

## #KeepCorbyn

# Kick out the Blairites

James Ivens

The establishment media, the fat-cat bosses, both wings of the Tories, and the Labour right have formed an axis. An axis against Corbyn's anti-austerity call.

It is plain that a mass party with a programme to make working class lives better could command ferocious support. It would also threaten the power and privilege of the super-rich 1%. The Corbyn movement's obvious electability has forced all competing establishment forces together against it.

The super-rich and their Tory reps fear how far a Corbyn-led Labour might go. Free education, a £10 an hour minimum wage and nationalised rail and energy could whet workers' appetites.

The Labour right tries intrigue after intrigue to oust Corbyn, stymie the new members, or throw Labour's general election chances.

Their man Owen Smith is a former big pharma lobbyist. He and his ilk share interests with the capitalists. They want to retire to boardrooms and consultancies like their Tory colleagues. There's no place for them in an anti-austerity Labour Party - let's get them out!

And the establishment's friends and hirelings in the press, from Express to Guardian, print smears and label him 'unelectable'. Phoney charges of 'racism' and 'intimidation' - made by cuts-happy warmongers trying to bully new members out of activity.

Still, thousands turn out for Corbyn in towns and cities previously untouched by mass rallies.

The establishment will never let up. Its media is there to defend the profit system. To get your regular antidote, the Socialist, visit [www.socialistparty.org.uk/subscribe](http://www.socialistparty.org.uk/subscribe).

But the only way to defend Corbyn - and defeat austerity once and for all - is to organise. A strong workers' party with a bold socialist programme can scatter establishment lies.

Corbyn's swelling support hints at this. Let's use it to force the right - inside and outside Labour - out of power.

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## Editorial of the Socialist, issue 913

# #KeepCorbyn: Answer right's attacks with firm socialist programme

It is no accident that as ballot papers were sent out in the crucial Labour leadership contest, London mayor Sadiq Khan chose this moment to openly join the long list of those to attack and vilify Jeremy Corbyn.

The Socialist Party warned from before Khan was elected that he would use his position not as a political victory for Labour but as a personal victory in opposition to the anti-austerity message of Jeremy Corbyn. Our objections were pushed aside by many on the left, including the leadership of pro-Corbyn group Momentum.

Only a day before this attack, Khan was allegedly committed to not 'interfere' in the contest. Such is the desperation of the Labour right and supporters of Owen Smith that they have exerted pressure on him to come out against Corbyn on allegedly electoralist grounds.

Khan wrote in the Observer that he would support Owen Smith because "Jeremy has already proved that he is unable to organise an effective team, and has failed to win the trust and respect of the British people." This from somebody who nominated Corbyn last time but didn't vote for him.

Nevertheless Jeremy Corbyn gave Khan full support in his own election campaign. Moreover he was elected on the coattails of the massive anti-austerity wave which was both reflected in the Jeremy Corbyn leadership campaign and given a big boost by its success. Khan came to power in London pledging, for example, far-reaching measures in favour of tenants. Yet when tenants threatened with eviction on the Butterfields estate in east London wrote to him asking for support, his office replied simply saying there is nothing he can do.

We warned the leadership of Momentum that its uncritical support for Khan in the London election would come back and bite it later. Khan had already demonstrated his support for the super-rich 1%, calling for more billionaires in London - a city that already has more billionaires than any other major city in the world.

Khan's is just the latest in a long line of attacks on Jeremy Corbyn. Heidi Alexander, who resigned as shadow health secretary in June, wrote in the Guardian: "I hated being a member of Jeremy's shadow cabinet - because it was entirely dysfunctional." Alexander's priorities were exposed when, while still in the shadow cabinet, she complained about Jeremy Corbyn and shadow chancellor John McDonnell appearing on picket lines to support striking junior doctors!

## **Trotskyists**

Deputy leader Tom Watson has launched an attack on alleged 'Trotskyist entryists', which Corbyn has correctly dismissed as nonsense. The real problem for Labour has not been entryism but exitism of hundreds of thousands of members and of five million former Labour voters who deserted the party during the catastrophic pro-capitalist years of Blairism.

But this attempt to repeat the methods of the right wing of the early 1980s has not worked because now they are identified with austerity and neoliberalism. This is in contrast to the Socialist Party and others, often leading the struggles against the consequences of these policies, including zero-hour contracts, poverty pay, and so on.

Moreover, we have been to the fore in gaining support for Jeremy Corbyn, especially through the trade unions. In Unite, it was a Socialist Party member who moved the successful motion at conference calling for mandatory reselection. In the Communication Workers' Union Socialist Party members successfully moved a motion calling for everything possible to be done to defend Corbyn and defeat the Blairites. In the PCS Socialist Party members have been to the fore, along with others, in maximising the support.

We've answered these attacks on Trotskyism by pointing out that Leon Trotsky, one of the leaders of the 1917 Russian Revolution, played a heroic role opposing Stalinist totalitarianism and fighting for workers' democracy. Also, adherents to his ideas - in particular in the Socialist Party and its predecessor Militant - led the heroic battle in Liverpool City Council in the 1980s, which defeated Thatcher, as well as the movement against the unfair Poll Tax which brought her down.

We have suggested that we be able to participate as an affiliated part of the movement, which has found more and more support. We call for the Socialist Party and others to be able to participate in an anti-austerity Labour Party on the same basis as the Cooperative Party does currently. It has been affiliated to Labour since 1927 as a separate entity supporting Labour from within the party. This proposal has been dismissed by the right wing as support for a 'party within a party.'

But lo and behold, the right themselves have now embraced this idea, although in a distorted form - not to push Labour to the left but to shore up the right. The Sunday Times reported: "Labour MPs will set up a new rebel group in parliament to co-ordinate mass defiance of Jeremy Corbyn's hard-left policies if he wins the leadership election." This group would supposedly have its own whip and aims to change the rules to elect the

shadow cabinet themselves. Evidently they don't mind a party within a party as long as it's one that can be used against Jeremy Corbyn and the anti-austerity movement.

Counter to what the right claim, Corbyn can win support not just from the wider labour movement but also in the broad electorate. They peddle the myth that he is unelectable. But in reality they and the capitalists bitterly oppose him precisely because he could win on an anti-austerity programme.

Right-wing social democracy is discredited everywhere - in France, Greece, Spain and in Germany where it now seems that the social democrats are agreeing to the raising of the retirement age to 69!

Despite all the mud slung at his campaign, Corbyn won the nominations of Constituency Labour Parties five to one.

## **Trade unions**

However, the right are determined to further undermine him and his supporters and to remove him if necessary. The leadership of the GMB trade union have justified their decision to support Owen Smith on the basis of a consultation in which several GMB members have complained they received no notification and so were unable to participate. The same was the case in the Usdaw shop workers' union, where the only vote was a phone ballot of the 16 members of the union's executive committee!

Even some of those union leaders who are officially supporting Corbyn can't resist striking a low blow at the same time. For instance, Dave Prentis, general secretary of Unison, referred to the Labour Party becoming "the nasty party" - an outrageous comparison between Corbyn's Labour and the Tory party. But it is Prentis and his witch-hunts of the left - particularly of four Socialist Party members who were accused and cleared of racism - not Corbyn supporters, who presents the 'nasty' face of anti-democratic bureaucracy.

The right want to limit the scale of the Corbyn victory, hoping that this will make it easier for them to continue undermining him afterwards. If they fail in this and Corbyn maintains a big majority, they hope against hope that the Tories will come to their rescue, like Thatcher in the 1980s. Tory MP Andrew Bridgen, who was quoted during the EU referendum campaign saying that he had no interest in stabbing Cameron in the back and would much rather stab him in the front, has revealed that the Labour right are desperate for an election and are pursuing a policy of 'electoral defeatism'. He has claimed that senior Labour politicians have approached him begging for the Tories to call a general election, which they then hope their own party would lose.

But again, the problem for them is that the idea Jeremy Corbyn and the left can't win is bogus. Corbyn has correctly said that Labour must appeal to former Tory voters. What's the best way to do that? With policies like democratic nationalisation of rail - which a big majority of the population, including many Tory voters, support.

The constant harassment and vilification in the media will cut no ice with the great majority voting in this election. The argument that Corbyn is not popular and that the Tories will exploit the 'lack of support' for him and his programme is wrong. So is the idea that splits in Labour will be a major factor in Corbyn's defeat. There are even bigger splits on the Tory side - over Brexit and its terms, for example. Ken Clarke has talked of 100 MPs wandering around in a daze.

The right, if they have a majority, always go for the jugular and seek to force the left out, including through expulsions. Unfortunately, even when it is clear they have the upper hand, the left don't act as firmly in standing up for our side and replacing these people with class fighters. The Labour Party needs mandatory reselection to transform the basis of its elected representatives. This is not just the case for MPs but also for local councillors - 1,000 who have signed a letter in support of Owen Smith. These are the people passing on Tory cuts at local level, as well as thousands of others who haven't signed. Corbyn must be consistently anti-cuts, including being prepared to replace these councillors.

The way to cement the Jeremy Corbyn campaign and guarantee victory is to come out clearly for a fighting socialist programme. His recent stand in relation to Nato, of arguing in opposition to the right who say they would automatically support Nato in any conflict, won wide support, particularly from young people.

He and his supporters must stand firm on this and on other key issues such as demands for free education and student grants, reintroducing EMA student payments, a mass programme of council house-building, rent controls and the democratic nationalisation of rail and the utilities. They must fight for mandatory reselection to ensure we have politicians who stand for and fight for these policies too. And they must link these immediate struggles to the need for socialist change.

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## **#KeepCorbyn**

# **Corbyn union nominations round-up and view from the workplace**

In the last fortnight, more trade unions have announced who they are backing in the Labour leadership contest. General union Unite and public sector union Unison have maintained their support for Jeremy Corbyn joining the bakers' union BFAWU, builders' union UCATT, the Communication Workers' Union and three others. While Community union has been joined by the general union the GMB, shop workers' union Usdaw and the Musicians' Union in endorsing Owen Smith in a joint letter to the Daily Mirror. Below are comments from members of some of the unions in response:

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## **Unison**

Many Unison members will be pleased that our union has officially backed Jeremy Corbyn for Labour leader. Jeremy is the only candidate, as was the case with the leadership election in 2015, who is fully supportive of the trade union movement and who is in line with the union's anti-austerity policies.

The immense support and enthusiasm that he receives from activists was witnessed at our annual conference in Brighton in June. When Jeremy spoke he got a huge standing ovation and was mobbed by supporters when he finished speaking - the fact that we have a Labour leader who is unashamedly pro-trade union is a big step forward!

However make no bones about it, there are plenty in our union who would have liked to have 'done a GMB' and supported Owen Smith. General secretary Dave Prentis made a statement on 12 August which talks of Labour becoming the 'nasty party' with many veiled attacks on the Corbyn campaign.

Prentis fears a Corbyn-type movement in Unison that could transform our union from top to bottom. Unison members would do well to remember that Prentis and his bureaucracy spent hundreds of thousands of pounds witch-hunting Socialist Party members in Unison in an unsuccessful attempt to 'get the Trots' - sound familiar to the Labour Party today?

The key issues for Unison members are first of all ensuring a Corbyn victory but then making sure we properly finish the job - no more compromise with right-wing Labour councillors cutting our jobs or Labour MPs who are happy to take our union donations but don't support union policies.

Importantly we need to discuss how exactly we can get the fairer society that Corbyn supports and many Unison members want to see - Socialist Party supporters in Unison believe that means breaking with the failed system of capitalism and introducing widespread public ownership of the banks and major industry.

Then we can truly put people before profit!

**Unison member in the West Midlands**

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## GMB

I was a delegate to the recent GMB conference in June. At the conference Jeremy Corbyn spoke and was given a rousing response by delegates.

In his speech at the same conference General Secretary Tim Roache gave his full support for Jeremy. He said that Jeremy was the democratically elected leader of the party and that the right wing in the party should support him and not attack him.

A recent poll of GMB members was conducted by email asking who was best to lead the party, this saw just 40,000 in a union of over 600,000 respond - with a majority in favour of Owen Smith. I didn't even get to vote despite receiving an email saying I would be able to.

This vote was conducted with no debate whatsoever, allowing the anti-Corbyn media to have free reign.

The letter signed by Tim to the Mirror now supporting Owen Smith says we need to be radical but we also need to be credible. Are Jeremy's policies of building 500,000 houses, calling for an end to zero-hour contracts, for public ownership of the railways and an end to privatisation in the health service not credible then?

Support for Owen Smith will not serve the interests of GMB or any other union members.

**GMB rep at JCB**

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## Usdaw

The fact that the leadership of the shop workers' union Usdaw, whose members are among the most low-paid in Britain, are supporting a candidate who calls for a minimum wage less than the union is committed to is bad enough.

The TUC and Usdaw are committed to campaigning for a £10 an hour minimum wage, the same as Jeremy Corbyn but Owen Smith only calls for a minimum wage of £8.25!

But that it was done with no consultation at all with the membership is even worse. A meeting of the leadership didn't even take place; the decision was reached by a phone ballot of the Usdaw executive council. Even so there are still a number of Corbyn supporters on the executive council, not to mention the majority of Usdaw's 440,000 membership. Corbyn received a thunderous reception at Usdaw's conference in April and has the overwhelming support of reps.

Over the past few years, Usdaw's conference has passed policies that are currently being put forward by Corbyn - a £10 an hour minimum wage, repeal of the anti-union laws, renationalisation of the railways and a mass council house building programme to name but a few.

Usdaw members have initiated an Usdaw4Corbyn campaign and will be campaigning for his victory, as well as campaigning for a fighting, democratic leadership of the union that reflects the views of its membership.

**Scott Jones, Chair, Usdaw East London retail branch C026 (personal capacity)**

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## Musicians' Union

I do not agree that the decision to back Owen Smith is necessarily for the good of musicians. Jeremy Corbyn's stance on the arts to me is very clear with instrumental lessons for all children, outreach art programmes etc.

He seems to me more and more the only person that isn't constantly conflicted by balancing business interests with those of the people.

**Ross Power, composer and Musicians' Union member**

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# **#KeepCorbyn: huge support at rallies and among Labour rank and file**

## **Harrogate**

"I'm not sure there's been anything like this in Harrogate before," were the introductory words used by Paul Whitmore, a Labour Party member involved in organising the Harrogate4Corbyn rally on 20 August.

Around 35 people turned out, predominantly Labour Party members who had been enthused by his policies.

Speakers included local anti-war activist Lindis Percy and Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND) chair Dave Webb. Dave commented on Corbyn's role in CND, particularly in opposing the renewal of Trident.

Labour Party member Rev David Wheeler talked about the hope that many people felt Jeremy Corbyn offered. He called for a progressive alliance, with Labour needing to unite with those working class forces who agreed with its anti-austerity policies such as the Socialist Party and the Communist Party.

Socialist Party member Iain Dalton was also one of the speakers, explaining why the right-wing MPs and media had decided to try to vilify 'revolutionaries' and 'Trotskyists' - he explained how Trotsky spoke of revolutions being mass movements of people, as we are seeing in support of Jeremy Corbyn.

Unfortunately, the organisers of the rally were put under extreme pressure to not allow Iain to speak, which we commend them for resisting. Two Owen Smith supporters did attend the rally, and loudly criticised Iain after he had finished speaking.

Socialist Party members provided practical help to the rally, including use of our PA system. We were welcomed by Labour Party members there, who instinctively saw the need to unite together in order to bring social change.

**Socialist Party reporters**

## **Derby**

To loud clapping and cheers in his introduction of Jeremy Corbyn, former Derby North Labour MP Chris Williamson said Corbyn was likely to be the first ever prime minister to have stood on a picket line.

Jeremy Corbyn addressed over 800 people at the lunchtime rally in Derby on 16 August. He spoke on many issues, from the NHS to Trident and zero-hour contracts. "Let's get rid of zero-hour contracts," he said. "It's very difficult to plan anything in your life if you don't know when you are going to work and how much you are going to get paid for it. We also need a decent £10 an hour living wage in this country."

He was cheered loudly on his every word by the crowd of all ages.

At the rally was a large contingent of teaching assistants, members of public sector union Unison. They highlighted their dispute with Derby's Labour-controlled city council. Many have lost hundreds of pounds a month after changes to their contracts imposed on them at the beginning of June.

They have already had a one-day strike and several lunchtime walkouts. They plan further strikes in September and October. Jeremy expressed his support for these workers in his speech.

Socialist Party members sold 90 copies of the Socialist.

**Charlie Taylor Derby Socialist Party**

## **Leyton and Wanstead**

On 12 August, Leyton and Wanstead CLP voted to back Corbyn by 94 to 33.

The meeting was so big we had to have an overspill meeting down the road. There weren't even enough Owen Smith supporters to fill their allotted time in the overspill venue. Socialist Party members showed support for Corbyn outside the meeting.

Addressing the room, one Owen Smith supporter asked: "Why were the Socialist Party allowed to leaflet our meeting?" Another Labour member answered: "It's a democratic right to give out leaflets on the pavement!"

**A Leyton and Wanstead Labour Party member**

## **Greenwich**

"It's great to see packed meetings discussing left-wing ideas" said Chris Clarke of rail union the TSSA, reflecting the excitement as around 80 people crammed in Progress Hall in Eltham for a Greenwich Momentum rally on 18 August.

Other speakers were Claudia Webbe, a councillor in Islington and newly elected to Labour's NEC and Danny Hoggan, branch secretary of Unite local government in Greenwich and a prominent member of the Socialist Party locally. The meeting was sponsored by Greenwich Unite.

Danny spoke about his union calling at its conference for mandatory reselection of MPs saying to loud applause: "It's not a god given right to have a job as an MP". He also spoke of the need for "a socialist party fighting for the people we represent and the class we come from". He also said that Labour councillors "need to use reserves, set needs budgets because the Tories are beatable."

Unfortunately this is not what Labour councillors have done, even those who support Corbyn. Webbe rightly pointed out that this "is not a political wake up call, this is a political revolution". This is not reflected in her approach in Islington where as a council cabinet member she has voted for a number of cuts.

She also spoke of the need for unity in the party and extending "the hand of friendship" to the right-wing after the leadership election. Unity with the same people who have been plotting against Corbyn for the last year is a fantasy.

In contrast to other Momentum meetings, in Greenwich people with differing political views, including the Socialist Party, have been welcomed.

**Paul Callanan Greenwich**

## **Walthamstow**

Jeremy Corbyn has won resounding backing from rank-and-file members in the Blairite-led Walthamstow Labour Party in east London.

309 people attended the recent nominating meeting to discuss which leadership candidate would win the endorsement of the Constituency Labour Party (CLP). Walthamstow had one of the biggest turnouts across the

country, and unsurprisingly, Corbyn was what attracted these numbers. 205 votes were cast in his favour, and the remaining 104 went to Owen Smith.

The Blairite leadership of Walthamstow CLP made every attempt to prevent this result. They were very clear at the start of the meeting that they would be following the ruling National Executive Committee's undemocratic rules for nomination meetings.

Only 30 minutes were allowed for discussion - five speakers for each candidate, speaking for three minutes each. Despite being the most important part of the meeting, the debate was the shortest section, and the only one kept to time!

But the right are completely unable to compete with the popularity of Corbyn's anti-austerity ideas, as was reflected throughout the meeting. Overwhelmingly, the speakers in favour of Corbyn were young, women, black or Asian, and all received sound applause from the rest of the meeting.

**A Walthamstow Labour Party member**

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## **Black footballer's taser death: stop police racism now**

**Hugo Pierre, Socialist Party black and Asian group**

Ex-footballer Dalian Atkinson was repeatedly tasered by police at his home in Telford, Shropshire on 15 August. He died from the incident an hour and a half later. The police claim that they were called to an incident following a "report of concern for the safety of an individual".

Atkinson is the 16th person to have died after being tasered by police since the weapon was first introduced in 2003. Taser use has increased as more police are issued with them. They do not have the same restrictions on their use as firearms, and the amount of training is usually three days.

Atkinson's death follows those of many other black people at the hands of police. Only in July, Mzee Mohammed was killed in police custody in Liverpool; last year Sheku Bayoh died of asphyxiation in Kircaldy, Scotland, following a brutal arrest. These are just some of the campaigns trying to get justice for victims of police brutality.

But many more black youth and workers face harassment. On the streets, black youths are several times more likely to be stopped and searched than white youths.

And in the same week as Atkinson's killing, a report from the Equality and Human Rights Commission showed racism and discrimination are still entrenched in the power structures of British society. Black children are three times more likely to be excluded in schools; black graduates earn 23% less than their white counterparts.

As well as fighting for democratic community control over police policy and hiring, we need to fight to end the capitalist system which profits from racist oppression. Socialism can guarantee jobs, homes and services for all, laying the basis for campaigning to eliminate racism once and for all.

### **Black Lives Matter**

Meanwhile, another murder of a black man at the hands of the police - Sylville Smith on 13 August - sparked angry demonstrations in Milwaukee, USA. Underlying the anger that erupted on the streets is the level of segregation and poverty in one of the poorest black communities in the United States.



The #BlackLivesMatter movement has sprung up throughout the US following the death of Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri.

Reports on the police force in Ferguson showed the commercialisation and privatisation of the police meant black people were criminalised to fund the service. Petty misdemeanours were punished with fines, and defaulting on those fines was followed up quickly with imprisonment.

Protest has spread throughout the US and is now being replicated in the UK and other parts of the world. The movement will continue to fight for justice for all victims of police brutality.

Importantly, big sections of the movement are increasingly moving beyond just campaigning against injustice. They are now moving onto the political plain, and starting to develop a programme of demands to tackle the blight of racism.

The civil rights movement of the 1950s, 60s and 70s was a titanic struggle. The involvement of the trade unions was an enormous boost.

But the best leaders were drawing conclusions that the fight against racism also had to be joined with the fight for something. The fight for a different society where the profit motive was not the driver, but instead cooperation and collaboration between workers of all races. A society where the 1% could no longer have the power to use divide-and-rule of racism to retain its wealth at the expense of the rest.

Today, we have the opportunity to fight for socialist ideas to build the Black Lives Matter movement to fight against racist division and for a socialist world.

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## **Pay still below pre-crisis levels**

**Becci Heagney**

There has been a lost decade for wage growth. Workers will have realised this, many getting pay freezes while the cost of living keeps on climbing up.

Figures released by the Office for National Statistics show the income of working households is down £400 a year on pre-2008 levels. The average hourly wage for both graduates and non-graduates fell by 20% between 2008 and 2013.

The forecast doesn't show much improvement, either. While inflation is still at historically low levels, it has increased and will continue to increase over the coming months. This will eat into wages, meaning we will feel the squeeze even more.

The pound is weak so imports are costing more. This hike in costs for the companies is being passed on to consumers. Food prices will rise. Railway companies are chomping at the bit to increase fares.

### **Rise**

We desperately need a pay rise! In response to the rise in inflation, the Trade Union Congress has called for an increase in government spending on infrastructure to help the economy. However, they have said nothing about their policy of a £10 an hour minimum wage.

Bosses are using the excuse of the Brexit vote and uncertainty in the market to keep wages down while prices rise. But we can't wait any longer!

We can't afford another lost decade. The rich have doubled their wealth while workers continue to suffer. We need to organise to fight for our share.

Capitalism and its representatives offer no way out - it's cuts and crisis forever. Recent successful strikes by low-paid workers show what is possible. We need this type of fightback across the board.

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## **Train fares to rise again - nationalise railways now!**

**Alex Gounelas**

Sick of getting into work feeling like a two-day-old used face wipe? Well soon you will have to pay an extra 1.9% for the privilege. Regulated rail fares will rise again next year in line with this year's 'RPI' inflation figures.

On the Birmingham to London line a season ticket will cost an extra £190 on all available routes.

While Southern Rail boss David Brown swans around with notes from his £2.16 million wage packet spilling out of his pocket, the rest of us have to jangle our coins and learn to live in a stranger's armpit on a daily basis.

The UK has the highest transport prices in Europe. Fares have increased at twice the rate of average wages since 2010 - 25% versus 12%, according to the TUC. At the same time, shareholders have had a 21% increase in their dividends. Meanwhile there are less ticket offices, major station understaffing, and driver-only trains.

The problem of fares, of course, goes hand in hand with the housing crisis, as workers have to travel ever longer commutes. For part-time workers, mainly women, it's even worse: season tickets are only cheaper if you commute - and earn - five or more days a week.

Jeremy Corbyn calls for nationalisation, which he estimates would take 10% off fares. This is welcome. But Jeremy needs to go further.

His plan is to take over firms as their franchises run out. We say nationalise immediately - and pay compensation to shareholders only on the basis of proven need. Nationalise the buses at the same time, and invest in a fully staffed and integrated, cheap, green public transport network.

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## **£500m on civil service redundancies in two years**

**A civil service worker**

Whitehall spent more than half a billion pounds on redundancy payments in two years, according to its own major departments' figures, recently published by the Telegraph.

The Tory paper is very specific in its outrage over who gets large government payouts. Its owners have been parasites on public funds for generations.

They raise a good point though. How many nurses, doctors, teachers or firefighters could be funded with the money spent on firing civil servants desperately required to carry out the basic functions of the state?

Just three people, a bunch of Whitehall apparatchiks Cameron called his 'advisors', received £1.3 million - before transferring straight to another department after his resignation. Meanwhile, around 90,000 workers have been laid off since 2010, with proposals for another 100,000 despite increasing workloads.

We demand an end to the contempt of the 1% for our public servants. Reverse all public service cuts and sell-offs.

When the ruling class agitates for an end to government profligacy, it means sacking workers without proper redundancy payments. In fact, bosses are already developing policy proposals to cut redundancy payments, despite having stated the budget is balanced following the pensions dispute of 2011.

When the government cuts funds from our public services, it's because we need to "pay down the deficit" or because "the last Labour government overspent". They dream of creating an emptied-out 'night-watchman state' that can only really exist in the fantasies of free marketeers like George Osborne and Sajid Javid.

In reality, public sector cuts are made to fund the next payout or tax cut for the super-rich. When the establishment righteously declares we need to be 'doing more for less', what it really means is that bosses should be getting more for less.

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## **Them & Us**

### **Duke of Westminster**

How do you get to be the fifth richest person in Britain? Hard work? Big ideas? Low cunning?

No. The answer is: inherit. The recent death of Gerald Cavendish Grosvenor, 6th Duke of Westminster, left his son Hugh with an estimated net worth of £9.35 billion (Sunday Times Rich List 2016).

That's more than the gross domestic product of Albania (£9.34 billion, IMF 2016 estimate). His grace's considerable estate dates back to 1677, and includes 300 acres of millionaires' stomping grounds in west London.

Still, at least austerity Britain's coffers can expect a hefty inheritance tax windfall. About £4 billion if estimates of the 7th duke's wealth are accurate.

But no! The Grosvenor family owns its extensive lands through a trust rather than individually. Trustees may die, but trusts cannot - so no pesky inheritance tax.

### **Landlord benefit**

Britain's private landlords collectively received £9.3 billion in tenants' housing benefit last year.

This figure has nearly doubled in a decade, says a report by social landlord umbrella the National Housing Federation. If all those private renters on housing benefit were in affordable homes, the bill would fall by £1.5 billion.

Nearly half of those claiming housing benefit are in work. This is nothing more than free money for big landlords and mortgage lenders, and a subsidy to poverty-pay employers.

The Socialist says: nationalise the land and take over empty properties, paying compensation only on the basis of proven need. No more free rides for super-rich landowners and property speculators. For rent caps and a mass programme of quality council house building.

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## **US presidential election**

### **Trump in trouble - political polarisation deepens**

**Tom Crean, Socialist Alternative (US co-thinkers of the Socialist Party)**

The presidential election campaign is heading into its final phase now that the Democratic and Republican conventions are over. The result was the anointing of the two most unpopular major party nominees in living memory, although Donald Trump is right now definitely winning the unpopularity competition.

Many workers, women, black people, Muslims and immigrants are legitimately afraid about what an unhinged Trump presidency would mean. But millions of people are also sickened by the choice at the top which is contributing to significant support for both left-leaning Jill Stein of the Greens and Gary Johnson of the right-wing Libertarians.

This presidential contest has witnessed an upheaval against the political establishment of both parties not seen in decades.

In particular there was the mass support for Bernie Sanders' call for a "political revolution against the billionaire class" - fuelled by pent-up anger at unprecedented inequality and the neoliberal attacks against working people over the past 30 years.

Such support showed the potential for a new political force representing the 99%, independent of corporate control.

Donald Trump's campaign, in a distorted way, has also channelled anti-establishment and working class anger but is using that to further a nationalist and racist, right-populist agenda, which is deeply hostile to the interests of working people and the oppressed.

## **Reactionary**

At the Republican National Convention, Trump focused on a "law and order" message playing on fears of racial strife and terrorism. But he also demagogically talked of standing up for the "forgotten men and women" in working class communities devastated by the loss of better-paid industrial jobs.

Since then he has come out in favour of changes to the tax code that would represent a further shift of wealth to the 0.01% showing how hollow the "I feel your pain" rhetoric really is.

The liberal media's frequently crude attempts to dismiss the white working class as one reactionary mass are fundamentally wrong.

For one thing a large section of the white working class rejects Trump, for various reasons or simply because they don't believe a billionaire blowhard actually has their interests at heart.

Many of the poorest white Americans are completely alienated from the political process and will not vote. And of those inclined to support Trump there is more than one motivation. Many are looking to punish the establishment, of which Hillary Clinton is such a consummate representative.

There is a reason why Bernie Sanders crushed Donald Trump in every poll for months and that is because a section of the people prepared to consider Trump, given a choice, would have opted for a clear pro-working class and anti-racist candidate. This shows the danger of trying to oppose right populism with a candidate of the status quo like Clinton.

There should be no illusion on this score: whether Trump wins or loses, a right-wing force is emerging in the US which can only be defeated by a mass movement of working people and the oppressed.

## **Establishment**

Significant sections of the ruling elite have their own reasons for going after Trump. First of all they are not happy with his 'isolationist' position in foreign affairs, including his opposition to trade deals or talk of pulling back from Nato commitments.

Secondly, they have concluded that Trump is incapable of 'pivoting' after the primaries to be more 'presidential'. They see his attacks on one group after another and his completely unscripted and undisciplined approach as potentially seriously damaging the presidency, further undermining the credibility of the political system. Their worry - not without reason - is that a President Trump could unleash civil unrest on a scale not seen since the 1960s and 70s.

As long as Clinton, clearly now the favoured candidate of Wall Street and the corporate elite, can keep the focus on him, her position strengthens. The danger for Hillary is if the focus returns to her. After the FBI report on her use of a private email server during her time as Secretary of State the polls showed her neck and neck with Trump.

Besides Clinton's "stop Trump" message she has also talked about inequality and reigning in Wall Street to appeal to Sanders supporters. But none of that is binding on the Democrats if they win. The ruling class would like a President Clinton who has made as few promises as possible but this is also a dangerous approach in dealing with Trump who is clearly prepared to make a lot of promises.

## **DNC walkout**

From the start of Bernie Sanders' historic campaign, Socialist Alternative argued that he should have run as an independent candidate. By accepting the framework of the rigged Democratic primary system, he set the stage for the betrayal of the 'political revolution'. In the end he tragically gave his fulsome endorsement to Hillary Clinton, who represents Walmart and Wall Street. But if Sanders was standing all the way to November's election there would be the potential for a left vote on a historical scale.

But despite the serious limitations of Sanders' campaign, millions got an education in how far the political system and particularly the Democratic establishment were prepared to go to prevent Sanders winning. Why? Because as a party which serves the interests of corporate America it is opposed to a pro-working class programme.

If the ruling elite seem distressed about the prospect of a President Trump, that is nothing compared to how they would have reacted to the prospect of a President Bernie.

Despite the efforts of the corporate media to keep the story under wraps, the Democratic convention in Philadelphia was the most contentious in 50 years.

The walkout of half or more of Sanders' delegates on the Tuesday night of the convention reflected the anger at the way the primary had been stacked against them which was all brought back by the Wikileaks data dump.

But it also reflected the disbelief at Hillary's choice of Tim Kaine, a supporter of bank deregulation, as a running mate all while talking about 'party unity'.

Socialist Alternative was proud to have played a role in helping to organise this walkout which was an affirmation of the political revolution. But even among those who walked out there was a clear differentiation between those who still believe the Democratic Party could be reformed into a party which represents the interest of the 99% and those who, like us, believe this is impossible and have decided to support Jill Stein as the best way to continue the political revolution in the November election.

## **Johnson and Stein**

Stein is now getting up to 5% in some polls while Johnson is polling near 10%. Both campaigns are feeding off the desire for more political choice than the dysfunctional two party system offers but they also point in fundamentally different directions.

We utterly reject the argument that a 'vote for Stein is a vote for Trump'. We fully recognise that millions who reject what Clinton represents will in the end hold their noses and vote for her to stop Trump. But we see the question of laying the ground for a new political force as primary.

40 years of neoliberal Democratic policies helped drive a big section of the working class into the arms of utter reactionaries. The solution to this is not to keep supporting those same Democrats but to build our own political party.

We must begin to prepare for the major social struggles that are going to be unleashed in the coming years.

In Seattle, Socialist Alternative member Kshama Sawant proved the effectiveness of independent politics by winning election and reelection as a council member, as well as winning the first local \$15 minimum wage in the country.

We also aim, alongside others, to continue to demonstrate in practice what a new independent politics based on determined struggle and directly challenging the corporate political establishment can achieve.

For more election articles see [www.socialistalternative.org](http://www.socialistalternative.org)

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## International news in brief

Short stories from other sections and co-thinkers of the Committee for a Workers' International, the global socialist organisation which the Socialist Party is affiliated to.

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### USA: Socialist Students launched

Student members of Socialist Alternative (US co-thinkers of the Socialist Party) have been to the forefront of key campaigns for fossil fuel divestment, against sexual assault on campus, the #MillionStudentMarch for free college last year, and Black Lives Matter on campuses.

As a result of these struggles Socialist Alternative is launching Socialist Students, a nationwide initiative to help build the socialist movement in schools and on campuses across the country.

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### Hong Kong: Multinational takes socialist to court

CWI member Sally Tang Mei-ching will appear in court on 1 September in a case brought by Hong Kong's scandal-prone transport and property corporation, MTR. She is charged with two offences that carry the maximum penalty of six month's imprisonment and a HK\$7,000 (£685) fine. This is a clearly a case of political persecution against a spokesperson for a well-known anti-big business and anti-establishment political organisation.

More at <http://chinaworker.info>

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### World Social Forum 2016

Tens of thousands of people gathered in Montreal, Quebec, for the 2016 World Social Forum (WSF), held between 9 and 14 August.

CWI members from Quebec, Canada, the US and several other countries were present throughout the event, holding a campaign stall and several meetings and workshops. Over 70 people participated in our first and very successful meeting, dedicated to the need for a political alternative to capitalism.

[www.socialistworld.net](http://www.socialistworld.net)

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## Readers respond to Trotskyist red scare smears by capitalist media

The renewed interest in socialist ideas has shaken cosy Westminster politicians, leading to fresh attacks on Militant, now the Socialist Party, and Trotskyism. Below, members of the Socialist Party defend our achievements against the lies and distortions of the capitalist media.

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## **Witch-hunter Watson**

**Right-wing Labour deputy leader Tom Watson has led the charge against Militant's principled socialist ideas and methods. Bob Labi exposed Watson's role in closing down the Militant-led Labour Party Young Socialists (LPYS) in the Guardian on 15 August.**

While it is true that in the mid-1960s Labour's youth movement massively declined (Guardian Letters, 12 August), the Labour Party Young Socialists grew dramatically in the 1970s and 1980s when it was led by supporters of Militant, who had become its leadership in 1970.

This revival came from a combination of increasing class struggle, radicalisation in society and serious campaigning. Soon nearly 2,000 young people were attending the LPYS's annual conferences. This growth continued and the LPYS reached a high point of 581 branches in 1985, the time of the miners' strike, youth protests against Thatcher etc.

However, the growing offensive against the left by the pro-capitalist wing of the Labour party inevitably had a damaging impact on the LPYS.

As it became clear that expulsions of individuals would not tame the LPYS, the Labour party right wing resorted to rule changes. In 1987 the LPYS's age limit was cut from 26 to 23 and most of its democratic structures were removed, with the result that by 1990 it only had 52 branches left, a reduction of 90% in five years.

Tom Watson, then the Labour Party's youth officer, presided over the LPYS's final liquidation and its replacement by 'Young Labour', an organisation without fully democratic structures and controlled by the party leadership. Watson's support now for limiting the franchise for Labour's leadership election shows his preference for top-down methods when he and his supporters cannot build grassroots support.

**Bob Labi, Editor of 'Left', the LPYS newspaper, 1971-77**

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## **Liverpool's legacy**

**Another favourite myth of the Labour right is that the Militant-led Liverpool Council was a disaster for the impoverished city. Tony Mulhearn, one of the councillors who took part in that struggle, replied in the Guardian on 16 August.**

John Hoggart (Guardian Letters, 15 August) believes Liverpool's Militant-led socialist council left a disastrous legacy and Thatcher had us on a string.

Is that why the Iron Lady conceded £60 million to the city - the only one to gain anything from that government? Is that why Liverpool became the object of a hysterical hate campaign against a single city by the forces of the establishment, similar to the current anti-Corbyn campaign, with Murdoch's Sun, Maxwell's Mirror and right-wing Labour leader Neil Kinnock spearheading the poisonous attack?

We built 5,000 new houses, six sports centres, cancelled thousands of redundancies, opened six new nursery schools, and created thousands of real jobs from which the youth benefited.

That's why demonstrations of up to 50,000 marched through the city in our support, and we received the largest council votes ever recorded. Some disaster! Some legacy!

As to Liverpool Labour's loss of control: that can be directly linked to Labour's policy of embracing Blairism with its appalling consequences for jobs and services. Take off your jaundiced spectacles, Mr Hoggart, and admit what a fighting Labour Party can achieve.

**Tony Mulhearn, Liverpool councillor and president of Liverpool Labour Party, 1980-85**

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## **Housing hypocrisy**

**Under the headline 'If Trotskyists are on the march there's chaos ahead', John Harris wrote in the Guardian on 12 August attacking Militant and the Socialist Party. Below, in a letter that editors declined to print, Linda Taaffe responds.**

In the run up to the London Assembly elections I took a call from a journalist about a piece on a local housing campaign.

Yes of course, do come along. Can we interview tenants? Sure, we can set up a street meeting and you can film. Your campaign is typical of what's going on around London. Yes it is, except these tenants are refusing to budge. That's not typical.

John Harris and crew duly came and did the business. At the time I spoke to him and there was a friendly exchange. At no time did he express any hostility. He even bought a copy of the Socialist.

Yet today, a few months later, we are treated to vitriolic denunciations of Socialist Party members! When he came face to face with activists doing the business of defending workers from being evicted he had nothing useful to add.

We Socialists will continue fighting alongside workers to defend homes, jobs and pay, and fight for a future for our young people. We are certainly on the march, as Harris's article is headlined.

But the chaos is here and now, and we are key fighters in getting through the chaos of capitalism to a more sensible place where we can plan for everyone's needs.

John Harris will forever be a mere commentator. Even his housing film turned out to be a rather bland piece and utterly forgettable.

**Linda Taaffe, Waltham Forest Socialist Party**

- The 'Butterfields Won't Budge' campaign has been running now since January. 50 families are still in their homes

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## **Would you call G4S for help over discrimination?**

**The Tories have handed the contract for the government's Equality Advisory and Support Service discrimination helpline to notorious privatisers G4S. Sue Powell takes a look at the outsourcers' record...**

Imagine the job description.

The Equality Advisory and Support Service helps people facing human rights issues or discrimination on the grounds of disability, race, gender and other forms of discrimination.

For example, supporting people denied housing or made redundant due to race, sexual orientation, age or disability. We seek a trustworthy, supportive and understanding manager to run our helpline at a time when



hate crime is increasing.

And now, the successful applicant's CV...

## G4S

- 1901 - Predecessor private security firm founded in Denmark.
- 1991 - Started running the UK's first privatised prison.
- 1998 - Began operating the UK's privatised children's prisons or 'secure training centres'.
- 2004 - A 'restrained' 15-year-old died in one of our prisons.
- 2007-10 - Claimed parking fines as business expenses to avoid £580,000 in corporation tax.
- 2010 - Unlawfully killed a father of five during deportation from UK. Our military wing was criticised by the US Senate's Armed Services Committee and the UN watchdog Global Policy Forum.
- 2012 - Senate and UN criticise us again.

Meanwhile, in Israel-Palestine, helped the Israeli state run several detention centres for Palestinians, and provided police HQ with security equipment. The Guardian reported that Cell 36 at al-Jalameh prison holds children.

Cashed in on Canada's asylum crackdown.

Part of the UK Olympics security fiasco.

- 2014 - Saw out a mass hunger strike of jailed Palestinians.

Investigated by the UK's Serious Fraud Office and criticised in parliament for charging for electronic tags on released and deceased offenders.

- 2014 - Sold our subsidiary which had been providing 'cleaning and facilities' services at Guantánamo Bay.

Found to use disciplinary techniques in our prisons including tipping a pregnant woman's wheelchair while holding her feet.

- 2015 - Had to sack at least six members of staff at a young offenders' facility after they attracted too much heat. Ofsted reported drug use while on duty, racism and humiliation of children.

Accused of torturing South African prisoners.

Our police control room made bogus 999 calls to hit targets.

Our patient transport service in Kent left a dialysis patient stranded for hours.

- 2016 - Lost our appeal over tax avoidance.

**Skills - Corner-cutting, over-charging, under-training, worker exploitation, negligence, racism, brutality.**

**Referees - UK government (estimated £4 billion of contracts by 2012), other governments looking to privatise anything all over the planet**

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## 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, phone 020 8988 8771 or email [editors@socialistparty.org.uk](mailto:editors@socialistparty.org.uk).

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.

Views of letter writers do not necessarily match those of the Socialist Party.

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## **SDP splitters**

I am old enough and grey enough to remember the formation of the Social Democratic Party (SDP) in the early 1980s. That too was to stop a left-wing Labour government from coming to power.

The quote I most remember from that period was from one of the SDP's founders. Shirley Williams (now a Lib Dem baroness) described socialists who favoured mandatory reselection of MPs, including supporters of Militant (forerunner of the Socialist Party), as "career assassins".

That's what behind today's foaming at the mouth of the right wing in Labour. They see a Corbyn-led Labour Party as an end to the perks, privileges, and comfy existence of their Westminster careers.

It has nothing to do with infiltration or splitting. It's all about self-interest. Same dirt, new wrappings.

**Clive Walder, Birmingham**

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## **No nukes - no wars**

The parliamentary vote in favour of the warmongers dream to renew the Trident nuclear weapons system was not just pointless, but represents a colossal waste of tens of billions of pounds.

This money would be better spent on the diversification of the jobs of the thousands of highly skilled engineers whose work currently relies upon Trident.

Perhaps surprisingly, Leicester East Labour MP Keith Vaz voted alongside Corbyn in opposing Trident. But Vaz is no peace activist. Earlier in the year he justified his support for the bombing of Syria, by relating it to his support for the ongoing Saudi air-strikes in Yemen.

**Mike Barker, Leicester**

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## **Brexit's bully bosses**

British capitalists are already saying because of Brexit they may not be able to commit to former chancellor Osborne's future 'living wage' increases, or sustain an already weak set of employment laws - while taking away every possible right for workers to try and defend their terms and conditions. Apparently, this is due to us now having to compete with low wage economies such as Bangladesh, Vietnam and China to name a few.

All this and more while a bunch of careerist parliamentary Labour Party politicians, silently supported by some careerist trade union officials, are hell bent on saving their unearned extremely generous terms and conditions.

Workers created the trade unions and supported the formation of Labour - what they thought at the time a political party of their own. We will not continue to standby while these careerists greedily feed at the table of British capitalism at our expense.

## **Mammoth pay**

I read in the news that woolly mammoths only died out 5-6,000 years ago. In the same paper it says some bloke has signed to play football for Man United for about £100 million.

Now, I hustle around seven days a week as a taxi driver to make maybe £500. So at this rate it will take me 4,000 years to make that much.

Add on his wages and "woolly mammoths may walk the earth again" before I get there!

**Chris Parry, Bristol**

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## **PLP panic**

First the Blairites changed the whole voting system to take what little was left out of the hands of activists in the Labour Party and the trade unions.

Then, to their horror, hundreds of thousands of the electorate paid up to vote for someone advocating left-wing policies - like reversing the privatisation of the NHS, and nationalising the energy companies, railways and steel; protecting workers' rights, building affordable homes, stopping wasting money on nuclear weapons and war.

After Jeremy got elected, hundreds of thousands more joined and continued to join. Panic at Westminster.

There was no point in forcing a leadership election; Corbyn was simply too popular. With unbelievable arrogance and total disregard for their own members, nine months after a massive mandate, 172 MPs went for a vote of no confidence.

Jeremy had too much respect for the membership to take notice of them and he refused to resign. Panic, panic, panic!

Change the rules again, and take the vote from anyone who'd joined in the previous six months - unless they pay an extra £25. Then set a narrow 48-hour window for the £25 to be paid.

183,000 actually paid in 48 hours - incredible! Then some cheeky disenfranchised supporters, raising the cost through crowd funding, challenged losing their vote through the courts, and won. Then, using members' money, the Blairites appealed this at a cost of £80,000 - now passed onto those members who dared to insist on their democratic rights through the courts.

Enough is enough!

**Mary Jackson, Doncaster**

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## **Striking driver talks to the Socialist**

# **Deliveroo strike action forces bosses to back down**

The six-day strike by Deliveroo drivers in London, organised by the IWGB union, has forced the bosses to back down and won concessions.

Following negotiations with a delegation of drivers, Deliveroo management scrapped the new contract they were trying to impose.

Other concessions include: a promise of no victimisation of strikers, a trial of a new pay structure in the area affected, negotiations afterwards, and any driver who doesn't want to take part can move to a new area of their choice and keep the same hours.

The trial pay model will see workers get £3.75 per delivery, in contrast to the current £7 per hour, with an additional £1 per delivery.

The decision by Deliveroo not to force workers to take part in the trial is a victory for collective action and trade union organisation and is particularly significant coming as it does in the so called 'gig economy'.

#### **A Deliveroo striker spoke to the Socialist:**

"When I started working for Deliveroo I didn't think this would be possible, but by fighting together and standing firm we have stopped the worst of the new contract and made our voices heard.

"We work in all weathers and risk our lives dashing around the streets of London and by scrapping the hourly rate as the company wants to, we would all earn less.

"Being paid for each delivery doesn't take into account all the waiting around and the inconsistency in deliveries.

"It would be like being on a zero-hour contract but my rent is the same each month, some drivers have kids, food is the same price, we can't afford our pay to vary every week.

"Technically we are self-employed, even though this only works for the company, but this shows even we can take action and act as one.

"The protest we held outside the offices on the first day of the strike was brilliant, it forced the top managers to come out and speak to us. And we'd like to thank everyone who came down to offer us support. I'm still amazed by how much publicity this strike has got!"

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## **Junior doctors set for further strike action**

### **Jon Dale**

Most junior doctors have moved to new posts this month but their contract dispute continues.

58% voted to reject the latest Department of Health 'offer' In July. No talks or revised offer have been forthcoming since.

A new survey reveals the impact of dangerous staff shortages. Rota gaps leave junior doctors covering too many patients, often in areas beyond their experience - and 21% of rota gaps were not covered by any doctor, even a temporary locum.

"We don't have time to review patients properly. [I am] constantly fighting fires covering three people's jobs, so never have time to think about a patient properly," one doctor told the survey.

The government's 'seven-day working', if implemented, would mean more admissions at weekends for routine treatments when there aren't enough staff covering emergencies.

Applications to medical school have fallen - from 17,140 in 2014 to 14,820 for courses starting this autumn. In five years the shortage of doctors will be even worse.

A programme of escalating 24-hour and 48-hour junior doctor strikes is needed, co-ordinated with teachers, university lecturers, rail workers and other disputes.

## **Call on the TUC**

The junior doctors' union the BMA should organise a national demonstration to defend the NHS, calling on the TUC and other unions to help build this into a massive rejection of unending cuts and privatisation.

Unite the Union's policy is to "call on other health unions and the TUC to co-ordinate widespread joint industrial action of health and other workers alongside any group of health workers under attack, as the junior doctors have been. Groups of health workers must not be left to fight alone, bearing in mind the needs of patients' care."

This policy must be turned into action.

## **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 (seafront), Brighton, BN1 2JF

### **Speakers include:**

Labour shadow chancellor John McDonnell, PCS President Janice Godrich, BFAWU general secretary Ronnie Draper, POA general secretary Steve Gillan and a speaker from the RMT

[www.shopstewards.net](http://www.shopstewards.net)

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## **A day in the life of a call centre worker**

**"I am on a zero-hour contract with the promise of 16 hours if I am good"**

**Steve Jones, Nuneaton**

"Save the... save the... save the nhs!" I chanted on the last march in London. Now here I am working in a call centre for a profit-making company that delivers care to people in their homes. I am on a zero-hour contract but with the promise of 16 hours if I am good.

I manage carers who have to drive between their clients without pay for travel time. I also have to persuade such carers over the phone in the early hours to take on more work to cover others who are off sick. I am wondering - apart from needing to pay my rent and bills - what I am doing here.

Within a short time of me working at the call centre, there was a clear example of this exploitation. A client, Tom, asked for the carer of the day to call his phone and then Tom would open his door to let the carer in.

When the carer, Winnie, arrived and phoned Tom, there was no answer. I was still learning the job so called over a manager who instructed me to tell her to move on to the next appointment so that she wouldn't be late.

I was asked to call another carer, James, to see if he could try to visit Tom. I know James, we were both on the same induction training (training that I was paid for attending while James was not).

It was only 7.30am and James' first appointment wasn't for an hour. But he agreed to get up early and make the extra call. When he arrived, he reported again that Tom was not answering the phone. So just as with Winnie I thanked James and told him to move on to his next client.

It is then that James asked me, "will I get paid for this?" The manager sitting next to me heard and told me that the company won't pay for any care not delivered - don't tell him that though, she said.

I pointed out how unfair this was but was just again told that it was company policy. I even considered sending James some of my own limited cash and checking up on him to see if he pursued the matter and managed to get what was owed to him.

Instead I emailed my notice to leave the job.

We have to fight to ensure carers - in the main very low paid women - are paid travel time, fuel rates and for training. They shouldn't have to pay for their own criminal record checks. They shouldn't lose out on pay if they are sent to see a client who isn't in or refuses to see them.

And we have to fight for a fully integrated, publically owned and democratically run system of health and social care to meet the needs of all patients and workers.

All names and identifying details have been changed to protect the privacy of individuals.

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## **Workplace news in brief**

Short reports on some of the latest trade union struggles.

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### **Lights, camera, action!**

Members of Bectu, the entertainment technicians' union, who work at the Ritzy cinema in Brixton, are balloting for strike action over pay. Workers at the cinema have been engaged in a long campaign to win the London Living Wage of £9.40 an hour. But Picturehouse Cinemas have rejected the claim and refused to negotiate with the union and rejected the chance for talks at Acas.

The current minimum rate at the Ritzy is £8.80. Bectu's assistant general secretary, Luke Crawley, said: "Bectu has tried to talk to Picturehouse Ltd but the company are being very hard faced in ignoring our pay claim. Union members at The Ritzy have shown how strong they can be when working together."

In 2014 Bectu members fought a long and successful campaign (including 13 strikes) in pursuit of the London Living Wage as defined by the Living Wage Foundation. The current ballot closes on 30 August.

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### **Blairite crush**

John McTernan, the political strategist who masterminded massive defeats for the Labour Party in the 2016 Australian general election and in Scotland at the 2015 general election, has claimed to know what voters want with regards to the rail unions.

Writing in the Telegraph McTernan, allegedly a Labour Party man, urges the Tories to crush the rail unions once and for all. He says: "Where are the core Tory values? Where is the support for management's right to manage?"

Before wiping out Labour in two different elections McTernan worked for Tony Blair and Gordon Brown. So a Blairite through and through calling for crushing working class people and implementing Tory values and of course opposing Jeremy Corbyn.

Voters in the Labour leadership election will decide between Blairite Owen Smith and supporter of rail workers and nationalisation Corbyn. Will it be another crushing defeat for the Blairites?

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# Save our NHS!

## Stop cuts and privatisation

- Workers and patients must fight back together

**Zoë Brunswick, medical student, Manchester**

The founding of the NHS almost 70 years ago is one of the greatest achievements of the British working class. Determined that they would not go back to the pre-war years of poverty, illness and hunger, ordinary people voted in a Labour government on its most radical, socialist programme yet.

Driven by the anger and determination of the working class, this Labour government oversaw the birth of one of the world's first national health services.

But today the NHS is in crisis. Beginning under the Margaret Thatcher governments of the 1980s, the NHS has been hit by decades of worsening privatisation and attacks. Now, even the mainstream media can no longer hide the continuous, vicious cuts that this government is making to our health service.

Ward and hospital closures - in particular of A&E departments - are becoming a more common occurrence.

The past few months in Greater Manchester alone have seen the decision to downgrade six out of ten large hospitals, close Chorley A&E and shut down two wards at Stepping Hill.

Not only has this put hundreds of jobs at stake, but patients in critical conditions will now have to travel further to receive the urgent care they need.

NHS staff have also been under brutal attack, with NHS-wide pay freezes and the battle over the new junior doctor contract, which threatens more hours for lower pay and impacts particularly on women.

## Bursaries

Perhaps most shockingly, the government has now decided to scrap the NHS bursary for nursing and allied health professional students. Student nurses are seen as nursing staff. They are even included in the staffing numbers in order to ensure there is a 'safe' level of staff per patient.

With the scrapping of the bursary, student nurses will now be paying to work. The media has already reported that some student nurses rely on food banks to survive while training and now this issue is set to become much worse.

We will see a decrease in the number of student nurses, further exacerbating the already severe staffing shortage throughout the NHS.

This can also be seen among doctors - in some areas there are reported rota gaps of five or six doctors in each department. These gaps are either left, putting patients in danger, or filled by expensive locum doctors, exacerbating chronic financial problems.

Labelled by the Tory government as "over budget," the NHS is actually chronically underfunded and understaffed. Out of all 27 EU countries, only Slovenia, Romania and Poland have fewer doctors per head than the UK. With medical school applications falling this is unlikely to change.

These vicious cuts to the NHS are part of this government's plan to sell off the NHS to private companies. Already, four community hospitals in North Kent have been sold off to Virgin Care, part of Richard Branson's multi-billion pound network of private companies.

This is particularly worrying as not only do private companies pay their workers a pittance, but they also cut corners to make profit, putting patients in danger. Hospitals with private cleaning firms are linked with higher rates of infection, including MRSA.

It is clear that we must take action now to defend our NHS, but what can be done?

## **Workers' action**

The junior doctors have proven the effectiveness of a clear programme of industrial action. The series of strikes earlier this year shook the government and forced them to make some concessions on the new contract.

Consciousness among doctors about their potential strength when organised rose hugely during the dispute, with many coming to recognise that they were striking not only to defend their own jobs, but for the sake of the entire NHS.

Some doctors are now adamant that they will not accept a new contract until the NHS is properly funded. Doctors decisively rejected the latest contract offer with a majority of 58% and the fight must continue. The BMA doctors' union has now announced plans for a new round of action.

Unite the Union's July conference voted to: "Call on other health unions and the TUC to coordinate widespread joint industrial action of health and other workers under attack, as the junior doctors have been, recognising an injury to one is an injury to all".

Unite also agreed to call on the TUC to organise a national demonstration in defence of the NHS, to be followed by a 24-hour general strike. Members of health unions now need to put pressure on their leadership to follow through with this strategy.

A mass demonstration co-ordinated by the TUC, linked with a series of national NHS strikes is the best way forward to end privatisation and save our NHS.

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# **The threat of private health insurance**

**Jon Dale**

As waiting times for NHS treatment lengthen, more people can be tempted by private medical insurance. This is a dangerous trend - for the NHS and for all but the wealthiest few.

In February, more patients than ever waited over 18 weeks for planned hospital care - over 260,000. 83,000 people had to wait over 26 weeks and almost 9,400 waited more than 39 weeks.

Record numbers of cancer patients also had to wait. Hospitals breached two of the eight cancer waiting time targets. Only 81% of people referred by their GP to have a first treatment for cancer got it within 62 days.



Over 5 million people have private medical insurance. Four fifths are paid by employers, the average cost being £700 a year. Prices for older people can be much higher. The cost is increasing four times faster than the rate of inflation.

Medical insurance companies are keen to cut the cost of insurance - for themselves. Like all insurance companies, they want more low risk customers paying premiums but fewer claims, especially for expensive treatment.

Now they are offering more than 10% discounts to people who share their fitness data. Trackers such as Fitbits measure how active the wearer is and can collect information about gym sessions and supermarket visits. They could also track heart rate and blood pressure. This information could be used to stop those in greater need of medical care being insured, unless at a prohibitively high premium.

Lengthening waiting lists and daily attacks on the NHS by the government and in the media can drive more people who can afford it to insure for private treatment. Those most in need of healthcare are usually least able to pay.

A massive trade union-led campaign is needed to save our NHS providing treatment for all and prevent US-style treatment by credit card.

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## **Organise against secretive NHS cuts plans**

**Hugh Caffrey, Manchester**

"The biggest attack on the NHS you've never heard of" - that's how the deeply secretive plans being drawn up by NHS bosses were described by one report. Thanks to funding cuts, rip-off PFI schemes, and privatisation, the NHS is groaning under a £2.5 billion deficit (possibly much more). The shortfall is predicted to rise to £22 billion by 2020.

The solution by NHS England national and local bosses is to slash services. This will mean devastating cuts under 'sustainability and transformation plans.'

NHS chiefs were already planning for 40 to 70 A&E units to become 'super centres', undoubtedly at the expense of the rest of the 225 A&Es.

One head honcho made clear that these cuts are "a central part of the NHS five-year forward view and the pace is about to accelerate... The heavy lifting starts in 2015-16..."

Sustainability and transformation plans are the new means by which this "five year forward view" is to be delivered. Detailed plans for cuts are to be drawn up by mid-Autumn.

The plans have no legal basis, as the government has been forced to admit, but the resulting cuts will be presented as accomplished facts for 'consultation' with the full backing of the political and NHS establishment.

The process is being directed by NHS England chief Simon Stevens, formerly of US healthcare company United Health and before that a 'special advisor' to Tony Blair when New Labour was driving privatisation of the NHS including into the hands of United Health.

These plans will be a disaster for patients and staff. Meanwhile the staggering waste of money that is the 'internal market' and privatisation will continue, consuming up to 20% of the NHS's £100 billion-plus budget through trusts, clinical commissioning groups and PFI.

So great is the waste of money that the companies trousering profits from PFI are nervous that their leeching may bleed dry the golden goose. Not to worry, reported the Financial Times: "Fears over rising National

Health Service deficits have forced Moody's to reassure investors that the government will pick up the tab for Private Finance Initiative debt if a hospital trust collapses or defaults.

"In a note to clients, the rating agency said returns from PFI schemes would be protected if the trusts were to become insolvent. 'UK legislation ensures that the government would in most cases cover a trust's liabilities, including its payments to project companies, if they were to become insolvent,' its note to clients said."

Mass resistance to closures, including from health workers and their trade unions, will be necessary. This will need to be unified nationally in demands for the funding cuts to be reversed, for all the privatisation-related measures to be scrapped, and the NHS to be returned to full public ownership.

More and more campaigns are demanding such policies. Socialists also argue for nationalising the private healthcare, pharmaceutical and life science companies, together with the banks and other sharks behind the PFI schemes. We call for democratic management of public services and nationalised industries by workers and service-users, and a joined-up socialist healthcare and social care system fit for the 21st century.

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## **Greenwich council tenants: We won't pay! We won't move!**

Around 20 people met in Eltham on 20 August in response to a letter from Greenwich council threatening 22,000 Greenwich council residents with a rent increase in April 2017. The council has indicated that it will implement the housing act, including 'pay to stay'. This means that those in council housing in London earning over £40,000 a year will have to pay market rents.

Nancy Taaffe, a housing campaigner and Socialist Party member, spoke about the need for a mass campaign like the poll tax. When 18 million refused to pay the tax, which was eventually beaten. She pointed to the campaigns in London at Fred Wigg and John Walsh Towers and Butterfields as models we can use to fight this attack on council and social housing.

It was agreed at the meeting that we would hold a demonstration on 10 September marching from Archery Road in Eltham at 11.30am to Woolwich to kick start the campaign.

**Greenwich Socialist Party**

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## **Local estate agents back Butterfields tenants**

**Waltham Forest Trades Council**

Estate agents are not generally known to turn down business. And with the property market in Walthamstow, east London booming, tenants and supporters of Butterfields did wonder what kind of response they might get on their "estate agent crawl". This was to ask estate agents not to get involved in selling any flats in Butterfields if offered by their asset-stripping landlords.

### **Immoral and unjust**

14 estate agents were visited, handed letters and tenants explained the issues. "It's immoral and unjust" they told the estate agents "for a company to buy 63 flats with the sole intention of turning the tenants out onto the streets."

One admitted to us they had been approached but refused business because they had heard of our campaign.

Others knew of the company as disreputable and would not touch them or had got involved and then withdrawn because it would damage their community standing.

One offered to help if we encountered trouble! Not one was hostile.

Foxtons, who had previously advertised one flat and received a strong protest letter from the tenants association, have now withdrawn the advert. What a result!

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## Nottinghamshire Pride makes history

### Nottingham Socialist Party

This year's Pride march in Nottingham on 30 July was a far cry from the corporate-sponsored 'respectability politics' of integration into the capitalist establishment. The march, some 5,000 strong, was led by Black Lives Matter and Notts QTIPOC (Queer, Trans and Intersex People of Colour), with the foremost banner dedicated to Marsha P Johnson, an African-American drag queen activist who was at the forefront of the Stonewall uprising against anti-LGBT police brutality in 1969.

Other banners celebrated transgender women as pioneers of Pride, and denounced the inhumane treatment of transgender prisoners and queer refugees. As the march arrived in Hockley, a minute's silence was observed for the victims of the Orlando LGBT massacre.

The atmosphere was electric as political slogans gave voice to anger that in previous years had been drowned out by the whistle-sellers' wares.

Socialist Party members marched and petitioned against NHS cuts that disproportionately affect marginalised groups, selling 15 copies of the Socialist.

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## Immingham residents' housing battle

### Matt Harrison

In June, hundreds of residents living in the Washdyke estate flats in Immingham were shocked to find out that Shoreline, the housing association that North-East Lincolnshire Labour council has outsourced social housing to, had drawn up plans to empty and later demolish their town centre homes in a two-phase project.

Because the 'consultation' period ends later this month, local Socialist Party members have now leafleted for two Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC) public meetings each attended by over 30 Washdyke residents.

Chairing the first meeting, Dave Mitchell stressed that TUSC wanted to ensure that residents, no matter what their personal preference for or against demolition, should receive personal assurances from Shoreline that the financial package would be without strings and residents would not be re-housed outside of their preferred area.

TUSC guest speaker Val O'Flynn relayed her own personal experience of Shoreline Housing and explained that their demolition and dispersal policy was driven by Tory government policies and the Labour council's outsourcing and cuts.

Questions from residents ranged from a young couple who were naturally concerned about their future accommodation, to tenants who had lived in the flats for years and didn't want to move, to an elderly couple in their nineties who were happy to take Shoreline's offer of £5,000 and live with family.

At the second meeting, residents were furious that apart from local Labour town councillor Dave Barton, no other Labour town or district councillors attended. People were also calling for Shoreline to be replaced as the social housing provider and the council to take it back in-house, for the council to build more council houses, and the mood was very much up for a fight. Towards this end, Washdyke residents are setting up a steering committee with at least one representative from each block.

At our next meeting, Shoreline are coming to explain themselves. Should be interesting!

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This version of this article was first posted on the Socialist Party website on 19 August 2016 and may vary slightly from the version subsequently printed in The Socialist.

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