

Time to Organise: Strikes and Campaigns Can Beat the Tories and Take On Capitalism

Housing crisis, NHS crisis, debt crisis, education cuts, pay freeze, austerity. That's the reality of Britain today.

Theresa May attempts to defend capitalism, claiming that "a free market economy ... is the greatest agent of collective human progress ever created." But it isn't working for most of us. And now there is an alternative.

A recent *Telegraph* editorial argued that the Tories need to defend capitalism because "Corbyn is selling a vision of socialism to a younger generation." They're right. A vision now exists that society can be organised in a different way, based on human need, not profit. Jeremy Corbyn has tapped into the anger of people who see their living standards cut and future hopes eradicated so that the rich can stay rich.

But how do we get that different society? Waiting for the next election is a dangerous option when it may be five years away. By then, the NHS will be close to destruction. How many more disasters like Grenfell will happen? And how are people to face five more years of pay cuts, zero hours contracts and precarious jobs?

We have to fight now. It is brilliant that the health unions have put in a claim for 3.9% and £800 for every health worker. All of us – not just health workers – can help make sure they win it. We can organise support for the unions' campaign in every area. If the health workers win, it gives everyone else confidence to fight back. We could start right now, and discuss setting up support groups on the buses and trains back from this demo.

But it's not helpful when Angela Rayner tells the Today programme "we'd love to give public sector workers a 5% pay rise but we cannot do that at the moment" – when she says that Labour is a "government in waiting" and can't make extravagant promises. How does that help health workers who need a pay rise now?

The truth is that we can afford to pay health workers properly – if we cut Trident and tax the rich. We can't work within the limits set by capitalism and aim to make it slightly better. We need to get rid of capitalism entirely. But if we challenge capitalism, it will fight back. We saw that in Greece in 2015. People voted No to the austerity package imposed by the banks and the EU – but the capitalists wouldn't take no for an answer, and then the left-wing Syriza government backed down and imposed the cuts.

If we're to avoid the same thing happening here, we need everyone involved in fighting for the changes we need. Winning campaigns and building union organisation is important to win struggles now – but are also about building up our strength for the future.

Involving everyone means not just people with British citizenship. We all move for work. Some from Sunderland to London, others from Bangladesh to Manchester or Bucharest to Birmingham. But no matter what our origins, we all make a contribution and we all deserve healthcare, housing, education and decent jobs.

So it's brilliant to hear Jeremy Corbyn say that "we will never follow the Tories into the gutter of blaming migrants for the ills of society. It isn't migrants who drive down wages and conditions but the worst bosses"

But if other workers are our sisters and brothers whatever passports they carry, Labour are wrong to call for ending free movement from the EU. Instead, they could commit themselves to retaining free movement from the EU whatever the result of negotiations, and scrapping immigration laws that discriminate against people coming here from anywhere else in the world.

A united fight against the Tories, in our communities and workplaces, can halt this weak and divided government. Let's make the Tory party Conference 2017 a launch pad for a bigger fightback than the Tories can have ever expected.

