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Formerly **Militant**

LONDON RIOTS FIVE YEARS ON

photo: Alan Barnes / Creative Commons

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40 YEARS SINCE GRUNWICK STRIKE

A struggle rich in lessons

photo: [Portrait of a woman]

GRUNWICK STRIKE COMMITTEE

> Feature: pages 8-9

#BLACK LIVES MATTER

photo: [Portrait of a woman]

> Reports: page 11



photo Paul Mattsson

STAND FIRM FOR SOCIALISM

Hull, Leeds, Liverpool, Bristol, Merthyr Tydfil. Across Britain the biggest left rallies in a generation are taking place in defence of Jeremy Corbyn's leadership of the Labour Party. The Blairites' attempted coup has mobilised a second wave of support for Corbyn, bigger even than the first one that thrust him into the Labour leadership eleven months ago. What is noticeable is the mood of openness and preparedness for unity and democracy.

Opposing and attempting to defeat the movement behind Jeremy are all the forces of the capitalist establishment, within Labour and without. It would therefore be wrong for anyone to be complacent about the outcome of the election. Nonetheless, so far each attempt by the right to try and gerrymander the election has been met with defiance by the movement and has, at least partially, been thwarted.

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- Corbyn campaign reports on pages 3, 6, 7 and 10-11



What we think

THE FIGHT FOR A LABOUR PARTY FOR THE WORKING CLASS



> Continued from page 1

When the Labour National Executive Committee (NEC) demanded that supporters - and members who had joined after 12 January - pay a hefty £25 in just 48 hours in order to be able to vote in the leadership election, an incredible 187,000 people did so. It has been reported, however, that 40,000-50,000 were to be ruled out, in a further desperate attempt to fix the election. Anyone, for example, who has dared to accurately describe as 'traitors' the 172 MPs who passed a vote of no confidence in Corbyn was to be excluded. However, the High Court's decision that the 130,000 Labour Party members who have joined since 12 January should be allowed to vote, provided it stands at appeal, will partially negate this latest attempt at exclusion and could swing the election decisively in Jeremy Corbyn's favour. It cannot even be completely ruled out that Smith could pull out, using the difficulties of administering the election following the court's decision as an excuse.

The capitalist media is doing all it can to promote the previously unknown Owen Smith, brushing his past as a lobbyist for pharmaceutical company Pfizer under the carpet, and allowing him to falsely pose as a 'socialist'. Smith hopes that this, combined with attempting to appeal to Remain voters by calling for a second referendum and claiming, on no grounds whatsoever, to be more electable than Corbyn, could convince a more passive layer of voters in the leadership contest to support him.

Anti-austerity

The best answer is for Corbyn to appeal to potential voters on a clear anti-austerity platform - with his programme of last year as a starting point. Some of his recent announcements, including pledging to build 500,000 council homes in his first term, to introduce rent controls, and to end privatisation of the health service, are welcome and have the potential to be enormously popular. Unfortunately, however, there have also been some retreats from the pledges he made in his initial leadership campaign, undoubtedly in the hope of pacifying the right. Nationalising the energy companies is supported by a majority of the population, yet this has been dropped from this year's election platform. It is also unacceptable that his previous promise of free education - abolishing tuition fees and introducing a living grant - seems now to have been diluted to 'cutting' student fees by an unspecified amount.

The huge support for Jeremy is because he is seen as representing a break with the pro-capitalist, pro-austerity, pro-war politicians that have dominated parliament for the last 20 years. Far from retreating from his initial programme, he would gain more support by building on it. He should, for example, call unequivocally for nationalising the steel industry. A call on Labour councils not to implement any more cuts to public services, the position agreed at the Unite and GMB conferences, would also be very popular.

One of the biggest rallies in defence of Corbyn was in Liverpool where up to ten thousand people came to hear him speak (see report on page 3). This is not coincidence but is linked to the history of working class struggle in the city, in which Militant - now the Socialist Party - played a key role. It was a mistake that Jeremy Corbyn, even though he supported it at the time, did not refer to the struggle of Liverpool City Council in the 1980s, which successfully won £60 million from the Thatcher government. Economist David Blanchflower has viciously attacked

Socialist policies could win mass support



Tata Steel workers marching to save their jobs - a Labour Party which backs nationalisation could revive dying industry
photo Scott Jones

Corbyn's Labour, alleging it "does not have a credible economic plan" because it fails to "accept the realities of capitalism and modern markets." The most effective way to answer this is to state clearly that Labour defies the 'realities of capitalism', which mean misery for millions. To fully do so would mean Labour nationalising the major banks and corporations which dominate the economy, under democratic workers' control and management, in order to begin to build a democratic socialist society, run in the interests of the majority instead of for the profits of a few.

These issues are important, not only for the leadership contest, but for beyond it. Even in the best, most likely scenario of Jeremy again winning with a large majority, it will not resolve the issues. The civil war, now it is out in the open, cannot be simply called off. There is no possibility of the Labour right accepting Jeremy Corbyn as leader, as they themselves have made very plain.

The Blairite MP Wes Streeting declared: "We've crossed the Rubicon, there's no going back. This is irreparable while Jeremy remains leader." Owen Smith himself said: "I think there is every likelihood that the party will split if Jeremy wins this election. I don't think it's a risk, I think it's a likelihood." Of course, at this stage no-one will admit to planning to split. But that is always the case in a war situation - all sides keep talking peace until the moment they declare war.

However, it is not certain that the right will take this path in the short term. It is clear that they themselves



The worst response to Jeremy's re-election would be to attempt to make peace with the Blairites

are feeling their way, reeling under the shock of a radicalised working class daring to interfere in 'their' party and to threaten their careers. It is possible that they will all hesitate and cling on, hoping to overthrow Corbyn at some future point, or that some will split while others remain. As George Eaton put it in the New Statesman: "Many [of the PLP] now believe that is only through a general election that the party's internal struggle will be resolved." What they mean by this is that Theresa May will do their job for them by calling an early election, defeating Corbyn, and they imagine, forcing him to resign.

Tasks

While the right are in disarray, the tasks of the left are clear. The NEC results show clearly their increased strength within the Labour Party. The slate recommended by the Jeremy Corbyn supporting organisation, Momentum, won all the constituency seats with a much increased electorate. They received an average of around three times as many votes as in 2014, in an important step forward. However, the Momentum-recommended candidates do not all have a consistent left record. Nor, unfortunately, does the leadership of Momentum. At the same time support for the right also increased to around double what they received in 2014. And at this stage the Labour Party's structure remains extremely undemocratic.

The worst response to Jeremy's re-election would be to attempt to make peace with the Blairites. Instead a serious campaign is required to consolidate the victory

and to transform the Labour Party into a genuinely anti-austerity, socialist party. This means taking on the main bases of establishment Labour, in the Parliamentary Labour Party (PLP), the national party apparatus and, locally, the big majority of Labour councillors.

The national structures of the Labour Party would also need to be opened out and democratised. To mobilise the maximum possible support, there should be a return to the founding structures of the Labour Party which involved separate socialist political parties coalescing with the trade unions and social movements like women's suffrage campaigners and the co-operative movement. That federal approach applied to today would mean allowing political parties that were prepared to sign up to a clear anti-austerity programme to affiliate to Labour as the Co-op Party still does.

A fight should be launched for the immediate introduction of mandatory re-selection which would allow local parties to replace their MPs at the next general election. Unite conference passed a motion calling for this, moved by a Socialist Party member, and Unite should now fight for this at the upcoming Labour Party conference. At the same time more decisive action would need to be taken before to bring the parliamentary party into line. MPs should have the Labour whip only if they agree to accept the renewed mandate for Corbyn and his anti-austerity, anti-war policies.

For the right-wing MPs, who believe in their right to sit in parliament is God-given, this reasonable democratic demand is justification for them to split. George Eaton quotes one of them as saying: "If, however, the hard left pursue deselections then those ejected from power would most likely feel compelled into a separate party option, which really would be a disastrous split."

Let them go! Those on the left that quail at a split in the Labour Party have to face up to what pacifying the right requires; a complete capitulation to the pro-capital-

ist elements of the Labour Party. Nothing else will satisfy them. Only if they are given their own way, their careers protected and, most importantly, the Labour Party confined entirely in the capitalist framework of austerity, privatisation and war, will they condescend to remain in a party with the left. A return to the socialist MPs within the Labour Party being like prisoners, able to smuggle a few notes out between the bars but nothing more, is the only basis on which the Blairites can live with the left.

Fear

Many Labour supporters will fear that a split would weaken the Labour Party. In fact the opposite would be the case. True a Blairite split away would - at least initially - dramatically decrease the number of Labour MPs in Westminster. But a group of 40, or even 20 or 30, MPs who consistently campaigned against austerity and defended workers in struggle, would do far more to strengthen the fightback against the Tories than 232 'Labour' MPs, a majority who vote for austerity, privatisation and war.

A re-founded anti-austerity Labour Party could quickly make electoral gains. One YouGov opinion poll estimated that a Corbyn-led Labour Party following a right split would receive 21% of the vote, while if the right successfully kept the Labour name, Corbyn's party would receive 14% of the vote. Either scenario would give a solid electoral base which could rapidly be built on. Let's remember that Greek party Syriza, initially on an anti-austerity platform, went from under 5% to winning a general election in just a few years, while Podemos in Spain has gone from not existing to vying for power in an even shorter time.

The movement in support of Corbyn opens up a very important opportunity for working class people in Britain. It creates the possibility of the formation of a new radical workers' party, able to attract all those workers and youth wanting to fight back against capitalism.

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

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Thousands rally for Corbyn in Liverpool

Up to 10,000 people flooded onto Liverpool's St George's Plateau and into the surrounding roads to greet Jeremy Corbyn on the Merseyside leg of his leadership campaign tour.

What a contrast with Owen Smith's event a few days earlier, where the 'crowd' was easily confused with the queue for a nearby ice-cream van!

Corbyn railed against the Tory Britain of poverty, homelessness, workplace exploitation, and corporate profiteering and tax-dodging. He outlined some good basic socialist policies to tackle the worst effects of capitalism in Britain today.

Instead of the "politics of the elite", by the elite for the elite, we need "the politics of the people expressing their views and aspirations."

Past gains were won through struggle, Jeremy said, and now we need a confident and hopeful movement, to change the kind of world we live in.

Applause

The rally was chaired and also addressed by local councillors, a nurse who received massive applause, a representative of the Cammell Lairds shipyard workers jailed in the 1980s during their dispute, left NEC candidate Rhea Wolfson and local MP Steve Rotherham.

With a huge thirst for socialist ideas, queues formed to buy over 250 copies of the Socialist. Our ideas and programme for action is increasingly popular among the developing mass movement around Jeremy Corbyn.

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

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A secondary school teacher
Birmingham

Theresa May has announced she wants to lift the ban on selective secondary schools, a measure she states will increase social mobility. This claim could not be further from the truth.

Figures from Buckinghamshire, where all pupils are entered for the 11+ grammar school entry exam, show pupils are two and a half times more likely to pass if they went to a private school. The pass rate for pupils claiming free school meals is one eighth of the average.

Far from improving social mobility, reintroducing grammar schools will reinforce the disadvantages faced by children from poorer backgrounds. Resources will go to selective secondaries at the expense of comprehensives, instead of funding high-quality, well-rounded education for all.

Attacks

The Tories' attacks on education have shown they have no interest in improving the lives of the working class. The government has already removed the accountability of schools through academies and free schools, leading to employing unqualified teachers, bypassing nationally agreed pay and conditions, and cutting vital support staff.

As a trainee teacher, I have witnessed the difficulties teachers face, including the pressures of forced academisation, high workload and having to prepare pupils for increasingly exhausting exams. The true cost of the Conservatives' drive to marketise education was recently revealed by Channel 4's 'Dispatches' and the Observer. They exposed academy headteachers abusing public money by claiming lavish expenses.

Grammar schools, academies, private schools and free schools only further inequality and unaccountability. Instead of grammar schools, we need properly funded and staffed comprehensive schools which do not decide pupils' futures at the age of eleven.

No to new grammars

photo Teo Sze Lee/
Creative Commons

FRESH BANK CRASH LOOMS

Interest rate cut shows bosses are out of ideas



Northern Rock was the first UK bank to suffer a run in 150 years during the last financial crisis, which started in 2007
photo Dominic Alves/Creative Commons

Tom Baldwin

The banksters are at it again. Despite huge public anger at their role in the financial crisis of 2007-8 it seems no lessons have been learned. A new report warns that "we're sailing blindly into a second global financial crisis."

It comes from right-wing think-tank The Adam Smith Institute, yet pulls no punches in criticising the finance industry and its regulators. "The Bank of England is asleep at the wheel." Its 'stress tests', which supposedly ensure the strength of banks, are "worse than useless" and "disguise the chronic weakness of the UK banking system."

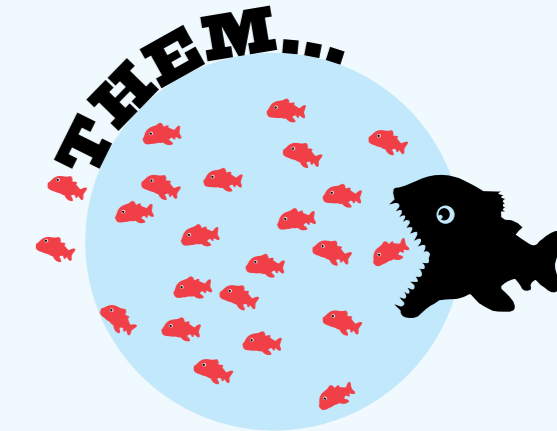
The Bank of England has cut interest rates to a historic low of 0.25%, aimed at stimulating a faltering economy.

However, the benefit of previous rate cuts and quantitative easing (QE) hasn't fully been felt in the real economy and certainly hasn't reached the pockets of ordinary people. In fact, it has helped fuel further speculation and inflate dangerous bubbles in the economy. Rock-bottom rates leave no room for manoeuvre when there is another crash.

The working class would suffer most if banks collapsed. The report warns of "beleaguered banksters begging for bailouts" and that "the taxpayer will be ripped off yet again - but bigger this time."

Despite the Tories claiming their austerity programme put Britain on the road to recovery, none of the underlying problems that caused the last crash have been solved. This would be impossible on the basis of capitalism. Financial gambling has grown as bosses seek ever greater profits.

Only socialist solutions can prevent a new crisis. That means the banks and big businesses that dominate the economy should be taken into public ownership and run democratically by workers and service users. Only then can the economy be made to serve the needs of society - and not a mad dash for profits by a wealthy few, regardless of the consequences.



Bosses' pay boost

Chief executives of elite 'FTSE 100' corporations have watched their pay rise by a third between 2010 and 2015. Meanwhile, workers' real wages have fallen by a tenth since 2007 (see story below left).

The same bosses took home 140 times as much as the average employee's pay, according to the High Pay Centre.

The average pay for chief execs was £5.5 million. That's enough to pay for 239 nurses. Each.

How do you think the Socialist would like to see that money spent? On 100 fat cats, or 23,900 nurses?

Hint: nurses and teachers have rarely been known to crash the economy. And in February, a BBC Freedom of Information request found 23,443 unfilled nursing vacancies in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

140x



FTSE 100 CEOs earn 140 times the average wage of their employees

£13bn

Estimated benefits that went unclaimed in 2015, according to the DWP

£18bn

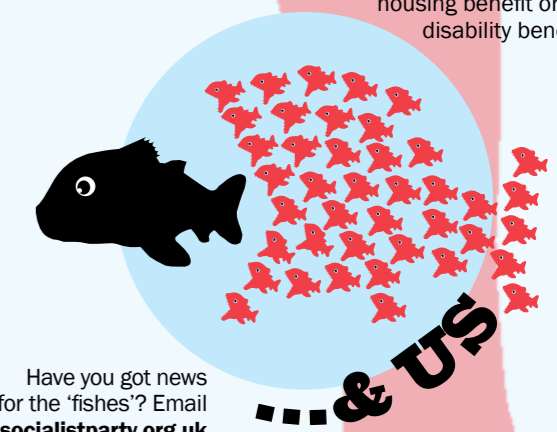
Estimated capital gains tax which will be dodged this year, says the NAO

Taxes v benefits

Super-rich property holders could cheat the Treasury out of £18 billion this financial year. Meanwhile, up to £13 billion of benefits went unclaimed last year.

A new National Audit Office report on capital gains tax says that due to the "complexity of the rules and lack of reporting requirements, there is scope for wide-scale misuse to go undetected." Perhaps reversing the cuts to tax inspectors might help?

And the Department for Work and Pensions reports that many entitled to state support did not manage to claim it. It estimated only half those eligible for jobseeker's allowance actually got hold of it. Only six in ten received pension credit, and eight in ten housing benefit or IS/ESA disability benefits.



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

Privatised medical record chaos

Nate James

Dozens of GP surgeries in England have had thousands of medical records appear late or not at all thanks to outsourcing giant Capita.

This is just the most recent evidence of the destructive effects of privatisation and austerity. Capita has had the contract to deliver medical records for less than a year. This kind of mistake would not be excusable for a publicly owned, non-profit service - let alone Capita, with pre-tax profits last year of £112 million.

A company profiting so hugely on people's sickness, but failing to deliver the service that is expected, will rightly anger health workers and service users alike. Members of doctors' union BMA are so concerned that their General Practitioner

Committee passed a vote of no confidence in outsourcing to Capita. BMA members have been leading the fight against Tory attacks on our NHS. Junior doctors have struck repeatedly against outright bullying from the likes of Health Secretary Jeremy Hunt and the rest of the Conservative government.

The resilience of health workers under attack - and their recent fight-back - is an inspiration. But these attacks are wearing them out. Poll after poll shows incredible levels of stress and exhaustion.

These vicious attacks on our health service need to stop now. Health unions must coordinate strike action and push for an early general election. Let's kick out these profiteers, and bring the NHS into public ownership under democratic workers' control.

FIGHT TO DEFEND HIV DRUG VICTORY

Michael Johnson
Socialist Party LGBT group

The recent High Court ruling that the NHS should fund anti-HIV 'pre-exposure prophylaxis' (PrEP) drugs (pictured) has been widely celebrated. However, NHS bosses have vowed to appeal.

PrEP is taken prior to sex by people who do not have HIV. An NHS study has shown it can reduce risk of HIV transfer by 86%. Diagnoses of HIV are increasing. Over 100,000 currently live with it in the UK. Access to this medication could have a hugely positive impact.

NHS bosses have claimed that funding PrEP would make it un-

able to fund treatments for other vulnerable groups, such as cataract surgery for older people. This is a cynical attempt to turn patients against each other over who is more 'deserving' of health care.

The NHS is struggling for funding. This is not a result of patients' needs, but of constant government attacks on funding, and private companies leaching money.

Newspapers such as the Daily Mail have proclaimed PrEP a "lifestyle drug" to let gay men be promiscuous. The National Union of Journalists and others have explained that, in fact, PrEP is a vital medication for anyone at risk from HIV, of any sexual orientation and activity level.

The bigoted and inaccurate views that HIV is a 'gay disease', and that gay diseases should have lower priority, killed hundreds of thousands before the end of the 1980s. We cannot allow that again.

The Socialist Party fights for:
 ■ Access to PrEP for free on the NHS
 ■ A fully funded NHS, publicly owned and free from profiteers, to meet the needs of all patients
 ■ An end to homophobia, transphobia, sexism, racism and all other forms of discrimination
 pic Jeffrey Beall/Creative Commons



UK wage drop as bad as Greece

Aaron Bailey

Workers in the UK have suffered the biggest fall in real wages among advanced capitalist countries, according to new analysis published by the Trade Union Congress (TUC). Meanwhile, bosses are cutting more jobs.

The analysis shows that between 2007 and 2015, real wages in the UK fell by 10.4%, a drop equalled only by Greece. The average among all OECD countries - most of the leading economies - was +6.7%.

In contrast, the UK's richest 1,000 families have more than doubled their wealth since 2009, rising by 112% to £547 billion. They now own more than the poorest 40% of British households combined.

-10.4%
 Fall in real wages in the UK since the 2007 financial crisis according to the TUC

And due to the majority of workers defying the bosses and voting to leave the capitalist EU, bosses have struck out at us.

Recruitment consultants say they have seen the number of full-time permanent posts drop rather than rise for the first time since 2009. The

cause? "Heightened uncertainty" surrounding the referendum.

I myself am a worker on the minimum wage who is forced to go above and beyond for my workplace while receiving little to no gratitude from my bosses.

All these situations show again that austerity measures are not delivering for workers like we were promised. The rich continue to get richer, while us workers continue to get poorer.

But this can be stopped. 2015 had the fewest days lost to strike action in ten years.

It's time for trade unions to turn that around and lead a fight for decent jobs and wages for all. Coordinated strikes against austerity and for a £10 an hour minimum wage would be a good start.

FAWLEY STRIKE DEFEATS 'RACE TO THE BOTTOM' EXPLOITATION OF MIGRANT WORKERS

Declan Clune

Southampton & South West Hampshire Trade Union Council secretary (personal capacity)

Striking Unite members working for contractors Nico at the massive Fawley refinery in Hampshire have won an important victory for trade unionists against the bosses' race to the bottom.

The strike was against contractors paying migrant workers from Bulgaria and Italy £48 for a ten-hour shift instead of the £125 union-agreed rate paid to British workers.

Unite regional officer Malcolm Bonnett said: "All the workers at

Nico will now be paid the same rate for the job. The 'pay parity' deal is backdated to September 2015. Unite will also be recognised for collective bargaining purposes by the employer. This is a victory for fairness in the workplace and pay parity. A combination of the solidarity of our members, support from other workers on the Fawley site and the media attention on this dispute all contributed to breaking the logjam with management."

These attacks by employers on trade union terms and conditions have been at the heart of the austerity drive to boost profits at the expense of workers across Europe. The attempt to drive down wages fuelled anger against the Tory government and the European Union,



RMT transport union members working for Southern Rail have taken five straight days of strike action 8-12 August against the introduction of driver-only operated trains. The RMT argue this is a threat to safety and 400 jobs could be lost. RMT members and passengers held protests on 9 August. The TSSA & Aslef unions are also planning to ballot for strike action alongside Southern. Jeremy Corbyn has stated during the latest Labour leadership election that taking Southern Rail into public ownership could be one option to settle the dispute. photo Rob Williams

reflected in the Leave vote in the EU referendum and the enthusiasm for Jeremy Corbyn and his stand against cuts and in defence of trade union rights.

This attack on the unions at Fawley has developed over recent years, coming to a head with the first official strike on 14 July for over 30

years. Pickets received strong support, with refinery workers joining the picket on their way to work and others offering to come out on unofficial strike.

This attack shows the enormous potential to cut across the bosses' attempts to cut wages and the racist attacks of right-wing politicians on

migrant workers. Like similar strikes elsewhere it is workers' unity in struggle that gets results and on this stand further victories must be organised to end the race to the bottom and start the climb to the top. As pickets told the Socialist: "There is no future for the next generation of young workers on £48 a day!"

Communication Workers Union backs Jeremy Corbyn

Lenny Shall

CWU member (personal capacity)

A special press conference organised by the Communication Workers Union (CWU) alongside Jeremy Corbyn, saw the union announce its official support for Jeremy in the Labour leadership election.

Before the press conference, a special political briefing by CWU general secretary Dave Ward on behalf of the union's executive committee was given to branch representatives, explaining the unanimous decision of the executive committee to continue

support for Corbyn.

Dave highlighted the significance of motion 47 from CWU conference that was passed, which "predicted the attacks" and the need for the union to do everything it could to organise to defend Corbyn against the right-wing Blairites. Motion 47 was moved and seconded by Socialist Party members at the conference in May.

The only opposition to the decision came from a small number of CWU branch officers in attendance, who were often the main speakers in opposition to any motions calling for an end to the union's blind support for New Labour before Jeremy

Corbyn was elected.

The scaremongering threats of a Labour split that were raised by the tiny number of Smith supporters were answered simply by one Socialist Party member: "Let the Blairites go and if they don't, mandatory re-selection is needed to kick them all out and the same with the cuts-making councillors."

Overhaul

The need for an overhaul in the democratic structures of the Labour Party and opening up to the wider workers' and socialist movement, and a return to a federal structure, was raised and received support.

HMY Radford shopfitters strike against penny-pinching company

Elaine Brunskill

Shopfitters from HMY Radford in Burnopfield, Tyneside, took three days of strike action from 3 August. This strike, alongside a 24-hour stoppage in July, is the first strike action at this factory for 33 years.

One of the strikers explained: "At the end of the day the dispute is about pay, conditions and fairness." Another said: "What we are asking for is pennies!"

The shopfitters had asked for a 33p an hour increase each year over

the next three years, which would take them to just below the living wage of £9 an hour which is to be introduced by 2020. The company flatly refused to do this.

Strikers also commented that their wages had already effectively been reduced by around £1,800 a year 18 months ago when their shift patterns were changed.

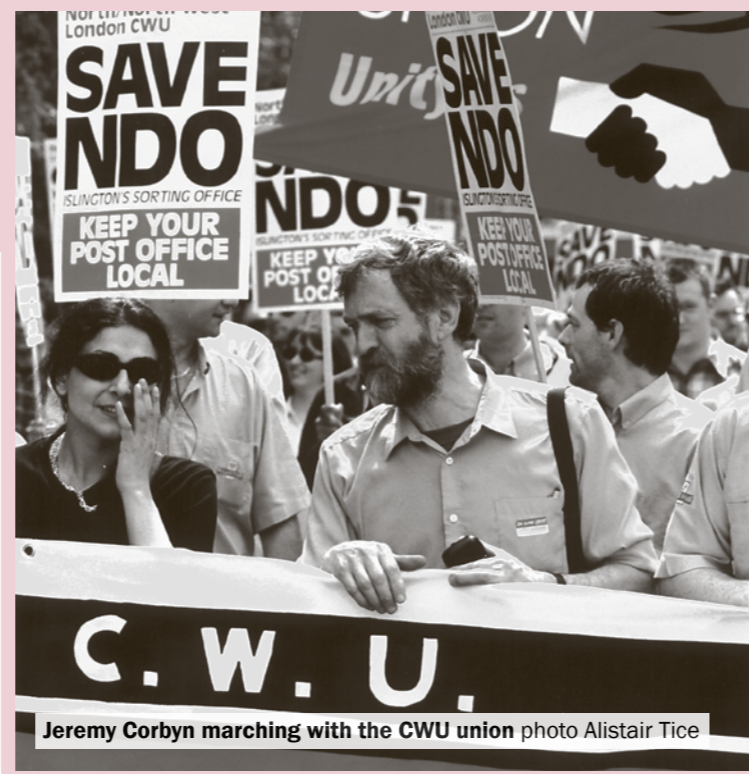
Workers told of the 'penny pinching' methods of the company, and how the managers "keep changing the rules to suit them." This year is a leap year, but workers were told they wouldn't be paid for the extra day as

they are salaried!

Strikers told us the company likes to make out that 'we're all in this together'; everyone at the factory wears the same uniform. However, when it comes to things like hospital appointments, office staff are given paid leave, whereas the shopfitters have to take the day off as a holiday or without pay.

The shopfitters are clearly angry, but also determined to fight for a decent pay rise and better working conditions.

Please send messages of support to 0778 772 5470.



Jeremy Corbyn marching with the CWU union photo Alistair Tice

SAMWORTH BROTHERS STEP UP BULLYING AND INTIMIDATION OF WORKERS

Michael Barker

Leicester Socialist Party

Trade unions like the bakers' union (BFAWU) exist to defend and extend the rights of workers.

This is why Samworth Brothers, one of Leicestershire's biggest food manufacturing companies,

is trying to bully their employees at Kettleby Foods into backing-down from their perfectly reasonable demands for collective bargaining rights.

Having unfairly dismissed Kumaran Bose, the one worker who helped recruit more than 50% of his fellow factory workers to the BFAWU, Samworth management have now stepped up the intimidation of their employees.

Drive a wedge

Workers are presently having to sit through management briefings where they are told that while it is their democratic right to join a union, to do so would be to act against the best interests of their employer by acting to "drive a wedge" between management and workers. In a further disgusting and bullying attack on workers, template letters are now being circulated by shop floor bosses to persuade suspected union

members to leave the union.

The form encourages employees to fill in the blank spaces on the letter, detailing when they joined the union, when they plan to leave the union, and to put their signature to a statement that says they "do not wish for BFAWU to be recognised at Kettleby Foods for the purposes of collective bargaining."

This intimidation is being further supplemented by a company petition, circulated by floor managers, calling for workers to disown BFAWU.

In a serious display of contempt for their employees, the petition has the names of all workers' printed on it already and workers are then asked by their line managers to sign it. If the workers don't sign they are invited into the manager's office to sign the petition!

In a bid to encourage the management to engage with their employees in a more democratic fashion, BFAWU has been forced to take its campaign to the streets to try to bring public pressure to bear upon this decidedly anti-union company.

On 30 July a protest was held in Leicester and other cities outside Marks and Spencer to encourage the public to boycott products sold there that are produced by Samworth Brothers.

Low paid cleaners in City of London declare strike victory

Rob Williams

NSSN chair, and Socialist Party executive member

The Socialist Party and the National Shop Stewards Network (NSSN) salute the victory of members of the United Voices of the World union after 58 days of indefinite strike action at 100 Wood Street in the City of London.

The main demand of the low-paid cleaners, who are mainly from Latin America, was for the London Living Wage, which was finally conceded after the 43rd strike day. But by that day, four workers had been made redundant by cleaning contractor Thames Cleaning which operates the cleaning contract for property firm CBRE. So one of the main outstanding demands of the then continuing indefinite strike was the reinstatement of the two remaining workers that still reside in the UK.

This has been a heroic struggle of a small group of migrant workers in one of the most affluent areas of one of the richest cities in the world. It has shone a light onto the class and wealth polarisation in modern-day capitalist London.

As the bankers and bond dealers make huge profits, they use offices and toilets cleaned by low-paid workers from every corner of the world, who have been up from the early hours of the morning and who are often also working another job to make ends meet.

The picket line actually meant that at 100 Wood Street at least, they had to walk past what are usually faceless workers!

Inspiration

The dispute has been an inspiration for trade unionists everywhere and has, in turn, received support all round the UK and internationally. At the typically lively and loud protest on 27 July to mark the 50th strike day, I read out a letter of support from the Athens bus cleaners who themselves had won a victory the previous week, aided by a global solidarity campaign.

The strikers had a rapturous reception at the NSSN annual conference on 2 July. It is a disgrace that it took another month for Thames and CBRE to settle the dispute but its successful resolution will be celebrated throughout the trade union movement.



photo Rob Williams



[News in brief]

South Wales NUM backs Corbyn

We are very pleased to learn that the South Wales NUM (National Union of Mineworkers) has come out in support of Jeremy Corbyn in the current Labour leadership contest. The NUM has a long history of working class struggle, with the South Wales NUM an example of combativity before, during and after the 1980s miners' strike.

It is therefore very important to hear that the South Wales NUM is supporting Jeremy Corbyn, especially when Pontypridd MP Owen Smith is from this region and with many Labour officials expressing support for him and trying to claim South Wales as favourable to him.

Joao Felix
Socialist Party Wales

Paul Reilly for RMT EC

Socialist Party member Paul Reilly, a branch secretary of the RMT transport workers' union in Nuneaton, is a candidate for the union's national executive committee to represent the Midlands region.

Network rail worker Paul was a Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC) candidate in Nuneaton at the 2015 general election and has been involved in the campaign to save City Link jobs last year and recently the campaign in support of Jeremy Corbyn. Paul moved the motion at the 2016 RMT conference to support Corbyn.

Follow the campaign at
facebook.com/ReillyRMTNEC

Like Paul Reilly for RMT National Executive Committee on Facebook



nationalshopstewardsnetwork

7th NSSN rally @ TUC
11 September 2016
'Cameron Gone - get the rest of the Tories Out!
We need to bring together all the struggles against the Tories
#KeepCorbyn

1pm
Ashdown Suite in the Holiday Inn, 137 King's Rd (seafrost), Brighton, BN1 2JF

shopstewards.net

GRUNWICK STRIKE 40 YEARS ON - LESSONS OF AN EPIC BATTLE

This month marks the 40th anniversary of the start of the two-year strike for union recognition and reinstatement at Grunwick's film processing factory in North London - which became a struggle of national importance.

Socialist Party member **Bob Labi** (a Greater London Labour Party executive member from 1971 to 1985), explains the rich lessons of the strike - particularly on how to react when legal restraints are used to weaken a struggle and the role migrant workers can play in spearheading struggle.

The Grunwick battle became the scene for a serious attempt by the ruling class to turn back the tide of trade union militancy which had come to dominate Britain in the early 1970s. It became a clearly political strike as Tory MPs and the right-wing 'National Association for Freedom' campaigned for the owners.

Grunwick became the scene of a concerted attack, using both the courts and police action, on the right to organise, strike and picket. Of course, in such a class struggle 'justice' wasn't neutral, as the company's clear illegalities, such as not filing company reports within the legal period, were ignored by the ruling class 'law and order' brigade.

One of the reasons for Grunwick's significance was that it was a strike for union recognition by largely migrant African and Asian women. At a time of increased racist and fascist attacks it was the first major strike by a mainly ethnic minority workforce (80% Asian and 10% Afro-Caribbean) and gathered huge support across the working class.

Attractiveness of unions

It showed the attractiveness of trade unions, with union membership growing and peaking at over 13 million in 1979. The Grunwick strike encouraged other workers, for instance in the film industry in Leicester and at Garners Steak House restaurant chain, to take up the struggle for union rights.

However, despite the trade unions' strength and the enormous backing this strike got from across the labour movement, it was ultimately defeated.

Significantly, notwithstanding taking place under a Labour government, the Grunwick strike saw determined police action to allow strike-breakers to go to work and the company to function. After the police's failure earlier in the 1970s to prevent mass picketing during the miners' strikes and the spontaneous picketing and demos when the 'Pentonville Five' dockers' leaders were jailed, a clear decision had been made that the police had to try to re-impose control on strikers.



Grunwick strikers on the picket line

“ Strikers were largely migrant African and Asian women

During this strike around 550 strikers and supporters were arrested, at that time the highest number detained in an industrial dispute since the 1926 general strike. The Grunwick struggle also saw the first deployment of a paramilitary police unit in a strike. Sections of the police developed a close relationship with the management; a former local police chief inspector became Grunwick's personnel manager.

It was against this background that the strike became a national trial of strength.

In that pre-digital age practically all cameras used film to shoot pictures which were then generally sent

to companies, usually via the post or chemist shops, which developed the film and printed the pictures. This is what Grunwick did.

Hence, a key question was stopping Grunwick physically receiving and sending mail. During the strike, calls were also made for the unions to cut off the electricity and water supplies to the Grunwick factories.

However, the Grunwick management secured legal bans on other trade unions taking solidarity action which, at the end of the day and despite rank-and-file support for action, most trade union leaders were not prepared to defy.

It did not help that when the work-

ers initially phoned the TUC to ask about joining a union they were advised to join the clerical union Apex. Apex was then led by some of the most right-wing elements in the trade union movement who increasingly tried to steer the dispute down the road of relying on Acas, the government's arbitration service, rather than decisive mass action.

Even so, the massive national support for the strike meant that the Apex leadership had to proceed cautiously. In March 1978 Apex asked the TUC to officially call for the blocking of essential services to Grunwick, confident that the TUC would turn the request down.

Grunwick also marked a turning point as many trade union leaders consciously sought to back away from the confrontation, often in the name of defending the then Labour government.

This included trying to rein in the willingness to ignore and defy anti-trade union legal rulings and police instructions which many workers, particularly coalminers and dockworkers, had shown in the epic battles of the early 1970s.

In this sense the ultimate defeat of the Grunwick strike was a small forerunner of how the mid-1980s struggles of both the miners and Liverpool city council, would also

“ The dismissal of workers attempting to organise was the spark for the struggle

be ultimately isolated and defeated due to refusal of the majority of trade union leaders to organise serious solidarity action.

Grunwick largely employed newly arrived migrant workers on low pay. The average weekly pay of its 440, largely female, workforce was £28, at a time when the UK national average was £72 and the average full-time wage for a female manual worker in London was £44.

While a previous attempt at organising the factory in 1973 was defeated, the dismissal of some workers in August 1976 was the spark that set off this determined struggle.

Initially, the strike set off with

great energy and confidence. In the first days of the dispute the sacked workers rejected Grunwick's offer of reinstatement if they dropped their demand for union recognition and, a few days later, all the 137 strikers were fired.

Now that the strike had become a clear challenge to the entire trade union movement, the question was posed of whether it could defend workers in small and medium sized companies.

The strike's significance was underlined by the support that the company had from Tory MPs. One of Thatcher's mentors and her future industry minister, Sir Keith Joseph, while speaking of "red fascism", highlighted Grunwick's national importance saying: "Grunwick could be all our tomorrows...it is a litmus test" and "a make-or-break point for British democracy".

The then postal workers union, the UPW, refused to cross picket lines and in November 1976 refused to allow the company to collect its mail from the sorting office. While attempting legal action the company made a limited retreat, saying it would talk to Acas and the UPW allowed it to once again collect its mail. Postal workers, particularly in the local sorting office and London generally, showed again and again that they were prepared to support the Grunwick strikers despite legal threats but this determination was not to be seen in the national UPW leadership.

As the strike continued the company took further legal action against picketing, which it lost, and to invalidate an Acas report recommending union recognition, which it ultimately won. At the same time Grunwick had moved to consolidate its hold over the remaining workers by giving some concessions including a 10% wage rise.

Mass picket

Against this background the spring of 1977 saw an increase in the number of workers' delegations joining the strikers' picket lines. Soon every morning there were trade unionists and others, including many members of the Labour Party Young Socialists led by supporters of Militant (the predecessor of the Socialist) on the picket lines.

In an attempt to get the strike over by its first anniversary, it was decided to try to repeat the success of the 'Battle of Saltley Gate', the turning point in the victorious 1972 miners' strikes when striking mineworkers were joined by thousands of Birmingham workers in a mass picket which shut down a key coke works. The idea was that a mass picket that totally closed the factory for at least one day would be a sufficient demonstration of strength to win the strike.

The strike committee called for a mass picket on 22 June and this became a national demonstration of solidarity with the strikers. On the day,



Miners march in solidarity with Grunwick strikers photo Militant

thousands turned up, particularly prominent were the large delegations of miners from the Kent, South Wales and especially Yorkshire coalfields. There were clashes with the police, and nearly 200 arrests, as attempts were made to stop strike-breakers and deliveries getting into the factory.

Such was the level of police violence that afterwards drivers at the private coach company used to bus police to the picket line said they would no longer transport police.

But after some hours, pressure from some union leaders led to the mass pickets being marched away and thereby the goal of being able to close the factory, even for one day, was lost.

This was followed by another national day of action in early July which attracted around 20,000 in support

of the strike. Further mass pickets were organised, one in November attracting 8,000 when 113 protesters were arrested and 243 were injured by the 4,000 police present. But the strike was becoming a stalemate which could only be broken if serious solidarity, secondary action was organised.

Increasingly however, the trade union leaders striving to limit solidarity action, whether by boycotts or mass picketing, hoped that somehow the then Labour government would give them a way out.

At the end of June the government set up a commission of inquiry under Lord Scarman and in return the pickets were called off in mid-July 1977. Two months later the Scarman Inquiry recommended reinstatement of the strikers but Grunwick refused to do this and the Apex leadership stepped up their futile hopes that Acas would provide a solution.

Wind down

The strikers' attempted to resist the move to wind down mass action and in November 1977 four members of the strike committee held a hunger strike outside Congress House, the TUC's headquarters. In response Apex suspended their strike pay for four weeks.

But when, in 1978, Acas said that it could do nothing more, the Apex leadership prepared to withdraw support from the strike. In this situation, after nearly two years of struggle, the workers' own strike committee decided in July that it would call off the strike.

At the end of the strike Militant reported that many strikers had drawn the conclusions that simply going through long legal proceedings is not the way to struggle and that if the trade unions' power had been brought to bear on the company, the strike could have been won.

This lesson is still true today - despite the many legal restrictions that have been imposed on trade unions since the 1980s, determined action and a refusal to allow workers in struggle to be isolated is the key to the victory.

Leeds Pride 2016

PRIDE MUST BE POLITICAL!



Socialist Party members at Leeds Pride 2016
 photo Iain Dalton

Maddy Steeds
 Leeds Socialist Party

Leeds Pride is the biggest free Pride event outside London and is an important place for the Socialist Party to show our support to the LGBTQ community. Our petitions called on the NHS to fund HIV preventative drug PrEP and were met with enthusiasm, particularly from people who currently take the drug but have to pay £400 for it.

We also had good discussions with people signing our petition, many of who saw that cuts to the NHS were part of the reasons PrEP is not being funded.

On the march itself we were met

with support from the trade unions and towards the end we set up an alternative stage to allow people the opportunity to talk about why they are marching and about the battles still facing the LGBTQ community.

Our stage was well received and we had some people come up and say a few words on the open mic (and in one case sing a song). It was good to see that a large number of people also agreed that Pride needs to be political.

Our intervention was important as we were the only group campaigning on an LGBTQ specific issue and highlighting that equality for the community is still far from won.

See page 4 for more on PrEP

Donate today!

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

- pay by card on 020 8988 8777 or socialistparty.org.uk/donate
- cheques payable to 'Socialist Party', PO Box 24697, London E11 1YD



Socialist Party Fighting Fund

	£ received	£ target	July to September 2016	Deadline 28 September 2016
Northern	542	750		72%
North West	1,464	2,100		70%
Yorkshire	1,878	3,300		57%
South West	905	1,800		50%
Wales	1,043	2,300		45%
Southern	589	1,600		37%
West Midlands	769	2,600		30%
East Midlands	380	1,850		21%
South East	111	750		15%
London	856	6,100		14%
Eastern	134	1,200		11%
Other	495	5,650		9%
TOTAL	9,170	30,000		31%

#KEEP CORBYN

Thousands of people have attended rallies and meetings in support of Jeremy Corbyn. A few are reported here, for more detail and further reports see socialistparty.org.uk



Bristol photo Matthew Carey

Wallasey

Hundreds of local Corbyn supporters met on 2 August to oppose the suspension of Wallasey Constituency Labour Party on the Wirral, Merseyside.

Wirral Socialist Party welcomed and attended the meeting, which should be the start of a mass fightback to deselect local MP Angela Eagle and the other Blairites.

Eagle had been invited to address the meeting or send a representative to do so. Instead she chose to attack the meeting in the media in advance, labelling the holding of a meeting as "bullying and intimidation".

The likes of Eagle aren't interested in the 'unity' of Labour or in reaching an agreement with the membership, but in defeating the Corbyn surge and driving out left activists.

The great majority of Corbyn supporters understand this and don't want compromises or retreats that will embolden the 'red Tories,' but a resolute struggle to defeat them and their cuts. A Socialist Party member calling for the deselection of all Blairite politicians received strong applause.

800 people have joined or rejoined Labour in Wallasey to support Corbyn, doubling the membership of the constituency. Yet on the basis of barefaced lies by a handful of rightwingers, local Labour has been banned from meeting indefinitely!

Wallasey CLP vice-chair Paul Davies rightly told the meeting, "they can stop Labour Party meetings but they can't stop us having meetings."

Cornwall

On 6 August around 2,000 people gathered at Heartlands in Pool for a rally in which Jeremy Corbyn was the main speaker. People travelled from all over Devon and Cornwall.

Understandably, Corbyn's calls for an end to austerity went down well in the

poorest county in England, where cuts have ravaged public services. Equally as popular was his policy of building more affordable social housing, stimulating the local economy by providing jobs for many out of work builders.

Although Jeremy Corbyn chose not to discuss the leadership election there were many in attendance who were asking for a strategy on how to get rid of the Blairites and many were keen to speak with us in the Socialist Party about this. Our calls for mandatory reselection of Labour candidates, democratising the Labour Party structures and opening the party out to all those who support Corbyn, including from other anti-austerity parties, were keenly taken up.

On the whole, we were very warmly received by the majority of those in attendance. However, some of the Momentum Cornwall leadership were determined to try to exclude us, as the police were asked to have us removed for having a stall. Nevertheless, we remained at the rally, with many Corbyn supporters defending our right to be there.

Over 60 bought the Socialist, and we had some excellent conversations with people who are keen for us to be involved in helping to defeat the Blairites and taking the fight to the Tories.

South Shields

Over 70 predominately working class people attended a packed and determined meeting at Harton and Westoe Miners Welfare in South Shields to defend socialism and democracy in the Labour Party.

The mood of the meeting was of determined opposition to the treacherous backstabbers of the Parliamentary Labour Party and full support for Jeremy Corbyn. Overwhelmingly, the meeting followed the lead given by the main

speaker, left wing-playwright Ed Waugh who called for Labour MPs to be subject to the 'right of recall'. Every reference to them being removed was greeted with a loud round of applause. As was the idea that Labour councillors should stop acting as agents of the Tories by implementing cuts.

There was a mood for unity but not with infiltrators representing the interests of the ruling class, they already have a party they can join - the Tory Party. But we want a unity of real socialists under the Labour Party banner. The idea, put from the floor, of allowing parties such as the Socialist Party to affiliate was very warmly received.

Bristol

Corbyn's tour of the UK continued in Bristol on 8 August. Around 2,000 supporters of the Labour leader packed out College Green in the centre of the city. Leila Ward, a young activist, spoke passionately about the struggles faced by young people. This included attempts to block under 18s from participating in the upcoming leadership election. Corbyn has a lot of support among young people, blocking their vote was a deliberate attempt to reduce his support at the ballot box. However, Leila revealed to the crowd that a high



Hull photo Michael Hurst

court judge had overruled the blocking of 130,000 young and newly joined members from voting. This was met by cheers, which were echoed again as the news broke that all six pro-Corbyn candidates nominated for Labour NEC positions had been elected. It was certainly a good day for the Labour leader's campaign.

The Socialist Party sold over 120 copies of the Socialist and our leaflets were gone before the rally had started.

Hull

The largest political rally Hull has seen in the last 20 years was held on 30 July, with over 3,000 people attending to show their support for Jeremy Corbyn. The city has seen a serious lack of investment for many years and has been hammered by austerity. This has resulted in a shrinking public sector, high unemployment and a lack of funding in front-line services. It was, therefore, with great anticipation that people waited for Corbyn. A politician that understands working class struggles and is putting forward an anti-austerity programme.

There was an upbeat and joyful atmosphere throughout the day. Solo artist Joe Solo had the crowd holding up their hands and singing "¡No Pasarán!" along to his ballad about a young working class lorry driver from Hull who volunteered for the International Brigade and fought the fascists in the Spanish Civil War.

Labour Party activists, MPs and trade unionists addressed the crowd, showing their support for Corbyn. A particularly passionate speech was given by Leeds MP Richard Burgon who fully supports Corbyn and his policies.

Notable by their absence were the three Hull MPs, Karl Turner, Alan Johnson and Diana Johnson, who were all part of the 172 MPs that backed a vote of no confidence in Corbyn. Corbyn first attended a local restaurant for lunch, where he met with members of Hull's Kurdish community, before making his way to the stage to rapturous applause.

The turnout in Hull was phenomenal and over 170 copies of the Socialist were sold. Leafletting at the event led to a very well attended public meeting on 1 August.

Michael Hirst

See more on Jeremy Corbyn and Labour on pages 2&3

#BlackLivesMatter

Hackney meeting 27 July photo Sarah Sachs-Eldridge



Magnus Dewsbury
 Southwark Socialist Party

"I shouldn't have to justify why my life is worth the same as that of my white neighbour," summed up a speaker to applause from the crowd of around 100 protesters. We were gathered for one of three concurrent Black Lives Matter demonstrations taking place across London on 6 August.

Southwark Unison assistant branch secretary and Socialist Party member April Ashley brought support from the union movement and laid bare the racial impact of austerity on the council workforce she represents and the community it serves.

Then we set off on the long march from Southwark Park to Downing

Street. The summer sun had people out on the streets, strolling, shopping, eating and drinking, and the young, lively demonstration won much support as it went, swelling its numbers along the way. Stopping at key road junctions on the route, there were sit down protests and extra-loud chants for maximum impact.

The Socialist Party lent its support and leaflets with ideas to take the movement forward were very well received. These called for democratic community control over police policy and hiring, as well as demands addressing immediate problems of low pay and poor housing, which disproportionately affect black and ethnic minority people. Fighting these problems is also needed to help cut across the roots of racism.

Hackney & Islington Socialist Party members

Over 60 people, mostly from the local black community, squeezed into a public meeting on 27 July to support and discuss the Black Lives Matter movement in the United States. The leading guest speaker was Ryan Watson, a Black Lives Matter activist in Chicago, and a member of Socialist Alternative - co-thinkers of the Socialist Party.

Ryan drew attention to the shocking fact that three people are shot dead every day on average by the US police. "We need millions in the street internationally saying that we won't take another police officer taking paid leave and then going back to work at the expense of a black or brown youth," said Ryan.

He graphically portrayed the discrimination and poverty faced by black and Hispanic working class people across the US, who make up over half the massive 2.3 million prison population - "even more than in the days of slavery," he commented.

He denounced the fact that "the system - capitalism - is not benefiting the 99% of us" and that inequality is worse than ever.

The solution, he urged, has to be through building support for socialist ideas, as his party Socialist Alternative is successfully doing, including in Seattle where it achieved the election of socialist councillor Kshama Sawant.

Also making a welcome speech from the platform was Socialist Party member Hugo Pierre, a trade unionist and member of Unison's national executive committee, speaking in a personal capacity.

Hugo spoke of the racism and police brutality regularly suffered by Black and Asian people in Britain, and highlighted the case of 21-year-old Colin Roach who died in 1983 from a gunshot wound inside Stoke Newington police station, close to where our meeting was taking place.

This is "your meeting" said chairperson Claire Laker-Mansfield to the audience at the start of the discussion. One of the contributors showed appreciation of that when she said: "I've never been to an event like this before, where you're able to express yourself".

The meeting was organised by Hackney and Islington Socialist Party with just four days of campaigning. The night's success could be measured by the number of discussions continuing in the room and on the street outside for over 40 minutes after the meeting ended.

Southwark protest 6 August photo James Ivens



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Socialist Party Summer Camp 2016

www.socialistparty.org.uk/summecamp/

steve.glennon@tesco.net



SANCTIONED!

A victim of government callousness

A job seeker sent the following account to the Socialist of his recent experience having his benefits withdrawn.



photo Helen Cobain/Creative Commons

I have been benefits sanctioned by the Department for Work and Pensions for four weeks, leaving me in a desperate situation. I do not know what I am going to do. I have no savings nor was I informed of this decision, so I had no time to prepare.

The absolute cherry on the top, however, is the attitude of my adviser, who claimed I must be living a "luxurious lifestyle" for receiving money from the state without putting in any work. This reveals a lack of compassion among some sections of society.

The reason for the sanction was a six-day lull in my job searching activities as logged in my compulsory online 'Universal Jobmatch' account. The decision maker determined I had not spent the required 35 hours looking for work each week.

I've previously completed a six-month work placement programme - working to keep receiving payment of jobseeker's allowance. I attended my work placement every day for those six months, making sure I jumped through all the hoops to avoid this very thing from happening.

As you come into the local job centre in Scunthorpe there are posters from the Ministry of Defence to your right, and on the left there are zero-hour contract jobs advertised.



I understand the system is to blame, not jobcentre workers, who I stand in solidarity with

The advisers are not there to help. They are there to determine whether you have done as you have been told. I understand the system is to blame, not jobcentre workers, who I stand in solidarity with.

I have sent a letter about what has happened to my local Labour MP, Nic Dakin - who previously abstained in a vote on the workfare bill - and I'm waiting for a reply. The next few weeks are going to be slightly less 'luxurious' than usual, but I know that with my comrades I shall get through this.



The Socialist Inbox

Do you have something to say?

Send your news, views and criticism in not more than 150 words to Socialist Postbox, PO Box 24697, London E11 1YD, or phone 020 8988 8771, email: editors@socialistparty.org.uk

Blairite bullies

I have been moved to write this letter after witnessing yet another vile and rabid attack against Jeremy Corbyn supporters.

The situation concerning the expulsion of six Militant supporters from Blackburn Labour Party in 1984 has been covered in previous issues of the Socialist newspaper.

However, these have featured predominantly the bureaucratic manoeuvres used against us. I wish to focus now on just some of the abuse and lies also deployed to discredit us by right-wing and even some soft-left Labour Party members.

We were falsely accused of theft and illegal activities, which two national newspapers and Jack Straw MP were forced later to retract. I was accused of violence, which again Jack Straw was forced to retract, ironically following an incident that had me being threatened by the party chairman with an axe!

I was also threatened to be shot in both kneecaps, my flat had a brick thrown through its window, and was later burgled of all my possessions. I was victim in my Labour Party ward of a lying whispering campaign to get people out to remove me from my local party executive positions. These lies included me being called a paedophile - I was an unemployed school teacher.

We were accused of extramarital affairs, illegal drug taking, and the local paper published inflammatory and distorted comments about us. Those Militant supporters lucky enough to be in work were spoken to by their bosses and made to feel their livelihoods were under threat. Worse than that, one young socialist attempted suicide due to all the pressure he was put under in this witch-hunt.

I could continue, but would conclude by saying this to those both inside and outside the Labour Party supporting Jeremy Corbyn: hold firmly to your socialist principles. Work in solidarity with others inside the labour movement - but be prepared for anything! Clearly the right-wing careerists in the

Labour Party can see the writing on the wall re their futures. With the prospect of reselection - a threat to their positions of power, prestige and income - and seeing radicalised new layers moving into action - these careerists will stop at nothing to tarnish and smear their opponents. Solidarity and courage are essential!

**Peter Harris
Blackburn**

Election selection

Now that Eagle had dropped out, Owen Smith is the only challenger to Jeremy Corbyn in the Labour leadership contest. It's interesting to see that three quarters of MPs elected in by-elections since Corbyn became leader have nominated Owen Smith for Labour leader. They are Rosena Allin-Khan, Jim McMahon and Chris Elmore. The other, Gill Furniss, voted against Corbyn in the Parliamentary Labour Party (PLP) no-confidence vote. While Harry Harpham - who Furniss replaced after his death - had backed Andy Burnham, all of the MPs the others replaced backed Corbyn in 2015. Of course Sadiq Khan, for example, didn't vote for Corbyn in the ensuing election.

This shows just how vital the question of the rank and file having control over the selection of MPs is.

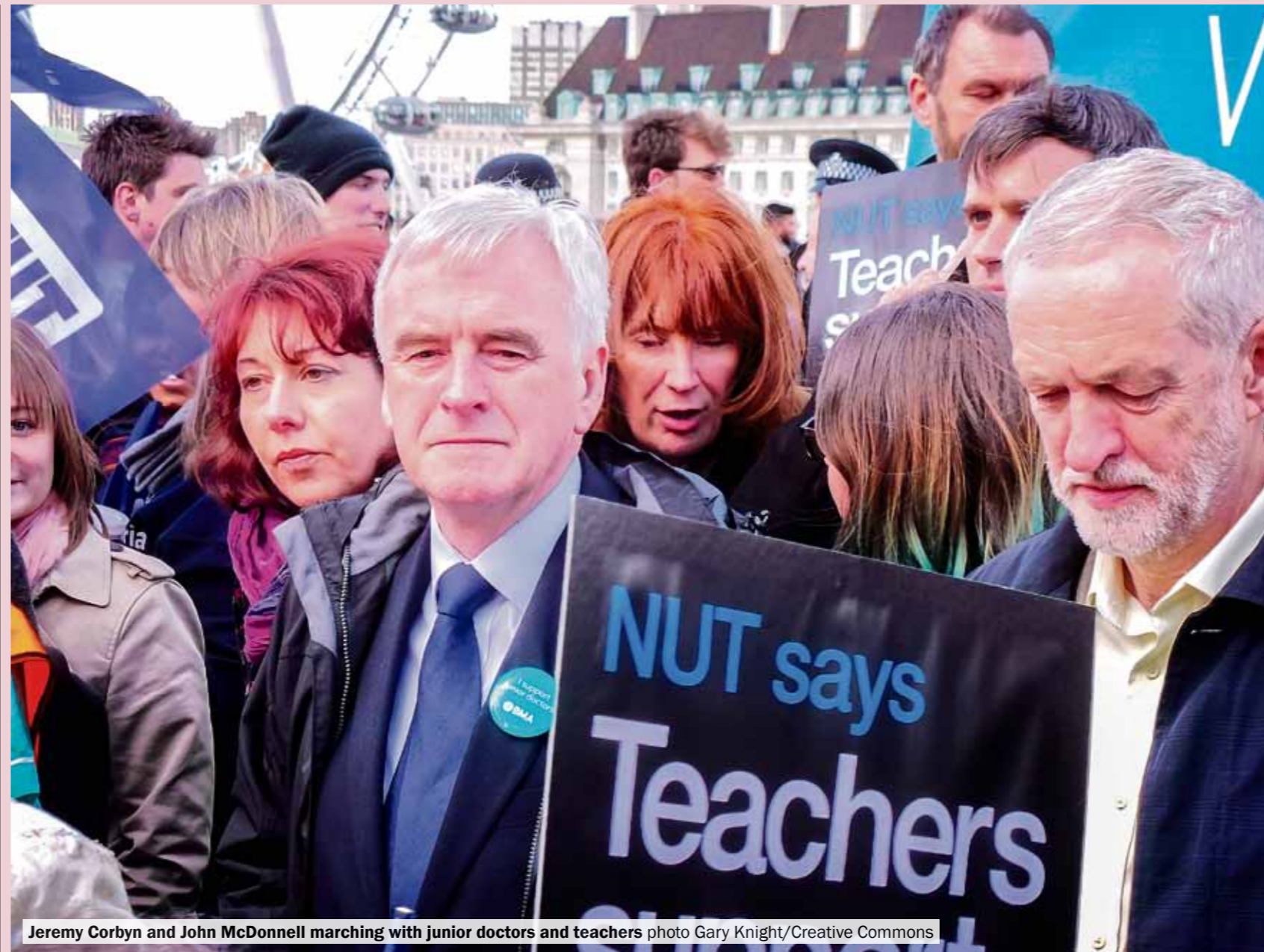
**Iain Dalton
Leeds**

Evil lesser evil

Owen Jones has demonstrated once again how little understanding he has of the social and political forces currently at work by calling for Sanders supporters to rally behind Hillary Clinton. This is in spite of the fact that the rise of Trump is directly tied to decades of successive neo-liberal regimes, of which Clinton is widely seen as one of the main representatives. Calling for people to vote for Clinton is calling for people to vote for the status quo. All the status quo has to offer is war, austerity, and human



photo Ultra7/Creative Commons



Jeremy Corbyn and John McDonnell marching with junior doctors and teachers photo Gary Knight/Creative Commons

suffering! Society, particularly in the US, is polarising right now, and this provides probably the best opportunity in history to break through the two-party system. Since Sanders has capitulated to the demands of the (un)Democratic Party, this means that the best course of action is now to provide critical support for Jill Stein from the Greens.

This is the position of Socialist Alternative - the Socialist Party's co-thinkers in the US.

People are looking for answers, and if the left fails to provide them then the right will fill the vacuum.

**Tom Barker
Leicester**

Owen goal

I just read an article on Owen Smith, about an interview he gave. This part upset me: "I'm glad you think I'm normal. I am normal. You know, I grew up in a normal household. I have a wife and three children. My wife is a primary school teacher."

These remarks are not only insulting to those married and unmarried couples without children, but also single parents, gay couples and single people - and also those trying for children and those waiting to adopt children.

My wife is also a teacher, and we were trying for children for years. We then went down the IVF route which was emotion-

ally and financially stressful. We failed, and now we are waiting to adopt, having passed all the tests.

How can this bloke be putting himself forward as a candidate to be leader of the Labour Party when he is so out of touch with modern society? I would expect those backward remarks from a Tory. How can he go on about an 'equal' and 'just' society when he comes out with remarks like that?

**Chris Fernandez
Leicester**

Fighting racism

After the EU referendum, reports from around the country pointed to a worrying spike in racist incidents. BBC London news (4 July) gave the figure of an average of 67 reported racist offenses in London per day, up 20% compared to before 23 June.

Some left Remainers point to this to attack the correctness of the left Leave campaign. In doing so they unfortunately highlight their refusal to learn the necessary lessons, not only of the rise of UKIP, but also how to combat racism generally. By succumbing to the creed of lesser evilism, and declining to take an independent class position, Corbyn, O'Grady et al failed to win over rightly sceptical workers, and left a vacuum which UKIP has been able to exploit.

But the pessimists ought not to despair. Rather they need to be spurred into ac-

tion. Opportunities are presenting themselves again, and the labour movement is capable of undermining racism - provided it breaks with the Blairites and takes up the fight for jobs, homes and services for all.

**Magnus Dewsbury
Southwark, south London**

Sleeping lions

In 1908, Ben Tillett - in his pamphlet 'Is the Parliamentary Labour Party a failure?' - put: "The House of Commons and the country, which respected and feared the Labour Party, are now fast approaching a condition of contempt towards its parliamentary representatives. The lion has no teeth or claws, and is losing his growl too."

**Mike
Southampton**

Zeroing in

The latest edition of the National Express company magazine included an article congratulating a young woman from Southampton who had successfully completed her work experience and had been awarded a zero-hour contract.

It doesn't matter how hard you work, you still can't be guaranteed a proper job with regular hours.

Unions should be campaigning for Britain to follow the example of New Zealand and ban zero-hour contracts. They also need to establish control over hiring and firing, and make sure flexible working is there for those who want it, but on workers' terms, not the bosses' terms.

A National Express employee

Corbyn carping

The attacks on Jeremy Corbyn seem to be getting more and more ridiculous. Only the other day, ITV News, on the subject of deselection of certain MPs, said that JC was like "a nasty boss sacking his workers."

Now if they want to go down that road, it is an implied term in any contract of employment that the mutual trust and confidence between employer and employee should not be damaged or destroyed.

Well, the Blairites are certainly guilty of this, so by ITV's logic it becomes the duty of JC to sack the lot of them.

**Jon Elvin
Hillingdon, west London**

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.



photo dgu163/Creative Commons

Food waste - the logic of capitalism

Iain Dalton

Figures that half of all food produced in the US is thrown away brings the question of the wastefulness of capitalism into sharp relief.

60 million tonnes of produce, worth \$160 billion, are thrown away each year. It's the single biggest category of waste sent to landfill and incinerators in the US.

But that is just what is thrown away upstream - by supermarkets and in homes. The report includes the suggestion from US food waste campaigns, that a fifth of all fruit and vegetables produced are wasted at source for not conforming to perfection standards.

In recent years in the UK, groups such as The Real Junk Food Project have established 'pay-as-you-fee' cafes. They take waste food that is still edible from supermarkets and serve cheap nutritious meals.

In some areas this has been a big help to those facing benefit

sanctions and the insecurity of zero-hour contracts. However, in Sheffield, even this group has been unable to cope with the amount of some food waste, recently suspending bread collections.

Public ownership

While these projects make a material difference to some people's lives, they also highlight that the wastefulness of capitalism can only be overcome by challenging the logic of the system.

The driving logic is profit, to the extent that 'loss-leaders' in supermarkets are worth it if they take other sales and so profits away from competitors.

Production and distribution must be taken out of the hands of capitalist profiteers by nationalising the key industries and big corporations under democratic workers' control and management. The food industry could then be integrated into a democratic plan of production based on the needs of society as a whole.



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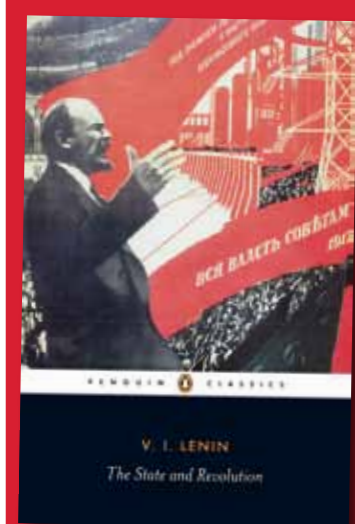


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What we stand for

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.

WORK AND INCOME

- Trade union struggle to increase the minimum wage to £10 an hour without exemptions as an immediate step towards a real living wage. For an annual increase in the minimum wage linked to average earnings.
- All workers, including part-timers, temps, casual and migrant workers to have trade union rates of pay, employment protection, and sickness and holiday rights from day one of employment.
- An immediate 50% increase in the state retirement pension, as a step towards a living pension.
- Reject 'workfare'. For the right to decent benefits, education, training, or a job, without compulsion.
- Scrap the anti-trade union laws! For fighting trade unions, democratically controlled by their members. Full-time union officials to be regularly elected and receive no more than a worker's wage. Support the National Shop Stewards Network.
- A maximum 35-hour week with no loss of pay.

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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Photos Paul Mattsson Inset: Community march uniting against austerity and police harassment

2011 RIOTS: AN OUTPOURING OF ANGER AT THE SYSTEM

Chris Newby

Five years on from the wave of riots that swept across cities in England, many of the underlying social problems are still there or have got worse. There is a real possibility of new upheavals breaking out today.

The initial riots in Tottenham, north London, were sparked following the police killing of Mark Duggan in Tottenham on 4 August 2011 and a community protest outside Tottenham police station.

These riots came out of a whole number of factors: poverty, inequality, police harassment, and anger at the rottenness of the political elite. Before the August events young people in the Tottenham area warned that the clo-

sure of the borough's youth clubs would lead to riots.

Tory ministers denied any link between poverty and a lack of opportunities to the disturbances. Instead they contemptuously referred to a 'feral underclass' of 'benefit scroungers'. This bile was repeated in the Sun which claimed that: "Thugs held in the August riots were part of a feckless criminal underclass - with one in eight on disability benefits."

Make an example

The criminal justice system was used to 'make an example' of convicted rioters. Three times as many offenders were jailed compared to those convicted of similar offences the year before and the average custodial sentence was four times longer. A college student was jailed for six months for stealing £3.50 worth of bottled water from Lidl.

Public service cuts and enduring poverty were not unique to Tottenham and the spreading of the riots was a reflection of that. They were not race riots but involved young people living in the inner cities from every ethnic background. Nevertheless, police racism was a major factor in sparking the riots.

The riots that broke out after the shooting of Mark Duggan represented a form of protest - a blind lashing out by young people facing attacks on every front.

While rioting expresses community frustration and rage, it is not an effective way of channelling that anger into a positive outcome. Often it is working class communities that suffer the consequences of riots, with burned out homes, local shops and businesses.

The Socialist Party, understanding the underlying reasons behind these riots, supported

the campaign initiated by Youth Fight for Jobs to stop the closure of youth clubs in Haringey. The Socialist Party also participated in the 3,000-strong unity demonstration from Hackney to Tottenham, which drew support from local trade unions and anti-cuts and community organisations.

Cuts

The demo's demands included: 'No cuts to public services! Investment into and regeneration of our communities, including housing, jobs, education and sports facilities; an independent community inquiry into policing methods in our boroughs, an end to discriminatory stop and search; and support for those affected by the rioting, including the immediate re-housing of people made homeless as well as grants for affected small businesses.'

We also consistently campaign

against cuts to public services and particularly call on Labour councils to defend public services and refuse to carry out the Tory cuts. The 2011 riots started in the London borough of Haringey, a Labour-run council then and now.

This council has consistently refused to stand up to government austerity and instead has implemented its spending cuts. This has meant that the situation in the borough, already at breaking point, is now even worse.

How has the situation changed from 2011? As the Socialist reported recently, black people are 37 times more likely to be stopped and searched by the police than white people.

UK police are disproportionately likely to kill black and Asian people in custody or shootings according to advocacy group, Inquest. Black workers face discrimination in their pay which is,

on average, 13% less than white workers. When you compare black graduates and white graduates pay, this figure reaches 25%.

Cuts and privatisation of public services is many times worse than 2011, highlighted by the new housing act which will dramatically increase the rents in social housing and widen the sell-off of social housing to include housing association properties (see back page).

Black Lives Matter

But there are several key differences to the situation that existed in 2011. The development of the Black Lives Matter movement in Britain that echoes the movement in the US has helped to bring together those angry at police racism, the lack of justice for families whose relatives have been killed by the police, and the injustices that the black community faces.

Many that have been drawn towards Black Lives Matter events and meetings have been open to discussing socialist ideas and coming to Socialist Party meetings.

The election of Jeremy Corbyn to the leadership of the Labour Party, while the battle for the Labour Party is far from finished, means that there is now a leader of one of the main political parties that opposes war, austerity and racism, and voices an alternative to the politics of big business.

While all the pressures and problems that existed in 2011 are still there and in many cases getting worse, the development of these movements over the last few years show that there is a possibility of turning this anger and frustration in a positive direction to challenge the capitalist system which creates this inequality.

AXE THE HOUSING ACT

■ NO TO RENT RISES

■ NO MORE PRIVATISATION

‘We can’t pay, we’ll organise and we’ll stay’

The housing crisis continues to deepen under this rotten Tory government. Many renters are now shelling out over half their net income to private landlords. But despite the acute shortage of affordable housing, Teresa May’s ministers are pursuing a vicious campaign against social housing tenants. This is on top of the Tories’ vindictive ‘bedroom tax’.

The 2016 Housing Act - along with extending the ‘right to buy’ to housing association homes, which will benefit private landlords - will force council and housing association tenants to pay market rents if their household income is over £30,000 a year (£40,000 in London). This ‘pay to stay’ will affect over 10% of tenants, forcing many into rent arrears with the dreadful prospect of eviction from their homes.

It is due to start in April 2017 but the government has still to publish the regulations. However, in advance of this, and despite Jeremy Corbyn’s opposition to ‘pay to stay’, Labour-run Greenwich council in south London has written to its 22,000 council and social housing tenants telling them it will be implementing this Tory measure.

One outraged tenant, who is also an active trade unionist, told the Socialist: “The local Labour dominated council, after years of attacking its own workforce with cuts, privatisation and low pay has now embarked on another phase of the capitalist, Tory plan to destroy the lives of working class people... What is needed now is for every worker and tenant to unite and fight back.”

And Greenwich tenants are fighting back under the slogan of ‘we can’t pay, we’ll organise and we’ll stay’. When the increases come through people should join a mass campaign of non-payment and resist moves to evict people from their homes. The campaign aims to mobilise local council and housing association tenants, alongside trade unionists, to fight for council housing in Greenwich with affordable rents.



photo Sarah Wrack

Public meeting
We won't move! Resist the Housing Act!
Saturday 20 August 12.30-2pm
180 Eltham High Street, Greenwich, London,
SE9 1BJ

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