

ABOLISH UNIVERSAL CREDIT

The introduction of Universal Credit, which replaces many state benefits, will have a damaging effect on millions of working families, leaving the poorest running up the down escalator. Under Universal Credit low-paid workers will be required to work with

DWP job coaches to seek more work hours, higher pay, or an extra job as a condition of receiving benefits. If claimants fall short of targets agreed with coaches, they may face financial penalties.

Now this appalling government has introduced this policy in Haringey with a clear intention to sap money from the poor and making victims of anyone who needs benefits. The programme is a perfect example of the government's heartless policies.

Once fully implemented Universal Credit will mean disastrous consequences for claimants. Applying for it can only be done online, so people without a computer or computer skills will have real difficulty and may not claim. People in part time jobs may be forced to leave these and take a full time job. It's paid monthly, in arrears, so many

being sold off by the Mental Health Trust.

StART is a community-led group that aims to provide genuinely affordable homes, along with other facilities, that respond to local needs. Recently a number of consultations were held, attended by over 100 local residents who gave their opinions on what should be included in the architects' plans for the site. In addition to this, StART sent out a survey to local residents which received over 300 responses.

Now that local people have had their say on what the St Ann's site should be used for, StART can work towards meeting those needs. The next challenge is to make those plans a reality.

Right now we are at a crossroads; concrete action is needed to stop the housing crisis destroying communities. Whilst local councils have property developers' best interests at heart, StART is mounting a challenge against this by proposing that genuinely affordable homes must be made available for local people in Haringey.

To do this, StART needs as much support from the local community as possible. To offer your support, visit www.startharingey.co.uk

will fall into debt and could end up using loan sharks. The housing benefit element is paid to claimants, and trials of this found many claimants went into large rent arrears as money for rent was used to pay for food and heating. The whole benefit goes to one member of the family (normally the male) so women fleeing domestic violence have no income, meaning they may stay with an abusive partner.

The government says that Universal Credit will make work pay. This is rubbish. Campaigners, activists and groups, are uniting to destroy this hated piece of legislation. The Poll Tax campaign teaches how we can bring people together to put a stop to it.

SCHOOLS FOR SALE

Ever since George Osborne announced, in his latest budget, that the government intends to turn all local authority schools into academies there has been an outcry from nearly everybody, except those in the Cabinet, echoing the local outrage in Tottenham when Downhills school was forced into the Harris academy empire!

It is clear that academies are flawed in principle and not the educational utopia that the Tories claim.

They are run by unaccountable 'sponsors', who are able to disregard parts of the national curriculum, determine salary rates and are given buildings paid for by public money. Education will become a competitive market. The better funded academies will attract the 'better' teachers through increased salaries, and the smaller academies will suffer. The larger academies will also choose the children they would prefer to admit.

But there is a wider political point. The Tories are interested in social control. Most of us regard education as being about opportunity, a right not a privilege. However, the history of education shows that the state has only ever really wanted to regulate learning on a need to know basis whilst enforcing a "know your place" hidden curriculum.

With fewer and fewer skilled jobs needed in industry and less and less employment of any kind even Michael Gove was too radical in his equality rhetoric and had to go. Emboldened - perhaps stupidly - by a Parliamentary majority and a Labour Party he regards as fatally split between MPs and grassroots, Cameron thinks he can now go for total privatisation of education. Nicky Morgan (the new Education Minister) does not use Michael Gove's rhetoric of working class rights but one simply of global competition.

FILTHY RICH AND MORALLY CORRUPT

The leaked Panama papers which highlighted tax evasion by rich individuals and corporations comes as no big surprise. It is just another show of contempt by privileged people towards the working classes.

While we are battling against austerity, facing cuts to our public services, it is the poorest and most vulnerable in our society who are having to pay the price while the idle rich stash their ill gotten gains into offshore accounts.

Prime minister "Dodgy Dave" and his family have been implicated, dispelling the myth that we are "all in it together".

The hypocrisy shown by those who have the power to legislate against this kind of morally indefensible

behaviour knows no bounds. Let's face it, tax evasion has been an issue for decades yet little has been done to stop it and little or nothing will be done in the future to prevent it.

So long as the filthy rich are allowed privileges that are not accessible to the rest of society then the gulf between the rich and poor will continue to widen.

This is just another example that capitalism is unfair, unjust and fatal to the poorest most vulnerable people in the world today. If those at the top are not willing to share the wealth they make from exploiting the working classes then we need to take it back and use it for the common good.

REFUGEES: WHAT CRISIS?

For the last two years, politicians and the media have been telling us that we are in the throes of a refugee crisis. Whenever those with power use language like this, it is worth scratching the surface in order to see the bigger picture

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees estimates that there are some 20 million people seeking refuge around the globe. Over 80% are hosted by developing countries - that is, countries with not enough to support a minimal standard of living for their people. Many African countries take in refugees from war-torn neighbours and similar events occur in Asia. They do this with limited assistance as they understand the needs of people fleeing for their lives or from persecution.

Lebanon's population has grown by a quarter with the influx of Syrian refugees. Jordan has taken huge numbers too. In fact, the movement of large numbers of displaced people across borders is perfectly normal where we have a militarised world in which the great powers intervene and take sides, stoking conflicts. Now we find a couple of million people from the Middle East desperate for sanctuary and trying to reach Europe.

Europe is wealthy and far better placed to host large numbers of

refugees than other areas of the world. Last year, Germany took in 800,000 - equivalent to 1% of its population. On that basis, the UK could take 650,000. Cameron's response - 20,000 over five years.

Whatever happened to humanity and looking after each other? The US and Europe took in hundreds of thousands of Vietnamese boat people in the 1980's. The UK took in 35,000 Ugandan Asians in a matter of weeks in 1971. As the Balkans was ripped apart by conflict in the 1990's, Croats, Bosnians, Serbs and Kosovans were welcomed with open arms throughout Europe.

Sadly, we have moved into a very depressing phase of our existence.

Politicians, who lack any vision for a better society, simply promote greed. Borders are locked down as they tell us refugees and migrants will take what is ours. It is time we understood at whose expense the West became so wealthy, open our arms to those in need and construct a better world.

KILL THE BILL

Everyone knows there is a housing crisis in London - rents are skyrocketing, councils' housing services are collapsing under the strain and more and more people are sleeping rough.

Meanwhile we can all see the cranes on the skyline, the council homes getting knocked down and the shiny new buildings going up in their place. So the Government decided to do something and now we have the Housing and Planning Bill going through Parliament.

This should sort things out right? Wrong. At a time when thousands of people are on the waiting list for housing, the Government is forcing councils to sell homes so that housing association tenants, people who already have a home, can be given a cash bonanza to buy their homes. Homes will then be privately owned so that housing associations can never rent them to people who need them.

Families who do get housed by the councils won't get properly secure tenancies anymore. Furthermore, the Government is forcing councils to reduce tenancies to just 2-10 years so that people can never put down roots. Kids will have to change schools every few years and communities will be made up of people just passing through.

Money that should be used to build homes that people can afford will be funnelled away to build 'starter homes' costing up to £450,000. The Housing and Planning Bill is a massive transfer of our resources to people who are already doing alright. The Bill will turn the housing crisis into a disaster except for the rich of course, who will be able to carry on adding to their property portfolios at our expense.



THIS IS A START BUT WE NEED TO DO MORE

The housing crisis in Britain, particularly London, is one of the biggest problems we face today. House prices and rents are rising at unprecedented levels, plunging people into levels of poverty we haven't seen for generations.

Currently in London, around 25,000 homes are built every year. It is generally accepted that double that figure is needed to meet demand. However, most of the homes being built are not affordable for many Londoners, resulting in people having to sacrifice much of their wages on rents and mortgages or move out of the capital completely.

Neither does the situation seem to be getting better any time soon. It is at this point that communities must take it into their own hands to tackle the crisis head-on; the St Ann's Redevelopment Trust (StART) in Tottenham is doing just that.

Set up and run by a group of local residents and workers, StART aims to build genuinely affordable housing on the site of St Ann's Hospital, two thirds of which is

