

# POLITICAL PARTIES? SCUM

We know the Tories are scum. And, after four years of the Coalition, we now know the LibDems are scum with their enthusiasm for hitting the poor. So, many in Haringey vote Labour... but why? Here are some of the recent achievements of the current Labour-run Haringey Council:

- 4 residential care homes closed
- 7 drop-in and day care centres closed
- Several community centres closed
- Library services slashed
- Council house maintenance cut to the bone
- Care services for the vulnerable cut
- 23,000 families in difficulty

with paying Council Tax last year were charged an additional £125 in court costs. The Council argues that the Coalition's spending cuts leave it with no choice. "The Council stands completely opposed to the depth and speed of the cuts", says Finance Chief Joe Goldberg. So the cuts aren't the problem, only the speed and depth. And what opposition? Generally, when someone opposes something they don't go ahead and do it.

Meanwhile, three councillors have been on a jolly to Cannes on the French Riviera-at a cost of £9k to the tax payer-looking for investors at a real estate conference to pour money into the Tottenham Plan. Investment for what and who?

Flash shops, cafes and restaurants ruining local businesses, and flash apartments for yuppies but quite unaffordable for local people.

10,000 households will continue to rot in shoddy, temporary or emergency housing (there were 25,000 until 15,000 were quietly shunted off the list last year).

Labour promotes itself as the defender of the poor, supporter of social justice and opposed to inequality. Call it a fairy story, call it a sick joke. The truth is that these councillors offer no resistance whatsoever to government cuts and promote the same rubbish as the other parties.

Vote Conservative, vote LibDem, vote Labour..... vote Scum.

# TAKING CONTROL

## COOPERATE, COLLECTIVISE

We say "vote for nobody" because we don't think 59 councillors in Haringey should speak for 250,000 local people. Nor do we think 650 MP's should speak for 60 million people in the UK.

But "vote for nobody" doesn't mean "do nothing". It doesn't mean just moaning. Or thinking only of yourself.

To change the present system that puts profit before people, and rich before poor, we have to work out new ways of running our lives, environment and economy. So turn the TV off and start to make a difference. But how?

Here are some examples. There is Haringey Federation of Residents' Associations. If every street/estate had its own residents' group, with everyone playing a part, we would make the decisions that affect how and where we live. In fact there are already dozens of such groups in Haringey doing just this. Haringey Friends of Parks Forum is doing the same thing for our local parks. Both need more of us involved.

Housing co-ops are where people collectively own their own homes or in some cases whole estates. Those who live in the homes decide how they are run. Workers co-ops are where workers

get together to run a business without a boss -and everybody gets the same money no matter whether they do the accounts or the cleaning.

Then there are groups fighting for different rights for local people. Out Tottenham want the people of Tottenham to decide how our area should look and be developed. Wards Corner Community Coalition is doing the same around Seven Sisters. Similar campaigns exist all over Haringey.

Militant trades unions, run by workers, get better wages and conditions for themselves and offer a lead to others to do likewise. People with kids are setting up play groups. In Haringey Housing Action Group, people support each other to get decent housing by using direct action. Tottenham Rights are fighting racism and support those attacked by the state like Nicky Jacobs\* and Mark Duggan. These, and many more, are examples of people organising, fighting back and changing things for the better - for all of us.

So it's not what box you put a cross in on 22nd May that counts.

It's about what we (and not politicians) do for the rest of the year that matters. But if we don't start organising ourselves, politicians will continue to treat us like children who should be seen but not heard.

\* We would like to take this opportunity to congratulate Nicky Jacobs on his acquittal for the murder of PC Blakelock, after another botched attempt by the Met to fit someone up.



# NEVER MIND THE BALLOTS

Another election is upon us and the chance to vote-in a council who won't represent or listen to our views. This is the ruling elite's perverse idea of democracy. So voting for a candidate is pointless - it changes little or nothing for the majority of people. Just look at the history - corruption, backhanders, sucking up to corporate business for the gain of a

few while constituents are treated with contempt. The question then is whether to spoil your vote or just not bother at all. Here are two views.

### Spoiler yes

Spoiling your ballot paper may be just one small act of dissent. Spoilt ballots are counted, and the number is usually reported in

election results, though it's often lumped with unintentionally spoilt papers. A deliberately spoilt ballot shows that we are not apathetic about government but pissed off with party politics and politicians.

If a larger number of people did this than voted for any party, wouldn't it give politicians a shock? It would certainly get some media coverage. It did get

noticed when there were 120,000 spoilt papers in the Police and Crime Commissioners (PCC) elections in 2010.

Add your own box to the list of candidates and label it "None of the above" or "Honest politician".

A spoilt ballot is an alternative to the protest vote of choosing a candidate you're sure won't get in, which reduces the percentage vote for the winner.

It's only one small act of dissent, but why stop there?

### Spoiler no

I have no faith in the political system, this so-called representative democracy, so I will not be voting in the up-coming local elections. People have said to me that if I don't vote then I have no right to criticise decisions politicians make. I am told that not voting is apathetic but, regardless of whether I vote or not, the real apathy comes from doing nothing in between elections. If you really want to effect change then get out there and be involved.

Well why not spoil your vote to show you are not happy with the way things are run? Why not - because it is a total waste of time and achieves nothing. Spoiled votes are counted and added to the official figures but how and why they were spoiled is not registered. I hate a political system that is self-serving, unjust and corrupt. The very act of turning up just to spoil my ballot shows support for a system I cannot stand. Not voting doesn't mean I am apathetic as many like to claim, I have joined with others locally to fight the injustices in our community.



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