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the Socialist

Formerly **Militant**

How can Labour be transformed?

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NHS AT

BREAKING POINT

photo Paul Mattsson

National demo and health workers' strike needed!

Richard Worth
Bristol South Socialist Party

The National Health Service is "now at breaking point." This is the warning from Chris Hopson, chief executive of NHS Providers.

There's a shortage of 20,000 NHS nurses. Pressure on staff means tired health workers, threatening patient safety. With one in three nurses aged over 50, many may retire over the coming years and shortages will grow. But instead of helping to recruit more the Tories have scrapped bursaries for student nurses, making them pay for their training!

Newly qualified junior doctors look after up to 100 patients. One said: "We don't have time to review patients. [I am] constantly fighting fires, covering three peo-

ple's jobs, so I never have time to think about a patient properly." Yet the government is forcing them onto a new contract, making them work even harder.

One in ten hospital beds are occupied by patients who can't be released because of cuts to social care. This means operations are cancelled, causing patients to be seen in private hospitals, costing the NHS.

The Royal College of General Practitioners says 600 practices - with 75% of GPs in these aged over 55 - are at risk of closure by 2020.

This will result in a shortage of 10,000 GPs in the next four years.

Yet patients are already struggling to get appointments. Many end up in hospital A&E departments, suffering long waits. This will only get worse as we go into winter.

What's the Tory answer to this crisis? More cuts! Theresa May says there'll be no additional NHS funding and Health Secretary Jeremy Hunt is demanding £22 billion in 'efficiency savings' (ie cuts) by 2020.

'Sustainability and Transfor-

mation Plans' for NHS England will axe maternity wards and A&E units. Entire hospitals could close.

Action is needed to save our NHS. The trade unions must coordinate widespread industrial action of health and other workers under attack. A national demonstration of unions and community activists to defend the NHS would have mass support. If followed by a 24-hour general strike, the Tories could be brought down - a first step to saving the NHS!

■ See NHS campaign reports pages 2, 3 and 11

ELDERLY CARE AT CRISIS POINT

Councils and unions must combat the cuts

Lynn Doherty
Trade union organiser

Over the past six years, the number of care homes has fallen by 1,500 to 16,600.

Home care providers are not renewing council contracts. The number of elderly people receiving social care from their local council declined by a staggering 26% between 2010 and 2015.

More than a million people who can't handle for themselves the basic necessities of daily life now get no help whatsoever. This is the reality of care under capitalism - in a rich country - in 2016.

A report by the King's Fund think-tank, 'Social care for older people: home truths', shockingly adds: "No one has a full picture of what has happened to older people... no longer entitled to publicly funded care."

Many care providers now concentrate on those forced to self-fund their own care - anyone above the threshold of £23,500 in total savings and assets. Over half of

residential and nursing care funding now comes from private individuals rather than the state, which has reaped a lifetime of taxation from workers paying into a welfare system designed to protect them in old age.

There is a pressing need for a programme of action. This must start with those who have the power to change things - councillors and trade unions.

Penury

Continuing to implement cuts with the mantra "there's nothing we can do" is just condemning the elderly to penury. Labour councillors should be engaging with the care unions to mount an effective campaign to oppose cuts.

Unions must organise more vigorously in the voluntary and private care sectors. Unionise the workforce to fight these assaults. Join with local campaigning groups to fight cuts and, where possible, organise for united action across the movement.

For many, waiting for a 2020 election to act will sadly be too late.



Care UK strikers in Doncaster beat pay cuts in 2014 photo Paul Mattsson

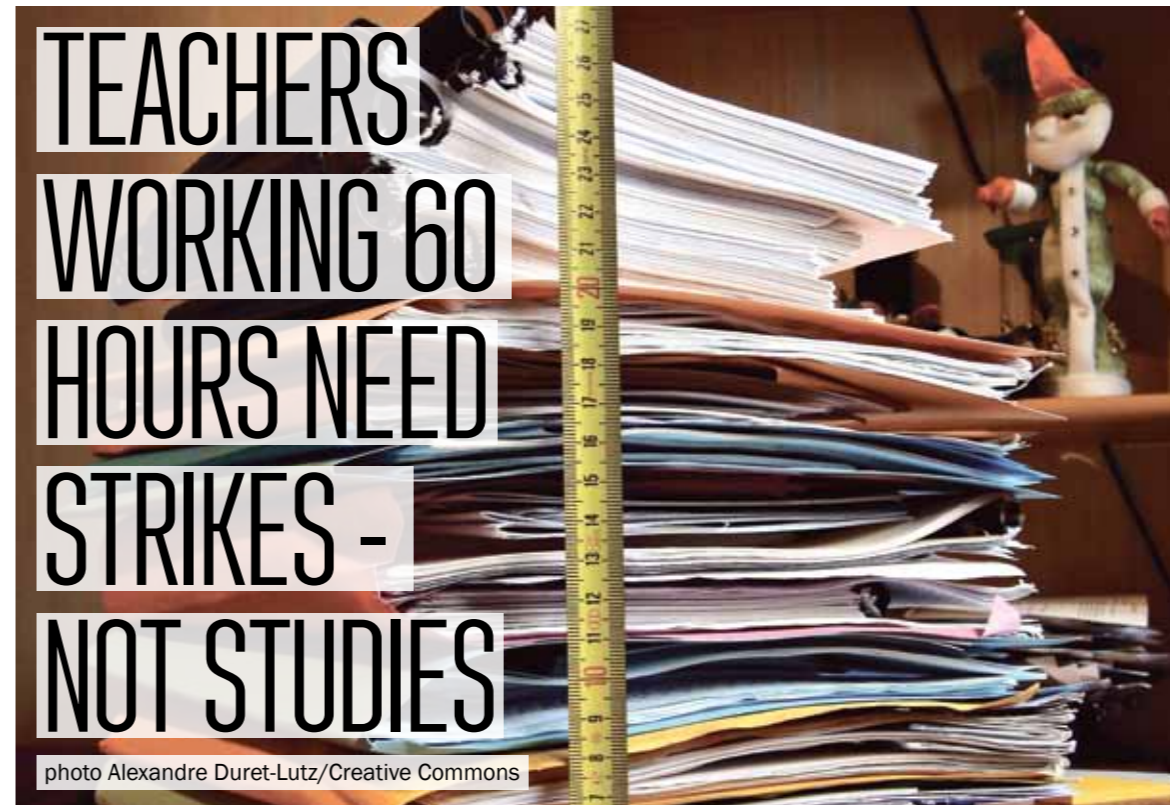


photo Alexandre Duret-Lutz/Creative Commons

Nicky Downes
National Union of Teachers rep, Coventry

Teachers work an average of 48 hours a week, and some work more than 60. This is the finding of a new report from the Education Policy Institute think-tank.

The BBC highlighted this report with the headline "Many teachers 'working 60-hour week'".

Teachers know they work long hours. They know that by half term they are crawling to work. They know they neglect their family and friends. They know being tired is not good for the children they teach.

What teachers don't want is another report telling us that, or ridiculous responses like 'increasing

class sizes reduces workload'. We want action to reduce workload.

In Coventry on 14 October we had our National Union of Teachers (NUT) reps' training day. It was clear, where teachers are taking collective action in their schools, they are winning small concessions.

In my school, for example, we now have a minimum marking policy. It means that most of our marking is done in lessons and not at home at midnight. Compare that to the rep whose everyday marking involves so many different coloured pens that the students are now responding in pink crayon!

The success from winning concessions school by school is limited. Even if an NUT group goes as far as taking strike action, the success is limited to just one school.

We need national action for a national contract. A contract that limits working hours, and includes, for example, 20% 'planning, preparation and assessment' time, smaller class sizes, guaranteed training. It should also remove performance-related pay.

Nottingham's Education Improvement Board has launched a voluntary 'Fair Workload Charter' for schools. It puts a cap on working time out of school at two hours a night. A move in the right direction.

Now we need a national campaign - including strike action, if necessary - that demands a national contract for all teachers in all areas. Teachers are sick of just being told we work 60-hour weeks. We need a national contract that ends this.



The campaign for rent control received surprising but welcome support in Cardiff on 15 October.

Members of Cardiff Socialist Party had their petition signed by Pikachu, the famous 'electric mouse' Pokémon.

The Socialist was unsurprised to

learn of Pikachu's support for the housing campaign. The 'Poké Balls' which house Pokémon between battles are the size of a grapefruit, and can shrink to the size of a ping-pong ball.

Thanks to Joe Fathallah for the Poké-pics

NHS cancer and dementia drugs 'unaffordable' NATIONALISE THE DRUGS COMPANIES!

Tom Barker
Leicester Socialist Party

The unrestrained profiteering of drugs companies means the NHS could start rejecting groundbreaking treatments for cancer and dementia as "unaffordable".

A number of dementia treatments are now in late-stage trials. If one proves successful in slowing the onset of the disease, and is subsequently approved by the National Institute of Health and Care Excellence (Nice), it will now be subject to a further affordability review by

NHS chiefs.

Because Nice will have to approve the terms of restrictions as "reasonable", bosses at NHS England claim this will not mean access to life-saving medicines is denied or delayed. But Nice also has affordability at its core.

All patients are legally entitled to treatments on the NHS, provided Nice approves them as cost-effective. In practical terms, this means costing less than £30,000 for every year of good quality life a treatment provides.

The Tories plan to slash a further £22 billion from the NHS budget by

2020. It is difficult to imagine that an extra affordability review will benefit patients.

Alongside private healthcare, the pharmaceutical industry exports vast profits from the NHS. The NHS in England spent £15.5 billion on medicines in 2014-15 - a rise of 19.4% since 2010-11.

So that they are run for human need rather than private profit, the pharmaceutical industry must be brought into public ownership under democratic workers' control and management. And NHS cuts and sell-offs must be halted and reversed.

NHS campaigns march together in 'one fight' against service cuts

Mike Forster
Chair, HandsOffHRI (personal capacity)

The sense of solidarity and unity was electric, with over 300 of us marching together. This was on a midweek protest organised by local activists.

The campaign to save Huddersfield Royal Infirmary's A&E department, HandsOffHRI, took its case to Westminster on 10 October. Groups from Chorley, Grantham, St Heliers and Lewisham, among many others, joined us.

The various groups all face cuts to local hospital services. We decided to protest together, and initially gathered our collective forces in Trafalgar Square.

We had contacted Health Secretary Jeremy Hunt beforehand, who had insisted the proposed A&E

closure at Huddersfield was a "local problem". We invited him up to Huddersfield to see for himself but heard nothing further.

Campaigners realise the Tories are behind the £20 billion cuts in health spending. We delivered 134,000 signatures to both the Department of Health and Downing Street.

Our main chant, "one fight, we all unite", reflected the anger felt by us all at the proposed huge cuts under the misnamed 'Sustainability and Transformation Plans'.

During the protest I met with other key activists to discuss more plans for the fightback.

We came up with the idea of calling a national demonstration in support of the NHS for February 2017.

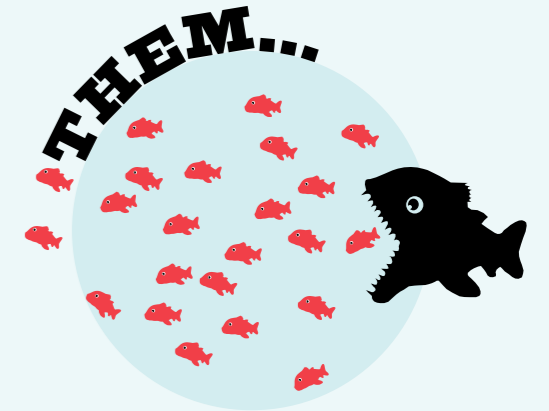
This will be further discussed at the next meeting of 'Health Campaigns Together'.

The time to strike back is now! The entire future of the NHS is now at stake. Campaign groups are springing up everywhere. We desperately need a national plan of action and joint resistance.

With determination and leadership this struggle can be won. It is now vital that the health trade unions come behind these calls for action, and give the lead with a programme of coordinated, escalating action.

Our Huddersfield group has come a long way in ten months. On 20 October we will hear the outcome of our local consultation.

We have pledged to continue the fight until the private sector is expelled from the NHS and proper public funding is returned to all hospital and health services.



Chocs away

Multinational food giant Mondelez dodged nearly £36 million in UK tax last year.

The US-based corporation made pre-tax profits of £117.3 million. But interest payments and a tax-exempt sale meant it paid zero corporation tax.

Mondelez - then part of Kraft Foods - bought UK chocolate firm Cadbury in 2010. Boss Irene Rosenfeld had promised not to close the Somerdale factory near Bristol.

She did close it. 400 workers lost their jobs.

Cadbury UK also paid no corporation tax on profits of £96.5 million. Rosenfeld 'earned' £13.1 million.

You can't control what you don't own. The Socialist says: nationalise the food giants to stop tax dodging and safeguard jobs and quality.

£0

UK coporation tax Mondelez paid last year

£13m

Mondelez CEO's pay packet last year

Water rip-off!

The richest man in Hong Kong, billionaire Li Ka-shing, has made £140 million from his stakes in UK water companies.

Southern Water started paying dividends again for the first time in five years, including £82 million for Li. This was in spite of receiving an average of twice the complaints of other water firms.

And Northumbrian Water paid CKI, Li's holding company, £58 million. Tax breaks meant it paid no corporation tax on its £131 million profits.

Water regulator Ofwat announced a restriction on water bill hikes in 2014. However, this was not enough to outpace inflation. The average annual water bill was set to break the £400 barrier in 2015.

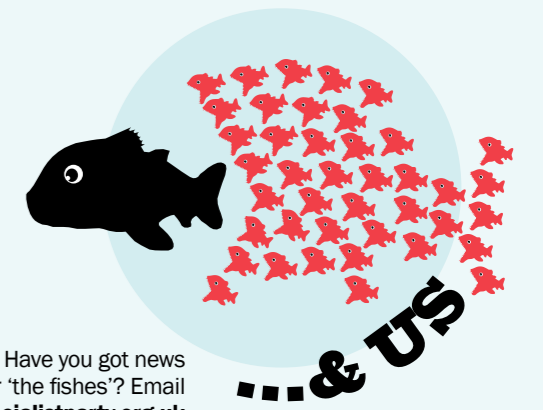
Before the Tories privatised utilities in 1989, the average bill was £236. Public ownership under democratic worker's control and management could sort that out.

£0

UK corporation tax Northumbrian Water paid last year

£58m

Dividend it paid to super-rich shareholder Li Ka-shing



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020 8988 8777 editors@socialistparty.org.uk @socialistpaper

Editor: Sarah Wrack
News/letters: James Ivens

International: Dave Carr
Workplace/campaigns: Scott Jones

Sales/layout: Ian Pattison
Photographer: Paul Mattsson

Website: Judy Beishon

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NO BACKTRACKS, NO COMPROMISES: WE MUST FIGHT FOR REAL DEMOCRACY IN THE LABOUR PARTY



What we think

On 28 February 2015 the 'Campaign for Labour Party Democracy' met for its annual general meeting. There was a motion proposed by Jon Lansman, now better known in his role as the chair and main political leader of Momentum, on the agenda.

Lansman's motion argued that Labour activists should "quit tinkering" and demand full mandatory selection of Labour MPs. Such a change would "ensure the accountability of elected representatives to the party" he went on to argue. After all, "Labour members who work tirelessly to return their MPs to parliament have a right to choose their local candidates. Going through a selection process once every 30 years is just not adequate."

It is in the heat of struggle that the mettle of individuals, organisations and political ideas is really tested. After all, it is always easier to 'talk a good fight' when you are not facing down fire on the battlefield. The fighting talk of Jon Lansman in February 2015 came at a time when the Labour left seemed in terminal decline. Following Labour's disastrous election result, John McDonnell spoke at a trade union conference where he hinted at potential support for new parties developing to the left of Labour.

Among the dwindling number of left stalwarts who had remained in the Labour Party during the long march of Blairism, optimism was in short supply. In an interview he gave while Jeremy Corbyn was fighting for nominations to stand in 2015's leadership contest, Jon Lansman wrote: "Jeremy Corbyn may not win this election but if he gets on the ballot paper, he'll widen the debate and change the other candidates' campaigns. Candidates will talk more about austerity than aspiration. If they mention party 'reform', they'll be more likely to mean democracy and less likely to mean new ways of excluding trade unions."

But, in an unpredictable way, Jeremy Corbyn's campaign became a lightning rod for the seething discontent which existed in society and the hunger for a political alternative. The movement that developed around him was primarily based on a fresh layer of people coming from outside of the Labour Party who, enthused by the possibility of an anti-austerity, socialist leader, paid £3 to register as supporters or a similar amount to join as members.

Two parties in one

Now, Jeremy Corbyn has emerged from a second leadership election. After winning almost two thirds of the vote, he has once again proven the enormous appeal of anti-austerity left politics. Within the Labour Party's membership he has overwhelming support. But within the Parliamentary Labour Party (PLP) he remains in a small minority. 172 of 230 Labour MPs voted 'no confidence' in Jeremy in June. They did so not primarily because of concerns about his personal 'competence' or 'electability' but because they are wedded to the pro-capitalist, austerity politics of Blair, Brown, Miliband and co.

And far from having accepted the decisive result of the leadership election they triggered, the right within the PLP are devising new plans to paralyse and undermine Corbyn. Recent reports described a right-wing plot by MPs to hold ballots - not of members, but of parliamen-



Campaigning in support of Jeremy Corbyn in Birmingham
 photo Birmingham Socialist Party

tarians - on key political issues. In this way they plan to oppose the positions supported by Corbyn - not to mention most Labour members - and attempt to force him 'into line'.

Indeed, while the right's immediate plans to remove him have been knocked back, Tom Watson's rumoured 'project Anaconda' is now clearly in full swing.

As the Socialist Party has consistently argued, a strategy of appeasement and compromise will see Corbyn paralysed and hemmed in on the most important issues, leading to the inevitable undermining of his support among working class people.

Instead, the mass support that exists for Jeremy must be brought to bear on the PLP. Other than a handful of loyalists in parliament, Corbyn's real supporters are outside its walls. They are anti-austerity campaigners, socialists, ordinary Labour Party members and trade unionists. These are the forces that must be organised and mobilised if Corbyn is to win this civil war.

The potential to win is clearly there. Thousands attended rallies to hear Jeremy speak over the summer. And they are prepared to fight. A poll by YouGov showed that mandatory reselection - a term that would have seemed utterly obscure at the time it was raised by Jon Lansman in 2015 - is now supported by the majority of Corbyn voters.

Why is it then, that at this moment, when the forces exist in outline to genuinely transform and re-found the Labour party, the official leaders of Momentum appear to have lost all stomach for a fight? In comments he made

to the Guardian just one week following Jeremy Corbyn's second, tremendous victory, Lansman was at pains to reassure the Blairites that, under his leadership, Momentum poses them no threat. "We will not campaign for mandatory reselection nor to deselect any individual MP" were his exact words.

Not only is this a reversal of his historic position, it is, in reality, waving a white flag of surrender to the Labour right and their backers in the capitalist class. It is a capitulation to the relentless campaign being waged against Jeremy by all wings of the establishment.

Mandatory reselection

Mandatory reselection is not about 'bullying' or intimidation as those seeking to smear Corbyn and his supporters attempt to claim. It is basic democracy. Those who wish to be Labour candidates should be accountable to the party members and affiliated trade unionists they are supposed to represent. There should be no blank cheques or guaranteed 'jobs for life'. This is true both of MPs and, importantly, of local councillors - the majority who are passing on vicious cuts hitting working class communities across the country.

Of course, the principle of democratic accountability applies beyond the confines of internal party democracy. The Socialist Party has always argued for the right to recall elected representatives, whether in trade unions, councils, parliament or any other kind of public office.

Mandatory reselection simply guarantees that, before every election, there is a democratic process within



photo Samantha Smith

Labour to decide on the candidate. It could be used to replace pro-war, anti-Corbyn MPs with anti-austerity and anti-war fighters, trade unionists, socialists and community campaigners. In short, to replace MPs who fight for the 1% with MPs who will fight for the working class.

That is why reselection was fought for and won by the left in the past. And it is also why it was removed as part of a tranche of measures designed to cement Labour's move to the right and destroy the left within the party.



Mandatory reselection simply guarantees that, before every election, there is a democratic process within Labour to decide on the candidate

But even without the rule-change that would be required in order to restore mandatory reselection, it is possible for campaigns to be waged to de-select MPs. The current rules allow for party members to use the mechanism provided through 'trigger ballots'. Although securing a re-selection vote through a 'trigger ballot' is a more torturous route, with more scope for the party machine to intervene, were Momentum to properly organise and co-ordinate Corbyn supporters in every area, it would be possible to remove right-wing MPs.

The move by Lansman to capitulate on the question of mandatory reselection is symptomatic of the general approach that has been adopted by Momentum's leadership, almost from the outset. This has included acting as a mirror image of Labour's right-wing 'compliance unit' and carrying out Momentum's own purges and exclusions aimed at members of the Socialist Party and other organisations. It is no wonder, therefore, that many of those involved in the campaign at local level are furious with the complete lack of internal democracy as well as the cowardly approach of its leadership on a whole number of questions, including reselection.

A party for the 99%

As the battle for the soul of Labour continues, those 'leaders' who are unwilling to take on the fight must be cast aside. The Socialist Party argues for a ferocious battle to be waged in defence of Corbyn, with the central objective of transforming Labour into a party which will act in the interests of working class people.

This means rather than declaring a phoney one-sided peace with the right, organising and fighting to defeat them. It means genuinely campaigning for Labour Party democracy, including mandatory reselection. It means defending the rights of Labour members, opposing witch hunts and supporting the restoration of the voice of workers through trade union collective representation at all levels. It means campaigning for the party to be opened up, looking towards its federal traditions, with a structure that could allow the active participation of socialist and anti-austerity organisations, including the Socialist Party. And it means being prepared to stand up for the anti-austerity, socialist politics that saw Corbyn elected in the first place - to fight for a Labour party that stands for the 99%.



photo Paul Mattsson

TUSC discusses new tasks after Corbyn victory

Clive Heemskerck
 Socialist Party executive committee and TUSC national agent

The first meeting of the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC) national steering committee since Jeremy Corbyn's decisive re-election victory agreed to make a new appeal to Labour councillors to join the resistance to the Tories' austerity agenda.

Nobody can dispute that local government public services are in crisis after years of underfunding. A recent leaked report from the Care Quality Commission found that social care services, for example, are in an "unsustainable" position due to council cuts, with enormous knock-on implications for the NHS as patients cannot be safely discharged.

Responding to the leak Labour's shadow minister for social care, Barbara Keeley, rightly denounced the Tories. But Labour councillors are implementing the cuts when they could be resisting them - and, by joining the fightback, playing a key role in defeating the Tories.

The TUSC steering committee agreed a model letter to Labour councillors calling on them to support no-cuts budgets in next year's council budget-making meetings. The letter takes up the counter-argument of the right-wing, that such a course is 'illegal', which was behind the disappointing vote at Labour's conference to now make it a party disciplinary offence for a councillor to support "any proposal to set an illegal budget".

Consolidating victory

TUSC, the letter makes clear, "is not opposed to actions which take the labour movement and its representatives outside unfair and unjust laws". As an example, it supports Jeremy Corbyn and John McDonnell's public pledges to "stand with trade unions that find themselves involved in 'illegal action' under the anti-union laws".

But as the letter goes on to say, TUSC also believes "it is possible for Labour councils to produce 'legally balanced' budgets that avoid cuts in

the short term and provide a breathing space to build a campaign" for more government funding. It points to the TUSC briefing document, 'Preparing a no-cuts People's Budget' (see www.tusc.org.uk/txt/355.pdf), and asks Labour councillors to discuss this with TUSC.

As part of the autumn campaigning around the new round of council cuts 'consultations' that will soon be under way, local TUSC groups should circulate the letter to Labour councillors and get the debate going.

The Socialist Party, one of the TUSC constituent organisations, also presented other proposals to the steering committee on the role TUSC could play in helping to consolidate Jeremy Corbyn's leadership against the right.

We highlighted the importance of fighting for trade unions to have their leading role within the Labour Party restored and that socialists excluded from Labour should be reinstated, with socialist organisations allowed to affiliate (see www.socialistparty.org.uk/articles/23636/28-09-2016/corbynwins-new-tasks-for-tusc).

To facilitate discussions with Jeremy Corbyn and his supporters on these issues, as well as the campaign against council cuts, the Socialist Party proposed that TUSC make no further preparations for contesting the May 2017 elections in England and Wales.

These proposals however, unlike the model letter to councillors, were left on the table for the next steering committee meeting in November.

The Socialist Workers Party (SWP) supported suspending electoral activity. But they disagreed with the very idea that the Labour Party could, in the words of the Socialist Party's statement, "be fully consolidated as a working class, socialist, anti-austerity mass movement". This reflects their view that because "Labour remains a parliamentary party", its "structures and politics restrict the capacity for it to become a social movement, let alone an instrument for socialist transformation" (Socialist Worker, 20 September).

This approach seems very radical - politics must be "dragged from the

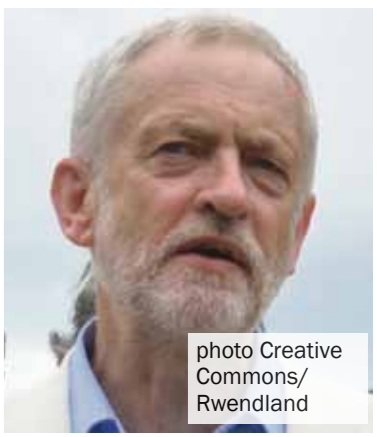


photo Creative Commons/Rwendland

parliamentary chambers into the streets" they wrote.

But it does not concretely point Corbyn's supporters to what alternative 'structures and politics' are actually needed to defeat the real forces of the capitalist establishment that remain within the Labour Party.

These include the big majority of Labour's 7,000 local councillors. Meanwhile the electoral weapon - standing anti-cuts candidates - that could be used against the Labour right is given up.

RMT discussion

On the other hand the other TUSC constituent organisation, and its largest, the RMT transport workers' union, had not yet been able to fully discuss all the issues raised.

The RMT's 2016 annual delegate general meeting (AGM) recorded that there was "no mood to re-affiliate to the Labour Party" in the union, even as it pledged support for Jeremy Corbyn's leadership. Would agreeing a TUSC declaration in support of restored rights for trade unions in the Labour Party contradict that position?

The AGM confirmed the union's continued participation in TUSC. It also agreed to continue supporting individual candidates in elections, TUSC or Labour, who "support the union's key politics. We back candidates that back us".

Would that fit with the union's representatives on the TUSC committee supporting a blanket decision for TUSC candidates in England and Wales to suspend preparations to stand in 2017 pending discussions with Jeremy Corbyn and his supporters?

So the proposals were left on the table and the discussion on the role of TUSC in the aftermath of Jeremy Corbyn's re-election will resume at the November steering committee.

In the meantime, the committee agreed, the campaign continues to push Labour in local councils to become an anti-austerity party in action as well as words.

12 & 13 November
 Central London

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 - FIGHT THE BLAIRITES
 - CHANGE THE WORLD TO END POVERTY, INEQUALITY & WAR



THEMES	SATURDAY 3-5PM	SUNDAY 10AM-12NOON	SUNDAY 1-3PM
Corbyn, Labour and a voice for the 99%	Why is de-selection important for the civil war in Labour? Speaker: Peter Taaffe, Socialist Party general secretary	Forum: Is the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition still necessary? Speakers include: Dave Nellist, TUSC national chair	Crisis in Spain, Podemos, socialist struggle Speakers: Barbara Areal from Izquierda Revolucionaria, Spain
Trotskyism in the 21st century	Who's afraid of Leon Trotsky? Speaker: Alec Thraves, Socialist Party national committee	Is Trotsky's idea of the 'transitional programme' still relevant? Speaker: Judy Beishon, Socialist Party executive committee	Why will we celebrate 100 years since the October 1917 Russian Revolution? Speaker: Lynn Walsh, editor of Socialism Today
Marxism Today	What use is Marxist economics? Speaker: Hugh Caffrey, Socialist Party North West secretary	Historical materialism - a tool for changing the world Speaker: Ken Douglas, Socialist Party national treasurer	Understanding change - dialectical materialism Speaker: Jim Hensman, Coventry Socialist Party
Big Ideas in Bitesize Mainly aimed at school and college students	Can school students make a difference? Speaker: Helen Pattison, Socialist Party London youth organiser	Am I a socialist? Speaker: Tom Baldwin, Socialist Party national committee	Why do socialists talk about class? Speaker: Lenny Shail, Socialist Party national committee
Big Ideas in Bitesize Mainly aimed at school and college students	A socialist programme for education Speaker: James Kerr, socialist education activist	What is a revolutionary party? Speaker: Paul Callanan, Socialist Party national committee	Are there easier ways to change the world and fight environmental crisis? Speaker: Mark Best, Socialist Party national organisation dept
Austerity Britain	Forum: defending refugees, fighting deportations Speakers from the Refugee Rights campaign, Tamil Solidarity and others	Forum: Disability in the age of austerity Speaker: Paula Mitchell, Socialist Party London secretary	Forum: We're not moving - resisting the housing crisis Speaker: Suz Muna, Unite housing branch and activists from the Butterfields housing campaign
After the Brexit vote	Is Scotland heading towards independence? Speaker: Philip Stott and Matt Dobson, Socialist Party Scotland	Were socialists right to say no to the EU? Speaker: Sarah Sachs-Eldridge, Socialist Party national organiser	Socialists and the EU free movement debate Speaker: Clive Heemskerk, TUSC national agent
Militant's real history	Poll Tax: How 18 million people beat Thatcher Speaker: Alistair Tice, Socialist Party Yorkshire secretary and Janet Gibson, jailed for refusing to pay the Poll Tax	Militant on the Mersey: lessons for fighting council cuts Speakers: Tony Mulhearn, former Liverpool 47 councillor; Nick Chaffey, Socialist Party Southern secretary; and campaigners on 'people's budgets'	
Lessons for our movement	1956 - the Hungarian Revolution: When workers rose in their millions Speaker: Clare Doyle, Committee for a Workers' International secretariat	1936 - the Spanish Civil War: Defeat snatched from the jaws of victory Speaker: Tony Saunois, Committee for a Workers' International secretariat	1916 - Easter Rising Ireland: A revolt against imperial power and war Speaker: Niall Mulholland, Committee for a Workers' International secretariat
World in crisis	Is there a solution to the misery in Syria? Speaker: Cedric Gerome, Committee for a Workers' International secretariat	Trump v Clinton: How did this happen? Speakers: Darletta Scruggs, Socialist Alternative Chicago, and Dave Reid, Socialist Party Wales Socialist Party secretary	South Africa: where next for the mass student fightback? Speaker: Sean Figg, Workers and Socialist Party, South Africa
Divided we fall	Debate: Women's liberation and identity politics Speaker: Claire Laker Mansfield, Socialist Party executive committee		Black Lives Matter - building a movement to end racism Speaker: Hugo Pierre, Socialist Party member on the Unison public sector union national executive (personal capacity)
Post-crisis capitalism	New technology, the gig economy and the working class Speaker: Sarah Wrack, editor of the Socialist paper	Capitalism v Corbynomics Speaker: Hannah Sell, Socialist Party deputy general secretary	Eight years after the world economic crisis - can socialism replace capitalism? Speaker: Robin Clapp, Socialist Party secretary South West
Discussion forums	Forum: Building new workers' parties in the 21st Century Speakers from Brazil, Spain, Ireland and Britain	Forum: Art, cuts and capitalism Speakers to be confirmed	Forum: The NHS, the trade unions and the fightback Speakers include health workers, trade union activists and local campaigners
Trade unionism today		The role of trade unions in refounding Labour as a workers' party Speakers from the trade union movement	Crisis in trade unionism - left or right? Speaker: Rob Williams, Socialist Party industrial organiser, and Vicky Perrin, Unison NEC (personal capacity)

SHEFFIELD BIN STRIKER INJURED ON PICKET LINE AS DISPUTE CONTINUES



About 50 workers on the picket line on 17 October block lorries coming out the yard
photo Philip King

Paul Stewart
Striking Sheffield bin worker

It was a proud day to be a bin man in Sheffield on 17 October as a hundred or more of my GMB union colleagues and I protested about the greedy corporate giant Veolia's refusal to agree our request for a 2% pay rise. They say they can't meet our demand while paying thousands to ship in scab labour and accommodate them in hotels.

Personally, I like to think we're

playing our part in ridding our city of one of Sheffield City Council's most expensive mistakes.

Veolia uses rate payers' money to satisfy its own ambitions all around the world and it shows a greater obligation to its shareholders than it does to those whose council tax funds them.

Privatisation

Veolia aren't here by any mandate from the people of Sheffield, but because the council privatised waste management on a 30 year contract.

During our strike, we formed a

peaceful blockade to obstruct vehicles and scab labour from leaving the yard.

I personally sustained an injury when a member of management drove his company 4x4 in to me. He could quite clearly see I was there and I can only assume his intention was to cause me harm, such is the attitude that Veolia has towards its own employees.

Veolia spirits millions away from our city when our council services have been stripped to the point of being ineffective - a concern we should all stand against.



Joseph (right) at the protest photo Pete Mason

London Underground cleaners protest pay cut

Joseph Mambuliya
London Underground cleaner and RMT member

London Underground (LU) cleaners protested outside the London mayor's office on 13 October. Our pay and conditions are being attacked by the private contractors employed by London Underground. The RMT is demanding that Sadiq Khan brings cleaning back in house.

Station cleaners are losing £3,400 a year because their working week has been cut from six days to five days. Yet they have been told to clean up to four stations a day. Before they were cleaning one or two.

In-house LU staff get sick pay and free travel. Cleaners are employed by contractors and get no sick pay and have to pay, not only when they

travel to work and back, but also between stations to carry out their duties. This can cost £100 a month. The contractors often short pay the staff, and harass and bully them. The RMT is fighting to unionise the cleaners and demands a £10 an hour minimum wage.

At the protest I made the point that every night the cleaners in the depots work really hard to get the trains immaculately clean for the city stockbrokers, so they can travel in them without soiling their five thousand pound suits.

The cleaners are also with having to help customers, because the ticket offices have been closed and station staff are busy helping customers on the tickets machines. We hope the mayor will listen to the plight of the cleaners, end the contracting out of cleaning staff and bring them back in house.

Support the 'Kinsley 3' cleaners in pay fight

Jon Sibbald
Wakefield and Pontefract Socialist Party

Socialist Party members and other trade unionists took part in a march and rally in Barnsley on 15 October in support of school cleaners, the 'Kinsley 3', who have been on strike for over six weeks.

The dispute started in April this year when their school moved from the control of Wakefield District Council and became Kinsley Academy.

Cuts

Although they had nearly 30 years' service between them the school gave the cleaning contract to C&D Cleaning, a Barnsley company. C&D abolished their sick pay agreement, cut their holiday entitlement and cut their pay rate from £7.85 an hour to £7.20.

But this doesn't take into account the time they don't get paid for and other complications of having to clock on and off over the telephone.

Their actual take home pay has been cut by about 25%.

When Unison tried to negotiate on behalf of the cleaners C&D said that they didn't recognise Unison and would not negotiate with them. If C&D get away with treating workers in this way it will open the floodgates for other rogue employers to do the same.

It is important that we give all the support we can to these workers.

■ Donations to their strike fund can be sent to Wakefield Unison, 18 Gills Yard, Wakefield, WF1 3BZ.

■ Send messages on Facebook, search for: 'Support the Kinsley School Cleaners Strike'



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NEWSQUEST STRIKE: BOSSES REALISE 'CONTRAINTS' OF SCAB LABOUR

William Jarrett
Newcastle Socialist Party

National Union of Journalists (NUJ) members at local daily papers published by Newsquest in the south of England have taken five days of industrial action against the company, beginning on 13 October. The source of the dispute is cuts to staffing, which have already prompted seven reporters to resign.

This follows office closures at two papers, cuts to editor numbers, and the slashing of an entire commercial features team. The impact is noticeable, with scab reporters copying sports press releases virtually word-for-word and front page headlines boasting embarrassing spelling and grammar errors.

Newsquest is a major UK media firm, with 5,500 employees, and enhanced its profits by 15% last year to a total of £82.5 million.

Newsquest is a subsidiary of Gannett, a US media firm, which has a



dark history of strong-arm industrial tactics, including sometimes-violent strike-breaking attacks on writers' and printers' guilds which would make even a Wapping-era Rupert Murdoch blush.

In keeping with that industrial tradition, Newsquest management, led by hard-headed CEO

Henry Faure Walker, refused to consult staff about these cuts. Management's tactics backfired however. With Acas talks exhausted, on 17 October members voted for a further five days of all-out strike action.

A Newsquest south London chapel spokesperson told me: "The company's repeated cuts are going to cripple true local journalism not only here but across the country. Profits boosted by cutting experienced and committed staff are shipped to Gannett in the US, meaning oversight of public officials and politicians is basically subject to that conglomerate's whim."

The Socialist Party stands in total solidarity with the NUJ and its striking members at Newsquest.

■ To donate to the strike fund email bernardr@nuj.org.uk noting the amount and send the money to: Account number 20143387, Sort code 608301

Sixty years ago Egyptian president Colonel Nasser's proclamation of the nationalisation of the Suez Canal was an electrifying rallying call for the country's working class and poor and throughout the Middle East. Britain's Tory government, along with France and Israel, attempted to seize back control of this strategic asset militarily. However, as **Niall Mulholland** explains, this only exposed British imperialism's rapidly declining economic and political power and accelerated social revolutions in the neo-colonial world.

In the 19th century, Egypt was part of the Ottoman Empire. In 1882, during a nationalist uprising, British imperialism sent a navy and army of occupation to secure its interests, including the Suez Canal, a strategically important route to part of its Empire.

A massive wave of strikes and demonstrations by Egyptian workers from 1919 onwards forced the British government to declare an 'independent' Egyptian state. But British imperialism maintained its garrison in the Suez Canal zone.

After 1945, workers and peasants throughout the colonial world intensified their anti-imperialist struggles to achieve national and social liberation. Egyptian society was undergoing radical changes. Economic instability, inflation, and unemployment led to the growth of new political groups, such as the Muslim Brotherhood. Broad hostility towards Britain and its presence grew.

Free Officers

In the war which followed the withdrawal of the British army from Palestine, Zionist forces defeated the Arab armies. The young Egyptian officers who served in the war were highly critical of the actions of the military high command and ruling class.

A clandestine movement of young nationalist officers, including the charismatic Gamal Abdul Nasser, returned from Palestine more than ever convinced of the urgent need for radical change in Egypt. The Free Officers, as they called themselves, formed an executive committee of which Nasser, now a colonel, was elected president. Cells were formed throughout the armed forces, which distributed literature denouncing the regime.

Under pressure from growing

unrest, Egypt's King Farouk, called a general election in 1950 and made a governing alliance with the Wafd party, dominated by big landowners and financiers.

Riding the tiger of nationalism, the Egyptian prime minister, Mustafa Nahhas, declared a state of emergency. Workers and students took steps to cut off supplies and labour to British forces stationed in the Canal zone. Nahhas could not restrain the formation of volunteer 'liberation' groups to carry out guerrilla attacks on the 80,000 British personnel garrisoned at the huge, complex Suez base.

On 25 January 1952 a British force surrounded police headquarters at Ismailia and called upon its occupants to surrender. They resisted until 50 were dead and many more injured.

The next day - known as 'Black Saturday' - crowds burned British and other foreign properties in Cairo. King Farouk dismissed the prime minister and four governments came and went in so many weeks.

Egyptian society was in turmoil. Millions were landless and unemployed. Land occupations and strikes were taking place. But with a weak Communist Party, and in the absence of a strong independent working class force to lead the urban and rural poor to power, Nasser stepped into the political vacuum.

As the regime disintegrated, the Free Officers took the initiative and on the night of 22-23 July, instructed loyal army units to seize key points in the capital, facing only token resistance. The Egyptian Revolution was declared.

King Farouk abdicated and was sent into exile. The Free Officers established the Revolutionary Command Council (RCC) to run the country (later the ruling party became the



“ ”

For Britain and France, the Suez debacle represented the ending of their century-long domination of the Arab countries. British imperialism's weakness was starkly exposed

and throughout the Arab countries.

After the US forced Israel to withdraw from the Sinai and Gaza in early 1957, Egypt was left in full control of the canal. All British and French property in Egypt was sequestered and thousands of their citizens expelled. Two months later, the rest of Egypt's banking and insurance was nationalised.

For Britain and France, the Suez debacle represented the ending of their century-long domination of the Arab countries. British imperialism's economic and political weakness was starkly exposed. Eden was forced to resign.

'Arab socialism'

For Nasser the years 1956 to 1959 marked the high tide of his rule, when his pan-Arab nationalism and anti-imperialism was immensely popular among Arab workers and the poor. He embarked on more 'Arab socialism' policies. Most industry, manufacturing and trade were nationalised. State control of foreign trade and progressive taxation was introduced.

However the regime did not overthrow capitalism. With his popular support, Nasser, a bonapartist dictator, manoeuvred between the capitalist and Stalinist powers of West and East.

From 1952-67 real wages rose 44%, not counting food subsidies. School and higher education was made free.

Nasser's rule was autocratic. The Communist Party was suppressed, strike leaders executed and unions turned into arms of the state.

Only the socialist transformation of

society in Egypt and across the region, with a democratically planned economy, could have led to a permanent transformation of living standards, ended imperialist interference and ensured lasting peace between Israelis and Arabs.

Over the next decades, Arab nationalist and 'Nasserist' regimes degenerated into despotism, corruption and cronyism. After Nasser's death in 1970, Anwar el-Sadat took power and changed the name of the ruling Arab Socialist Union party to the National Democratic Party and promoted free market capitalism.

Subsequent falling living standards, mass unemployment and decades of suffocating dictatorship saw his successor, Hosni Mubarak, overthrown by a revolutionary movement in 2011. But the lack of a mass socialist alternative allowed the military to bloodily retake power. Fearful of the 'Arab Spring', imperialism intervened to prop up reactionary regimes in the region; sowing 'divide and rule' policies that helped spawn the horrors of Isis.

The memory of Suez and Nasserism lingers on. For socialists the main lesson of that period is that only mass struggle for a democratic federation of socialist states of the Middle East can meet the needs and full liberation of working people and the poor.

See also 'Nasser's Egypt and Arab nationalism' by David Johnson in Socialism Today, April 2011 available online at www.socialismtoday.org



Gamal Abdul Nasser, Egyptian President during the Suez Crisis photo Creative Commons

Arab Socialist Union).

The RCC espoused radical policies, such as getting rid of foreign powers' influence, ending the rule of the landlords and monarchy and corruption of political life. But the Free Officers movement had no developed or coherent political programme; they represented middle class frustration at the complete failure of capitalist politicians to develop society. In contrast to the weak landlord-capitalist class, the military was powerful and organised.

Under the monarchy, less than 0.5% of landowners between them owned over one third of all cultivable land. Land reform was carried out by the RCC but it was limited, with about 10% of the landless fellahin (peasants) benefiting from land redistribution. While this reform did weaken the power of the reactionary large landowners, Egypt remained semi-feudal.

In July 1954 an agreement over Suez was made with Britain. This entailed the former colonial power evacuating

“ ”

Although winning militarily, the Anglo-French-Israeli attack provoked widespread anger on the Arab streets and from workers around the world

all its troops and maintaining the base, with civilians, on a seven year lease.

This proved to be a short term truce. As Nasser's anti-colonial liberation rhetoric gained a powerful echo in restive colonies in Africa, British Prime Minister Anthony Eden decided he had to be removed. Similarly France, in an ultimately futile battle with the independence struggle in Algeria, entered an alliance with Israel (which regarded Nasser as its chief regional foe) to counter Egypt.

New bloc

US imperialism also looked on with alarm. Along with President Tito of Yugoslavia and India's Pandit Nehru, Nasser was regarded as one of founding fathers of a bloc of 'non-aligned states'.

But the Arab masses greeted Nasser's anti-imperialist nationalism with enthusiasm. At last, here was an Arab leader prepared to stand up to the old colonial masters and imperialism!

In 1956 America withdrew support for the gigantic Aswan Dam scheme in Egypt. As a reprisal Nasser, having secured Soviet aid for the building of the dam, announced the nationalisation of the Suez Canal on 26 July 1956, the fourth anniversary of the Egyptian Revolution. It electrified the whole neo-colonial world.

While Britain publicly tried to negotiate some continuing 'international' control of the canal, it secretly plotted with France and Israel to retake the canal by force and to remove Nasser. For Britain and France, if they were not to dwindle to second-rate powers, this seemed the last chance to act.

Intensifying pressure on Britain, Nasser called for international solidarity on 16 August, which resulted in massive strikes in Libya, Egypt, Syria, Jordan and Lebanon and other protests in Sudan, Iraq, Tunisia and Morocco.

Britain and France decided to act while the US was in the midst of presidential elections. American imperialism was locked into an intense rivalry

with Britain and France for influence in the Middle East and had signalled it was against using military force.

At the same time, Stalinist Russia was preoccupied with the workers' revolt in Hungary.

Secret

Using the pretext of cross-border Palestinian raids and the blocking of the port of Eilat by the Egyptians, Israel invaded the Sinai on 29 October.

On the following day France and Britain issued an ultimatum, as part of the secret plan, demanding both parties withdraw their forces. Despite suffering large troop casualties, Nasser ignored the ultimatum.

On 31 October, French and British bomber planes started destroying most of the Egyptian air force. An Anglo-French force, assembled in Cyprus, landed near Port Said and after capturing the city (where 1,000 Egyptians, overwhelmingly civilians, were killed) made its way southwards along the canal.

Although winning militarily, the

Anglo-French-Israeli attack provoked widespread anger on the Arab streets and from workers around the world. In Britain the labour movement staged a huge demonstration and rally in Trafalgar Square against the war.

The Soviet Union threatened retaliation and even the British Commonwealth faced collapsing over Suez. Most Arab states broke off diplomatic ties with Britain and France. Saudi Arabia blocked oil exports to Britain.

Crucially US Republican President Eisenhower refused to back the military action. The US blocked Britain's application to the International Monetary Fund for a loan.

Britain was forced to call a halt to its Suez action. On 6 November Britain and France accepted a UN-supervised ceasefire, ingloriously withdrawing their forces from Egypt. Israel could not continue alone.

British and French imperialism badly miscalculated. They hoped the war would provoke a popular uprising against Nasser. Instead his popularity was greatly enhanced in Egypt

Socialism Today
 The Socialist Party's magazine

October issue includes

- **Leon Trotsky** Why does the capitalist establishment still fear Trotsky's ideas? Peter Taaffe writes
- **Corbynomics** Hannah Sell on the political and economic barriers to Corbyn's programme

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Can you donate to the Socialism 2016 appeal?

Ken Douglas
Socialist Party national treasurer

We have set an ambitious target to raise £30,000 at the Socialism 2016 rally so we have the finance we need to help build the developing movement against austerity – for example to defend Jeremy Corbyn in the fight to reclaim the Labour Party.

The Socialist Party has been to the fore in this campaign – that's why Labour's deputy leader Tom Watson attacked the Trotskyists and why Militant, the predecessor of the Socialist Party, has been in the news again.

It was Militant who showed how we could beat the Tories and their echoes in the labour movement in the 1980s in Liverpool and who led the 18-million strong non-payment campaign against the poll tax that brought down Thatcher.

The Socialist Party has been virtually alone in calling for mandatory reselection as the only way to restore democracy in the Labour Party and evict the pro-big business Blairites. Our members successfully moved the resolution on reselection at Unite conference and also won agreement for Unite backing councils to refuse to carry out Tory cuts. If Labour MPs or councillors aren't prepared to fight the cuts then they should go.

The Tories are hopelessly

divided – they can be beaten by a determined struggle against the cuts and the attacks on the NHS, schools and the selling-off of social housing. Cameron and Osborne, the architects of austerity, have gone – why do we have to wait for up to four years for a Labour government?

Building a mass movement against the cuts now would make a Labour government more likely.

Socialist ideas are the key to fighting capitalist austerity. Capitalism, based on private greed, is a system in crisis and is out of control. Our living standards are being cut while at the same time 62 super-rich individuals have accrued more wealth than over half the world's population – more than 3.5 billion people.

Internationalism

A proportion of the money we raise at Socialism 2016 will also go to assist the pioneering work of our comrades around the world.

You can help the work of the Socialist Party and the Committee for a Workers' International (CWI – the socialist international to which the Socialist Party is affiliated). Can you give £5, £50 or £500?

Can you ask other members and supporters to donate? Every donation, no matter how small, will make a difference and all of it will go to building support for socialist ideas.

Members of Worcestershire Socialist Party enjoyed a walk in the Malvern Hills before drinks and a picnic raising money for the fighting fund by selling food photo Ruthie McNally



Donate today!

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

- pay by card on 020 8988 8777
- cheques payable to 'Socialist Party', PO Box 24697, London E11 1YD

Socialist Party Fighting Fund

	£ received	£ target	October to December 2016	Deadline 4 January 2017
Northern	404	750		54%
Wales	564	2,300	25%	
Yorkshire	473	3,300	14%	
West Midlands	314	2,600	12%	
South East	76	750	10%	
London	488	6,100	8%	
South West	114	1,800	6%	
Southern	97	1,600	6%	
North West	99	2,100	5%	
Eastern	35	1,200	3%	
East Midlands	48	1,850	3%	
Other	2,003	5,650	35%	
TOTAL	4,721	30,000	16%	



Butterfields tenants on the march during their nine month long campaign photo Sarah Wrack

BUTTERFIELDS HOUSING VICTORY: "WE SHOWED THAT IF YOU STICK TOGETHER AND FIGHT YOU CAN WIN"

Linda Taaffe
Waltham Forest Socialist Party

I have never experienced a day like it in my life. The news that Dolphin Living Trust has agreed to buy all Butterfields flats, allowing the tenants to stay, came from an unlikely source. I was stunned.

We had worked on an absolutely fantastic and ferocious campaign for nine long months. Now we have won far more than we could have imagined. All tenants can stay in the homes they have lived in, for more than a decade! Not one, or two, or ten but 49 households just got back their future.

One by one as tenants gathered the news spread. "No!", "never!" – they could not believe it, laughing and crying at the same time, some wiping away quiet tears of joy and relief. An end to the waking up in the middle of the night 'thinking where will I be waking up next month, next year'.

The worst thing in the world is to have an insecure roof and live daily under the constant threat of having

to move. Some actually had court possession orders hanging over them – but now thankfully all wiped out! Jiggling about, arms waving, if it would have been a football match, it was the World Cup and the FA Cup all rolled into one! A real celebration.



All tenants can stay in the homes they have lived in, some for more than a decade! Not one, or two, or ten but 49 households

When the first street meeting in Butterfields took place in February, nobody could have predicted the outcome. What were they going to do?

They felt doomed. Sixteen families had formal letters to leave and had to be gone by Easter. All had correct-ly figured out this was only the first tranche of the 63 flats bought the previous November by Butterfields

E17 Ltd, a ruthless asset-stripping property company. Who would be next?

We showed that if you stick together and fight you can win something. Thousands of people supported us in so many different ways. We started by disrupting auctions in swanky hotels. We became national news. The landlords thought they could easily scare off poor families. The landlords thought wrong.

We turned the tables on them. They sent heavies round the estate to knock on doors to frighten tenants. We took a demo to the landlords' big posh mansion and handed in a letter to their family! We scared the landlords off! We forced them to the negotiating table.

If we can do it, why not others too? The housing crisis in London has reached catastrophic proportions. If masses of tenants declared we are not moving and faced down the system in large numbers, we might have a chance.

In elections Socialist Party candidates have flagged up rent controls as the main policy and made a promising start on developing the

Bristol: Millions of pounds of "horribly unpalatable" cuts

Mike Luff
Unison member (personal capacity)

Bristol is facing massive attacks on its jobs and services, under a rapidly capitulating newly-elected Labour mayor, Marvin Rees. The mayor, when challenged on television that he was elected on an anti-austerity platform, surprised the interviewer by saying "no".

The cuts being proposed include the removal of bus subsidies, charges for users of dementia services, fees for disabled parking bays, library closures – the list goes on. It amounts to £27 million cuts for 2017-2018, and then there is a further £65 million cuts by 2020. Even the mayor describes his proposed cuts as "horribly unpalatable".

This is in addition to 1,000 full-time equivalent posts being cut, one sixth of the workforce over the next few months. This will inevitably lead to hundreds of compulsory redundancies. As a regional Unison officer said: "the cuts in jobs are not

sustainable at such thin levels". Services will easily collapse.

The day before these announcements, the local anti-cuts alliance met with the mayor. We put forward a way to build a mass campaign of trade unions, communities and campaigns across the city, which would strengthen the demand for the return of our money from this weak Tory government. By using reserves and prudential borrowing, cuts can be frozen legally for a period, during which such a campaign can be built.

The excuse given for not trying to build such a campaign was that it would weaken negotiations with the government! The fact that such an approach has been used and failed over the previous years is conveniently forgotten.

Jeremy Corbyn visited Bristol supporting Rees on a number of occasions during the election campaign stating: "the message of opposition to austerity". Jeremy has to face up to the undermining of Labour's anti-austerity leadership by those carrying out the Tory cuts.



Jeremy Corbyn in Bristol in the summer photo Matt Carey

Cheshire and Merseyside: Huge NHS cuts and privatisation planned

Hugh Caffrey
North West Socialist Party organiser

Huge cuts to hospitals and health-care across Cheshire and Merseyside are in the pipeline, proposed in the very secretive 'Sustainability & Transformation Plan'.

This aims to deliver £999 million of 'savings' by 2021 – cuts of nearly £1 billion of jobs and services. It is part of a national plan by NHS England bosses and the Tory government to do the same to the NHS in every part of England.

The Socialist Party is totally opposed to these devastating cuts and our branches across the area are working with other campaigners to develop a movement of mass opposition.

Threatened

The cuts mean hospital closures such as Liverpool Women's Hospital and plans to replace Arrowe Park, Clatterbridge and Countess of Chester with one hospital in Ellesmere Port. Other hospitals will also be threatened.

Whole departments such as A&E or maternity and neonatal will be closed at some hospitals and support services will be removed – pharmacy, labs (pathology) and scans (radiology) will no longer be provided at every hospital.

Other services and departments will be handed over to private

companies and conditions for staff will get worse.

And finally the plans admit that some parts of the plan will save little or nothing, or don't know how much they will save and that even big closures may save little money as people will have to travel further to another hospital in the same region. This will mean more cuts at a later stage.

The plans refer repeatedly to opposition to the public and politicians threatening the cuts from going ahead. Every MP and councillor should be mobilising massive opposition to these cuts. But we will help mobilise a mass movement without waiting for them!

For more on the NHS 'at breaking point' on pages 1,2 and 3

Devon: Campaigning against community hospitals closures

Sean Brogan
Exeter Socialist Party

'Once you lose them – you will never get them back', this was the stark warning in a letter published in a local Devon paper. The letter refers to the current consultation period

taking place on the closures of community hospitals with the loss of hundreds of beds. The alternative is community care in people's homes. This is being met by widespread resistance despite the fact that

the 'consultation' is regarded as a sham – a done deal – a word to be laughed at!

All elements of a democratic say as to whether people want their local hospitals closed or not, seem to have been removed. But these proposals have been met with resistance all over Devon.

In Paignton, a town with a population of 50,000, the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) has been forced to hold five extra meetings. People have been locked out of overflowing meetings. Ashburton and Buckfastleigh residents have forced the CCG to hold another meeting in a bigger venue.

The closures and cut backs are being applied all over Devon. North Devon District Hospital is seeing a run-down of its maternity services which will mean a drive to Exeter for pregnant mums.

The newly formed Socialist Party branch in South Devon has been on the streets getting hundreds of signatures and leafleting. People have seen so-called community care in action – ten minute visits if you are lucky.

As was pointed out in last week's Socialist, children's services in Devon are already in the hands of Virgin Care. The attacks and privatisation of the NHS are becoming a daily reality. Socialists in South Devon are part of the resistance to that threat.



photo Paul Mattsson



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■ Featured letter: democracy

Stop racist 'Prevent' surveillance

Recently, the two major trade unions representing education workers reaffirmed their opposition to Prevent, which requires teachers to spy on and report young people at risk of "radicalisation".

At the University and College Union (UCU) annual conference in June, a motion titled "Prevent - education is not surveillance" was unanimously backed, which, among other things, resolved for the union "to work with students and others in opposing the Prevent agenda."

Similarly, a few months earlier, at the annual conference of the National Union of Teachers (NUT) held in March, a motion was passed calling for the Prevent to be withdrawn and replaced with new guidance for schools.

But it is not just trade unions who have been vocal in their calls for the termination of Prevent.

In 2014, the Economist observed that Arun Kundnani's excellent book 'The Muslims are coming!' had "some fair points to make about the counter-productivity" of Prevent. "His analysis of Prevent rang true".

Professor Kundnani's fair criticisms

of the government's counterproductive terror policies were then updated in his 2015 report, 'A decade lost: rethinking radicalisation and extremism,' which reaffirmed that "the government should end its Prevent policy." He continued: "This will help to avoid nurturing a new generation of antagonised and disenfranchised citizens. Ultimately, Prevent-style policies make Britain less safe."

Professor Kundnani's criticisms of Prevent are not unique in this regard.

In April this year, Maina Kiai, the UN special rapporteur on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly, made his own position very clear. "It appears that Prevent is having the opposite of its intended effect: by dividing, stigmatising and alienating segments of the population, Prevent could end up promoting extremism, rather than countering it."

**Mike Barker
Leicester**



The radical life of Paul Robeson

Fighting racism and capitalism with solidarity, socialism and song

Scott Jones

"The artist must take sides. He must elect to fight for freedom or slavery. I have made my choice. I had no alternative," were the words of Paul Robeson 80 years ago, when speaking in solidarity with workers fighting fascism in Spain.

It was wondering who the "giant man with a heavenly voice" was in the Manic Street Preacher's song 'Let Robeson Sing,' which led me to discover the life of Paul Robeson. And a giant he was.

An actor who starred on Broadway, a talented college American football player, a brilliant singer - and a socialist and civil rights campaigner at a time when Malcom X and Martin Luther King were just children.

It was as a lawyer that he first tried to make a career, until he encountered such extreme racism that he turned to acting. He soon landed a role in 'All God's Children Got Wings' by socialist playwright Eugene O'Neill. By the 1930s Robeson was at the height of his fame, regularly appearing on Broadway and touring Europe which included a short period living in London.

It was during his travels in Europe that Robeson became a socialist.

Welsh miners

In 1929, when walking in London, he heard the rich sound of a Welsh miners' choir. They were unemployed due to the Great Depression, and had walked to London to petition the government for help.

Robeson joined the miners, humming along with them. He later raised money to pay for their journey back to Wales and buy food and clothing for the miners of the Rhondda Valley and their families. That year he also contributed the proceeds of one of his concerts to the Miners' Relief Fund, and visited Wales in person to sing for and talk to the miners.

During this time he also visited the Soviet Union. On a stopover in Berlin on the way, he was appalled by the Nazis and their racism, which he later contrasted with the acceptance and irrelevance of his race he encountered in Moscow.

Touched by the solidarity and struggle of the South Wales working class, and in opposition to fascism, Robeson threw himself into the struggle against fascism during the Spanish Civil War.

He used his performances to advocate the cause of the Spanish Republic, and even travelled to Spain to visit the battlefield, all against the advice of his agent. Robeson decided events trumped commercialism.



Paul Robeson in the 1930s

The culmination of his solidarity with the workers of South Wales came in 1940 when he starred in 'The Proud Valley,' a picture filmed in the heart of the Valleys. It told the story of David Goliath, played by Robeson, a black American miner and singer who gets a job in a Welsh pit and joins a male voice choir.

It documents the harsh realities of coal miners' lives, which Goliath shares. He becomes a hero as he helps to better their working conditions, and ultimately, during a mining accident, sacrifices himself to save fellow miners.

One of the most iconic parts of the film occurs when he encounters racism from a fellow miner who refuses to work alongside a black man. This is quickly challenged by a Welsh miner who leaps to David's defence with the

fantastic line: "Damn it, well aren't we all black down the mine?"

Robeson would go on to perform and fight for socialism throughout his life. He championed the civil rights struggle in the 1950s and 1960s. During McCarthyism, like many other socialists and communists, he was blacklisted - and even had his passport taken from him.

Paul Robeson recognised the need to fight racism and fascism with solidarity and socialism. This giant man's lifelong struggle serves as an inspiration as we carry on the same fight today.

■ **'Revolutionary rhymes: class struggle and music in South Wales'** by Scott Jones - £2 plus postage from leftbooks.co.uk - or call 020 8988 8789

■ Pilger praise

I have attached an extract from an article by John Pilger. Its main virtue is that, while brief, it illustrates the different political characters of Pilger and Owen Jones.

"Described by the Guardian columnist Owen Jones as 'funny, charming, with a coolness that eludes practically every other politician', Obama the other day sent drones to slaughter 150 people in Somalia. He kills people usually on Tuesdays, according to the New York Times,

when he is handed a list of candidates for death by drone. So cool."

Sue Powell, Gloucester

■ Dressing down

A 'couture' dress sold for £100,000 pounds caused one Murdoch newspaper to sigh:

"One dress would cost more than a year's fees at Eton. For some people this kind of life is normal!"

Mike, Southampton

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Aberfan 50th anniversary



A DISASTER THAT SHOULD NEVER HAVE HAPPENED

Sasha O'Neil
Caerphilly/RCT Socialist Party

Aberfan - it's a name as resonant with tragedy for working class people in South Wales as Hillsborough is for Liverpool. For many the horror is all the greater because 116 of the 144 who died were young children. Like Hillsborough, Aberfan was a disaster that need never have happened.

The coal waste tips that towered above Aberfan were a common feature of the Valleys, but the local children playing here noticed that the tip above their school was shifting ten yards a year.

Adults noticed too. On 24 July 1963, over three years before the disaster, the borough engineer, DCW Jones wrote to the local official in charge, "...the National Coal Board (NCB) appear to be taking slurry similar to that which... gave so much trouble in the quarry at Merthyr Vale, up on to the... tip at the rear of the Pantglas Schools... I regard it as extremely serious as the slurry is so fluid and the gradient so steep that it could not possibly stay in position in the winter time or during periods of heavy rain."

DCW Jones wrote urgent warnings to an array of officials as the months passed. Meetings were held - and deferred - as individuals went on holiday. Decisions

were put off. The tips still loomed and shifted.

One letter is headed, "Danger from coal slurry being tipped at the rear of Pantglas School, Aberfan".

The colliery manager writes: "A satisfactory and suitable place other than the tip... eludes me at the moment..."

In another letter we read: "We would not like to continue beyond the next six to eight weeks in tipping on the mountain side where it is likely to be a source of danger to Pantglas School."

Tsunami

A culvert was repaired, but the slurry kept coming. Then, at 9.15am on 21 October 1966, a huge portion of the tip broke away and rushed like a tsunami down on Pantglas Primary School, where morning lessons had just begun.

John Sztucki - who grew up to be a miner at Tower Colliery - was in the third form at the secondary school 200 metres away where classes started later: "There was a group of us in the playground - six or seven of us - waiting for the bell to go.

"It was so foggy you couldn't see ten yards. We heard this horrible roaring noise and we thought a jet airplane was about to crash into the mountain. We climbed out over the wall of the school up onto the old railway line. There was all this muck - ooze - flowing below it.

"Between the canal bank and the railway line ran a crevasse, about 50 metres deep at one end, tapering off to almost nothing in front of the primary school. Our school had the crevasse in front of it, so a lot of the muck went in and more or less filled that. Whereas the primary school was covered.



We heard this horrible roaring noise and we thought a jet airplane was about to crash into the mountain. We climbed over the wall of the school. We could just make out through the fog where the houses should have been

"We couldn't get there because of the muck coming down. We could just make out through the fog where the houses should have been between the two schools, but they weren't there any more. There was just total confusion.

"The miners were called out of all the local collieries - Merthyr Vale, Deep Navigation, Taff Merthyr, Abercynon. My father was

one of them. They were all up on the school trying to shift this muck out of the way. People who were known to live in Aberfan were called out of their workplaces to go home immediately.

"One of my best friends was one of the lucky ones who were dug out. He was buried up to his neck in slurry. I was in a little gang of friends and we realised that half of us - six or seven - were gone."

In the valleys all around people left work, grabbed a shovel and rushed to Aberfan to help the emergency services with the rescue effort. Less welcome were the hordes of journalists.

The attention of the world was on South Wales, but Lord Robens, the head of the NCB, went along to his installation that afternoon as Chancellor of Surrey University. He didn't show up in Aberfan until the evening of the following day.

Like other heads of nationalised industries, Robens had a boss's arrogance - and a Daimler, an executive aeroplane and a flat in Belgravia to go with it. When he finally reached the site, he denied that anything could have been done to prevent the disaster. He told the press "natural unknown springs" had brought down the tip. Only at the end of the 76 day enquiry did the Coal Board admit responsibility.

The Davies Tribunal concluded that the NCB's liability was "incontestable and uncontested",

but no one was sacked or prosecuted - and Robens refused to allow the NCB to remove the tips above Aberfan.

Labour Prime Minister Harold Wilson refused Robens' resignation. Robens was carrying out huge cuts to the coal industry without any major strikes - something the Tories could never have managed. Perhaps Wilson felt he couldn't afford to let him go.

The NCB paid out a total of £160,000 compensation (just over £2 million today), and the Aberfan Disaster Fund raised £1.75 million. Wilson's government raided that fund to help pay the costs of removing the tips - money that was only returned after Labour's win in 1997.

Commemorations

Today the 50th anniversary commemorations shun any mention that Aberfan was not an accident. That is a grave mistake, because the tip would not have fallen had there been legal regulations for siting, constructing and maintaining it.

In the aftermath of Aberfan, the National Union of Mineworkers and other trade unionists redoubled their efforts to win a culture of "safety first" in industry and the wider community. Those safeguards are now under threat from Tory cuts - egged on by a press that ridicules "health and safety gone mad". Our memory of Aberfan must keep us vigilant.

Syria: Horror deepens in Aleppo

NO SOLUTION ON BASIS OF IMPERIALISM AND CAPITALISM

Having promoted a bloody sectarian war in their efforts to dislodge the Russian and Iranian-backed Syrian regime of President Assad, the Western powers are hypercritically bemoaning the plight of Syrian civilians caught in the deadly crossfire. A recent ceasefire of belligerents negotiated between the US and Russia fell apart barely before the ink had dried, with the US and UK governments now calling for new sanctions against Russia and Assad's regime. As **Sami El-Sayed**, of the Socialist Party (CWI in Ireland), explains, none of the ruling classes involved are capable of resolving the Syrian crisis. Only the working class internationally has the potential to securing lasting peace and economic development.

Over the past five years, Syria has endured a civil war of terrible brutality and human suffering. It is partly a sectarian conflict, fuelled by outside European, US and Russian powers, all vying for influence in the region. Also in the mix are the interventions of regional powers, such as Iran and their allies Hezbollah, on behalf of the Assad regime. Saudi Arabia and Turkey act on behalf of predominantly Sunni rebel factions.

The death toll, to date, is estimated to be well over 400,000, mostly civilian deaths, inflicted by the merciless tactics of the Assad regime, backed by Russian military might, military strikes by Western capitalist powers and reactionary Islamist forces, such as the so-called Islamic State.

The international media fixation on Isis's mass executions and terror tactics fails to mention financial and logistical support given to Islamic terror groups from the Erdogan government in Turkey, as well as the financing and arming by Saudi Arabia and other Gulf states.

The Syrian war, its spill over into neighbouring Iraq and the inability of the US to reign in its allies in Turkey and Saudi Arabia, illustrate the growing weakening of US imperialism. The so-called 'moderate' rebels backed by US imperialism have failed to gain traction. Soon after the war's beginning, the al-Qa'ida affiliate, Jabhat al-Nusra and Isis gained footholds in Syria and Iraq.

The narrative of the Assad regime's imminent collapse bore no fruit. Russia's direct military intervention has gone a long way into propping up the regime and solidifying the Syrian Army's position, giving the



There exists a powerful working class in countries such Iran, Turkey and Egypt that can play a decisive role in challenging the rule of capitalist-landlord regimes in the region



Civilian casualties in Aleppo
photo Voice of America/creative commons

Assad regime a new lease of life. This has given rise to the possibility of Assad remaining in power, in some form, in whatever new order emerges.

Some continue to praise the so-called 'secularist' nature of Assad's rule. But Assad continued the tactics of French imperialism before him, of 'divide and rule', playing the religious minorities, on which he bases his rule, off against the Sunni majority.

Destruction

Nothing portrays the brutality of the war as much as the current offensive by the Assad regime against rebel

forces in east Aleppo. As it stands, the regime has the military advantage of the Russian airforce to supplement its own aerial attacks. This has seen the bombing of schools, hospitals and other civilian targets to weaken the morale of the defenders. According to the UN, nearly 400 civilians were killed in Assad's September offensive.

The rebel counter-offensive to relieve besieged forces in the east of the city has largely ground to a halt. It is expected that a serious blow will be struck against the rebels, though this would not be the first time such predictions have been made and not borne out by events.



Putin and Obama - no deal
photo www.kremlin.ru/creative commons



The war is partly a sectarian conflict, fuelled by outside European, US and Russian powers, all vying for influence in the region

The bloody conflict cannot be solved on the basis of military might alone. There is a real possibility of the war grinding to a halt, in a sectarian stalemate.

This would see some territories dominated by Shia and other minority religious groupings that are controlled by the regime and the remaining territory controlled by various Sunni and Kurdish rebel factions.

Solution

There is no solution to this conflict on the basis of the rule and domination of imperialism, capitalism and landlordism in the region. This economic and social order can only provide a future deepening conflict, poverty and sectarian division.

There exists a powerful working class in countries such Iran, Turkey and Egypt that can play a decisive role in challenging the rule of capitalist-landlord regimes in the region, such as those of Assad, Erdogan and other rotten dictatorships.

Allied with the poor and oppressed such a movement has the capacity to lead a struggle to take the vast resources and wealth of the region under public ownership, democratically planned to meet the needs of all.

A strong working class alternative must be built so that such a socialist vision of the Middle East can come into being.

Theatre: Dare Devil Rides to Jarama

Moving, funny and inspiring tribute to working class heroism

Becci Heagney
Salford Socialist Party

Adelante! "Forever forward" - the motto of an ordinary man from Oldham who did extraordinary things, and lost his life in the Spanish civil war.

'Dare Devil Rides to Jarama' is a moving, funny and inspiring account of the life of Clem 'Dare Devil' Beckett. It is a great feat considering the cast is just two people, but portrays with realism dirt track races, mass protests and war.

Commissioned by the International Brigade Memorial Trust and backed by general union Unite, Socialist Party members Neil Gore and Louise Townsend wrote and directed the play for the war's 80th anniversary.

Audience participation in 'I'm a Rambler', 'Lancashire Lads' and 'The Internationale' helps tell the story of Clem's involvement in mass trespass, driving Oswald Mosley out of Manchester, and fighting fascism in Spain. I saw it in a theatre only a couple of miles down the road from where Clem was born; one of his nieces was in the audience.

As a member of the Young Communist League, he wrote for the Communist Party's newspaper, the Daily Worker. And he unionised his workplace - the speedway track!

As the sport became more popular, businessmen took control and pushed young drivers to risk their lives without proper training and many were killed. Clem set up the Dirt Track Riders Association to organise the riders, but was eventually blacklisted from the sport in Britain.

He travelled to Germany, Denmark and the Soviet Union where he competed in races, broke world records - and bones! - and met Communist Party members across Europe. When he heard of the



'Dare Devil' Beckett

International Brigades going to help the war against fascism in Spain, he didn't hesitate to sign up.

The first half of 'Dare Devil' shows that it was ordinary people, politicised by their life experiences, who were drawn into struggle throughout the 1930s. Clem could have had fame and money, but he gave that up because of his commitment to socialist ideas.

The second half is set in Spain and, through the experience of Clem and his friend Christopher, shows the frustration that many felt during the civil war. They wanted to fight, but there was lack of organisation, training and decent weapons.

"This gun is shit and if it jams, you're fucked!"

Ending with Clem's death at the Battle of Jarama, it is a timely reminder, on the 80th anniversary, of the sacrifices working class people have made.

The Spanish civil war displayed the heroism and instinctive international solidarity of working class people. This play is a wonderful tribute to those people.

■ **'Dare Devil Rides to Jarama'** is touring nationally into December. For dates, venues and box office details, visit townsendproductions.org.uk

■ TV: BBC2 Poetry Night

What am I to make of all this?

Dave Gorton
Chesterfield Socialist Party

... The highlight was the live performance of Kate Tempest's new work 'Let Them Eat Chaos', recently released in both book and album form. It truly is an amazing work.

"It's big business baby, and its smile is hideous. Top-down violence, a structural viciousness.

Your kids are doped up on medical sedatives. But don't worry 'bout that, man. Worry 'bout terrorists" ...

■ Film: Deepwater Horizon

Big oil bosses' reckless greed

Simon Carter
East London Socialist Party

Deepwater Horizon is a disaster pic for real.

The film dramatises the BP-leased oil rig that exploded in the Gulf of Mexico in 2010, killing eleven crew members. The subsequent vast oil spill caused the worst environmental disaster in US history.

The clear message of the film is that the oil giant's reckless drive to complete the costly drilling operation led to safety negligence and catastrophe...

Read the full reviews online!

■ Kate Tempest's "stark hip-hop or electronic backing," says Dave Gorton, "complements the work perfectly." But John Betjeman wrote "the type of poetry you can imagine Ukip leaders rhapsodising about." > socialistparty.org.uk/articles/23780

■ Simon Carter finds that "the crew's panic and the pyrotechnics of the rig blowing up are very dramatic" - in spite of a script which is "fast and full of techno-babble." But we will avoid future calamities "only by nationalising these corporate giants." > socialistparty.org.uk/articles/23781



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.

WORK AND INCOME

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

ENVIRONMENT

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

RIGHTS

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

NEW MASS WORKERS' PARTY

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

SOCIALISM AND INTERNATIONALISM

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

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

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Get organised to win the battle both inside and outside Labour

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2016

A weekend of discussion and debate
12 & 13 November
Central London

Isai Priya

Waltham Forest Socialist Party

This crisis driven capitalist system is not working. The world is in turmoil. Inequality is increasing - 62 people own the same wealth as half the world.

High rents, low wages and ever increasing debt are frequent words that millions of us are familiar with.

Austerity continues to strip us of our vital services and make us compromise on our basic needs.

More and more of us are saying enough is enough and are looking for an alternative to this system that serves only the interest of rich elites.

Socialism is back on the agenda. Even right-wing politicians are forced to talk about the 'working class' and pose themselves as against cuts. But this rhetoric is just that - meaningless words when their actions continue to attack workers and young people.

Socialist ideas are increasingly being searched for and on 12-13 November in central London these ideas will be discussed and debated at Socialism 2016 - an inspirational weekend, with packed sessions on a wide range of issues.

Civil war

Come along to discuss the civil war within the Labour Party and how we can win a socialist, anti-austerity, democratic party that represents our interest. There will be discussions on the civil war in Labour, the role of the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition, examples of building left parties internationally and loads more.

Socialism 2016 will discuss ideas on how to get organised to win the battle both inside and outside Labour. From housing, to defending refugees, to Trotskyism, to socialist ideas in bitesize - there is a session for all. Come and join more than a thousand other people in solidarity and struggle.

The strength of the working class is always undermined by the media and the bosses. But when you're in a packed room and hear first-hand from those like you and me that are involved in the day to day struggle - the strength of the working class is felt. As one collective organised force - we can win.

> See page 6 for full programme and speakers

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