

THE CASE FOR COUNCIL HOUSING & DIRECTLY EMPLOYED CONSTRUCTION WORKERS



Seen above are some of the workers who attended the 1st edition book launch at Southwark DLOs Frensham Street depot in 2018



Tackling the housing crisis

With Publicly owned construction
Direct Labour Organisations



Tony O'Brien

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Tackling the housing crisis

THE CASE FOR COUNCIL HOUSING & DIRECTLY EMPLOYED CONSTRUCTION WORKERS

Pensioners and Housing - 2 million older people are suffering physical and mental ill-health and face early death because of living in substandard and non-accessible homes according to a report in July 2019 by the cross-party group of MPs.

The report says sub-standard housing is costing the NHS £1.4bn every year. The report predicts the number of older people renting in the private sector, often in unsafe, unsuitable and unhealthy accommodation, will soar in the coming years. (1)

The book written by Tony O' Brien chair of the NPC Housing Working Party argues that having housing should be a human right and the system for building housing has failed us. The book looks back on the history of Direct Labour Organisations and how they hugely contributed to local authority social housing that governments have been so intent on destroying.

He argues that the price of housing has been driven up by governments allowing the private sector to not deliver adequate supply of truly affordable housing and starving local authorities from providing new social housing and maintaining its existing housing stock. This has created monopoly control of housing by building companies and property speculators who have made vast fortunes for themselves.

Recent examples of this are:

Persimmon - Managers Bonus Millions - It was reported in December 2017 that the chief executive, directors and 150 most senior staff, were between them, given more than £500m in bonuses as the company benefited from the taxpayer-backed housing help-to-buy scheme.

Carillon Collapse – The Government pumped money into Carillon, enriching its directors and shareholders prior to its collapse when it was aware of its failures. Failures that led to thousands of construction workers losing their jobs.

The ongoing Private Finance Initiative scandal - In 2017 the National Audit Office (NAO) found that taxpayers will be forced to pay nearly £200 billion to contractors for at least 25 years on projects with a capital value of just £60bn.

Attacks on Pensioners - There is so much publicity that is attempting to blame older people for the housing crisis. Yet the facts are: fewer than 48% of 55-64-year-olds own their property outright. An estimated 2.6 million older people, have assets greater than £100,000, survive on an income of less than £15,000 a year and just 2% of housing is constructed with pensioners in mind. (2)

The high cost of housing will be a major factor behind the report made by NHS digital in Dec 20-19 that it found the number of older people diagnosed with malnutrition has more than trebled to almost 500,000 in the past decade (3)

With hardly any opposition from MPs, many pensioner couples have now lost up to £7,000 a year due to changes to pensioners' housing credits made in May 2019.

Housing will become more and more unaffordable if other attacks being planned on pensioners are not stopped. This means we must stop their plan to prevent many pensioners from getting the over 75s TV licence.

(1) MPs report 2m older people are suffering, Guardian 4/07/2019

(2) Pensioners and Housing, NPC election manifesto 2017

(3) NHS digital, malnutrition figures. Dec 2019.