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Issue 907  
23-29 June 2016



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# the Socialist

Formerly **Militant**

**FIGHTING RACISM,  
AUSTERITY AND  
THE FAR RIGHT**

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photos Paul Mattsson

## After the EU referendum...

# GET THE TORIES OUT!

**T**his issue of the Socialist goes to press before the EU referendum result.

**We've made it clear that whatever the result, working and middle class people will still have to fight austerity cuts to our living standards and privatisation of our public services.**

We will still have to fight the bosses' profit system to reverse the widening wealth gap between the tiny minority of tax-avoiding super-rich billionaires and the rest of us. We will still have to fight to end the rule of the greedy mega-corporations and their exploitative work practices of zero-hour contracts and low pay.

But make no mistake, a majority Leave vote will remove one obstacle in the way to changing society and providing decent living standards and fully funded public services. It will also add the bonus of rupturing the deeply divided Tories and possibly forcing an early general election.

### Lame duck

But even if Cameron wins a Remain vote - with, to their shame, the backing of a majority of Labour MPs - especially if the vote is close, he will still be seen as 'lame duck' prime minister. Moreover, he will have to settle accounts with his large bloc of Tory eurosceptic MPs, again possibly provoking splits and resignations.

After all, John Major won a leadership re-election against his eurosceptic "bastards" only for the hapless Tory PM to get hammered in the 1997 general election.

In the referendum the official Remain and Leave campaigns have been dominated by rich Tories with the likes of millionaire racist UKIP leader Nigel Farage thrown into the mix. Unfortunately, because Jeremy Corbyn switched to a pro-EU stance and because many trade union leaders also backed this mistaken 'social Europe' position, the socialist alternative to the bosses' EU struggled to be heard.

But once the dust over the referendum campaign settles, working class people will take stock. Many will begin to draw the same conclusions as the Socialist Party; that the establishment politicians and their rotten capitalist system must be fought and brought down.

Analysis of the referendum result: see [socialistparty.org.uk](http://socialistparty.org.uk)





# LEFT ALTERNATIVE NEEDED TO COUNTER AUSTERITY, RACISM AND THE FAR RIGHT

## What we think

■ This issue of the Socialist goes to press before the referendum takes place. For post-vote analysis, see [socialistparty.org.uk](http://socialistparty.org.uk) and next week's issue

Following the terrible and shocking murder of MP Jo Cox in West Yorkshire, questions have been asked about the role played by racist propaganda during the EU referendum campaign. Her attacker, Thomas Mair, when asked for his name in court, said "death to traitors, freedom for Britain".

In the Observer on 19 June journalist Mark Townsend referred to West Yorkshire's "post-industrial social landscape" as being the background to the existence there of at least seven far-right groups. These are more grouplets in reality, as they have very small activist cores. But in the absence of a left-wing pole of attraction they have received some tacit backing a bit beyond their activist layer, mainly in the forums of social media.

Without doubt the relentless right-wing propaganda on immigration from both sides of the EU referendum debate, and on the threat of jihadist terrorism, has helped the fortunes of those odious far-right organisations.

Guardian columnist Polly Toynbee, on the day following the shooting, patronisingly acknowledged that "there are many decent people" for EU exit. But then in promoting the Remain camp, she went on to place all the blame for racism on exiters "whose recklessness has been open and shocking. I believe they bear responsibility, not for the attack itself, but for the current mood: for the inflammatory language, for the finger-jabbing, the dog whistling and the overt racism".



**Without doubt the relentless right-wing propaganda on immigration from both sides of the EU referendum debate has helped the fortunes of those odious far-right organisations**

Certainly the scandalous "Breaking Point" poster promoted by Ukip leader Nigel Farage, showing a queue of refugees next to those two words, was just one of many outrageous interventions from the pro-capitalist Brexit campaigns.

However, whipping up racism has come from the big business representatives on both sides of the debate. On the one hand Cameron's government has pursued racist immigration policies, pledged immigration curbs and attacked welfare benefits for migrants. On the other hand it has encouraged immigration to suit the needs of big business, while at the same time fuelling division by slashing public spending on vital services.

On other issues too, the leading right-wing Remain advocates have matched the excesses, slanders and untruths of the right-wing Brexiters. Tory donor Alexander Temerko supports remaining in the EU but attacked George Osborne: "I cannot support him. Business has lost trust in the chancellor because of the big manipula-



The late Bob Crow (second left on banner) then general secretary of the RMT marching with other trade unionists against the EU in 2010 all photos Paul Mattsson

tion of figures in the referendum and the very strange statements - so aggressive and without proper evidence - about what will happen if we leave the European Union".

His remarks showed how the deep divisions within the Tories have not just grown between the Remain and Leave sides and among the leavers (with defections taking place from that camp) but also within the Remain side.

### Cross-party consensus

The official Remain campaigners were wary of directly citing the tragic death of Jo Cox to attempt to further their

case, for fear of a backlash. But this didn't stop them from trying.

For instance, following the killing, a letter was sent to the Observer signed by leading individuals from all three main establishment parties, plus the Green Party's Caroline Lucas, former TUC leader Brendan Barber, former CBI director general Richard Lambert and a few others. It began: "We are living in worrying times, with our society at risk of becoming more and more polarised and with blame, grievance and division on the rise." They concluded that by staying in the EU "we have a chance to reject division, isolationism, and blame. To choose coopera-

tion..." This was yet another example - of many - during the referendum campaign where labour movement and Green figureheads have shamefully chorused in unison with Tories and other austerity-drivers and spokespeople of big business to promote the bosses' EU.

With Cameron hoping that leading labour movement representatives will save his skin in the final days before the vote, the Remain team in the 21 June Wembley stadium debate is TUC leader Frances O'Grady and London Labour mayor Sadiq Khan, debating in alliance with Scottish Tory leader Ruth Davidson. The terrible murder was even enlisted to help promote this kind of cross-party campaigning and blurring of class boundaries; Andrew Rawnsley in the Guardian, among others, approvingly noted that Jo Cox had worked with Tory politicians and other opposition parties in a 'consensual' and 'collaborative' manner.

A left-wing voice for working class interests has been given no space in the media to argue for Brexit on the basis of developing solidarity and cooperation across



Europe between working peoples and ending austerity across the continent. Since the tragic shooting, the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC) - which the Socialist Party is part of - has called on the electoral commission to reflect on its role in giving political authority to the reactionary Vote Leave organisation and so helping to create a "climate of hate". TUSC also rightly criticised the broadcast media for refusing any platform for TUSC and others who stand in the traditions of the late Tony Benn and Bob Crow - opposing the EU from a socialist and internationalist standpoint ([www.tusc.org.uk](http://www.tusc.org.uk)/17287).

### Standing of capitalist politicians

Following Jo Cox's death there has been denunciation in the media of the low regard in which politicians of the main parties are held - their overall unprecedented unpopularity. Polly Toynbee let rip: "This attack... occurs against a backdrop of an ugly public mood in which we have been told to despise the political class, to distrust those we serve... Contempt for politics is dangerous and contagious, yet it has become a widespread default sneer."

Rawnsley, when decrying the reactionary Brexiters' lies, went so far as to say: "the overall effect has been to depress respect for politicians on both sides" - ie, he absolved the likes of Cameron and Osborne for responsibility for their own unpopularity during the referendum campaign.

The Socialist Party never hesitates to condemn abuse and personal threats against politicians of any party, including the frequent appalling physical threats made against women MPs on social media. But it is completely another matter to engage in trying to rehabilitate the standing of politicians who are justifiably hated for imposing spending cuts that drive down living standards. On the contrary, they must be politically opposed every step of the way, their ideology countered and their elected positions contested by anti-austerity candidates.

### Working class mood

Anti-establishment working class people have forced their voice to come through in the opinion polls, against the bosses' EU and supporting a Leave vote. Most are repelled by racism, but nevertheless they have been derided and maligned by Remain camp commentators for being "uninformed" and prey to the likes of Ukip.

Particularly vitriolic was the Observer's Nick Cohen, who disgracefully labelled this layer as succumbing to "paranoid populism," with "the final mobiliser of paranoid opinion: racism, the oldest and most effective recruiting sergeant there is." He added that they "black out alternative points of view" and have "willingly locked themselves in maximum-security prisons of the mind, from which there is no escape." How contemptuous and condescending!

It took Will Hutton in the same newspaper to touch on reality when he wrote: "millions of British, especially the less well-off, left behind in the cities and towns all round the country, are so unimpressed they want to leave [the EU]." Pro-EU advocates give "the arguments

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of the elite, they say."

This is not just the mood of a large layer of British workers; a recent Pew study showed a big drop in support for the EU across a number of its member states over the last year. Only 27% of the Greeks, 38% of the French and 47% of the Spanish have a favourable opinion of the EU. Pew's figure for Britain was 44%.

Whether the referendum result is "Remain or Leave, it's clear that either outcome will have major repercussions in Britain and across Europe. "The idea that [the] European project is always 'more integration' has been widely abandoned", commented Jonathan Hill, Britain's EU commissioner.



**A recent Pew study showed a big drop in support for the EU across a number of its member states. Only 27% of the Greeks, 38% of the French and 47% of the Spanish have a favourable opinion of the EU**

And more and greater turmoil is certain in Britain's main pro-capitalist parties. On the same day as the mortal attack on Jo Cox, the Tooting byelection took place because Sadiq Khan had resigned that seat to become London mayor. Labour more than doubled its majority, in what was the fourth byelection it has held comfortably. This again disproves the lie that Labour is unelectable with an anti-austerity leadership.

Jeremy Corbyn has unfortunately toed Cameron's line and that of Labour's right wing, missing the opportunity to lead a mass working class-based anti-EU campaign that could have played a major part in cutting across the "well of hatred" that he spoke of when he visited the spot where Jo Cox died.

Only defying the rule of Labour's right wing will enable him to secure and develop his standing among working class people and the role that he could play in helping to transform the political landscape of Britain. Yet in one way or another working class people will be compelled to rapidly build political representation, to seriously challenge the escalating inequality and degradations under capitalism and put forward a socialist alternative.

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

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# 148,000 households faced risk of eviction

Terri-Jay Hersey

Over the last 12 months, housing charity Shelter found 148,000 households at risk of eviction.

According to the charity, the lack of affordable housing and welfare cuts are contributing factors. Over the last six years we have seen the Coalition and Tory governments, and Labour councils, cut benefits and sell off council housing - while private rents rocket sky-high.

People are struggling to keep a roof over their heads and provide the basic everyday requirements such as food for their families. We have been ever since the Tories came into power in 2010.

Since 2010 we have seen the number of evictions rise by 53% which is

equivalent to around 250 evictions each day. These figures really show the shortage of affordable housing for the 99%.

Up to the age of 26 I lived with my parents, with no prospect of moving out on the wage of a nursery nurse, until I met my partner, who I now live with.

But what the Socialist Party calls for is a mass programme of affordable council housing for everyone. We demand democratic working class control over how much rent we pay, especially in the rip-off private tenancy sector. We fight for a £10 an hour minimum wage with no exemptions. We also call for reversing all benefit cuts.

This programme of action could guarantee a better standard of living for all.



Protesting against homelessness photo Paul Mattsson

Lindsey oil refinery construction workers striking against the EU-backed undermining of national trade union agreements photo Sean Figg



# Pensions 20x smaller for younger workers

Matt Whale  
Young worker

Young workers once again find themselves being ripped off, as a report indicates that companies spend 20 times more on older workers' pensions than younger workers'.

Big business wants to drive a wedge between younger and older workers to maximise profits.

They start with attacks on the young: lower wages, less opportunities - and increasing job insecurity, with casualised work and zero-hour contracts becoming the norm. Now they've chucked in a huge deficit in funding for pensions - if young workers can ever afford to retire.

But according to the 'experts' at the Intergenerational Foundation, which produced the report, the answer is to also attack the gains made by older workers! Capitalist politicians have made the same arguments. This is what big business has

wanted all along.

They argue that businesses can no longer afford the pensions older workers fought for, and this is why there's underinvestment in young workers' pensions. Of course the only reason this is 'unaffordable' is it will eat into profits for the bosses and major shareholders.

Workers do need to organise to address the imbalance between younger and older workers. But this must be on the basis of bringing younger workers up to the level of older workers - and going further for both, to demand living pensions for all. It is vital we avoid a 'race to the bottom', with an artificial divide between generations used as an excuse to cut hard-earned pension rights.

The bosses have billions stashed idly in their vaults - much of it in offshore bank accounts. We say take it off them. For full job security for all workers, a £10 an hour minimum wage with no exceptions, and a living pension for all upon retirement.

# BHS PENSIONS INSULT

Caroline Vincent  
Retail worker

Some 20,000 members of the BHS pension scheme are concerned to find their pensions from the failed firm are now in the Pension Protection Fund, meaning they will receive less than expected.

Working in retail can be stressful and demanding, so won't someone spare a thought for Sir Philip Green? Sure, he may be responsible for the collapse of BHS, but at least he's trying to sort out a "better outcome" for the pensions mess he created.

When asked whether members would receive the pensions due, he simply said he'll give it his "best shot." How reassuring!

Like a lot of retail workers, Sir Philip has suffered ill health, even having to go so far as to relocate following a heart scare. Luckily he managed to find a suitable climate to recuperate - sunny Monaco! Any tax benefits are purely incidental.

Many retail staff become the victim of workplace bullying, and Sir

Philip will be able to empathise. He feels that he has been hounded and victimised at the hands of MPs, who have been asking him some difficult questions. For instance, just how rich did he make himself while wrecking the livelihoods of some 11,000 BHS workers?

Yes, Sir Philip may be having a hard time at the moment, but at least he can take comfort in the £400 million that he extracted from the company before selling it on for £1. BHS staff and pensioners, on the other hand, face an uncertain future.

The Socialist Party has called for nationalisation as the only way to save both the jobs and the pensions. Business magazine Forbes estimated Sir Philip's net worth as £3.3 billion in 2015 - that should do the trick.

Department store BHS is due to close its doors, threatening 11,000 jobs and 20,000 pensions



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# MERSEYSIDE'S BIGGEST LEFT EU DEBATE: TUSC FIGHTS FOR WORKERS

**Hugh Caffrey**  
 Socialist Party North West

Merseyside's biggest left or trade union debate about the EU referendum to date was hosted by the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC) on 14 June.

This shows the popular appeal of a socialist case against the EU, and a fraction of what could be achieved if the official labour movement did its duty. Nearly 70 people crammed into the meeting hall, including many young people and first-time attendees of TUSC events.

Socialist Party member Roger Bannister was TUSC candidate for Liverpool mayor and is a member of public sector union Unison's national executive committee. He spoke powerfully, in a personal capacity, about the direction of the EU towards ever-greater austerity and privatisation. He lacerated those who should be standing up for working class people, but instead pass the buck to the neoliberal EU.

Daren Ireland, regional organiser for transport union RMT, detailed the pro-privatisation role of the EU. It is now demanding further privatisation of rail services. He challenged any pro-EU person to explain how it could be reformed.

Angela Grant, TUSC candidate and member of public sector union PCS, argued that we need to "bust the myth" that the EU is in favour of workers' rights. She explained the real situation for working and poor people in Britain today.

Audrey Glover, speaking for former TUSC Preston councillor Michael Lavalette, explained the dreadful conditions enforced on refugees by the racist EU - including 300 lost children in the Calais refugee camp.

The speakers argued for internationalism and socialism as the alternative to the bosses' EU - and a Leave vote on 23 June as a necessary step towards breaking with austerity. These were sentiments clearly shared by the majority of the floor.

■ This issue of the Socialist goes to press before the referendum result. Check [socialistparty.org.uk](http://socialistparty.org.uk) for post-vote analysis



**This shows the popular appeal of a socialist case against the EU**

## ■ Climate chaos

Carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) levels are due to pass a major milestone this year. Avoiding a calamitous 2°C temperature rise will need a 40 to 70% emissions cut by 2050.

The Met Office has found that CO<sub>2</sub> concentration is about to reach 400 parts per million. It must stabilise at no higher than 450 to avoid the 2°C disaster. But far from falling, CO<sub>2</sub> emissions have actually risen by a quarter since 1997.

Year after year, climate summits set new and insufficient targets, and promise new and insufficient action to achieve them. Then politicians go back home to their big business paymasters, who remind them that tackling climate change dents profits.

Stopping climate tragedy requires us to remove the profit motive. The trillions stowed away by big business and the super-rich, if commonly owned and democratically planned, could guarantee clean energy. The Socialist says you have to be red to be green.

■ 'Planning for the Planet' by Pete Dickenson: how socialism could save the environment - £9.95 from [leftbooks.co.uk](http://leftbooks.co.uk)

## ■ Brazil budget

Brazilian politicians are considering a constitutional amendment to lock in austerity for two decades.

Right-wing interim president Michel Temer wants a 20-year budget freeze. He is taking advantage of right-wing MPs' suspension of President Dilma Rousseff on corruption allegations to transfer even more wealth from workers to bosses.

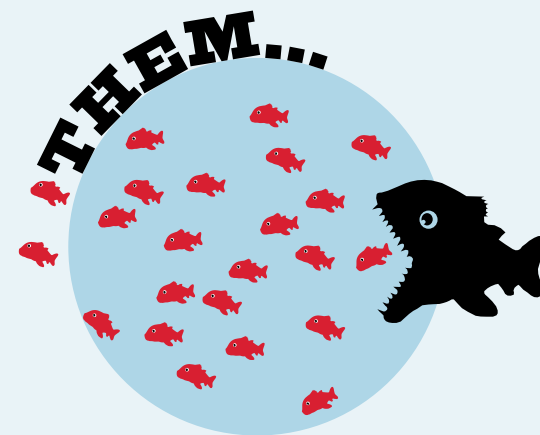
But even if his amendment passes, that is not the end of the story. Angry Brazilian workers have struck over a number of issues recently. Militant, coordinated strikes can push policies and even whole governments aside.

The Socialist sends solidarity to Brazilian workers fighting this despotic austerity onslaught.

> More international news on pages 14 and 15

**World socialist news and analysis**

from the **Committee for a Workers' International**  
[socialistworld.net](http://socialistworld.net)



## ■ Battle of the Thames

Anti-worker racist millionaire Brexiteer Nigel Farage and anti-worker tax-dodging millionaire Remainer Bob Geldof had a water fight on the Thames on 15 June.

The capitalist media has done its best to make the EU debate into 'Them & Them' rather than 'Them & Us'. The repulsive character of both official campaigns, and total lack of a working class voice, has angered millions.

Ukip leader Farage - net worth £146 million - was leading a flotilla of trawlers protesting against EU fishing policy. But when he sat on the EU's fisheries committee, he attended only one out of 42 meetings. And the flagship was previously involved in the UK's largest ever fishing fraud, over £2 million of undeclared catches.

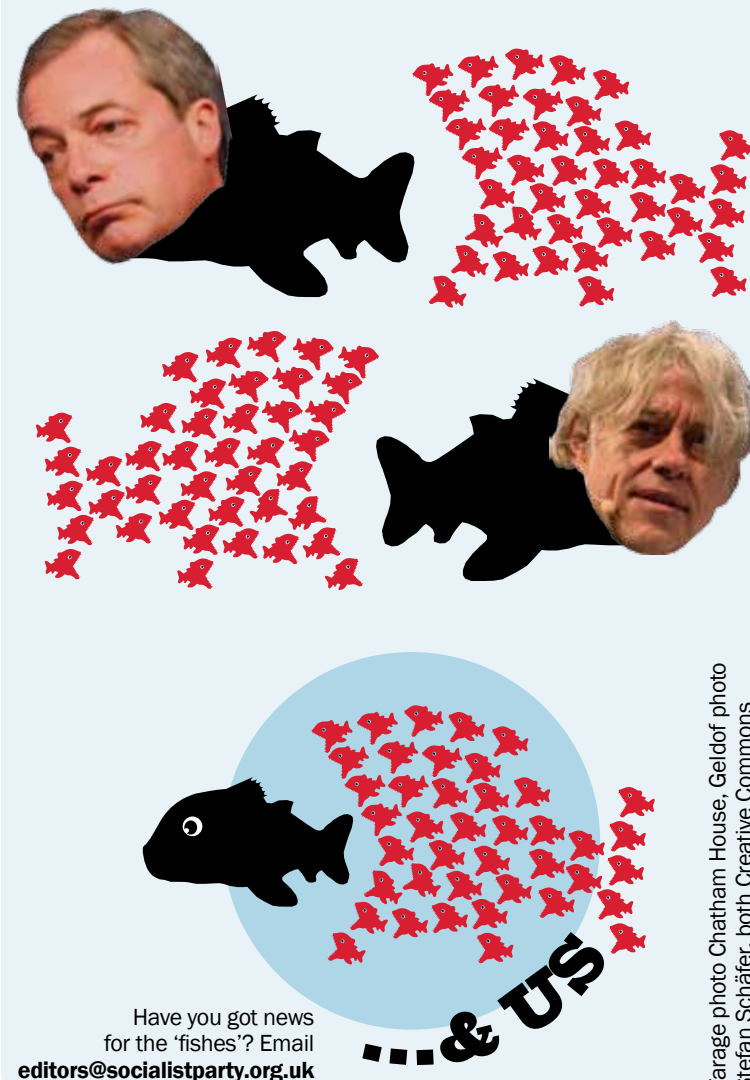
'Band Aid' hypocrite Geldof - net worth £102 million - is a so-called 'non-dom' and can avoid income

and capital gains tax. His self-satisfied counter-protest encircled Farage with dinghies. Hose play ensued.

But austerity and privatisation are not fun summer water games for workers. They mean low pay, unemployment, no services, wrecked communities. And the EU is a millionaires' and billionaires' project, constitutionally committed to all that.

Most of the establishment backed Remain. They recognised Farage's posturing as a mistake for most of the super-rich. The Socialist backs Leave. But we have been clear that workers should not join either capitalist camp, but navigate an independent route.

Whatever the outcome of the referendum, the battle is on to sink the bosses' raft of cuts and sell-offs. Workers are all in the same boat.



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

Farage photo Chatham House, Geldof photo Stefan Schäfer, both Creative Commons





# Solid strike against "Britain's worst train company"



Brighton protest photo Neil Cafferky

Services run by what workers are calling "Britain's worst rail company" have again been hit by strike action in a long running dispute over plans to get rid of conductors and operate driver-only trains. Workers at Southern Railway, members of the RMT transport union, have walked out to oppose plans to introduce so-called "driver-only operated" trains across more Southern services, which the union considers a safety risk.

On 21 June, the strike was solidly supported by pickets across the network. Delegates from the annual conference of Unison joined an RMT demonstration outside Brighton station and Socialist Party members attended the picket line at Victoria station in London.

The company also faced customer protests as more than 100 people protested at Brighton train station on 14 June. The protesters brandished placards demanding improvements and calling for the

Southern franchise to be stripped from Govia-Thameslink Railway (GTR) for repeated cancellations, delays and overcrowding. On Twitter they branded the operator "Southern Fail." Some people were late for the protest due to delayed trains.

Some of the delays have been due to "staff shortages" but the RMT says GTR has cancelled trains when there have been full crews available.

RMT general secretary Mick Cash said: "Staff shortages are down to gross mismanagement of staffing numbers, rosters and diagrams by the company on this basket case franchise."

"Trying to lump the blame on hard-working, frontline staff, who take the full force of passenger anger for cancellations and delays, is cowardly and despicable behaviour."

The boss of the controversial operator was recently awarded a £2.1 million pay cheque. This comes soon after GTR recently only narrowly avoided being

stripped of the franchise after being found to technically be in breach of its licence. However, it avoided losing the operation after the government's transport department agreed to reset operating targets. **Socialist Party reporters**



Victoria picket photo Rob Williams

## ScotRail strike

RMT members at ScotRail/Abellio are taking strike action in opposition to driver-only trains. This strike shows yet again that it's ordinary workers and their trade union that are putting safety before profit. After a 75% backing for industrial action in a strike ballot, you'd think bosses at ScotRail would have been prepared to seriously get round the table with the union. But ScotRail/Abellio management have behaved scandalously, attempting to bypass the union by resorting to social media and mailings in a campaign of misinformation with union members. In addition they also cancelled planned talks that could have allowed genuine negotiations to take place. As the RMT said: "Safety before profit delivers safe trains

for Scotland's people. The model that Abellio ScotRail want to follow delivers an unsafe method of operation for Scotland's rail users. Indeed the whole project is about two things; 1) cutting ScotRail's wage bill and 2) maximising shareholder profit." The RMT members on ScotRail should be applauded for standing up and fighting for their and passenger rights and safety. Socialist Party Scotland calls for the ScotRail franchise to be taken back into public ownership rather than handed to Abellio, with profit going to shareholders rather than invested into the service.

■ Send messages of solidarity to [m.hogg@rmt.org.uk](mailto:m.hogg@rmt.org.uk)  
■ See more at [socialistpartyscotland.org.uk](http://socialistpartyscotland.org.uk)

Pennine strikers photo Alistair Tice



## National Museum Wales strikers vote on offer

**Dave Reid**  
Socialist Party Wales

National Museum Wales workers are balloting on whether or not to accept an improved offer from the employers after seven weeks of strike action that have closed some sites and partly closed others.

Two years ago museum management announced they intended to cut weekend premium payments for museum workers who are mainly in the PCS civil servants union.

With most museum workers expected to work weekends - some have only one Sunday off in three - this amounted to a big pay cut, especially for the lower paid workers.

Management, who were losing no money, offered them compensation

equivalent to two years loss of pay, but it would still amount to a big pay cut.

After a series of one day strikes by PCS members, an all-out indefinite strike began on May Day weekend and the Welsh Labour government was forced to sit up and promise action.

### Improved

New funds for National Museum Wales were found and eventually, after a lot of feet-dragging, management have come forward with an improved offer.

The offer does not save the weekend premium payments but improves the compensation to amounts equivalent to five years instead of two which can be taken as a lump sum or spread over five years

with pension contributions. There is also a reduction in weekend work and a 4% pay rise in 2017.

The offer is a huge improvement on the original proposal amounting to nearly £5,000 for each worker extra, but falls short of defending the weekend premium payments.

Branch officers are also determined to keep up the fight to return the weekend premiums: "We see the deal not as the end of the war, but the end of the first battle" one of the officers said.

Geraint Parfitt one of the leaders of the strike will be addressing the National Shop Stewards Network (NSSN) conference on 2 July (see below).

■ Further updates and full article at [socialistparty.org.uk](http://socialistparty.org.uk)

**shopstewards.net**  
**nationalshopstewardsnetwork**  
Organise to take on the Tories! Link up strikes!  
Come to the 10th annual NSSN conference!

**Saturday 2 July 2016, 11am to 4.30pm**  
Conway Hall, 25 Red Lion Square, London WC1R 4RL (Tube: Holborn)

Speakers include Yann Venier (pictured right) a French striker and secretary of the CGT trade union in Nancy, BMA junior doctors, BFAWU, FBU, RMT, PCS, POA - come talk about your dispute too!



## ■ BFAWU conference 2016 "A COUNCIL OF WAR"

**Rob Williams**  
Socialist Party industrial organiser

The BFAWU bakers' union conference 12-16 June in Southport felt like a real council of war. This is a union with 20,000 members - that is numerically smaller than others - but huge ambition to defend them at a time when it is under siege from the food employers who want to protect their profits.

The main bulk of BFAWU members are employed in factory bakeries with big companies such as Greggs and 2 Sisters who have been looking either to cut terms and conditions (ironically to make up for the new higher National Living Wage) or close plants and make workers redundant.

The conference took place just as its members in 2 Sisters plants - at Pennine Foods in Sheffield and RF Brookes in Newport - have taken strike action to defend their contracts. Hundreds of workers picketed both plants with tremendous support from fellow trade unionists and socialists, including the National Shop Stewards Network (NSSN)

and the Socialist Party.

Pennine workers have been able to push the company back on their attacks and look to have secured the offer of a 2% pay rise backdated to August 2015. But these fights are bruising as the battle for recognition in Leicester company Samworths demonstrates.

BFAWU member Kumaran Bose has just been sacked (see below) and the conference pledged to defend him.

He is from a Tamil background and it was apt that Isai Priya from Tamil Solidarity (TS) was invited to address delegates and committed TS to take the fight for his reinstatement into the Tamil community. Kumaran and BFAWU general secretary Ronnie Draper will both be speaking at the NSSN Conference on 2 July.

### Organise

Alongside fighting to maintain its membership in the bakeries, BFAWU has been looking to organise fast food workers by launching Fast Food Rights with the NSSN, Youth Fight for Jobs and other organisations.

A number of delegates from this

sector were at conference, some for the first time. Taking inspiration from the \$15Now campaign in the US and linking up with unions there, BFAWU has really popularised the demands of the scrapping of zero-hour contracts and a £10 minimum wage.

The main political debate of conference was on the EU referendum. BFAWU general secretary Ronnie Draper and president Ian Hodson correctly exposed the class character of the EU and delegates voted to confirm the union's position of Leave on an anti-austerity basis.

Conference also passed motions condemning the Blairites in Labour who are attacking Jeremy Corbyn as well as supporting the junior doctors struggle.

On a motion about MPs who are jailed for misconduct, Ronnie Draper paid tribute to Militant ex-Labour MP Terry Fields who was sent to prison for not paying the poll tax.

The Socialist Party hosted a very successful fringe meeting on the EU referendum with speakers Tony Mulhearn, surcharged anti-cuts Liverpool Labour councillor and Enrico Tortolano from Trade Unionists Against the EU.

## Campaigning to reinstate sacked Samworth Brothers union activist

**Michael Barker**  
Leicester Socialist Party

The recent rise in the national living wage, although still falling well short of a real living wage of £10 an hour, was meant to make it easier for workers to afford to pay their rent and bills.

But greedy bosses like Leicestershire-based food manufacturer Samworth Brothers are using minimal basic rate increases as a green light to erase premium payments for working unsocial hours.

Kumaran Bose, one of the leading BFAWU organisers at Samworth, was sacked earlier this month because he had proven himself extremely effective at recruiting people into the union.

### National campaign

In response, a national campaign has been launched to demand Kumaran's immediate reinstatement and an end to the climate of bullying and intimidation that is prevalent within Samworth factories.

On 18 June, the bakers' union and the National Shop Stewards Network (NSSN) organised a public meeting in Leicester to help build this campaign which will include a

boycott of goods produced by Samworth Brothers.

Indeed, just prior to the meeting, a bustling picket was staged outside of a local Tesco store - a corporation that does much business with Kumaran's bullying bosses.

It is noteworthy that earlier this year Tesco also appointed the recent CEO of Samworth Brothers to their board of directors. Samworth bosses refuse to give official recognition to their workers' union of choice.

Speaking at the meeting Kumaran pledged to fight to the very end for union recognition for his fellow workers at Samworth with whom he had worked for 12 years.

The secretary of the Leicester and District Trade Union Council, Tony Church, brought a message of solidarity noting: "Samworth's have a nineteenth century mentality when it comes to labour relations."

He confirmed the trades council is "fully behind" the bakers' union in calling upon the company to reverse Kumaran's disgraceful sacking immediately.

■ Join the protest to defend Kumaran Bose outside Samworth's Melton Mowbray head office at 12.30pm, Sunday 26 June, Chetwode House, LE13 1GA



Kumaran Bose speaking at the public meeting photo Steve Score



### [News in brief]

#### ■ Unison update

A stinging rebuke was delivered to the leadership of Unison during its local government conference on the 19 and 20 June. The conference saw members express their anger with this year's pay campaign. Conference voted to repremand the NJC (the elected body that negotiates pay and conditions with the employers) for calling off the pay dispute without consulting with members. A number of policies Socialist Party members have long argued for were won on conference floor. The leadership accepted the argument for legal no-cuts budgets in local councils. Conference agreed it would be possible to take national strike action on cuts. Conference voted to have a national ballot on forced academies that would join up with the existing struggle of the NUT. These positive votes, if acted upon by the union can be the beginning of a real fight back against cuts.

#### ■ First fight continues

"It was great to see your party supporting us at the weekend" was the comment of one driver, echoed by numerous others. This was in response to Socialist Party members in Leeds organising a stall and producing a leaflet in support of the strike. Several drivers stopped by the stall, but one particular striker was overjoyed to see such a show of solidarity and had shared a photo of the stall on Facebook. 20 June saw Unite drivers at First take a second day of action for a pay increase, after talks had not fundamentally changed the situation. Yet since the last strike, First have reported an increase in profits overall, up to £52 million, with around a third of that coming from Leeds. The company has hardened its stance by imposing an overtime ban. In the face of a management determined to defend First's increasing profits, further strike action will likely be necessary.

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■ pay by card via 020 8988 8777  
or [socialistparty.org.uk/donate](http://socialistparty.org.uk/donate)  
■ cheques payable to 'Socialist Party', PO Box 24697, London E11 1YD





Pride month 2016 comes at a time of increased attacks on LGBT people - not least the horrific massacre in Orlando. While there have been steps forward in social attitudes and legal rights, genuine equality remains elusive. The Socialist Party fights for the liberation of all oppressed sexualities and gender identities - and the root cause of oppression and division: capitalism. Two members of the Socialist Party's LGBT group, an acronym we use in the broadest, most inclusive sense, take stock of the fight.

- For our response to the Orlando mass killing, see [socialistparty.org.uk](http://socialistparty.org.uk), 'Orlando massacre: working class unity to defeat homophobia, terrorism and racism' - see also the website of our US co-thinkers, [socialistalternative.org](http://socialistalternative.org)
- To get involved with the Socialist Party's LGBT group, email Michael Johnson on [michael\\_j\\_j@hotmail.com](mailto:michael_j_j@hotmail.com)

## Only struggle can stop the bosses' onslaught against LGBT people

Mary Finch

The LGBT movement has made significant gains since the 1970s liberation movement. The stigma around being gay was reduced. Homosexuality was decriminalised in a number of countries, with anti-discrimination legislation passed in its place. We've won marriage equality in the UK, US and Ireland in the past two years.

But in the current climate of capitalist crisis and austerity, it's increasingly clear that these gains aren't enough. For the majority of LGBT people, we're hit by double oppression. Discrimination based on our sexual orientation or gender identity, and the chronic poverty and instability that faces the whole working class and much of the middle class.

Homophobic and transphobic families make it far more likely that LGBT people will be homeless, victims of domestic violence, and suffer mental health problems as a result. 24% of young homeless people are LGBT, as well as being twice as likely to suffer from mental illness.

Transgender people in particular are far more likely to face discrimination and violence. Social prejudice and insufficient training make it near impossible to access gender identity or reassignment services through the NHS.



**24% of young homeless people are LGBT, as well as being twice as likely to suffer from mental illness**

LGBT people are twice as likely to have a negative experience with a GP, which is what makes specialist services so necessary. But the destructive effect of cuts means they are less and less accessible. For 32% of transgender people, it's a one to three-year wait to access a gender identity clinic.

The same problems pervade other services, such as mental health and housing. LGBT young people are often hesitant to use homelessness and housing services, because they too often proffer the 'solution' of returning to abusive or violent homes. But the only LGBT domestic violence service, Broken Rainbow, is facing closure because of a funding crisis.

Another major LGBT mental health charity, Pace, closed in January after 31 years of providing services, again citing government funding cuts.

Specialist services for LGBT people are often among the first to close. Fighting oppression is something the government says it would like to do, but can't deem essential. Some of the biggest services for LGBT people are charities, rather than state-owned and funded public services.

We need these services now more than ever. The 1970s didn't signify the end of discrimination: rather, UK police reported an increase of almost a quarter in homophobic and transphobic hate crimes in 2015. The number of murders of transgender women in the US has been described as an epidemic.

Woeefully inadequate sex and relationship education is partially to blame. Schools don't have strategies for combating homophobia and transphobia, despite the fact that half of teachers recently reported experiencing homophobic, racist or sexist abuse from both parents and students. An overwhelming majority of LGBT people will experience some form of bullying or harassment in school.

### Normal

Young people in many cases are never told what LGBT identities are, or that they're normal and healthy. Those who identify as LGBT are often too intimidated to come out. And when they do, they're seen as abnormal, so it's no wonder hate crimes are on the rise.

But the more significant reason for the increase in attacks on LGBT people, both in terms of attacks on services and attacks on people, is the decline of struggle. Pride marches, for example, used to be an assertion of identity and liberation, but they've become completely depoliticised; PR opportunities for banks and big businesses after the 'pink pound'.

Lesbians and Gays Support the Miners (LGSM) - an LGBT organisation founded to support the miners' strike in 1985 - was supposed to lead the 2015 London Pride march. They were told they had to move to the back if they wanted to march with the trade unions, so Barclays bank led the march instead!

Now more than ever, we need a mass, united movement for LGBT liberation. The Socialist Party demands, and fights for, the reversal of all cuts, including those to LGBT services, and an overhaul of homophobic and transphobic healthcare and education systems. By linking up with the

trade union and socialist movement, we have the potential to stop austerity in its tracks.

But the Socialist Party also recognises we have to go further than that. As long as we have capitalism, we'll have a ruling class made up of business owners and the super-rich who rely on workers to make their profits for them. Oppression is a tool that big business's political representatives use to divide and rule working class people. By pitting us against each other, they hope to distract us from who the real enemy is: the bosses and their politicians.



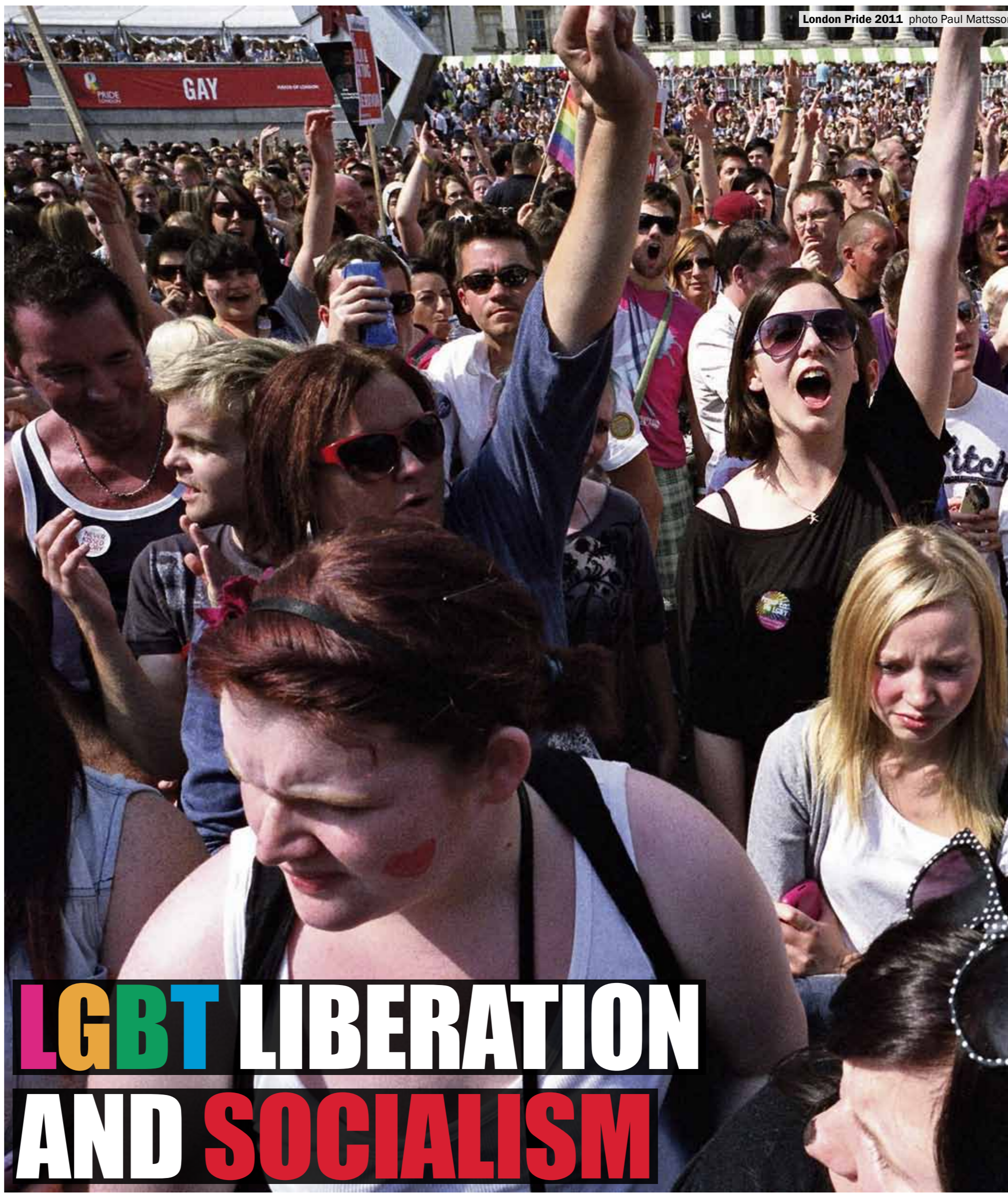
**Pride marches used to be an assertion of identity and liberation, but they've become depoliticised; PR opportunities for banks and big businesses after the 'pink pound'**

Also, strict gender roles are a deeply embedded element of capitalism and all societies divided into economic classes. This arose from the need for rich men to pass on wealth and status to their sons, requiring a rigorous control of women's sexuality in particular. Any sexual orientation or gender identity seen as a challenge to this has been repressed through the ages.

It is essential we link the fight for liberation to fighting capitalism itself, to make the gains we win thoroughgoing and permanent.

A publicly owned, democratically controlled, socialist planned economy - unlike unstable, divisive, exploitative capitalism - could guarantee all the funding and support LGBT people need. That would provide the material security to begin to fundamentally transform backwards social attitudes too.

Massive gains for LGBT people - far more extensive than anywhere else in the world at that time, and still unmatched in most of it - were made after the working class took power in Russia in 1917. This was before Stalinist reaction overturned them as part of a general retreat from genuine socialism. We can replicate the gains of 1917, and far more, by fighting for liberation - and against capitalism, for democratic socialism!



London Pride 2011 photo Paul Mattsson

# LGBT LIBERATION AND SOCIALISM

## Fighting for trans rights

Maddy Steeds

Recent years have seen the rate of transphobic hate crimes increase dramatically in the UK. They have also seen some growing recognition of transgender identities - those of people who feel their gender doesn't match the one they were assigned at birth.

In some areas, the number of attacks has doubled. According to police, these crimes are often greatly under-reported, meaning that more people have likely been subjected to violent behaviour because of their gender identity.

Many more are subjected to verbal harassment. This includes all manner of abuse, calling trans people 'wrong' or 'unnatural'. It can include deliberately referring to them as the wrong gender.

Non-binary identity is also more recognised - and under attack. Non-binary people don't feel they fit neatly into the genders of man or woman. Gender identity is different to biological sex - which in some cases is more complex than simply male-female, anyway (some people are intersex). We are told non-binary gender identity is not 'real' and we have to pick.

Socialists support the right of all people to determine their own gender and sexuality. But most institutions continue to lack recognition of trans people of any type.

Recently, there have been several reports of trans women people being sent to men's prisons. In the case of Vicky Thompson, this led to her tragic suicide (see [socialistparty.org.uk](http://socialistparty.org.uk), 'Transgender woman dies after spiteful courts pick men's prison'). The justification for this was that she had not 'transitioned enough'.

Such arbitrary reasoning often rests on the individual not choosing to alter their biology through hormone treatments or surgery, or not doing so 'enough'. This pushes the harmful idea that every trans person's goal is to 'pass' as a certain gender, and to do so based on visible sexual characteristics.

For some trans people that is the goal, and they should be supported in achieving it. But people whose

appearances do not reflect stereotypical perceptions of that gender face criticism and non-recognition.

In hospitals, if a trans person has not transitioned 'enough', they may be put on a ward for people of the opposite gender. This can be very distressing, and is not conducive to healing.

Trans people are also more likely to suffer mental illness. In fact, at least half of young trans people have considered suicide. The lack of acceptance of trans individuals plays a big part in this: friends' and families' reaction to you coming out as trans can be a terrifying prospect.

It was only in 2013 that the psychiatry manual DSM renamed the condition "gender identity disorder" to the more neutral "gender dysphoria". This should have happened long ago. The previous definition suggested it was the individual who needs to be 'cured' - rather than supported, and society needing to recognise them as trans.

### Not enough

While this formal change is a small step forward in how medical science views transgender people, it is not enough, and by no means reflected in society as a whole. Also it is disheartening that a person cannot usually get any support from the NHS for feelings of gender dysphoria for the first six months after reporting them. In this time, trans people can suffer from depression and anxiety which can be debilitating and sometimes deadly.

Clinics to help transgender people are few and far between. In the south west of England, for example, there is only one listed on the NHS website, in Exeter, which also treats trans people from across the UK. Working class trans people have a harder time affording to travel there and getting time off work to go.

The clinics help with various parts of gender transitioning and gender dysphoria. They are a vital service for trans people. Not being able to access these places can have devastating effects.

Austerity has hit trans people hard. Reversing the cuts to health services is just the start of the funding needed to support them, and the change needed in institutional and social attitudes.



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## Music review: Stay Voiceless

# Manics' punk spirit is alive and well



Scott Jones

'Those kids have no idea whatsoever of what went on at Stalingrad' is a song title that leaves you as curious as the name is long. You certainly take away more from it than the three minutes 32 seconds dose of punk rock you get.

The song is a new single by unsigned Tredegar band Stay Voiceless, and it samples a famous speech that actor and activist Michael Sheen made in the south Wales town in 2015.

Stay Voiceless frontman Chris Morgan says: "I'd attended the People's March for the NHS in my hometown last year to show my support, protecting the NHS is something quite close to the band's heart." Speakers that day included the Socialist Party's Mariam Kamish before Sheen went viral.

The part of his speech the band has sampled includes: "When people are too scared to say what they really mean, when they're too careful to speak from their hearts, it's no surprise that people feel disengaged with politics.

"There is never an excuse to not speak up for what you think is right. You must stand up for what you believe. But first of all - by God, believe in something."

The band said the speech was perfect for the song, which attacks those who have failed communities and public services. They aim to be a voice for the voiceless, with a sound that is as uncompromising and arresting as the politics - I'm glad to see the spirit of the Manic Street Preachers is alive and well in the Valleys.

Check out the song and upcoming gigs at [facebook.com/StayVoiceless](https://www.facebook.com/StayVoiceless)



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### EU migrants

I just heard on a special EU referendum question time what David Cameron says will happen to EU migrants if the Remain vote passes and I already feel deported. No one will be allowed to live here if they cannot support themselves (whatever that means) and people will be sent home if they are unemployed for more than six months.

I don't understand how voting for what he says is better in terms of EU migrants' rights. You will have to hang on to any job so that you are not unemployed for more than x amount of time.

Amalia  
London

### Catch up, Corbyn!

Remember when Jeremy Corbyn appeared on the BBC with his enfeebled pro-EU stance in April? Corbyn appeared with his Blairite escort Alan Johnson at his side. Trapped as hostage, Jeremy Corbyn, on cue, castigated

the 'Leave Vote' in order to 'Remain' in the bosses' EU austerity organisation, declaring workers' rights would be thrown onto the bonfire.

At a time when UK steel and construction workers are just beginning to flex their muscles - there is a growing movement of dissent against the EU Posted Workers Directive that multinational companies use to drive down 'NAECI' pay and breach equal opportunities to work for both UK and migrant labour - Corbyn turns the other way.

Ask any construction worker - like Keith Gibson, who played a leading role in the Lindsey oil refinery strike against the Posted Workers Directive - and they will tell you: "The EU bosses lit the touch paper to burn workers' rights long ago." Political representation for workers, via groups like TUSC, has never been more vital. The battle to unite UK and migrant workers against the Posted Workers' Directive is gathering.

Jeremy Corbyn needs to step out of the confines of the PLP and catch up! Workers need political representation now!  
Janet Gibson  
Hull

### Liverpool: Leave!

Liverpool's Blairite Mayor Joe Anderson and his friend, Tory arch-austerity supporter Lord Heseltine, are singing from the same hymn sheet when they deploy the latest scare tactic. They predict the loss of 1,700 jobs at the Vauxhall plant in the event of rejecting the EU. Well, the mayor is an expert on losing jobs, since he has slashed some 6,000 in the city council.

By contrast, the 47 socialist councillors in charge between 1983 and 1987 - who inherited a city where 65% of the manufacturing base had collapsed after a decade of Liberal/Tory rule locally and four years of Thatcherism nationally - refused to sack workers, nor implement any further cuts, and campaigned for 'Objective One' status which allowed Liverpool to access EU funding.

This funding has now run its course. But the reality is Liverpool received money which had been slashed by the outgoing Liberals in collaboration with Heseltine who cut £100 million from our budget between 1979 and 1983.

And that EU funding hasn't stopped Mayor Anderson from slashing a third of a billion from social provision and placing our disabled, elderly and other needy people at the mercy of the private sector.

We need a radical, anti-austerity, socialist alternative - which the EU neoliberal agenda is totally opposed to. Let's have the courage to vote to leave this fat cats' club, and instigate a mass anti-austerity movement to turf out both Tory camps. And return a Corbyn-led Labour government, with a leader committed to fighting

racism and austerity. And reach out to our comrades in the European anti-austerity movement to do the same.

Tony Mulhearn  
Liverpool

### Khan caught

I happened to meet up with Sadiq Khan, the London mayor, quite by accident recently, at our local Age Concern centre (make jokes now please). He brought a huge contingent of photographers and a 20-strong 'Team London' group of young people, who immediately set about cutting all the hedges around the centre with the photographers snapping away.

When I asked the woman in charge who paid for all this, she said "London businesses."

Khan himself was posing with the OAPs and as he came out I approached him as if I wanted to shake his hand. He held out his hand, turning to the photographers as if to say "another fan," but I said to him: "Why are you sharing a platform with David Cameron?"

He was somewhat taken aback with this and said "well he is our prime minister." I responded: "He is also the man putting through massive austerity cuts against the very people you are supposed to represent."

By this time he was hurrying away, but said over his shoulder: "It would be worse outside the EU..."

Bill Mullins  
Southwark

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

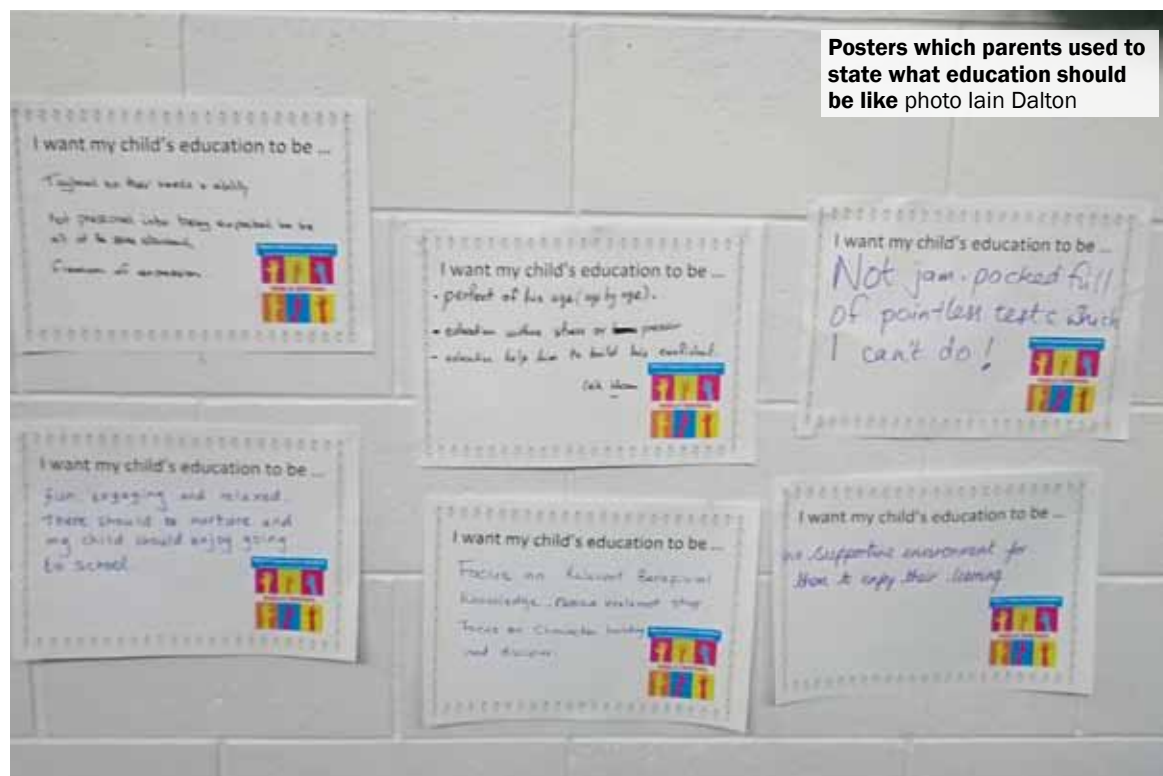
### David Cameron has promised further attacks on EU migrant workers if the Remain camp wins

photo Alex Proimos/Creative Commons





# PARENTS IN LEEDS DISCUSS ATTACKS ON EDUCATION



Posters which parents used to state what education should be like photo Iain Dalton

**Iain Dalton**  
Leeds Socialist Party

“I want my children's education to not be jam-packed full of pointless tests that I can't do!” was just one of the posters filled in by angry parents at a public meeting in Harehills, Leeds on 9 June.

Parents for Education organised the meeting at Bankside Primary School to discuss recent topical issues about education, such as the government's forced academisation plans and the controversies around SATs tests.

Patrick Murphy, Leeds National Union of Teachers (NUT) divisional secretary, highlighted the crisis in education. Such is the pressure now

on children in schools that stress due to exams is the main cause of depression and self-harm according to a recent report.

There is also a school places crisis which is particularly acute in Leeds, where 60 parents in the north east of the city didn't get any of their five choices of schools for their children.

## Strike ballot

The NUT is balloting for strike action over these attacks, demanding in effect a national contract for teachers, so that pay and conditions are not determined academy by academy as the government intends.

Richard Burgon, Labour MP for East Leeds, was the second speaker. He admonished the record of Labour under Blair which was responsible for introducing academies and

tuition fees at universities.

Several questions went into the detail of the attacks and how to organise to resist them. Perhaps most striking was that asked by a local Labour councillor who said that to get rid of these attacks we would need to elect a Labour government in 2020, but how do we ensure that it is committed to repealing these changes?

Burgon's response was to state that he'd like to see the Tory government gone this year! But, he added, it would need to be replaced by 'the right kind of Labour government'.

The Socialist Party agrees that we need a government that puts the interests of workers and their families first - a task that if delayed until 2020 will see austerity devastate the lives of many more people.

# Private company running King's Mill Hospital goes bust

**Karen Seymour**  
Mansfield Socialist Party

The people of Mansfield in Nottinghamshire have learned that the company running the primary care centre at King's Mill Hospital has gone bust, with redundancies to follow.

Sadly, this is what happens when private providers, only concerned with profit, are brought in to care for us. Health workers deliver fantastic care day after day, under huge stress and strain. It is perhaps not hard to see why there is such a high turnover

of staff in such a pressured environment. Inevitably, the cost of agency staff has skyrocketed and that seems to have happened in this case.

We should all be concerned about who provides our healthcare because when private providers are brought in, it is certain that corners will be cut.

## Investment

It is not overspending in the NHS that has brought it to crisis point, but a lack of investment over many years.

Plus the hugely expensive Private Finance Initiative (PFI) deals that

were approved by Labour and Tory governments alike. King's Mill alone is in debt to the tune of £2 billion because of PFI.

The junior doctors and most of us understand the government's real aim is to privatise the NHS by stealth, selling it to their big business cronies 'on the cheap'. If we do not fight for it, we will end up with a US-style system, where those who cannot afford healthcare go without it.

Our health, and that of our families and friends, is too important to be left in the hands of those who only want to make profits.

# Pathetic fascist 'demonstration' outnumbered in Bristol

**Tom Baldwin**  
Bristol Socialist Party

The racist, fascist group the South West Infidels called a demonstration in Bristol for 4 June. They only mustered around 20 people who marched under heavy police protection.

They were outnumbered by ten to one by anti-fascist counter-demonstrators, Socialist Party members were among them as we tried to prevent the fascists from marching, spreading their message of hate and posing a threat.

We also took part in a demonstration of 250 earlier in the day, opposing racism and supporting the rights of refugees.

## £100,000

The pathetic spectacle of the fascist demo would not have even been possible but for the extraordinary lengths the police went to protect them and allow them to march. The police spent £100,000 on the day, drawing support from surrounding forces.

Hundreds of police tried to prevent counter-demonstrators reaching the fascists. Police officers and vans surrounded the fascists to protect them while police dogs and horses were used to clear anti-fas-

cists from blocking their path.

Questions must be asked of why the police did so much to help them march. They've never shown the same degree of willingness towards other demonstrations.

They've claimed in the past that they didn't have the resources even to simply help manage traffic to help keep anti-cuts demonstrators safe.

As they left with chants of "Nazi scum - off our streets!" still ringing in their ears, the 'Infidels' must have known they're not welcome in Bristol.

However we will remain vigilant for any attempts to return and will make sure the anti-fascist and workers' movements in Bristol are as well organised as possible to drive them away.

Socialist Party members also took part in a 200-strong anti-fascist counter demonstration in Nottingham against the 'Patriots against Islam' fascist group on 11 June. The group, numbering around 20 were humiliated as they tried to march, eventually being bussed away by their police escort to the train station. The heavy police presence kettled part of the counter demonstration, arresting two people.

South West Infidels march through Bristol protected by huge police presence photo Bristol Socialist Party



## Socialist Party Fighting Fund

	£ received	£ target	April to June 2016				Deadline 30 June 2016
North West	3,698	1,800					205%
Northern	991	600					165%
Yorkshire	3,722	2,900					128%
East Midlands	1,902	1,600					119%
Wales	2,492	2,300					108%
Eastern	1,250	1,200					104%
South West	1,296	1,400					93%
West Midlands	1,740	2,100					83%
Southern	932	1,200					78%
London	4,599	6,100					75%
South East	278	750					37%
Other	3,756	3,050					123%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>26,661</b>	<b>25,000</b>					<b>107%</b>



# OUTRAGEOUS BLOCKING OF AID FOR REFUGEES

Isai Priya

Thousands of refugees and migrants fleeing war, conflict and poverty continue to be trapped in desperate and deteriorating conditions in camps in Calais. Supplies in the camps are running low.

On 18 June, a convoy to Calais of 250 vehicles, including cars, lorries and minibuses set off to deliver solidarity and aid. It has been planned for months but the organisers received a letter two days before, in effect banning the convoy because of "heightened security" in France.



Isai photo Senan



The authorities might have stopped the convoy but not the human solidarity of the people who took part and supported it

**3,100**

Estimated number of refugees who died while attempting to travel in the first five months of 2016. Children account for a third of these

Of course, the borders continue to be open if you're going on holiday, for the European Championship football tournament for example, and will benefit big business.

Hundreds of people assembled on Saturday morning at Whitehall in London before making our way to Dover. Out-

rageously we were stopped there and refused entry by the French authorities.

We were told that the border was closed and the ban for the convoy was confirmed. So a protest took place and the slogan "we've got aid, let us through - refugees are humans too" gained momentum. One lorry with donations and a handful of volunteers were allowed to cross to France but about half the aid was in the vehicles left behind.

## Embassy protest

After some discussion with the police the organisers told protesters that we would all drive back to London and protest outside the French embassy, depositing the remaining aid there. Some felt we could have continued and escalated the protest where we were - against both the UK and the French authorities.

Towards the end, the slogan the crowd kept repeating was "Tories out." This government is responsible for huge austerity, as well as for bombing other countries and turning innocent victims into refugees.

The authorities might have stopped the convoy but not the human solidarity of the people who took part and supported it. This is not the end - we need to build a mass movement of trade unionists, socialists, students and working class people to demand more refugees are taken in and that there is proper investment in jobs, homes and services for all.



Volunteers in Calais distributing aid on an earlier occasion photo Paul Mattsson

**#CONVOYTOCALAIS**

## We must grow the strength of our movement

Bridget Taylor

We blockaded Dover Port for over an hour in protest at the convoy not being allowed in to France - chanting and holding placards and banners to prevent the ferry from leaving.

Eventually we had to leave as the police were threatening to kettle us. Their aim was to only let vehicles leave the port individually - which would have broken up the convoy and left us kettled in the port for hours.

We deposited our aid donations at the French Embassy in London (the only way we could reach 'French territory') to shame that government and continue with our protest, chanting things like "shame on you - refugees are people too."

There were reports in the media that the French police accused us of planning to 'facilitate intrusions' (ie smuggle refugees into the UK)

## Treating victims of the EU's policies

Medical aid charity Doctors Without Borders (MSF) has said it will no longer accept donations from the EU or any of its 28 member states (which currently provide 8% of its funding). This is in protest at the deal between the EU and Turkey on refugees - where all refugees arriving in Greece who didn't apply for asylum in advance are deported back to Turkey.

Jerome Oberreit, secretary general of MSF, said: "The EU deal is the latest in a long line of policies that go against the values and the principles that enable assistance to be provided." He added: "We cannot accept funding from the EU or the member states while at the same time treating the victims of their policies. It's that simple."

**7K**

Unaccompanied children refugees arrived in Italy from Africa in the first five months of this year. Many face abuse and exploitation on arrival. It is thought that 90% of children arriving in Europe are unaccompanied

- which was never the aim of the convoy.

The real reason the border police didn't want us to enter France is that the French government has consistently ignored the rights and needs of



Refugee in Calais photo Paul Mattsson



The wealth exists to offer refugees, and the entire rest of the population, decent food and housing

the refugees within its borders and will not tolerate any attempt to draw attention to this humanitarian crisis. This is also worsened by the policies of Cameron's Tory government. The protest showed the strength of opposition to the way refugees are being treated by states across Europe. Manchester Metropolitan University For Refugees is already contemplating a second convoy later this year. Our response must and will be to grow the strength of our movement and to continue to demonstrate our solidarity with refugees across all borders. We will not be defeated by this shameful act.

# CRISIS SHOWS REALITY OF FORTRESS EUROPE

Helen Pattison

The blocking of the convoy at Dover had a politicising impact on the whole convoy event. It changed the mood from a day of solidarity and charity to one of protest, anger and defiance.

Many of those taking part expected a day away from the referendum debate. But being stopped at the border really brought it back.

We are repeatedly told we can move freely within the EU but here 250 cars carrying basic supplies for refugees were stopped from crossing the border to France.



Helen photo Senan

ment, the US and France, struggle to find safety. Even if they make it into Europe many live in appalling conditions, such as those in Calais.

Ordinary people, charities and trade unions shouldn't have to collect basic aid for refugees within Europe. One person told us how shocked she was that both aid charities helping refugees in France are currently "very low on food."

This was a convoy that planned to travel through two of the richest countries in the world because neither provides a decent standard of living to refugees fleeing war. The wealth exists to offer refugees, and the entire rest of the population, decent food and housing - but sits in the bank accounts and companies of the super-rich 1%.

## Homes for all

Many people had donated tents. The Socialist Party leaflet pointed out that across the EU there are 11 million empty homes - enough to solve the housing crisis faced by existing citizens as well as refugees.

There were cheers when we heard around half the donations made it on to the ferry and would be delivered to Calais. But, although the charity of ordinary people will help some of the 4,300 refugees in Calais, the crisis will continue. The need to take on the Tories and the war-mongering capitalist system they support is more important than ever.

As long as capitalist governments like ours continue to start wars and destroy the environment, people will have to flee their homes in desperation. To permanently solve the refugee crisis we must fight for a socialist world capable of providing for the needs of all.

**24**

People displaced every minute. The latest figures from the UN refugees agency shows a record 65 million refugees worldwide - that's one in every 113 people on the planet forced to flee their homes, more than a 50% increase in five years

The refugee crisis has exposed the EU's real attitude towards migration. A number of border controls within the EU have been introduced for the first time in decades.

This is the real EU - Fortress Europe. Refugees, many desperately escaping the bombs of this govern-

## Socialism Today

The Socialist Party's magazine

June issue includes:

- Workers vs the EU
- Referendum: Don't save the Tories!
- Israel/Palestine - statement on the national question



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Many trade unionists took part in the convoy photo Paul Mattsson

# TUSC EU tour: exposing the EU 'Employers' Union' in Stoke

Andy Bentley

An excellent Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC) meeting took place in Stoke-on-Trent on 16 June. This was the biggest public meeting of socialists campaigning for a vote against the EU to take place in the city during the referendum campaign.

People packed into the room to hear North Staffs RMT branch secretary Tim Breed and Socialist Party national organiser Sarah Sachs-Eldridge explain the socialist case against the EU and TUSC's key role in consistently fighting against cuts, not just in words but also in deeds.

## Discussion

This was followed by a lively discussion with many questions and contributions from longstanding socialists and those who were attending this type of meeting for the first time. Many issues were covered - immigration, what will happen after the referendum and how we can strengthen unity among workers across Europe and beyond were just a few.

However, there were two constant themes that were mentioned by the main speakers and many others in the debate. Firstly, the baleful role of many trade union leaders who suggest that the EU will defend workers. Instead they should be exposing the EU 'Employers' Union' for what it is - a bosses' club - and preparing their own members for action to defend workers' rights, jobs, pay and conditions, in or out of the EU.

## Corbyn

Secondly, that Jeremy Corbyn should have stuck to his historical position of socialist opposition to the EU instead of succumbing to the pressure of the Blairites to back the Tories' support for the EU. His decision handed the xenophobes, nationalists and racists involved in the largest Brexit campaigns an opportunity to portray themselves as the unheard voice of working class people.







### Pakistan: Women health workers protest

A protest was held by the Lady Health Workers organisation (LHW) in Mirpur Khas in the Sindh province, Pakistan demanding the payment of their wages. Outrageously, the treasury is refusing to make payments to the workers regularly and has not paid wages to them for the last four months. LHW also demanded justice for their colleague, Maryam Mallah, who had been sexually assaulted. No investigation or any effort was made to bring the offender to justice. The authorities spread text messages that they have agreed to pay the wages within two days. However, the workers were not contacted or informed about this and will continue their protest until they get their wages. Sughran Khaskheli



### Portugal: Solidarity with Wales' strikers

Solidarity with National Museums Wales workers (on indefinite strike - see page 6) from Lisbon and Portuguese dockers' union Sindicato dos Estivadores and the International Dockworkers Council, during the recent demonstration against casualisation and precarious working conditions - João Filipe Ruivo Félix



### Taiwan: Tuition fees victory

The Taiwan education ministry has backed down over increasing student tuition fees! The new DPP government clearly fears alienating youth so soon into its term of office. Of 14 universities in Taipei, 12 will see no increase - the 12 that took part in protests. Vincent Hsu of the CWI Taiwan (pictured speaking) is a spokesperson for the students' campaign.

# Middle East: Isis under pressure on several fronts

Working classes will take to road of mass struggle again



US backed Kurdish Peshmerga forces replace Isis flag following territorial gains photo Flickr/Creative Commons

Niall Mulholland, Committee for a Workers' International (CWI)

The Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (Isis) is under attack in and around the last big three cities it holds in Iraq and Syria - Fallujah, Mosul and Raqqa - and is also struggling to hold on to Sirte, its main base in Libya. Fallujah is the scene of the most intense fighting, as the Iraqi army and Shia militias, backed up by US, Australian and British airstrikes, attempt to drive Isis out. The Iraqi city has been under siege for a year by these forces. Since a new offensive began on 23 May, some 68,000 Sunni civilians fled, often into the hands of sectarian Shia forces carrying out reprisals. Human Rights Watch said it received "credible allegations of summary executions, beatings of unarmed men, enforced disappearances". The battle for Fallujah is a useful diversion for the Shia-dominated regime in Baghdad. The Green Zone - the seat of central government - was stormed twice by poor Shias in recent months, protesting against corruption and the failure to provide electricity and other essential services. Prime Minister Haidar al-Abadi's regime is also under pressure to prevent more bloody Isis suicide bomb-

er attacks in poor Shia areas, which allegedly emanate from Fallujah. It is two years since Isis hit world headlines by capturing Mosul, the second largest city in Iraq, having already conquered Fallujah, 40 miles west of Baghdad. Fallujah has long been a focus of resistance to the Bagdad regime. In 2004, the city was stormed twice by US forces, killing thousands and reducing much of it to rubble. The conditions for the stunning success of Isis in capturing the city in 2014 were a revolt of the city's Sunni population. The deep hatred of the Shia-dominated Baghdad regime meant some Sunnis, who make up one fifth of Iraq's 33 million population, initially welcomed or tolerated Isis rule. They desperately hoped it could mean an end to Shia persecution and would bring a measure of 'stability' and 'law and order'. Suicide bombers Initially the use of indiscriminate atrocities by Isis terrified and demoralised the much greater forces of the Iraqi army, which often fled the battle field. But these terror tactics are no longer as effective. As all the armies fighting Isis are now better trained to deal with attacks, Isis turns to slaughtering more innocent civilians. Isis still displays the ability to reorganise and launch offensives but it's losing more fighters than previously.

Fallujah has been under siege. Since a new offensive began on 23 May, some 68,000 Sunni civilians fled, often into the hands of sectarian Shia forces carrying out reprisals

The likely capture of Fallujah by Iraqi government forces will be the biggest defeat suffered by Isis, so far. However its self-styled 'caliphate' remains a large area and it faces divided enemy forces - a cockpit of rivalries. The Turkish regime is involved in an incipient civil war with the Kurdish PKK militia, in the south of the country and refuses to close off Isis's access to the wider world. The Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) - led by the Kurdish Peoples' Protection Units (YPG), backed by US air strikes - recently launched an offensive against the town of Manbij, west of the Euphrates, close to the Turkish border, in an attempt to stop Isis moving weapons and fighters across the border. The ultimate aim is to dislodge Isis from Raqqa.



Displaced Iraqi war refugees in Damascus photo Wikimedia/Creative Commons

At the same time, from the south-west, the Iraqi army, with Russian airpower backing, is also advancing on the Islamic group's self-styled caliphate capital. All of these military manoeuvres indicate the deep antagonisms between outside powers and their regional allies. Just as important as territorial gains are for all those battling Isis - the Kurdish Peshmerga, YPG, Iraqi army, Shia militias and the US - is who will succeed in ruling in its place. The US is most concerned at any gains made by allies of Iran, its main opponent in the region. Fallujah is regarded by all sides as a dress rehearsal for a potentially much greater battle to capture Mosul, Iraq's second city. US bombers and their allied Kurdish Peshmerga ground forces are conducting an anti-Isis offensive in the north of Iraq, in preparation for taking Iraq's second city. Even if Isis is routed, it does not necessarily mean the end of the organisation. It appears to be retreating from Fallujah, which it cannot hold, to preserve its experienced fighters. But Isis can evolve into another terror movement. Other Salafist groups, like Jabhat al-Nusra, the Syrian wing of al-Qa'ida, are growing in popularity among Sunni Arabs in Syria. Such groups will find fertile conditions to grow among the Sunni Arabs, who view operations like the assault on Fallujah as ethnic cleansing that is intended to drive Sunnis from Iraq. According to a US diplomat, Sunnis exist in "islands of fear" in Iraq. Isis terror rule Yet Isis has proven to be no solution to the desperate situation facing Sunnis. Its medieval, obscurantist rule cannot answer even the most basic problems facing working class and poor Sunnis. And its barbaric treatment of minorities repulses all others. Over 80,000 people have fled Sirte since Isis's takeover, where in February 2015 it beheaded 21 Christians.

Isis is now struggling to hold Sirte as militias aligned with the UN-backed 'unity government' advance from Misrata, in western Libya, and a different militia advances from the east. "The US and EU states have not wanted to acknowledge the link between the terrorism and their strategic Sunni allies such as Saudi Arabia, the Gulf monarchies, Turkey and Pakistan". On the basis of capitalism and the rule of reactionary elites and sectarian forces, more conflicts and humanitarian disasters are assured in the Middle East. Only the working and poor people of the region, allied to workers everywhere, can find a way out. The potential for this was clearly seen during the 'Arab Spring', when dictators were overthrown by mass movements of workers and the poor in Tunisia and Egypt. But these movements, emerging from decades of dictatorships, lacked a pro-working class leadership that could successfully mobilise the masses in a struggle against local tyrants and the capitalist system. Counter-revolution, with the support of the western powers, was able to gain the upper hand. Yet the working classes of the region, through these bitterest experiences, will take to the road of mass struggle once more, in opposition to dictators and all sectarian forces.

But even if these forces drive Isis out of Sirte, many Libyans fear it will only mean a return to the country's previous hostilities. The 'parliament' in Tobruk refused to cooperate with the UN-backed government in Tripoli and militias could return to fighting one another for control of Libya's oil ports. The current round of anti-Isis military advances is yet another bloody carnage resulting from the US-led invasion and occupation of Iraq. Faced with general opposition in Iraq, the US occupiers whipped up sectarian differences in order to 'divide and rule' and later adopted a policy of fanning and supporting armed sectarian opposition to the dictator Assad in Syria. Similarly, the Nato powers decisively aided the armed overthrow of Colonel Gaddafi's regime in Libya, to further the interests of western imperialism, throwing the country into bloody chaos. One source of the growth of Isis that the West will not train its guns on is the reactionary Gulf States and other Sunni Islam regimes that help fund and nurture jihadist movements. As the veteran Middle East correspondent Patrick Cockburn recently

**What we stand for**

The Socialist Party fights for socialism - a democratic society run for the needs of all and not the profits of a few. We also oppose every cut, fighting in our day-to-day campaigning for every possible improvement for working class people. The organised working class has the potential power to stop the cuts and transform society. As capitalism dominates the globe, the struggle for genuine socialism must be international. The Socialist Party is part of the Committee for a Workers' International (CWI), a socialist international that organises in over 40 countries.

Our demands include:

**PUBLIC SERVICES**

- No to ALL cuts in jobs, public services and benefits. Defend our pensions.
- No to privatisation and the Private Finance Initiative (PFI). Renationalise all privatised utilities and services, with compensation paid only on the basis of proven need.
- Fully fund all services and run them under accountable, democratic committees that include representatives of service workers and users.
- Free, publicly run, good quality education, available to all at any age. Abolish university tuition fees now and introduce a living grant. No to academies and 'free schools'!
- A socialist NHS to provide for everyone's health needs - free at the point of use and under democratic control. Kick out private contractors!
- Keep council housing publicly owned. For a massive building programme of publicly owned housing, on an environmentally sustainable basis, to provide good quality homes with low rents.

**ENVIRONMENT**

- Major research and investment into replacing fossil fuels with renewable energy and into ending the problems of early obsolescence and un-recycled waste.
- Public ownership of the energy generating industries. No to nuclear power. No to Trident.
- A democratically planned, low-fare, publicly owned transport system, as part of an overall plan against environmental pollution.

**RIGHTS**

- Oppose discrimination on the grounds of race, gender, disability, sexuality, age, and all other forms of prejudice.
- Repeal all laws that trample over civil liberties. For the right to protest! End police harassment.
- Defend abortion rights. For a woman's right to choose when and whether to have children.
- For the right to asylum. No to racist immigration laws.

**NEW MASS WORKERS' PARTY**

- For a new mass workers' party drawing together workers, young people and activists from workplace, community, environmental and anti-war campaigns, to provide a fighting, political alternative to the pro-big business parties. Support the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition as an important step towards this.

**SOCIALISM AND INTERNATIONALISM**

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

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

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## PRIDE MONTH 2016 - AFTER ORLANDO...

# SOLIDARITY TO END LGBT-PHOBIA

**T**here has been an outpouring of horror and shock but also of solidarity with LGBT people after the killing of 49 people at a Latino gay nightclub in Orlando, Florida on 12 June. Vigils have taken place across the world.

This vicious attack was a sobering reminder that lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans (LGBT) people, despite positive changes in the law and other steps forward, still face oppression due to their sexuality and gender identity.

A teachers' report found that in Britain nine in ten secondary school teachers say students in their

schools are bullied for being - or perceived to be - lesbian, gay or bi. 28% of young trans people have experienced physical attacks and 27% have attempted suicide.

Between 2008 and 2014, there were 1,612 murders across 62 countries of transgender people - equivalent to a killing every two days. In the US, transgender people are four times more likely to live in poverty.

Austerity hits groups already discriminated against under capitalism the hardest. The housing crisis, cuts to homelessness services and shelters, cuts to NHS funding and many of the other austerity attacks are hitting LGBT people sharply.

### Struggle

A political Pride and united working class struggle are urgently needed. Pride was born out of struggle against police victimisation and for visibility and equality. Today, in Britain and internationally, austerity and capitalism in crisis threaten the gains won through struggle in the past.

A strategy to achieve lasting LGBT liberation depends on linking the day-to-day battles against anti-gay and anti-trans violence and discrimination to the struggle to build a mass movement for socialism and achieve a socialist society.

■ **LGBT liberation and socialism - feature on pages 8-9**

In Seattle in the US, Councillor Kshama Sawant, a member of Socialist Alternative (co-thinkers of the Socialist Party) has led the battle on the city council to challenge LGBT-phobia and austerity.

On 20 June the Seattle City Council unanimously passed a proclamation declaring 24 June 'Trans Pride Day'. In her speech arguing for this Kshama said: "Trans Pride is also a reminder that the fight against oppression is deeply interlinked with the larger fight for workplace rights. Trans activists have correctly been among the leading voices in the fight for \$15 an hour, to end the gender pay gap, and the battle to unionise our workplaces."

■ **See [sawant.seattle.gov/trans-pride-day](http://sawant.seattle.gov/trans-pride-day)**



photo Paul Mattsson