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Issue 914
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the Socialist

Formerly **Militant**

**EDUCATION
FIGHTBACK
NEEDED**



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**BURKINI BAN
FUELS DIVISION
IN FRANCE**



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STUDENT RESISTANCE

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#KEEP CORBYN

FOR A PARTY THAT FIGHTS FOR WORKERS

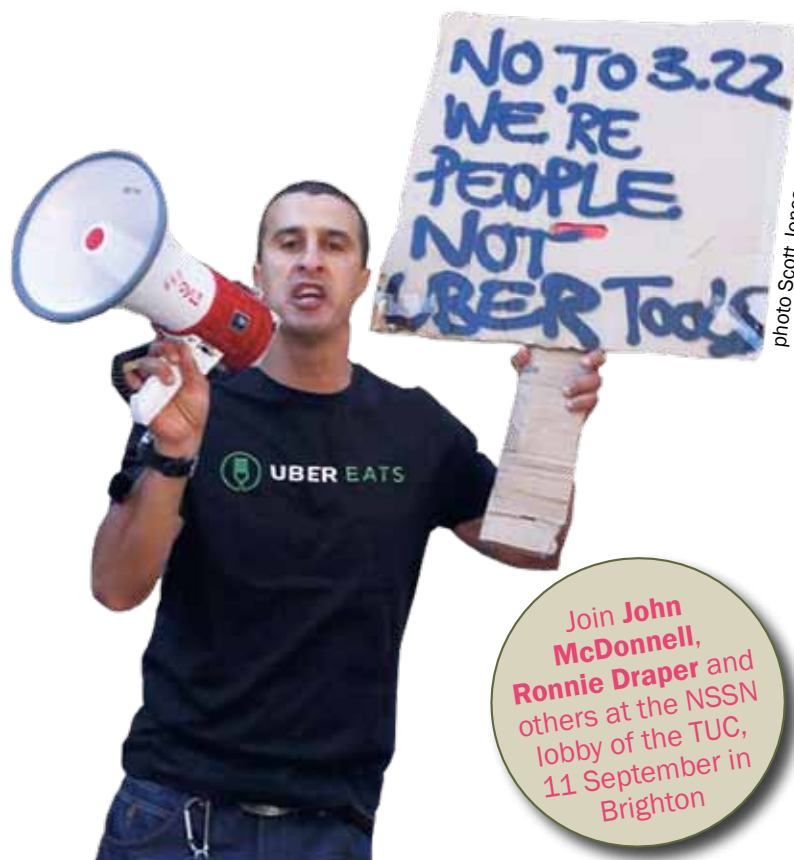


photo Scott Jones

Join **John McDonnell, Ronnie Draper** and others at the NSSN lobby of the TUC, 11 September in Brighton

This has to stop, and we are going to stop it. This is the message of legions of workers fighting zero-hour contracts, poverty pay and the 'gig economy'.

Deliveroo drivers struck against their boss's grasping. He wanted to do away with hourly rates, and instead pay them per delivery. Just £3.75 an order.

"We can't survive on £3.75!" declared pickets, revving their bikes and battering drums outside HQ. The strike won.

Those drivers have now spread the fight to UberEats (report page 6). Some workers have to gig for both to make ends meet. And their Uber brothers and sisters who deliver people instead of meals are organising against similar problems - no guaranteed hours or rates of pay.

Meanwhile, cinema workers at the Ritzy Picturehouse are again balloting for walk-outs. After 13 strike days last year, they won a 26% raise. Just short of the London Living Wage. Management promised to discuss paying the full amount this year - but has refused.

This is casual labour. This is piece work. This is starvation pay. The bosses have taken

us back in time, back to the 19th century. The Tories and Blairites abetted them.

That is why the anti-austerity movement massing behind Jeremy Corbyn's Labour leadership is so important (editorial page 2).

His platform opposes zero-hour contracts, and promises a £10 an hour minimum wage. These and other pro-worker policies are why trade unions should support him.

And many do. One of the most enthusiastic is bakers' unions BFAWU, which has led victorious strikes against zero-hour contracts at Hovis.

Labour's right wing is so petrified of organised workers that it has suspended BFAWU's

pro-Corbyn general secretary Ronnie Draper. Ronnie has been a Labour Party member for four decades! This open assault on democracy is an outrage. The Socialist Party condemns it, and calls for Ronnie's reinstatement.

Ronnie will join Shadow Chancellor John McDonnell at the National Shop Stewards Network lobby of this year's Trade Union Congress. All these crucial issues will be on the agenda.

■ **Join fellow trade unionists and socialists on the NSSN lobby in Brighton on 11 September, 1pm in the Ashdown Suite, Holiday Inn, 137 King's Road (seafont), Brighton BN1 2JF**

RIGHT'S PURGES AND EXCLUSIONS SHOW WE MUST FIGHT FOR A PARTY FOR THE 99%



What we think

Many will have sighed in disappointment and exasperation to see #LabourPurge2 trending on Twitter as ballot papers were sent out for the Labour leadership election. Tens of thousands of members and registered supporters are thought not to have received a vote because they have been ruled out by Labour officials. That's on top of the 130,000 members who were excluded from voting because they joined after the arbitrary cut-off date of 12 January set by Labour's NEC.

Among the most shocking stories of exclusions is a member from Wiltshire seemingly ruled out for a Facebook post saying that she was a fan of the band the Foo Fighters. Outrageously Ronnie Draper, general secretary of the Labour-affiliated bakers' union BFAWU, has had his (40-year) membership of the Labour Party suspended. He was told that this was because of a Tweet he had put out - though not what it said. In a statement Ronnie responded:

"I believe this flies in the face of natural justice. I intend to challenge my suspension robustly and am currently taking legal advice... I passionately believe that all members should be allowed to be heard, and be given the opportunity to vote for the candidate of their choice. I am extremely concerned that suspensions and bans are being imposed in an arbitrary or politically motivated way in this election..."



The right wing will never willingly accept the kinds of democratic measures and fighting policies needed to really change the Labour Party into an anti-austerity, socialist force

Jeremy Corbyn himself and shadow chancellor John McDonnell have correctly also responded strongly criticising this desperation from the right-wing Labour machine. John has worked closely with Ronnie Draper and BFAWU, along with Socialist Party members, in the Fast Food Rights campaign and others. He contrasted what he said looked like a "rigged purge" of Corbyn supporters to the complete lack of action against the likes of Labour peer Lord Sainsbury, who has recently donated more than £2 million to the Liberal Democrats.

These bureaucratic attempts to snatch victory from the jaws of defeat for Owen Smith are not having the desired effect. They only act to make it clearer to more people that the right do not stand with the majority or have any interest in a real democratic process. In fact,



photos Paul Mattsson

as shadow defence minister Emily Thornberry said, they want to "put party members back in their box." Not only will these methods fail, but they fly in the face of all the best traditions of the labour movement from which the Labour Party came.

One of the most common reasons given to people as to why they have been denied a vote is that they have publicly supported, or even stood for, rival parties in the past. But of course, those elections took place with a Labour Party dominated by those now opposing Corbyn and his policies.

Civil war

Millions of voters stopped voting Labour under Tony Blair because the party was no longer the one they had seen as their own. Many now see a chance to reverse the damage done by Blair and to go even further - it is this possibility, hope and fight that is bringing many thousands back towards Labour.

The purge is just the latest phase in this civil war in the Labour Party - which fundamentally is about what kind of

party is needed. The Blairites on the one side are fighting for Labour to remain as another bland party of big business, bereft of any real activist base involved in political discussion - which they had largely achieved over the last two decades. The thousands of new joiners and others fighting hard for a second Corbyn victory represent the desire for a new kind of party - one that is truly democratic and draws millions of ordinary workers and young people into political activity and debate.

We have argued that the best way to achieve this would be a return to the federal structure on which the Labour Party was founded. Invite in all trade unions, campaign groups and political parties - including the Socialist Party - which agree with the basic programme of Corbyn's Labour Party to participate with full democratic rights, while maintaining their own structures. This already exists, for example, for the Cooperative Party. Achieving this, as well as a thoroughgoing socialist programme, requires having politicians who support these moves. That means mandatory reselection to give rank-and-file Labour Party members and affiliated organisa-



Ronnie Draper

tions a real say over who their public representatives are. There have been reports that a handful of Labour MPs who abandoned shadow cabinet positions to undermine Corbyn after the EU referendum will ask to return to their posts if he wins. There can be no compromise with Blairites or others who are implacably opposed to the direction that Corbyn is taking the Labour Party in.

They will never willingly accept the kinds of democratic measures and fighting policies needed to really change the Labour Party into an anti-austerity, socialist force. Why? Because they would mean the end of the rule of the Labour Party by the right and their pro-capitalist policies - and of Labour as a vehicle for their political careers. They understand as much as the left do that a truly democratic party involving millions of working class people would simply not support the continued rule of the Blairites.

Their policies are not popular - Corbyn's are. In an era of low pay, zero-hour contracts and brutal austerity ravaging our public services, people want radical policies like a £10 an hour minimum wage, nationalisation of key services and investment in the NHS. They don't want so-called 'pragmatism' and crocodile tears from 'Labour' politicians who claim nothing can be done while carrying out Tory cuts.

In this way, the fight against bureaucratic methods like this purge is one important strand of the fight for a democratic, fighting, socialist Labour Party involving the mass of working class people. And that in turn is a vital part of the wider struggle against austerity, to kick out the Tories and to fight for a socialist society free from poverty and oppression.

Unity

All on the left must therefore play an active part in the movement supporting Jeremy Corbyn. We need real unity in action to achieve change. So it has been disappointing to see in some instances different elements of the Corbyn movement responding to attacks from the right by joining in attacks on the Socialist Party.

An article was recently published on the blog of South Birmingham Momentum criticising Socialist Party members for responding boldly in the press to attacks on us and Corbyn supporters for alleged 'Trotskyist entryism' into the Labour Party.

As Birmingham Socialist Party said in their reply to this article: "What were the Socialist Party, who were bureaucratically expelled from the Labour Party for fighting the Tories, supposed to say? 'No comment'? Would that have called the media hyenas off? No of course it wouldn't. It would have been tantamount to saying 'We know we're villains, so we're lying low'. Socialists must answer the attacks made by Britain's elite, not hide when attacked."

What is this article really arguing? "That Marxists, 'Trots' etc should not be allowed in the Labour Party? That Kinnock's and Blair's expulsions were right? That if anti-austerity Greens wanted to join Labour that that would be embarrassing or 'awkward'? All this to placate - and without any success - a right wing determined to destroy Jeremy's leadership?" The response finished asking "please concentrate determined fire on the Blairite right wing, not on socialists."

This is a potentially historic time for the whole labour and socialist movement. An opportunity stands before us to create the kind of party so desperately needed in the struggle against austerity and capitalism. We must come together to fight for the right of all workers and young people who support those aims to have a democratic say in its leadership, structures and programme.



I am extremely concerned that suspensions and bans are being imposed in an arbitrary or politically motivated way in this election

Ronnie Draper - Corbyn supporter, bakers' union general secretary, and suspended member of the Labour Party



photo Lenny Shail

Packed meeting discusses Trotskyism, Corbyn and socialist change

Lenny Shail
Coventry Socialist Party

It was "standing room only" at a packed Coventry Socialist Party public meeting on 25 August where Socialist Party general secretary Peter Taaffe spoke on "Trotskyism, the Militant tendency, the Corbyn insurgency and the struggle for socialist change."

Introducing the meeting, former Coventry Labour MP Dave Nellist put the current attacks on the Socialist Party, formerly Militant, in their historical context.

Peter discussed the role of the Militant leadership of Liverpool City Council in the 1980s who refused to make cuts. Instead, the council set a 'needs budget' with the support of a mass movement of local trade unions and communities against the Tories, to fight for the money the city needed. The council won, allowing it to build 5,000 more houses and create thousands of jobs, with not one job lost!

Compare the fighting stand taken there with Coventry City Council now, which is closing libraries, public toilets and children's centres.

Peter also outlined how it was Militant that mobilised the mass non-payment of the Poll Tax, which



One attendee stated that if he hadn't joined the Socialist Party last week, he 'definitely would have done so tonight!'



the working class, aided by the leadership of Militant, that have fuelled the attempts of the establishment and right wing of Labour to white-wash history and attempt to discredit Trotskyism and the Socialist Party.

Peter also discussed the election successes of Dave Nellist and the example he set as an MP in only taking the average wage of skilled workers within his constituency.

Peter argued that the Socialist Party would welcome affiliation to the Labour Party similar to that of the Co-operative Party, if the Labour Party was to open up its structures to be more democratic and federal and was to become a truly anti-austerity party as Corbyn and the Socialist Party both want.

Following Peter's remarks there were many interesting contributions from the floor, including from Labour voters arguing for deselection of right-wing MPs and expressing their disgust at Labour councillors passing on Tory cuts to working people. One attendee stated that if he hadn't joined the Socialist Party last week, he "definitely would have done so tonight!"

The meeting highlighted that the attacks on Trotskyism and Militant have not deterred people, but have increased the interest in our ideas and organisation.

eventually led to the downfall of Thatcher.

Both Dave and Peter made clear that it was these huge victories of

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

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Scot schools scandal

Offshore investment firms part-own 277 Scottish state schools.

The schools are products of 'Private Finance Initiative' (PFI) infrastructure privatisation. 'Wealth machines' was how a spokesperson for the European Services Strategy Unit think-tank described them.

Speaking to the BBC, he added: "There are an awful lot of people making very substantial sums of money out of it." Scotland's various PFI contracts, including the schools, are worth a collective £6 billion.

In Edinburgh, authorities had to close all 17 of these schools earlier this year. The corner-cutting of private contractors had caused construction faults. A wall fell clean off Oxgang Primary School during a storm. Luckily, no students or staff were stood there at the time.

The Socialist says: end PFI extortion. For public ownership and investment in high-quality infrastructure.

Smith v refugees

Owen Smith, the right-wing Labour leadership contender, falsely claimed refugees are overcrowding his local schools.

He said the entry of "significant numbers into South Wales of people fleeing the Middle East" was responsible for lack of places. There are, in fact, surplus places in Rhondda Cynon Taf, his local authority. And the council has only taken in 18 refugees.

Where there is pressure on school places this is caused by cuts, sell-offs and underinvestment, not people fleeing wars. Some of these military actions Smith himself voted to support, including in Libya and Iraq - although admittedly he voted against bombing Syria.

This cynical play on legitimate fears about public services follows comments about being "normal" with "a wife and three children". This was widely interpreted as a homophobic dig at then-rival for the leadership Angela Eagle.



Ending relationships can be awkward - but most agree doing it by text message is unacceptable. Unless you're the boss of a bus firm, that is.

Workers at GHA Coaches in Wrexham, north Wales, received a poorly written text-speak SMS to notify them of imminent redundancy. Some were drivers out on routes. Up to 400 staff now face the dole line.

Management didn't even say soz. FWIW the company should be nationalised, and BTW open the books so workers can see where the money's gone. Bring all public transport into common ownership under democratic workers' mgmt & ctrl. K thx bye.

Corinthia Ward

New research by the Institute for Fiscal Studies shows women on average still earn 36% less a week than their male counterparts. This is despite more than four decades of equal pay rights being on the statute books.

The Chartered Management Institute carried out a separate study highlighting the difference in pay progression. In the last year, 14% of men in management roles were promoted compared with 10% of women.

The recent attention on sexist dress codes - mandatory heels, skirts and make-up - highlights the bosses' backwards attitudes further. I myself worked in a shop two years ago where my manager told me I needed to wear more make up - as I looked too 'sickly' and 'pale' to fit in with the aesthetics of the shop.

Cuts to child and adult care services force many women out of full-time employment; paying a private company is too expensive for most. Women also lose out on pay rises and promotions due to lost time - or are looked over for jobs, praise and advancement because of the false idea we are less capable.

Profits

In part, sexist ideas persist because they have a role in defending the profits of the super-rich. Bosses rely on women doing free labour when it comes to the home, so they don't have to fund it through higher wages or taxes. Capitalism also uses oppression to divide workers against each other rather than unite us against it.

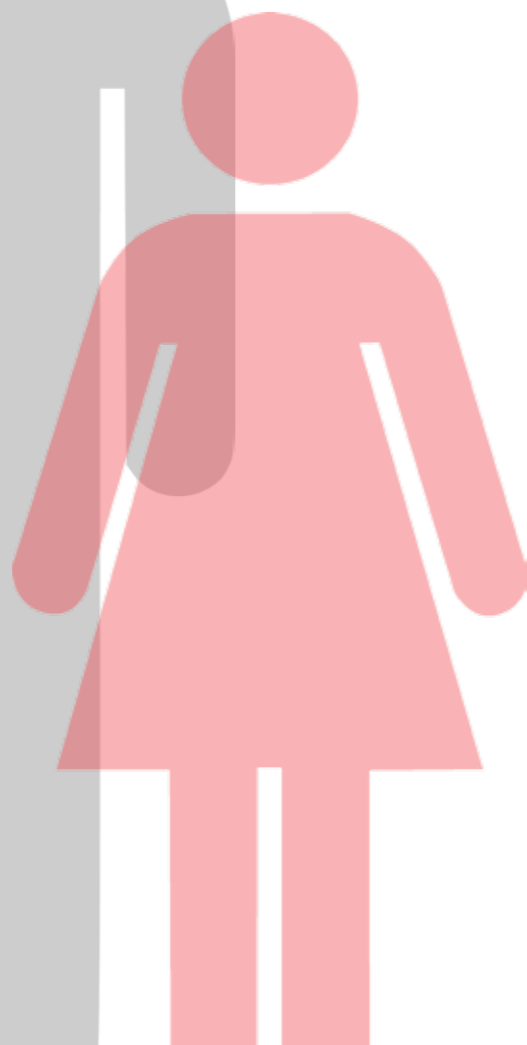
Legal rights mean little unless workers organise to force their enactment. In the end, only democratic public ownership and socialist planning can lay the basis to make anti-sexist reforms permanent.

The Socialist Party fights for free childcare, adult care and education for all, the abolition of employment tribunal fees, full maternity and paternity pay, and an end to all sexist practices and attitudes. Then both women and men alike can start to see real change.



Women earn around 18% less than men on an hourly basis. But when taking into account reduced hours, the average pay gap doubles, to 36%. And even these latest figures from the IFS exclude top and bottom earners.

WOMEN STILL TAKE HOME 36% LESS THAN MEN



Over a million families in 'extreme problem debt'

Mary Jackson

The latest report from the Trade Union Congress outlining personal debt in Britain is shocking.

1.6 million low-income families in 'extreme problem debt' - debt so crippling that it takes 40% of their total household income. Another 3.2 million households, that's one in eight, are struggling to manage their debt repayments, taking up 25% of income.

Total 'unsecured' debt - which excludes mortgages - for UK households rose by £48 billion between 2012 and 2015. It reached a staggering

£353 billion. Debt has risen and income fallen by a tenth since the world economic crash in 2007-8.

Behind these figures is a nightmare of misery and deprivation: real people, worried to death at how they are going to survive.

Unnecessary

I worked in Citizens' Advice for many years. It's extremely rare for people to get in unnecessary or unfordable debt. It's invariably a change of circumstances that makes debt unaffordable. A decrease in hours, losing a job, becoming ill, having an accident.

We can't wait until 2020 for a gen-

eral election. People are dying, children are hungry.

We need a minimum wage of £10 an hour without exemptions, and the reversal of all benefits cuts - now. Nationalise the banks and loan companies under democratic workers' control and management. Mass investment in infrastructure and council house building to create jobs and homes.

Kicking the Blairites out of Labour and building for a 24-hour general strike against austerity would be a good starting point. The Tories are still weak and divided. United working class action with a clear socialist programme could bring them down.



State-educated Liverpoolian Katarina Johnson-Thompson broke the British outdoor high-jump record in Rio this year, coming sixth in the Olympic heptathlon photo Jim Thurston/Creative Commons

One in three GB Rio 2016 medallists privately educated

INVEST IN GRASSROOTS SPORTS NEEDS

Lenny Shall

Britain's second-place finish in the Olympic table has been used widely by the establishment as a show of the greatness of British sport and successful investment strategies. But the reality is far from this image.

32% of the UK's Rio medallists went to private schools, according to research by education charity Sutton Trust. Only around 6.5% of children go to private school.

This reveals serious problems in how sport is funded and organised, who controls the funds, and what sporting organisations seek to achieve.

Millions, young and old, will have been inspired by Mo Farah floating down the track, or Laura Trott darting round the velodrome. But the opportunities for working class people in Britain to take part in basic sports - let alone those requiring equipment and facilities - are worse than ever.



Schools are meant to ensure children can swim 25 metres unaided by eleven, but 45% are unable to swim

Swimming is part of the national curriculum. Schools are meant to ensure children can swim 25 metres unaided by eleven. Despite this, figures from 2014 found more than a thousand primaries didn't provide any lessons, and 45% of children start secondary school unable to swim.

Previously, the Sports Council - motto 'sport for all' - directed and governed sport in the UK. In 1994 the Tory government replaced it with UK Sport, which concentrates funding on top-end professionals.

The idea behind this came from Olympics chief Seb Coe. He saw financial support for elite sport as the overriding priority, putting local authorities in charge of grassroots sport.

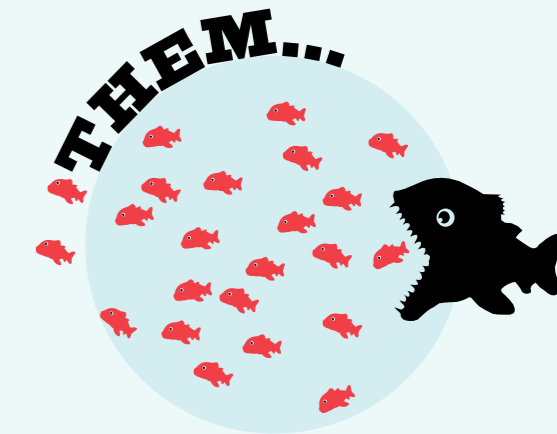
Funding

But over many years of Tory and New Labour attacks on public services, funding for mass participation has been one of the first victims. This has excluded the majority from ever getting the opportunity to try out many sports.

Sports funding elitism has even reached a stage where some athletes were denied selection for Rio despite having qualifying times - because they weren't deemed 'medal winners'.

The Socialist Party campaigns for the funding, facilities and time for everyone to take part in sports. Reverse cuts and sell-offs of school and community facilities. For investment in free, high-quality sport aimed at participation at every level.

Bosses' history of excluding working class from sport - read more online at socialisparty.org.uk



Have-yachts...

£443k Weekly cost of hiring the superyacht Naia

On a boat trip round Capri in Italy this summer, any guilt over how much we were spending on holiday disappeared - when we met a mini-fleet of superyachts flying union jacks.

It was probably more ships than the Royal Navy has now. I took down a couple of names, wondering whether I knew any of the owners, so might get invited on for a beer? Needless to say, I was disappointed.

These were charter yachts - so of course, any ordinary worker can hire them. All you need this winter for the 'Naia', for instance, is £443,459, plus expenses, per week. Of course, you can split the cost with up to eleven guests.

Jeremy Short

£214k Average price of a UK house (Land Registry, June 2016)

... have-nots

Meanwhile, 12.9 million people in the UK live in 'absolute poverty'.

A June report by the House of Commons Library found one in five individuals had an income under 60% of the national median last financial year. The figure also takes into account housing costs and inflation.

3.7 million of those people are children. That's 27% of all kids.

The Socialist has nothing against fancy food and cool submarines. What we object to is a system that limits the finer things to the super-rich minority while driving the rest of us into penury.

We say: take the wealth off the 1%! For public ownership of the top corporations, and democratic planning of production to meet the needs of all. Then we can end poverty for good - and maybe throw on some extra submarines for the summer hols.

12.9m Number of individuals in the UK living in 'absolute poverty' (Commons Library)

27% Proportion of kids in the UK living in 'absolute poverty'



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

UberEats: ANGRY DELIVERY DRIVERS PROTEST OVER PAY

Scott Jones

“We are free, don’t work for three,” chanted angry UberEats drivers after storming the courtyard in front of the offices of the food app riding mopeds and bikes on 26 August.

They were referring to the £3.22 that the company want to pay drivers for each delivery instead of a basic wage. Workers are demanding the London Living Wage.

“Every day when we wake up we don’t know what we’re going to be paid, we have to rely on tips which is totally up to the customer. I ride a motorbike and can get into accidents so I have to pay £108 out of my pocket on insurance alone,” one driver told the Socialist.

UberEats claim drivers can earn £10 an hour at present but most drivers currently earn less than the minimum wage. One driver showed me his phone to show that he earned just £34 during a ten hour shift.

‘Self-employment’

As drivers are technically self-employed the company can get around minimum wage legislation, using modern technology to implement Victorian working conditions.

Similarly, over 100 couriers at rival firm Deliveroo took strike action over proposed changes to the way in which they’re paid, meaning they would only be paid £3.75 a delivery.

The drivers at the protest elected a delegation of five who were even-



UberEats workers ride into town to face down their bosses photo Scott Jones

tually allowed in, along with a rep from the IWGB union, to talk to management but they came back out minutes later after bosses insisted on only talking to workers one-on-one. Security appeared as the protest resumed and tried to buy off the workers with ice creams which were promptly refused and thrown back.

As the protest started to disperse, drivers were told that management were speaking to Channel 4 news around the corner from the office and proceeded to interrupt the interview demanding talks, which bosses ignored. The exchange was caught on camera and made the evening news.

Instead of talking to workers,

the company has instead sacked one of the drivers, Imran Siddiqui, clearly victimised due to his role in organising workers and leading the protest.

Strike action is now threatened and a petition demanding Siddiqui’s reinstatement can be signed here: <http://tinyurl.com/uberEATSpetition>

Solid bus strike for better terms, pay and against anti-union bosses



Striking Westbourne Park bus drivers photo Rob Williams

London bus workers Tower Transit took 24-hour strike action on 26 August, over the imposition of roster changes, pay and the anti-union approach of the company.

Over 1,000 drivers, engineers and controllers at Westbourne Park bus garage and the Lea interchange bus depot were involved in the dispute following an 89.8% vote in favour of strike action.

Following the solid action, the second 24-hour stoppage of the dispute, scheduled for 29 August, was called off for talks. The walkout followed mounting frustration among workers, who are angry over a lack of consultation over roster changes which are leaving them out of pocket, as well as the non-payment of correct rest day working pay rates.

One driver at Westbourne Park

said: “I don’t see my family because I work six or seven days a week while these companies are making millions, not pennies. We’re public workers in a private company and it doesn’t work. Companies are too busy trying to make profit.”

At the Lea interchange in east London it was evident Sadiq Khan’s betrayal in allowing companies to get away with these attacks has done damage to Jeremy Corbyn among London bus drivers.

Socialist Party members spoke to workers on the picket line who said that they thought Jeremy Corbyn would let them down as Khan has done, undermining faith in Labour. The Socialist Party’s call for all transport to be brought back into public ownership really chimed.

Socialist Party reporters



[News in brief]

■ Southern strike

“The Govia Thameslink franchise is in meltdown and not fit for purpose. Not content with axing catering services, closing ticket offices and attacking the role of their guards, they now want to threaten 130 station jobs and compromise the safety of both their passengers and staff alike,” said RMT general secretary Mick Cash in announcing the latest RMT strike on the Govia Thameslink franchise. Station staff will strike for 24-hours on 7 September following a 70% yes vote in favour of action over proposed reorganisation of station staff. Govia Thameslink want to close ticket offices, or cut them to morning peak only, at 83 stations from as far afield as Kings Lynn and Bognor Regis. As a means of doing this they plan to introduce a new multi-functional role of ‘station host’ which RMT estimates will result in a cut of at least 130 jobs.



photo Nick Chaffey



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 (seafont), 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

shopstewards.net



JOIN THE STUDENT FIGHTBACK TO END EDUCATION CUTS AND AUSTERITY

As the new academic term begins, students at schools, college and universities around the country face a year of important struggles. Here two young people comment on some of the difficulties facing working class students. Also see the feature on pages 8 and 9 with comments by a teacher and a college student.

photo Scott Jones

Alice Murray
School student

There are many things that anger students in the current economic crisis. However, more recent betrayals have really hit home for this generation.

Cuts to education have affected us dramatically, for instance the range of subjects have become extremely limited. Vocational subjects that allow students who don't excel academically to gain useful skills have been cut.

One of the reasons for this is that teachers are being made redundant; many of my peers have been told that they're unable to pursue their interests in child development, health and social care and performing arts, all because of vicious cuts. Now our

schools are gradually becoming academies. They're transforming into businesses discriminating against the poor - even the food is now extortionate.

Another aspect of the government's attacks that directly affects our generation is exam grade boundaries. The increase of these makes it almost impossible to achieve good grades.

This becomes a class issue when privately educated students are privileged with small classes, well paid qualified teachers and better equipment. This means they achieve high grades bringing up school averages and therefore grade boundaries, keeping the working class out of university and well paid jobs.

These are only a few of the many attacks that especially target the younger generations and the struggle posed by the Tory government's austerity.

The destruction of the working class student

Mark Attwood
Student

I'm 18 and about to start a bachelor's degree, which really should help me achieve my goals and dreams in life, right? However, after my degree I will also be in over £50,000 of debt just like hundreds of thousands of other students. This is unacceptable.

An investment in your future should mean you definitely have one worth investing in.

But the reality is I could go to university, study solidly for years, and come out feeling like Aristotle, but it will never guarantee me the good future I worked hard for. Therefore I think it's perfectly acceptable to say that higher education is not worth even close to £9,000 a year.

Students are the future of this 'great' country, and should be entitled to a high standard of education without putting them in over

£50,000 worth of debt. Even if they do end up one of the lucky ones with a pretty big salary, they have to pay even more for an education that was probably still not worth it.

With only an average of ten or eleven hours of lectures a week, I highly doubt there are students out there feeling liberated knowing they spent £9,000 annually.

And with the addition of some universities raising their fee to £9,250 a year, working class students and working class families can rarely afford this huge amount of debt - it is entirely discouraging. I have seen this first-hand with most of my friends, who do not see the point in going to university.

For all we know, they could be the next Picasso, or the next Mozart. The government values the profits of companies and war over the futures of coming generations.

I find this utterly mind boggling, as a socialist. Britain spends £60 million on machines of death which could be spent on better things, like the NHS or housing and helping the homeless.

For the solution to this madness we need leaders who can put their foot down and turn away from big businesses looking to fill their greed-meters, and say: "The future belongs to the young". We must ensure that everyone, from every background and every corner of society can enjoy an education packed with opportunity and discovery, without having to worry about any debt.

Text 'JOIN' plus your name & college to 077493 79010

socialist students

www.socialiststudents.org.uk

@socialiststudents

Socialist Students

We demand:

- An end to education cuts
- No to academies and 'free schools'
- Abolish fees and introduce grants including EMA
- No to austerity and racism
- For a mass socialist party of youth and workers



Alice Murray (left) marching with Socialist Students at London Pride 2015
photo Helen Pattison

James Kerr
Socialist Party teachers group

Education policy stands at something of a crossroads and the new academic year will be a significant one.

The start of the summer holidays brought news that Theresa May will look to lift the ban on the creation of grammar schools. This told us two important things: it confirmed the Tories' desire for a more selective and stratified education system, flying in the face of years of educational research. It also told us they don't have confidence in the academy and free school programme to deliver fully for them and big business.

The announcement came only a fortnight after Channel 4's Dispatches unveiled even more corruption and nepotism within academies. One choice cut was academy boss Ian Clelland's luxury Jaguar 'company car' on top of his handsome £180,000 pay check. We also saw the former head of Kings Science Academy in Bradford convicted of fraud while at the flagship free school.

Six years on from the Tories' mass expansion of academies, still no hard data can prove that academisation alone improves a child's education but there is a wealth of material on how some are enriching themselves at the expense of the public purse.

For all May's talk of social mobility, research by the Education Policy Institute showed Tory reforms had reinforced or even worsened social segregation. The disparaging remarks by former Ofsted chairman David Hoare about the Isle of Wight added to a sense that we're not really 'all in it together' when it comes to the education system.

Testing

Testing in all key stages has created an explosive mix for teachers and students. We are seeing primary school pupils stressed and demoralised as they prepare for Sats and other internal tests when they should be excited about learning and discovery. Primary pedagogy has always valued play and enquiry but standardised testing puts those approaches at risk.

The call for a boycott of Sats tests must be taken up energetically by the trade unions (especially the National Union of Teachers - NUT) and prepared for immediately. Important opportunities to capitalise on the anger around primary testing have been missed

EDUCATION: FIGHTBACK NEEDED

Teaching unions must call coordinated national action



photo Paul Mattsson

and we can't afford that again. Even the headteachers' union, the NAHT, warned it could support a boycott of Sats if discussions with ministers are not 'fruitful'.

The increased workload created by tests and how they're linked to performance-related pay can be used to frame the dispute and

develop demands.

It would also tap into growing parental opposition indicated by thousands of parents withdrawing their students from school during test season. This is no substitute for action by those who work in schools but can be an important adjunct.

In secondary schools the constant drilling and endless 'interventions' have similar effects on students. The narrowing of the curriculum to focus on subjects with 'value' in the league tables is making school a more lifeless place for many. The government's Ebacc and now the new Progress 8 measures to evaluate school

performance mean choices are not always made in the interests of the students but on what will look good in the league tables

The 2.1% drop in A*-C grades will have raised the question for many students who have busted a gut this year: 'was it really worth it?' Playing politics with kids' futures has consequences and we could see the development of action, including school strikes, by students in response to this.

This year will see further major changes to GCSEs with coursework and oral assessment being removed from most subjects and everything weighted on a final exam.

This drags us back to a situation where recall rather than genuine understanding is assessed. This naturally makes life more difficult for students who suffer from anxiety, those with special educational needs and with English as an additional language.

National action

Despite the manifold attacks from the government, summed up by the education White Paper, teachers are willing to fight back. Just before the summer break we saw a day of national strike action from the NUT and motions passed by Unison and GMB (who represent school support staff) to explore action.

The NUT executive, meeting at the start of September, urgently needs to grapple with how to take forward the campaign of national strike action in defence of national pay and conditions and school funding.

The national teachers' strike in July saw many younger teachers out for the first time and energetic pickets and demonstrations. The summer term action was always seen by activists as a precursor to further strike days in the autumn.

This needs to be built for and demands linked to what's happening on the ground. Many teachers will be returning to increased class

sizes, extra periods and a lack of resources.

This is a result of funding cuts and we need to link it to the need to step up our action. Work needs to be done on building in academies where the management approach and high turnover of staff has weakened union representation in some cases.

With more teachers qualifying 'on the job', rather than through a university based course, fewer are exposed to the unions early on. Some targeted work to reach those teachers is needed but our best recruitment tool is building confidence that action can win. 8,000 people joined the NUT in the run

up to the last strike because they saw the need to resist the government's agenda.

We are not alone in this fight. The junior doctors are engaged in a very similar dispute and we could build on our links with their union, the BMA, and coordinate action. The NUT should be proactive in suggesting dates, perhaps to coincide with the Tory party conference and go to all education unions with a plan to take on the government.

Major campaigns by teaching assistants in Derby and Durham show the potential for further links to be made and with the National Union of Students and lecturers' union UCU preparing days of action in the coming months, we can place the defence of education firmly on the agenda.

All of this raises the need for legally binding limits on what teachers can be asked to do - a national contract for teachers is what we're fighting for. While campaigning for a national agreement, the content of that contract could also be used by teachers in individual schools or academy chains to secure a better deal at local level.

Jeremy Corbyn

This is all brewing against the backdrop of the Labour leadership contest and the fight to transform the Labour Party into a party for working class people.

Teachers will be following the developments and will have been cheered by some of the policy announcements from Jeremy Corbyn, like the reintroduction of the Educational Maintenance Allowance and a National Education Service.

He acknowledges the need for a broader curriculum with an Arts Pupil Premium in primary and will consider drama and art's place within the national curriculum.

Corbyn has been critical of academies and in his historic speech at NUT conference this year made important links between child poverty and educational attainment.

He can go further. The 'renationalisation' of our schools and the end of academies should be explicitly in his programme. The demand for genuine democratic control of schools, with parent, teacher and student representatives involved in decision making would also prove popular within school communities where staff feel increasingly deskilled and micro-managed.

An injection of funds into schools to cut teacher workload could turn around the teacher recruitment crisis. Kicking out the privateers, putting a stop to the marketisation of education and developing bold socialist policies could make schools vibrant and exciting places and not exam factories.

That's what is at stake in this fight. Theresa and Justine, the holiday is over.



Lily (left) marching with teachers and junior doctors photo Paul Mattsson

Pressure, lies and head games: being a school student in Tory Britain

Lily Douglas
College student

I'm just going to say it... it is hard being a school student, especially under the Tories. There is a lot of pressure on you to be perfect, to have everything figured out.

In year 9 (when you are 13 or 14) you are expected to choose what kind of path you're going to lead in the future when you make your GCSE options. Then you have to drop everything to study and cram in as much as humanly possible and more, until it becomes a memory test not a knowledge exam. It's not about understanding or developing your talents.

You are not allowed to be a child. Since I can remember I have always had the threat of the next exam - and what it means for my future - plaguing me. 'If you don't do well at exams then you won't get a job, you'll be on zero-hour contracts, you won't be able to leave home.'

And then they change the goalposts! I was never really that good at exams. I always knew I had to put all my effort into my GCSE coursework because that's where I was going to get my grades and I did. Walking into

the exam, I knew solidly that I'd got all As in my coursework, so no matter how much I failed in the exam, I should be ok.

Or so I thought. Between me completing (and being given an expected grade for) my coursework and the exam and official grading, the exam board decided to play games with our heads. They brought the grade boundaries up to the extent that even if you had improved in your mark, you got a worse grade than before. The high achievers were no longer high achievers.

Lazy

As a student, a teenager, you are stereotyped by the media as a lazy, loud-mouthed thug who doesn't care and is too immature to make choices for yourself.

But actually we're working very hard and are very concerned about our futures. We have to be. Which is why I think we should have votes at 16. We are generally ignored by politicians or just plain lied to - like when the Liberal Democrats promised to cut university fees and then trebled them instead.

We want to be a full part of holding politicians to account.



Hundreds of teenagers protest for votes at 16 photo Scott Jones

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Grantham protest against night-time closure of A&E

Jean Thorpe
Nottingham Socialist Party

Over 200 people attended a protest on 14 August, organised by campaigners against the night-time closure of Grantham Accident and Emergency Department. The protest was organised, with just a few days' notice, by a local group including Labour councillor Charmaine Morgan.

Citing safety, the local hospital trust decided to close Grantham Hospital A&E between 6.30pm and 9am from 17 August, temporarily, so doctors can be moved to the trust's A&E departments at Lincoln County Hospital and at Pilgrim Hospital, Boston.

Travel
Councillor Charmaine Morgan wrote to Lincolnshire County Council Scrutiny Committee and the lo-

cal Commissioning Group:

"The loss of a night time A&E service to the 120,000 people living or working in the Grantham Hospital area is not acceptable given many residents have no means of travelling to an alternative A&E unit.

"This service has now gone and local lives are more at risk. Other non-life threatening, but important, medical care at night has been lost for sick or injured patients. I personally witnessed two boys on the evening of 17 August arrive with fractures who had to face a journey to Lincoln Hospital to receive any form of treatment, without any appropriate stabilising medication or painkillers. Had their injuries been life threatening and require medical intervention immediately they would be dead.

"People unable to travel elsewhere will be forced to wait in the open in an unheated, insecure unsheltered location for help to arrive.

If they are critically ill and need immediate attention in a worst case scenario they could die locked out of the hospital without medical assistance. The father of one young boy was quoted 1.5 hours for an ambulance - this is a totally unacceptable risk."

Socialist Party members supported the protest and Gary Freeman, an East Midlands member of Unison's health service group executive, addressed the protest giving his full support to their campaign and explaining how the attacks on the A&E service are part of a cuts agenda.

There is a march in Grantham to fight cuts to the service, on 3 September, meeting at 12noon at St Peter's Hill Green, Grantham.

We demand:
 ■ Opposition to all cuts
 ■ A properly funded NHS
 ■ A national demonstration and trade union action to defend the NHS



Protesters photo Gary Freeman

Ken Loach and a Socialist seller join Sisters Uncut protest

The Spirit of '45, a film by renowned filmmaker Ken Loach was shown recently at a small local theatre in North Newcastle-upon-Tyne.

I decided to sell copies of the Socialist outside but after ten minutes when I was told I was unwelcome and had to stand well-away.

He seemingly didn't recognise any irony and could have passed as a security guard in Ken's latest film 'I Daniel Blake'.

I continued selling the paper and was joined by over 20 women from an organisation called Sisters Uncut. They too were told to "shift themselves".

They were protesting about the potential closure of the local Women's Aid service, a charity which has done vital work for over 40 years, and saved countless lives.

This was their first organised protest in the area, some of the women carried flowers, others placards or

banners, and they gave a sombre roll-call of 81 victims of domestic homicide in the UK in the past year, clearly showing the needs of the refugee are undiminished.

There was also plenty of chanting: "Where's the spirit of '45?" and "What if Cathy can't go home?"

Sometime later, Ken Loach himself, who had been doing a question and answer session in the venue, came out to greet us and joked he'd thought he was being picketed! He inquired about Sisters Uncut, wished us well and bought a copy of the Socialist.

Nick, Newcastle-upon-Tyne



Unison's Emma Garson photos Steve Jones

TRADE UNIONISTS FOR CORBYN RALLY IN CARDIFF

Cardiff Socialist Party member

Trade unionists took the ideas of socialism onto the streets of Cardiff on 26 August, gathering at the foot of Aneurin Bevan's statue on Queen Street to rally in solidarity with the movement building around Jeremy Corbyn.

David Bartlett, secretary of Cardiff Trades Council and member of the civil servants' union PCS, said: "For working-class people the last 20 years have meant nothing but austerity, cuts and privatisation. We are now living in the most unequal society in the history of the planet."

Participants listened to the speakers and also leafleted passers-by, many of who stopped to listen and engage with us throughout which

also generated much street-based political discussion.

Cardiff County Unison was represented by branch secretary Emma Garson and Owen Herbert spoke for transport workers' union RMT. Both spoke of Corbyn's support for trade unions throughout his life. Speaking on the 1% benefiting from the suffering of the 99%, Owen argued "things have got to change."

The rally sought to strengthen the local trade union and socialist movement, to support Jeremy Corbyn and to challenge the aggressive establishment attacks on working class people.

Members of both GMB union's Young Members Network and Cardiff and Vale's Welsh Labour Grassroots spoke in personal capacities. GMB recently came out in support of Owen Smith, though many mem-

bers complained they received no ballot papers.

Welsh Labour Grass Roots, Momentum's Welsh sister organisation, have been labelled a threat and a rabble by Tom Watson, deputy Labour leader. The rally showed solidarity locally among the left in spite of constant attack by the Blairites.

Gary Johnston, the regional secretary of the bakers' union BFAWU, Ronnie Draper, which took place the day before.

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



photo Senan

Sunshine and socialism at Socialist Party summer camp

Dave Gorton
Chesterfield Socialist Party

Dozens of socialists in a field with sunshine, debate and refreshments. Unusual maybe, but our summer camp, held on August bank holiday weekend, is a long-standing highlight of the Socialist Party calendar.

Against the backdrop of the second successive summer of heightened political activity, the camp gave an opportunity to discuss the developments in greater depth.

The Saturday evening rally centred on the turmoil in all Britain's political parties. The ruling class are beginning to utilise their panoply of dirty tricks to demobilise the movement around Jeremy Corbyn.

Socialist Party general secretary Peter Taaffe explained that the enthusiasm among young people in particular was part of a worldwide process of millions fighting back against austerity.

The increased interest in socialist ideas is starting to alter consciousness internationally. Capitalism is rotten to the core and needs replacing with a system based on satisfying the needs of the many, not just

accumulating riches for the few.

The crisis is crying out for a movement based on a programme of action to transform society.

As contributors to the debate, including former Labour MP Dave Nellist, pointed out, the programme of Momentum and Corbyn is insufficient and would not, for instance, bring an immediate return to public ownership of the privatised industries.

Wide range

A lively socialism and art session covered wide ranging subject matter from reality TV to stand-up comedy and gaming. The French burkini ban was prominent in a well-attended socialism and feminism session and more theoretical ideas discussed in an introduction to Marxist economics.

Evening entertainment included excellent live music, a quiz and the traditional campfire with songs from the vast history of the struggle of the oppressed; a special mention to Ellis and Lily for some wonderful renditions.

Our thanks once again to the Stevenage Socialist Party for all their hard work in organising another successful event.



One of the debates photos Becci Heagney

Socialist Party 'collectathon' to raise crucial cash

Ian Pattison
The Socialist campaign organiser

Socialist Party members will be trying to raise as much money and sell as many papers as possible in our 'collectathon' fortnight from 17 to 30 September.

Richard Branson made his £3.9 billion, now tax-free, personal wealth benefiting from privatisation. He's recently tried to publicly undermine Jeremy Corbyn and his plans to renationalise the railways.

For a magnate Max Mosley has donated £200,000 to right-wing Labour Party deputy leader, Tom Watson who is at the heart of attempts to oust Corbyn, deny Labour members the right to vote in the leadership election and purge Corbynists from party lists.

The establishment is clearly well funded. The 99% need to get organised and financed too.

This 'collectathon' falls during the university freshers fair season. Young people starting college and

university this year have only experienced a capitalist system of crisis and austerity.

But every pound they donate is worth far more than the likes of Branson and Mosley. We hope Socialist Party members will put on extra special campaign stalls at the weekends too.

Jeremy Corbyn rallies are the place where sellers of the Socialist have had the best response this summer. 250 copies were snapped up by the queues at the massive rally for Jeremy in Liverpool.

Every supporter can help with our fighting fund. In the North East a curry, raffle, and whiskey night raised more than £350!

This quarter requires an extra push as we've increased our target to £30,000 to be able to fund a socialist and anti-austerity alternative. We don't take a penny from big business.

Can you make a donation or take out a subscription to the Socialist-socialistparty.org.uk/subscribe?

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Socialist Party Fighting Fund				
	£ received	£ target	July to September 2016	Deadline 28 September 2016
North West	2,566	2,100		122%
Northern	614	750		82%
Yorkshire	2,391	3,300		72%
South West	1,282	1,800		71%
Wales	1,609	2,300		70%
East Midlands	1,025	1,850	55%	
Eastern	582	1,200	49%	
West Midlands	1,202	2,600	46%	
Southern	678	1,600	42%	
London	2,008	6,100	33%	
South East	200	750	27%	
Other	893	5,650	16%	
TOTAL	15,054	30,000	50%	

International outrage has resulted from the decision of 30 town mayors in the south of France to ban from beaches the wearing of 'burkini' swimsuits, on the spurious grounds of 'inciting terrorism' and 'threatening public safety'. Despite a court decree rejecting the ban as unconstitutional, the mayors say they will ignore the ruling. **Judy Beishon** reports on how the issue has become the focus of an ugly backlash to the recent terrorist attacks in France.



photo Giorgio Montersino
Wikimedia/Creative Commons

FRANCE: BURKINI BAN FUELS DIVISION

Workers' unity and socialist struggle to fight racism and Islamophobia

The mayor of the French Riviera resort of Cannes, David Lisnar, was the first to issue a temporary ban in August on the wearing of burkinis on the beach. Over 20 other mayors then made similar orders.

The decrees were worded against 'beachwear showing religious affiliation' but the burkini - a swimsuit covering most of the body - was clearly the main target. In Lisnar's words, it was a "symbol of Islamic extremism" that "could risk disrupting public order while France was the target of terrorist attacks".

Very few burkinis were actually being worn on French beaches. These edicts and subsequent police actions were blatant propaganda-motivated attacks on individual Muslim women who were trying to relax by the sea.

Coming from mayors from both the two main pro-capitalist parties in France - the right-wing republicans (UMP) and some from the so-called 'Socialist Party' of president Francois Hollande - these draconian orders are acting as a diversion from the complete lack of any real way forward these politicians have on preventing terrorism or on turning around the declining French economy.

Government ministers took opposing positions on the events. Prime minister Manuel Valls was among those supporting the bans, exacerbating divisions in his party, while education minister Najat Vallaud-Belkacem dryly pointed out: "There is nothing to prove that there is a link between the terrorism of Islamic State and what a woman wears on a beach".

Perhaps with an eye on the degree of disbelief and condemnation internationally, a test court case in France on 26 August suspended the ban in Villeneuve-Loubet.

A number of right-wing mayors vowed to keep their bans in place despite this ruling, and the mayor of Villeneuve-Loubet, Lionel Luca (a Republican National Assembly member) made it clear he will continue to use the issue to whip up racism and division.

He declared that the ruling would boost "rampant Islamisation" and that "far from calming, this decision can only heighten passions and tensions, with the risk of trouble we wanted to avoid".

It is the words and actions though of the burkini-banning, bigoted pro-capitalist politicians that are inflaming tensions. Through scapegoating all Muslims they create a climate in which there will be increased alienation of young Muslims and more incidences of physical and other racist attacks on Muslims.

Also, far from reducing the influence of the very small minority of jihadist-leaning Islamists, they give them an opening to pose as the defenders of the rights of Muslim

women who are being fined for what they wear.

In addition, banning burkinis is likely to increase their use. How many people had even heard of a burkini, least of all worn one, before French mayors launched their attacks? But now the burkini's Australian originator says that sales have risen.

After former French president Nicolas Sarkozy imposed a ban on full-face veils in public places in 2011 it was estimated that the number of women wearing them increased. And an untold number may have stopped leaving their homes; and now many may no longer go to beaches.

The outrageous, polarising position of Luca and many others who have waded into this issue is doubtless with a view to the 2017 presidential and legislative (parliamentary) elections - playing for votes by exploiting fear of globalisation, immigration and terrorism.

A prime example is Sarkozy, who wants to be reelected as president next year and is trying to draw votes away from the National Front led by Marine Le Pen, who fully supports the burkini bans.

Sarkozy strongly supported the bans, calling burkinis "a political militant act, a provocation. Women who wear it are testing the resistance of the Republic". He declared he would extend the bans nationally and also widen the ban on headscarves in schools and public sector institutions to encompass universities and all workplaces.

Women's rights

Aside from the issues of 'public order' and countering terrorism (and passing over the spurious issue of public hygiene that has been raised!) a major pretext of the burkini bans has been to uphold women's rights and promote secularism.

Some people who support the bans in France - especially on the left - do so due to these two issues, recognising that dress codes involving the covering of women's bodies can be a symbol of control by men over women.

Certainly, no woman should be forced against her will by her family to wear, or not wear, any particular item of clothing, whether for religious or moral reasons, in any country of the world.

But state-enforced laws either to uncover or cover-up won't aid the struggle for this basic right; rather they promote division and reduce the right of individual women to



Secularism in state institutions must be defended but so should the right of any individual to practise a religion and wear what they choose...

make their own choices about what they wear and do.

Secularism in state institutions must be defended but so should the right of any individual to practise a religion and wear what they choose, as long as they don't try to impose their beliefs on anyone else.

In any case, women don't just wear headscarves, tunics or burkinis because of religious observance; for some it is for reasons of tradition, culture or identity; or to avoid having their bodies stared at; or simply to protect their skin from the sun. For others it is to express defiance against racism, or to demonstrate their opposition to the imperialist wars that have killed hundreds of thousands of Muslims.

That the pro-ban capitalist politicians in France are not in reality motivated by women's rights is shown by their support for savage austerity measures - attacks on pensions, jobs, terms and conditions - that women are at the sharp end of.

The central route to dramatically improving the lives of Muslim women in France and all other working class and middle class women, lies through reversing austerity and im-

plementing a programme of creating secure jobs on good, equal pay, increasing benefits, and providing genuinely affordable housing and low cost childcare.

State repression

After the terrible 14 July slaughter of 86 people in Nice when a lorry driver drove into crowds, the French government extended the state of emergency it introduced after the Paris terrorist attacks last year.

But this won't stop further atrocities - as was shown just a week later when Isis claimed responsibility for the brutal killing of a catholic priest in a church near Rouen.

The extra police powers and the thousands of soldiers placed on the streets are an attempt by the government to appear to be doing something - an attempt in vain, as Hollande's very low popularity ratings bear witness.

The special repressive measures do however serve one purpose for the government; they can be used and have been used against demonstrators opposing government policies.

For example, protests by environmentalists have faced restrictions, as have some participants in the mass movement earlier this year against a new employment law.

That movement involved millions of workers from the public and private sectors taking repeated rounds of action and protests against a law that opens the door to longer working hours, less job security and other measures that amount to a bosses' charter at the expense of working people.

It included oil refinery blockades; strikes on the railways, at nuclear power stations and by refuse workers; participation by young people in secondary schools and universities; and the Nuit Debout discussion gatherings in city centres. Concurrently there were hundreds of strikes breaking out over other issues: pay, or terms and conditions, by air traffic controllers, pilots and other workers.

It is also through developing such united, mass workers' action, along with workers' political representation - whether in the Middle East, France or elsewhere - that the sponsors of terrorism and the conditions that breed it will be fought.

The devastation in Iraq and Afghanistan during and after the brutal western imperialist occupations created breeding grounds for escalating terrorism.

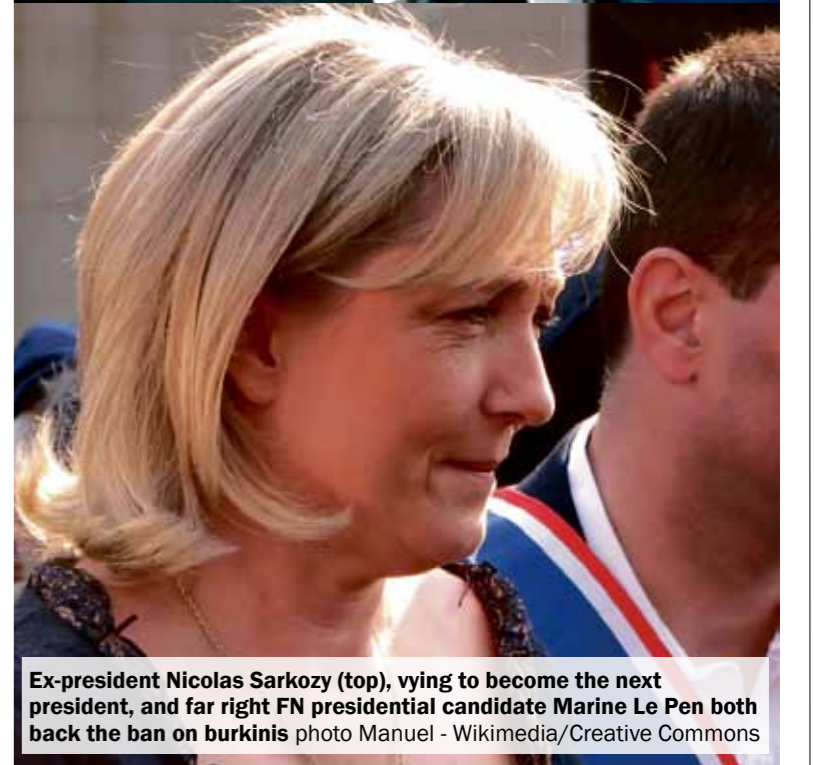
Add that catastrophic picture - and the war in Syria and the French military interventions in Africa - to the discrimination and poverty suffered by many Muslims and other sections of the working class in France, and the underlying background to the terrorist atrocities in France takes shape.

The sponsors of far-right reaction and terrorism feed off discontent, anger, lack of hope, inequality, discrimination and poverty.

Right-wing political Islam in the form of organisations such as Isis must be strongly countered, both because of the atrocities committed in their name and their reactionary ideology which is so profoundly



photo WEF
Wikimedia/Creative Commons



Ex-president Nicolas Sarkozy (top), vying to become the next president, and far right FN presidential candidate Marine Le Pen both back the ban on burkinis photo Manuel - Wikimedia/Creative Commons

against the interests of the working class and women's equality.

An overwhelming majority of Muslims condemn terrorism, and at present are the majority of victims of it across the globe. Even in Nice, around a third of those mowed down by the lorry driver were Muslim.

A tenth of the working population of France is unemployed, around 17% for those from immigrant backgrounds and higher still among youth. With zero economic growth

in France in the April to June quarter this year, the sickness of French capitalism - as with capitalism across the globe - is clear.

The answer to this lies not in state smokescreen measures that worsen racism and division, but in workers uniting in action, and laying the basis for the building of a new, genuinely socialist, party of their own to counter racism, sexism and all the austerity-driving acts of the government.



Mass workers' action - as seen in the recent struggles against the Hollande government's hated 'El Khomri' labour laws (above) - together with workers' political representation, can cut across racism and division in society photo Naomi Byron

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End low pay! - UberEats workers strike over their abysmal wage rates. See report page 6
photo Scott Jones

Can Britain have a pay rise?

Steve North
Secretary, Salford City Union
(personal capacity)

I was recently part of the audience on the BBC programme 'Can Britain have a pay rise'. There were 100 of us seated in ascending order of pay. Earnings ranged from jobseeker's allowance to the £1 million salary of Pimlico Plumbers boss Charlie Mullins.

What followed was a discussion about meritocracy: the myth that working hard can get you out of poverty. As somebody who represents care workers, I felt the need to state that anybody who believes this should talk to them. Even the wealthy found that hard to argue with.

We moved on to whether low pay was down to "the bosses". It was great to see a majority agree. Most of the business owners scoffed that it was them who helped people out of poverty by employing them. The answer from workers was: you need us more than we need you!

The third question was whether the Tories' National 'Living' Wage was a good thing. A business owner claimed he had to cut staff numbers because of the increase. He was rightly challenged over his own living standards. But the key point - that small businesses suffer more from the market dominance of big businesses than the rights of workers - was sadly missing.

We finally got to talk about trade unions. I was pleased to pay tribute to two young workers who had unionised their workplaces to protect their rights. Charlie Mullins - who had tried to present himself as a 'compassionate' employer - showed his true colours by attacking unions. He was met with a chorus of responses, declaring that if it weren't for unions workers wouldn't have even the paltry rights we have now.

The last section was on Brexit. Unfortunately I had to leave before this: I was already late for my second job!

■ 'Can Britain have a pay rise?' is available on BBC iPlayer until 23 September

Why you should join the Socialist Party today

Sarah Sachs-Eldridge
Socialist Party
national organiser

You should join the Socialist Party to help build the powerful movement for socialist change we all need.

Everyone probably knows someone involved in some sort of campaigning. From backing Jeremy Corbyn in the Labour leadership, to fighting cuts and privatisation of public services, to solidarity action with our sisters and brothers across the conflict-riven world, and many other important issues.

But in the face of a world in crisis, all establishment politicians seem capable of is inaction - hand-wringing at best. This is because they exist to defend the status quo. There is a tiny minority for whom the status quo is ideal - the super-rich.

As the Wall Street Journal put it: "Whatever the world's economic and market turbulence last year, one group has held up well: billionaires." The combined wealth of the world's billionaires increased by 5.4% to a record \$7.7 trillion, and the world's billionaire population grew by 6.4% to 2,473 in 2015.

Real earnings in Britain have declined more than 10% since the financial crisis began in 2007. In the US in 2012, the richest 10% received more than half of all income - 50.5%, the largest share since record-keeping began in 1917!

Statistics like these are replicated across the world. The working class and middle class are forced to pay for the crises of the profit-motivated capitalist system.

So instead of accepting that austerity and poverty for billions are a fact of life, people are increasingly prepared to take action for change. In Britain the main front of this battle is currently the civil war over the future of Labour. The incident around Virgin boss Richard Branson shows what it's all about.

When Jeremy Corbyn called for renationalisation of the railways from the floor of an over-crowded, over-priced, privatised train, for most it was a no-brainer.

But to the fat cats who run the railways for profit and their ilk, a Corbyn-led government elected on commitments to renationalisation and ending austerity spells disaster. Maintaining Labour as a pro-privatisation, pro-1% party is what is behind the attempted coup.

In defending the bosses' and the bankers' interests, the Blairite plotters have also attacked the Socialist Party - as reported in the establishment media. This is not accidental, but crucial to their attempts to weaken the movement that has arisen.

The Socialist Party has a record of convincing people of socialist ideas and the need for organised, united working class struggle. This is not by 'arm-twisting'

as Labour deputy leader Tom Watson scandalously declared, but by offering an explanation and a way to fight.

The Socialist Party has a record that attests to our confidence in workers to fight and to win based on the conviction that a socialist alternative is possible. For example, Militant, the Socialist Party's predecessor, led the 18-million strong campaign against the Poll Tax which brought down Thatcher.

The Militant leadership in Liverpool City Council in the 1980s refused to make cuts, redundancies and closures. Instead, it organised a mass campaign which resulted in the Thatcher government providing millions of pounds, allowing it to build 5,000 council houses and create thousands of jobs.

As part of the anti-Corbyn coup, the Labour Party 'compliance unit' is excluding people. We don't exclude anyone who agrees with our basic ideas and is ready to join the fightback with us - that includes Labour members. After all, we want to be part of a democratic and federal Labour Party in the fight against austerity and for socialism.

So if you agree with what you read in the Socialist, what we say in meetings, how we link up with people to organise resistance - don't let there be any barriers. Join us today.

■ Visit socialistparty.org.uk/ join, call 020 8988 8777 or text your name and postcode to 07761 818 206



photo Helen Pattison

Chile General strike threat as pensions protests grow



Socialismo Revolucionario (CWI in Chile) reporters

Sunday 21 August was another enormous day of protest marches in opposition to the AFP (the compulsory private pension system). Over 400,000 marched in the capital, Santiago, with up to two million in total demonstrating around the country. This represents a huge increase on the one million who participated in the historic 24 July protests.

The system of private pensions was introduced in 1981 under the dictatorship of General Pinochet - who led a US-backed military coup against the left-wing government of president Salvador Allende in 1973.

There are six private pension funds - AFPs - which manage \$160 billion (£122 billion) of assets but pay out paltry sums to retirees. Average pensions are only 38% of final salaries - the second lowest payout in the 35 nations comprising the OECD bloc. The demonstrators want the for-profit system scrapped and a generous public pension scheme introduced.

But so far President Michelle Bachelet has only promised minor reforms which have failed to satisfy the majority. Consequently, her government ratings in opinion polls continue to slide to an historic low.

The pensions campaign organisers have named 4 November for a general strike if the government continues to ignore workers' demands.

New wave

The recent demos represent a new pinnacle of mass anger and protest in a country which has been rocked by a militant student movement over the last decade. Sunday's protests, with young and old participating in large numbers, represent the beginnings of a new unity of students, workers and youth in struggle.

The marches were called by the "No + AFP" campaign, which brings together activists and leaders of the Chilean bank workers' federation, the national health workers' union, and other smaller unions.

Members of Socialismo Revolucionario, who play an important role in the bank workers' federation, have also played a leading role in building this campaign.

Patricio Guzman, an economist and leading Socialismo Revolucionario member, has made numerous national media appearances. A video of one such interview (in Spanish) can be seen on socialistworld.net.

While the government-controlled CUT (historically the main

union confederation) until recently supported the government's pension policy, key militant unions such as the copper workers and dockers' unions, could play a leading role in mobilising for a general strike.

Such a stoppage, organised over the heads of the country's pro-government union bureaucracy, would be a very significant step in the building of a new, militant mass movement of the working class in Chile, both industrially and politically.

Socialismo Revolucionario aims to play a central role in this, equipped with a revolutionary socialist programme.



What we stand for

The Socialist Party fights for socialism - a democratic society run for the needs of all and not the profits of a few. We also oppose every cut, fighting in our day-to-day campaigning for every possible improvement for working class people. The organised working class has the potential power to stop the cuts and transform society.

As capitalism dominates the globe, the struggle for genuine socialism must be international.

The Socialist Party is part of the Committee for a Workers' International (CWI), a socialist international that organises in over 40 countries.

Our demands include:

PUBLIC SERVICES

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

ENVIRONMENT

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

RIGHTS

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

NEW MASS WORKERS' PARTY

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

SOCIALISM AND INTERNATIONALISM

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

Join the fightback!
Join the Socialists!

www.socialistparty.org.uk 02089888777

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£20bn hospitals funding gap

NO NHS CUTS OR CLOSURES

Mike Forster Chair, Hands Off HRI (personal capacity) and **Aaron Bailey** Huddersfield Socialist Party

The NHS is about to undergo further major cuts and closures, through the government's misnamed 'Sustainability and Transformation Plan'. NHS England alone could face a £20 billion funding gap.

Simon Stevens, NHS England's chief executive, pledged in April 2014 to maintain local hospitals. He feared a vengeful public coming out to fight for their NHS.

Yet that is exactly what will happen now as a result of the 44 regional Sustainability and Transformation Plans. Changes in London, Leicestershire and the West Midlands - including entire hospitals being downgraded or closed - could result in nationwide protests.

Disbelief

NHS bosses say the plans are necessary for the sake of better care, modernisation and financial balance. But an angry, disbelieving public will fight tooth and nail against the loss of vital local services.

Here in Yorkshire, workers and the community continue to resist the proposed Huddersfield Royal Infirmary (HRI) A&E closure through the 'Hands Off HRI' campaign.

On 4 September we will march, followed by an afternoon of bands, stalls, entertainment and speakers. Almost £20,000 has been raised by local people to launch a legal challenge against the closure, backed by several large demonstrations. Two coaches have so far been booked for a visit to the Department of Health and Downing Street on 10 October.

This fight of ours has been fought and won in other parts of the country, such as Lewisham in south London. More areas are starting to mobilise to defend their own services. We are starting to link up with campaigns from all over the country, some of which are joining us in London in October.



Part of the thousands-strong demo against HRI A&E closure earlier this year

- Kick out the privateers!
- For a fully funded, publicly owned NHS, free at the point of delivery
- Scrap the 'Sustainability and Transformation Plan' - reverse all cuts - end PFI

The time is now right to unite all these struggles into a huge national campaign to defend the NHS.

The government can be defeated on this issue, but it's urgent that the trade unions take up the struggle now! The unions must build for coordinated, escalating strikes, and name the day for a national demonstration to save the NHS.

Save Grantham Hospital A&E

3 September, 12 noon - meet at St Peters Hill Green, Grantham
(see page 10 for campaign details)

Hands Off HRI march and 'Sunday Funday'

4 September, 12 noon - assemble at Huddersfield Royal Infirmary, Acre Street,
Sunday Funday from 1pm in Greenhead Park - all welcome

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