the balloting process the leadership has made it clear it would take more than one day of strike action to shift the employers.

When the time comes for action however, this is never backed up with sustained industrial action. Instead our members have been subjected to a morale-sapping cycle of one-day actions followed by a settlement when the government offers a few crumbs. We must break with this cycle.

As general secretary my priority in national industrial disputes would be to assess whether sustained action would be necessary and then work to deliver that strategy among the membership. Our members cannot continue with pay freezes while the cost of living climbs higher and higher. Winning a decent pay rise will be my top priority.

Unison urgently needs change. I have fought for a single anti-Prentis candidate in this election; even offering to withdraw if that could be achieved. I initiated a meeting between myself, Heather Wakefield and John Burgess but unfortunately no agreement could be reached and now the ballot papers are being prepared.

So, on the basis of my votes in previous general secretary elections, my profile and programme I believe that I am in the best position to deliver the change our members need and deserve.

## Cuts

Council cuts can be stopped - but we need to build a powerful movement. Local actions in Glasgow and Yorkshire have shown action can win.

The election of Jeremy Corbyn as leader of the Labour Party, on an anti-austerity programme, is a significant political development for public sector workers. But it is the beginning and not the end of a process that could easily be derailed by Corbyn's many opponents in the Labour Party.

Many thousands of Unison members are employed by Labour councils who have passed on Tory cuts. This must stop. The councillors should follow the anti-austerity message of Jeremy Corbyn and unite with our members in resisting cuts.

I call for greater flexibility in our political fund rules so that none of our funds go either directly or indirectly to politicians that attack Unison or its members. Anti-cuts candidates, including councillors forced out of Labour for opposing cuts, deserve our support - not councillors that attack us regardless of what party rosette they wear!

In the 1980s I was deeply involved in the struggle of Liverpool City Council and the working class in the city against Thatcher's cuts. Because of the council's defiant stance, thousands of local government jobs and services were saved. As general secretary I would campaign for a similar approach to be taken by Labour councils throughout the country.

Our NHS is under attack like never before. We have all been inspired by the brave and militant stand taken by junior doctors. Our members in health have shown their willingness to fight time and again in disputes like at Care UK.

Unfortunately this has not been matched by our leadership. Unison is the largest health union in the country. It should be leading the battle to defend our NHS.

## **Under attack**

The trade union movement as a whole is now under attack from the Tories with their trade union bill. Unison is one of the largest unions in the country. It should be playing the lead role in bringing other unions together with a strategy of industrial action for the widest possible resistance to this attack on our trade union freedom.

If the TUC are unwilling to take action Unison should take the lead in forming a 'coalition of the willing' with other fighting unions to take action together against this bill.

Finally, I believe a general secretary in touch with the members should live the same life as the members. For that reason, if elected, I would only take the average wage of a Unison member and donate the rest of the general secretary salary to the labour movement.

If you are a Unison member and agree that Unison needs a fighting strategy to beat the cuts and win victories for members, we urge you to vote for Socialist Party member Roger Bannister. Ballot papers will be hitting doorsteps from 9 November and voting closes 4 December. Join the campaign at [www.facebook.com/roger4gensec](http://www.facebook.com/roger4gensec) or email [electrogerbannister@gmail.com](mailto:electrogerbannister@gmail.com)

---

# **Workplace news in brief**

## **Unison Scotland urges no more cuts**

Last week the Socialist reported that the five trade unions representing Glasgow City Council workers have demanded a 'no cuts' budget. Following this Unison Scotland has set up a 'Scotland-wide cuts strategy group' to take the campaign forward and have published a report pointing out how 'Scottish public bodies could mitigate the effects of austerity through powers they already have.'

---

---

## **DLR dispute**

RMT members on the Docklands Light Railway (DLR) held a solid 48-hour strike on 15 and 16 October. Cleaners and security staff are campaigning for a wage rise and for management to honour long-standing workplace agreements. This was the fourth strike in the dispute and pickets were confident that management is feeling the effects. Some had voted for the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC), and were happy to add their names to the TUSC letter to Labour councillors asking them to meet and discuss voting against cuts. Tower Hamlets TUSC had hoped that local Labour MP Jim Fitzpatrick would at least give support to the strikers after John McDonnell had pledged that Labour MPs would support workers in struggle. However he replied to TUSC with a bizarre tweet about not supporting any struggle unconditionally because a group of dockers marched in support of Tory MP Enoch Powell in 1968.

---

---

## **Wales walkout**

RMT drivers on Arriva Trains Wales are taking strike action on 22 and 23 October in response to the company dragging its heels over a revised pay offer for the 2015 pay award. RMT general secretary Mick Cash said: "RMT is not prepared to tolerate Arriva Trains Wales' delaying tactics any longer. Train drivers deserve a fair pay offer and real improvements in their working conditions. We have been left with no alternative than to call strike action to show the company that drivers will not be treated with contempt over such important issues as pay and terms and conditions."

---

## **Art attack**

On 15 October, NUT members at Alfreton Grange Arts College took strike action. Around 20 workers formed a picket line outside the college and were in good spirits. The NUT produced a leaflet indicating the college management plans to increase the number of teaching periods from 25 to 43, thereby ensuring shorter break times and leading to a longer school day. It is a question of quantity rather quality, leading to poorer educational outcomes. The college management is also looking for academy status.

---

## **Hull's Labour council in aggressive bid to remove all union convenors**

**Mike Whale, Chair, Hull City Council trade unions**

Hull City Council, run by Labour, is pre-empting the Tories' trade union bill by issuing a redundancy notice known as a '188 notice' which threatens the council's five full time union convenors. The proposal to halve the convenors' time is a determined attempt to behead the workforce as the council prepares to implement the Tories' brutal cuts.

---

## **Welsh Government should think outside 'the Box'**

250 workers at Crown Packaging in South Wales were dropped a bombshell last week with the announcement that the plant, which has been a landmark in Neath for almost 80 years and is known locally as 'the Box', was to close due to alleged 'overcapacity'.

The loss of these relatively well paid jobs would have a big impact not just on the workers and their families but also a knock on effect on this small town.

Wayne Davies, Unite convener at the plant, spoke to the Socialist Party's Alec Thraves:

"There is virtually no chance of getting similarly paid jobs in this area. A lot of our members have worked at the Box for decades and this is a devastating blow for them as it is for those with just a few years' service. That's why we need to do all we can to fight to keep this plant open and ensure a future for our members and their families."

This multinational company has no loyalty to its workforce and will have no hesitation in switching production to its other European plants.

If Crown Packaging is determined to end decades of manufacturing at the Box then Unite must demand that the Welsh Government steps in to provide the financial resources to save these jobs and prepare a new plan of production, publicly owned and controlled, that can secure a future for these workers.

---

## Determined mood at Napo conference

**Chas Berry, Napo national vice chair (personal capacity)**

Probation and family court workers organised in Napo left their AGM last week with a new mood of determination to rebuild their union.

Overcoming significant barriers to achieve a representative conference, with many members having been refused time off by their employers to attend, the AGM agreed changes giving incentives to new joiners and those switching to direct debit. This is an important weapon in our battle to fend off the attempt to crush the union financially through the withdrawal of 'check-off'.

In each debate, speaker after speaker linked the attacks upon us with the need to join with others in the fight against the trade union bill. Guest speaker Steve Gillan, general secretary of the Prison Officers Association, received a big ovation when he urged members to look beyond our immediate battles and to recognise the need for generalised strike action.

Conference was also addressed by shadow lord chancellor and justice secretary Lord Falconer. Significantly, he was criticised about Labour's record in office and in particular over building more private prisons and for passing laws that allowed probation privatisation.

### Union busting

Disappointingly, like his predecessor Sadiq Khan, he stopped short of committing Labour to tear up current private probation contracts to union busting firms like Sodexo.

This was perhaps the most political AGM for a number of years. Reflecting the wider anti-austerity mood, fringe meetings linking Napo's campaigns with others in the justice field and beyond were the best attended and most enthusiastic of all the sessions.

The first ever Socialist Party fringe meeting attracted 20 members; sixteen copies of the Socialist, six Kill The Bill pamphlets and three copies of Socialism Today were sold, showing a renewed interest in socialist ideas.

---

## Sports Direct action over sacking

**Elaine Evans**

As a Sports Direct employee you not only slave in workhouse conditions, you can also be illegally sacked with 15 minutes notice.

Unite and activists from other trade unions held a protest in Chesterfield on 14 October against another

abuse of workers' rights by Sports Direct.

Legal representatives of Sports Direct chief executive David Forsey submitted a plea of not guilty to criminal charges of making staff redundant from its USC (subsidiary company) warehouse in Scotland without the 30 day notice and consultation period required by employment law. As an employer of over 20 workers the secretary of state should also have had notification 30 days before any job losses.

The case has been adjourned until a three day hearing on 14 March next year.

Major shareholder billionaire Mike Ashley claims to provide working conditions in compliance with applicable employment and health and safety legislation. 90% of workers are on zero-hour contracts and receive very low pay.

---

## Rally opposes the Tory trade union bill

**Laurence Maples**

The Trade Union Co-ordinating Group hosted a rally at parliament on 12 October to oppose the Tories' new anti-union bill.

The new shadow chancellor, John McDonnell, promised Labour's support for trade union action to defeat the bill. As Matt Wrack pointed out from the platform, this is a welcome change from the New Labour government which maintained all the Tories' anti-union laws.

Green MP Caroline Lucas also spoke against the bill, but unfortunately the Greens included in their 2010 manifesto a pledge to ban trade unions from donating to political parties, which is one of the restrictions of this hated bill. Also, in Brighton, as part of a so-called equal-pay deal, the council attempted to cut the pay of the city's low-waged bin workers by as much as £4,000, ripping up a union agreement.

### Mass picketing

PCS (civil servants union) general secretary Mark Serwotka spoke of the need to make the law unworkable with mass picketing and co-ordinated strike action.

National Shop Stewards Network (NSSN) chair Rob Williams explained how Tory anti-union laws were defeated in the past. For example, the call for a general strike developed from below when the Pentonville dockers were jailed, leaving the law impotent.

As the next step, the TUC's lobby of parliament on 2 November, which is supported by the NSSN, should become a mass demonstration. That has to be followed up by generalised strike action. This is an attempt by the government to break the back of the workers' movement so they can impose austerity forever.

We won't let them, so let's all strike together and smash this government of the billionaires.

---

## Hands off tax credits

### Fight for decent jobs and welfare

**Come to Socialism2015 - [www.socialism2015.net](http://www.socialism2015.net)**

**A weekend of discussion and debate - 7&8 November, central London**

**Becci Heagney**

David Cameron announced at the Tory Party conference his "all-out war on poverty". It's clear that what he meant was an "all-out war on the poor".

After promising not to cut Child Benefit, the Tories are slashing tax credits including Child Tax Credit. Already one in four working people earn less than the living wage, cutting in-work benefits will mean that 3.3 million families will lose £1,300 a year on average.

These are not just statistics, they are real people just trying to get by. The Tories got a taste of this when Michelle Dorrell made her emotional attack on Amber Rudd MP over tax credits during Question Time. Millions of people will be feeling the same way. In fact, 70% of the tax credits cuts will fall on mothers in work. So much for standing up for "hard-working families".

The Tory Party's hypocrisy knows no bounds. A report by 'Bright Blue' - a conservative think tank - argues that child benefit should be cut if parents don't send their children to pre-school from the age of two or three.

## **Families**

It recommends Sure Start centres. Since the Con-Dem government cut funding to the service, over 200 around the country have closed or are threatened with closure. Liverpool City Council are closing 23 out of 26 centres, Newcastle City Council are attempting to close every single one.

Not for decades has there been such an attack by the rich on the poor - it is no exaggeration to describe this as the Tories' warfare on welfare. 90 people a month died after being declared 'fit-for-work' between 2011 and 2014. We need to fight back.

We demand an end to and reversal of all benefit cuts. We support a cap on rents, not benefits, with a mass council house-building programme. We need a £10 an hour minimum wage with guaranteed hours.

Socialism 2015 will be tackling these issues and more. The cut to tax credits has been described as Cameron's "Poll Tax moment". Mass non-payment of the hated tax, led by Militant (forerunner of the Socialist Party), brought down Thatcher - we need a similar movement to bring down Cameron.

---

# **Organising to defend Corbyn's anti-cuts mandate**

**Around the country campaigns are underway to establish networks that can work together to defend the anti-austerity politics that made Jeremy Corbyn so popular in his stand in the Labour leadership election.**

**Socialist Party members are enthusiastically taking part in such initiatives - since the election we have highlighted the need to bring together those inside and outside the Labour Party to support Corbyn in his battle against the Blairite right wing of the party. Here are just three local reports.**

## Lambeth

The fight for Jeremy Corbyn's anti-austerity ideas has made an exciting start in Lambeth, south London.

Socialist Party members joined around 40 from across Lambeth and neighbouring Southwark at the founding of the local 'Momentum' group.

Ordinary people - including many new to politics - came looking for a movement, broader than Labour, to fight back.

Some were long-standing members of Labour or other left groups. Others joined Labour in the wave of enthusiasm after Corbyn's election, but were concerned by the right-wing roadblocks he faces.

Still others were members of no group. They supported Corbyn's ideas, but were sceptical of Labour - especially in Lambeth, home to an entrenched Blairite council.

The group voted overwhelmingly to join with Momentum nationally. This should give it access to thousands of interested local names.

Our political ideas enthused many there, especially the newer faces.

We spoke about the importance of supporting Corbyn's anti-austerity battle by ousting the 'red Tories' attacking him from within Labour. This includes writing to councillors and MPs and asking them to commit to fighting austerity.

If they won't, we can support Corbyn by campaigning to deselect them. If that doesn't work, we can support him by fielding anti-austerity candidates against them from outside Labour.

Ted Knight, former leader of Lambeth council, was warmly welcomed by the room. Ted fought austerity under Thatcher by refusing to set a cuts budget.

This was at the same time as the struggle of Liverpool City Council. Liverpool was led by supporters of Militant, now the Socialist Party, and won millions back from the Tories.

One or two members of small political groups tried to sideline us for raising the idea of standing in elections against pro-austerity Labour representatives. But this did not match the mood of most of the room - both inside and outside Labour. Newer people in particular spoke strongly in favour of an anti-austerity movement wider than just the Labour Party.

### James Ivens

- How councils can fight the cuts: Lambeth Socialist Party public meeting. 27 October at 7pm, Prince of Wales pub, corner of Brixton Road and Coldharbour Lane, Brixton SW9 8HH

---

## Sheffield

In August, around 1,500 people attended a rally and overflow meeting in Sheffield to hear Jeremy Corbyn speak during his Labour leadership campaign. Interviewed at that time, Jeremy said that "Labour councils should band together against the Tory government cuts."

So Sheffield Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC) has individually emailed all 59 Sheffield



Labour councillors asking if they support Jeremy's anti-cuts stance and inviting them to meet with us "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 also wrote to 'Sheffield4Corbyn' asking if they would like to co-host with TUSC a conference to draw up a 'no-cuts, people's budget' that "we can counterpose to the continuing Tory cuts being administered in Sheffield. We want to invite trade unions, anti-cuts groups, community organisations and tenants' organisations to make representations as to what should be included in such a budget, as well as working out how that could be funded and campaigned for."

Sheffield4Corbyn, who are now Sheffield Momentum, allowed TUSC to address their meeting on 12 October. While not officially supporting the 'no cuts' conference proposal because of wanting to prioritise their own Momentum launch rally, most Corbyn supporters were friendly and many said they would attend as individuals.

TUSC will continue to work with Momentum supporters and others in Sheffield and South Yorkshire in building the biggest possible anti-austerity movement around a clear no cuts policy.

**Alastair Tice**

---

## **Waltham Forest**

Waltham Forest Socialist Party is busy helping to build for the first public event of new campaign group Waltham Forest for Corbyn. The event is designed to reach out to the thousands of people in the east London borough who have been enthused by the election of Jeremy Corbyn and his anti-austerity stand in the Labour leadership election.

After an opening platform explaining the aim of the group - to unite those inside and outside the Labour Party who support Corbyn - the meeting will break into workshops. Two Socialist Party members have volunteered to run workshops - one on resisting the housing crisis and one on disability.

Socialist Party members will take part in all of the workshops, which will discuss how local people are affected by different issues and what they would like to see done about it. We have raised the idea that the points discussed could be pulled together to form the basis of a people's budget for Waltham Forest which could be a campaign tool for the group and be used to lobby councillors with.

Separately, Waltham Forest TUSC has written to our three local Corbyn-supporting councillors asking to meet with them to discuss working together against cuts. At a recent lobby of the council cabinet organised by the trades council, some councillors said they were open to this idea. It seems that Corbyn's victory may be giving confidence to some Labour representatives who have previously been cowed into voting for cuts.

We also leafleted a Labour Party new members meeting with copies of the letter we have sent to councillors. People were friendly and keen to discuss the strategy needed to secure a party that can implement the great policies that Corbyn has popularised.

A discussion is ongoing about whether this group will become the Waltham Forest branch of Momentum. The last organising meeting agreed to encourage the national organisers of Momentum to adopt democratic structures that allow local groups a say in its politics and strategy.

**Sarah Wrack**

- Waltham Forest for Corbyn meet up: 7-9pm 25 October, Foster Hall, Wellesley Road, E17 8QX
- 

## **Socialist Party subs campaign:**

# **Help fund the fight for socialism**

**Naomi Byron, Socialist Party finance department**

Can you increase your membership subs (regular donation)? This is the question the Socialist Party is asking all our members.

Over the last few weeks many have pledged increases totalling £3,000, but we still have a way to go to reach our target of an extra £4,000 a month income by Christmas. The Socialist Party has no rich backers. All our campaigns and events are financed by donations from members and supporters.

### **Popular ideas**

The last few months have shown how popular socialist ideas are. The overwhelming victory of Jeremy Corbyn in the Labour leadership contest, and the excellent junior doctors protests, show that years of austerity are pushing the majority of the 99% towards the ideas of socialism.

We are the only party with a clear strategy to defend Corbyn's victory from the Blairites, and make sure there is a party that can represent working class people in Britain.

We are at the forefront of the main struggles today - against the Tories' trade union bill, helping prevent evictions and campaigning for local councils to refuse to implement Tory cuts. We need to have the resources to reach as many people as possible, and respond quickly to events.

Some members have made very substantial increases - eight are now paying over £100 a month, and another eight have increased their subs to over £50. Many on low incomes have made big increases too. One member in Sheffield has increased from £8 to £9, another from Southampton has doubled their subs from £10 to £20.

### **Every penny**

If you can't make a big percentage increase, can you make an inflation related increase to help us cope with constantly increasing bills? No increase is too small. Every penny counts.

If you would like to discuss increasing your subs, you can speak to your branch treasurer, call the socialist party finance department on 0208 988 8777 or email [finance@socialistparty.org.uk](mailto:finance@socialistparty.org.uk)

---

## **Huge support for the Wales March for Homes**

**Sebastian Robyns-Landricombe, Cardiff Socialist Students**

A major event in the Cardiff Housing Action campaign took place on 17 October: the 'Wales March for Homes'. From 11.30, students and local organisers arrived outside city hall, setting up stalls, erecting banners and chatting to the press.

The march brought out well over double the numbers of the previous 'Rent Rip Off' march organised by Cardiff Socialist Students, and the enthusiasm made for an amazing atmosphere of solidarity.

The 'March for Homes' started with several speeches given by campaigners, including the head of National Union of Students (NUS) Wales and the NUS vice president for Welfare, Shelly Asquith, showing the gravity of student support behind the campaign. They joined other campaigners in highlighting the injustice of the housing situation, and the need for radical social and political change to reverse it.

After the rally, the march lined up and started towards the city centre. With the town rammed full of rugby supporters, we proceeded through the huge bustling crowds full of enthusiasm.

Chanting loudly "what do we want? Rent control!", the message was clear, and well received by the many people who saw the march and heard the slogans.

Passers-by approached us with compliments and support. The eyes of all the rugby fans were fixed squarely on the large shouting block - some even joined in!

---

## **Former war hero fighting for the future: a pensioner speaks out**

**Older people are hard hit by the bosses' cuts and sell-offs. Sue Powell spoke to Claude Mickleson, National Pensioners Convention activist and member of Gloucestershire Socialist Party.**

**Claude - as someone who served in World War Two, were you offended when Jeremy Corbyn didn't sing the national anthem?**

He attended the ceremony and showed his respect. The anthem is all about the monarchy.

**When you fought in North Africa, were you 'serving king and country'?**

No - I suppose we all thought we were fighting fascism.

I am convinced that the only people who benefit from wars are the capitalist class. They make vast sums of money from them.

Some supplying arms to both sides, or by increased markets and territory. None of which benefits the working class, who have to do the fighting.

**Did the capitalists treat soldiers returning from war well?**

Well I couldn't get anywhere to live. My wife and I had no kids so we couldn't get help with housing. We lived in a caravan for several years.

I suffered from poor hearing due to the sound of the aircraft I worked on, but my claim to compensation was turned down. Many others were treated similarly.

**Have things improved?**

Things improved at first, with the founding of the welfare state. But since the late 1970s conditions have gradually deteriorated.

I fear they could become worse even than the 1920s and '30s, when I grew up.

**And are pensioners treated well today?**

No they are not.

The Taxpayers' Alliance research director said the Conservatives should cut older people's benefits sooner rather than later. Because many of us would "not be around", or would have forgotten who was responsible, by next election.

Winter fuel allowance was provided as a sop by Gordon Brown to keep us quiet about poor pensions. Thatcher altered the goal posts as to how they are calculated in 1980. Labour refused to re-instate them during 13 years in power.

Tens of thousands of older people in Britain already die specifically from the cold each year - more than in any European country except Estonia.

The Tories have always resented every gain achieved by the working class. We were never given anything for which we didn't have to fight hard.

**Is that why you're so active?**

I suppose I am trying to make up for lost time. I'm 92 and want to make sure we can build towards a mass movement. I may not live to see socialism, but I am sure younger generations will.

Corbyn offers hope, but I don't trust the Labour Party. It always seems to fall short of socialism because they don't go for public ownership of the bulk of the economy.

That's what is needed: public ownership and workers' control. Accountability. Councillors who refuse to implement cuts.

---

## **TV review: We Want Our Country Back**

### **'Britain First' - tiny and violent**

**Laurence Maples**

Tiny far-right group 'Britain First' has attracted disproportionate levels of media coverage over the last year. The BBC is latest to jump on the bandwagon. Its documentary is provocatively titled 'We Want Our Country Back'.

Cuts, unemployment and deprivation - coupled with the racist rhetoric of establishment politicians - are the fertile soil far-right ideas lay root in. They play on workers' genuine fears about jobs and services, but try to scapegoat minority groups instead of fighting back against cuts politicians and greedy bosses.

The BBC does not address these issues.

The film follows the group embarking on its activities. They engineer a confrontation with local

Muslim youth in Luton. They pose with offensive slogans outside mosques. And they try to intimidate Muslim businesses with absurd claims that halal food funds terrorism.

Britain First produces these stunts to provide 'clickbait' - sensational material designed to capture online traffic - for its Facebook page. The media marvel at their success in building an online presence. But they are partly responsible with the coverage they provide.

## **Media coverage**

Britain First, and other miniscule far-right groups, receive far more mainstream media coverage than the Socialist Party. This is despite the Socialist Party being a much larger organisation with many elected representatives, especially in trade unions.

The real strength of Britain First is shown by the turnout they achieve on demonstrations - around 200 for a 'national mobilisation'. This documentary tries to portray the group as a mass movement, or at least the embryo of one. But it is a phantom movement; nothing but a micro-sect with a military fetish.

Violence is a constant theme. The vicious, anti-worker character of Britain First is exposed as they try to intimidate striking taxi drivers.

Despite the incessant racist bile of the gutter press and establishment politicians, there is no public yearning for a far-right mass movement. An anti-austerity mass movement, on the other hand, would be extremely popular - as support for Jeremy Corbyn shows.

- We Want Our Country Back is available on BBC iPlayer until 8 November 2015
- 
- 

<http://www.socialistparty.org.uk/articles/21610>