

TOTALLY INDYPENDENT

Newsletter of Haringey Solidarity Group

www.haringey.org.uk

"If you think you are too small to make a difference try sleeping with a mosquito" - African proverb

POST-ELECTION: WHAT NOW?

At the recent general election political parties competed to get control of parliament. Whoever you voted for - or didn't - Government and capitalism as always got in and plan to continue to screw us all.

Parliament, big business, the military, royalty, banks and other powerful institutions (the ruling class) have worked together for centuries to enforce the rule of money and power over our everyday lives, our communities, our workplaces and our environment. This results in mass poverty, oppression, exploitation, wars and now the imminent threat of environmental and planetary catastrophe.

Parliament is part of the problem, not the solution. However, many people understandably hoped the Labour Party would get in and carry out some of its promises to protect our underfunded and collapsing public services and move towards a slightly 'greener' economy to try to slow up runaway climate disaster.

These fairly mild reforms would leave capitalism and the state fundamentally untouched. Yet they were still countered as always by the Tories and their corporate media billionaire pals with a continuous and successful barrage of lies, political propaganda, irrelevant non-issues and 'personality' assassination.

Parliament's role is to help coordinate a system based on greed and bullying by the powerful in order to keep the majority of us "in our place". We are discriminated against on the basis of class, race and sex, patronised or ignored, and generally kept down and shafted as oppressed citizens, exploited wage-slaves and passive consumers.

We have to organise and fight daily for our own collective needs. We should be building up counter-power with a positive vision for real change and a better future. We should not be

reliant on parties seeking power for themselves.

People want a better life. Instead of relying on failed strategies such as the lottery, drugs, praying, following charismatic leaders, voting and Party-building, we call on everyone to focus mainly on building up autonomous radical collective grass roots organisations and movements that

empower people where they live and work and spread the seeds of a new alternative society based on collective decision-making, sharing and mutual aid.

Mass protest movements involving millions continue to rise up all over the world. Such movements can develop very fast and grow into a real alternative to state and corporate power.



APOLOGIES FOR THE MESS AS WE GENTRIFY TOTTENHAM

"Please bear with us" says developer Argent's marketing banner at Tottenham Hale station. Their partnership with Haringey Council, to create a new town centre, now involves annexing one-third of the bus station to become a building site for a 38-storey tower block.

This tower is one of about 25 being built around Tottenham Hale. Other Argent towers - mainly offering private expensive flats for sale - will be plonked on Ashley Road and the former Welbourne Centre next to Chestnut Estate. For providing significant public land, Haringey Council gets around 130 council homes. Out of an Argent total of 1,000 units. A massive gentrification shift even before adding in the non-Argent towers of private sale homes.

Haringey say these Welbourne flats are part-delivery of their 2018 manifesto pledge to build 1,000 new council homes by 2022. While the rents levels on these new council flats remain a mystery, Argent advertise their market sales from £365,000. Most will be bought from overseas as 'Tottenham London' housing is marketed as "an investment".

Argent Director Robert Evans must inwardly roar with laughter that Haringey initially brought him in to be the "independent" chair of the Tottenham Landowners and Major Businesses group, and paid for him to attend MIPIM 2014 in Cannes. Plus, that Haringey has thrown so much public land and £12m into the partnership.

Not even Momentum senior figure Cllr Joe Ejiofor becoming Haringey leader has thwarted Argent's profiteering scheme. In fact, Ejiofor

approvingly watched from the public gallery in December 2018 as planning permission for all Argent sites was granted in one evening of democracy.

The early doors of "Argentification" has been controversial. Along with the stink over the planning for a lousy return of council homes, there is the daily construction noise and dirt. Further, an early Argent action was to delete the Hale Road cycle lane because the road had to be widened to create a new entrance to the shrunken bus station.

While the Argent town centre gentrification project appears presently unstoppable, we must continue to highlight the economic plunder to warn others of what might come their way. By exposing the threat of construction trucks moving about we can improve public safety. The flats may be pricey, but they shouldn't cost anybody their life.

Martin Ball

@CreativeActionN17

LOVE LANE ESTATE LIVES ON

The Council and Spurs continue to threaten sell offs and demolitions on the west side of the North Tottenham High Road for the benefit of private developers. However, the Love Lane residents Temporary Accommodation Group continues to fight back - their campaign for a residents' ballot on the threats, and at the minimum full rehousing for anyone living on the estate, has put the cat amongst the pigeons. And the Tottenham Businesses Group on the Peacock Industrial Estate to the north are opposing evictions of family businesses and have come up with their own Community Plan. Current Council plans are in tatters. The struggle continues...



HOMELESSNESS – A NATIONAL SCANDAL



It's shocking that over 300,000 people are homeless in Britain, according to research by the housing charity Shelter. It's also appalling that a homeless person in the UK dies, on average, every 19 hours. In London, 170,000 people – equivalent to one in 52 – have no home.

Haringey has the third highest level of homelessness in the country, with almost 3,000 households currently living in temporary accommodation. As with other London boroughs, Haringey has seen the numbers of people rough sleeping rise in recent years.

Homelessness has seen a year-on-year increase of 13,000, a 4% rise, despite government pledges to tackle the crisis. Estimates suggest that nationally one in 200 people is homeless.

The housing crisis and an unequal capitalist system are two of the main causes of this discrimination.

Yes, homes are being built, but who for? Certainly not for the people who really need them. And, with years of austerity cuts affecting benefit claimants (most of these working people), plus a lack of any new social housing, the government and local authorities are failing the most vulnerable people in our society

Homeless people are being denied access to basic healthcare pushing people with no fixed abode into "repeat cycles of homelessness" and causing unnecessary deaths.

People with mental health conditions face a daunting system which provides little, if any assistance to find suitable housing. Drug users said they had been told they were not able to receive support until they addressed their substance misuse issue, placing them in a "vicious cycle".

The crisis hits hard and indiscriminately. Just a little 'bad

luck' and suddenly you can't find the social care and well-being that allows you to have a peaceful life. Migrants, and young people, are seeing more and more that they are being denied any prospect of a future. They face high rents which are just unaffordable for many.

It seems clear one answer is to be found in homes being left empty while people sleep on the streets. A situation that only favours landlords and property speculators who want to keep available supply low in order to keep rent and house prices high.

The best solution is always to empower people through solidarity and direct action. We can't fight back on our own, but together we have a chance. Haringey Defend Council Housing and Haringey Housing Action Group are just two local organisations challenging the current housing crisis in our borough.

MASS GLOBAL UNREST

Every day around the world, the urban & rural working class and peasants engage in small local struggles to make their lives just that bit more bearable. Usually these struggles are ignored by politicians and the mainstream media, because they just don't care.

But every now and then a wave of massive strikes, uprisings and rebellions sweep the world, and cannot be ignored. That is happening right now around the world, and has been gathering pace over the last

year. From France to Haiti; Ecuador to Hong Kong; Iraq to Chile; Egypt to Spain; Lebanon to Indonesia; and many places in between, the global working class is fighting back.

The triggers in each case may vary, but there are some common themes. As the global neo-liberal ruling elite oppress us all a little bit more every day, with more austerity, more wealth inequality, more repression, everywhere workers & peasants eyes are opening wider. We see corruption and the bosses'

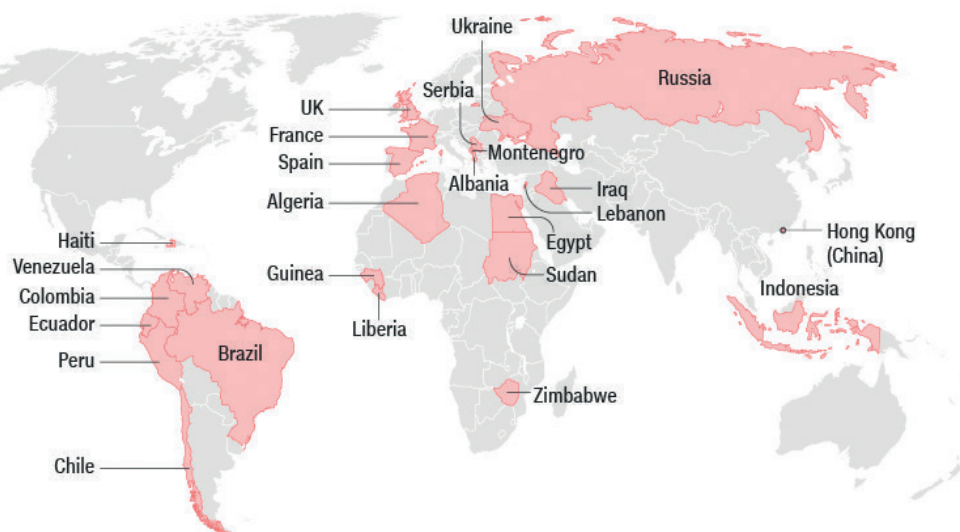
cronies ripping us off, our land is stolen, prices are rising whilst wages stagnate and services are cut. Elections are controlled, fiddled, or ignored; the police & military literally get away with murder; and dissent is increasingly outlawed.

These are not the fake rebellions we've seen here recently, where protest zones are agreed in advance, and the cops gently arrest people whilst other protesters applaud them. In these real rebellions people risk their lives just going out onto the streets. To be arrested means beatings, torture, disappearance, time in prison with no trial, and often death. Betrayed so often by political parties of all stripes, people are self-organising and creating new movements from below, linking up with the better labour movements, and resisting in ever greater numbers.

We anarchists and socialists do not own or control any of these rebellions. Where anarchists and socialists are able to exist, and flourish, we are a part of these movements and uprisings, standing side by side with our fellow humans. Along with everyone else, we articulate our ideas and dreams, tactics and strategies – as equals, not as leaders, nor followers. We will do the same in London – join us in joining the global resistance.

World of unrest

Countries and territories where significant protests occurred in 2019



GAMBLING, THE DRUG OF THE NATION!

Sponsorship of sport by gambling companies has boomed since 2005 when the last Labour government caved into the bookies lobbying and relaxed the rules which had previously restricted their marketing.

Betting companies made over a staggering £14 billion last year and their sponsorship of sport has played a major part in that financial success.

Cricket, Darts, Football, Rugby and Snooker to mention but a few, are sports that have benefitted from the money the betting industry spent on marketing just last year, a sum of £1.5 billion.

Even so sports organisations are not happy and are pushing for a larger slice of the cake, making the point that most bets that are made by people are placed on sporting events.

That sounds fair enough, but, both the betting companies and the sports they pay to advertise their industry are ignoring the growing problem of

gambling addiction.

The World Health Organisation recognised in May 2018 that gambling was now a mental health risk. Simon Stevens, Chief Executive of NHS England, pointed out in 2019 that the industry spends £1.5 billion a year on marketing but under £10 million dealing with the health consequences.

There are 340,000 adults with gambling addiction in the UK, with 2 million more "at risk." 55,000 young people aged 11-16 are addicted to gambling. Research in the UK and Hong Kong found that 4-11% of suicides were related to gambling, equal to 250-650 deaths a year in the UK. Gambling addicts are 3-4 times more likely to attempt to kill themselves than other types of addict.

With this in mind, isn't it about time that sports organisations and clubs took some responsibility for the problem of gambling addiction?

Apparently not! 80% of UK sponsorship deals are aimed at football. In the 2019-20 football season, half of the teams in the English premier league have the logo of a bookmaker displayed on their match shirts. In Scotland, all four leagues and both of the domestic cup competitions are sponsored by gambling companies. Many of the teams who benefit financially from the bookies also promote themselves as community clubs, which is something of a contradiction.

It is not only the gambling addicts who suffers, but their families, their kids and society in general. They are more likely than any other group of addicts to commit crime to finance their gambling.

Instead of promoting the betting companies, football and other sport, need to see the damage they are helping to create and stop normalising a practice that causes widespread harm.

THE FRENCH PRESIDENT MAY HAVE SUCCEEDED IN DOING SOMETHING NO FRENCH LEADER HAS DONE BEFORE: **UNITING ALL WORKERS**

In France, the latest "reform" by President Macron, is a "reform" of the pension system.

The French pension system has taken a hit since 2008 and money is needed to support it. But Macron's plan, which follows his rewarding the rich with a huge tax giveaway and making it easier to sack workers, would mean workers work longer to earn the same pension they presently have.

Macron's administration has a name for this policy, its called "equality." That is, they want everyone to be equally poor.

In response French workers, especially in the transport industry, took to the streets in early December 2019 closing down much of French commerce by stopping trains, planes and buses.

Strikers were joined by French hospital workers, protesting against a heavier workload, under funding of the hospitals and falling salaries; teachers, protesting against increased

monitoring; students (one who set himself on fire in Lyon) protesting against the removal of scholarships; plus firefighters and even the cops.

The strikes, led by the public unions for the first time featured the appearance of the "yellow vest" alongside the unions - the movement of workers who have been staging weekly demonstrations since November 2018. On the first day of the strike it was estimated around one million people were on the streets.

Public opinion is overwhelmingly against this "reform". 70% of French support the strikers. Should the government not back down the strikes are planned to continue into 2020.

In 1995 public sector workers could claim their pensions at 55. It is now 62 and growing. Alongside automation and deindustrialisation, more people are out of work and finding it difficult to retrain and re-enter the workforce.

Workers feel there could be at least three ways to increase pension revenue, but all involve thinking beyond the purely defensive. One is a global effort to close down tax havens so the rich pay their fair share of taxes. A second is the tax on the digital industries, what the French call a "Gafa tax" (an acronym for Google, Apple, Facebook and Amazon) and the third is increasing employers' contributions to the pension system.

Instead in Macron's world, all "reform" comes out of the pockets of those who can least afford to pay.

The battle lines seem to have been drawn, and like many full on disputes around the world presently (Spain, Hong Kong, Iraq, Bolivia and many more) it looks like 2020 could be a lively year in France. Worldwide ordinary people are getting fed up with the mega rich and their lackey bureaucrats. Where will heads start rolling next?

I HAVE CERTAIN RULES

I LIVE BY...

MY FIRST RULE,

I DON'T BELIEVE ANYTHING

THE GOVERNMENT TELLS ME.

- George Carlin



THE GOVERNMENT LIES

NOTHING BUT THE TRUTH!



Mark Duggan's family have settled a High Court damages claim against the Metropolitan Police over his death.

In March, civil proceedings were brought by Pamela Duggan and others who accused Scotland Yard of liability for the death and wanted compensation.

In October 2019, Mr Justice Stewart approved a confidential settlement of

Mr Duggan's family's claim against the Met. The court heard the parties had agreed terms after mediation took place.

The family said: "The settlement was made after both parties engaged in mediation and reached an agreed position without acceptance of liability on the part of the MPS or its officers. Both sides have agreed to bring all

proceedings concerning the death of Mr Duggan to a conclusion and move forward in the best interests of all those involved."

While it won't bring Mark back and while yet again the police get away with murder, we hope the pay-out helps the family as best it can.

The Killing of Mark Duggan - The TRUTH the Whole TRUTH & Nothing but the TRUTH

On 30th November 2019 the above event happened at Tottenham Town Hall. Below the organisers describe the event.

The Metropolitan Police Service recently agreed to settle a claim brought by Mark's family arising out of his fatal shooting in August 2011. We, the community, view this as an acknowledgment of their wrongdoing. Whilst this may bring to an end the current legal process, the community continues its quest for the truth to be revealed.

To this end we have joined forces with FORENSIC ARCHITECTURE (FA) to put on this special event. FA is a research agency, based at the University of London, which investigates cases of police and military violence using cutting edge techniques of video analysis and digital modelling. Using only the testimony provided at the inquest into Mark's death, FA have created a digital model that, for the first time ever, provides a wholly independent and visual reconstruction of the fatal shooting of Mark Duggan by British police officers on the streets of Tottenham.

ROJAVA UNDER THREAT FROM THE TURKISH STATE

Rojava in north east Syria was until recently one of the safest areas of the country. The Arab Spring hit Syria hard, but in Rojava, Kurdish, Arab, Turkman and Assyrians lived together peacefully despite differences in religion, language and nationality. They also established decent human rights for the area. Even with ISIS at its strongest they mobilised and protected themselves via the Peoples Protection Units (YPG/J) and then the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF).

Recently, American troops, stationed in Syria, were a buffer, stopping Erdogan's Turkey invading Rojava. Turkey's president Erdogan was always annoyed with America's support for the Kurds as he wanted to dismantle the democratic self-administered Rojava – seeing it as a threat to Turkey. Erdogan wanted a 32 kilometre buffer zone (inside Syria) along the border to stop any so-called threat from terrorist groups. He also wanted to re-settle Syrian refugees

presently in Turkey in this buffer zone. Doing this would destroy Rojava and the Kurdish self-governed areas.

But on 6th October Donald Trump withdrew American troops from Rojava. Turkey saw this as an opportunity to attack Rojava even though it was in Syria. On 9th October the Turkish military attacked the Kurds and later said it had hit 181 "militant targets".

When the invasion happened Trump presented the invasion as a historical inevitability, saying Turks and Kurds "have been fighting each other for centuries". This was how he paid back the Kurds who had helped defeat ISIS and was looking after thousands of ISIS prisoners. And some 11,000 Kurds have lost their lives in the process.

This latest repression of the Kurds by Turkey has caused more suffering. Over 200 civilians have been killed and hundreds more injured. Over 200,000 people have been displaced – adding to the increasing number of refugees. At

least 100 ISIS prisoners have escaped, and their whereabouts unknown.

Attacked and isolated the Kurds had no choice but to make a kind of peace with Assad's regime via Russia. Assad's forces occupied the border between Syria and Turkey.

Rojava suffered further when Erdogan and Putin met in October 2019. Russia insisted the SDF withdraw from anywhere Turkey has already invaded. If not, they could face aggression from Russia as well.

It's disgusting what's happened to the Kurds and people who dare to organise themselves. Rojava's deserves all our support and solidarity – even more now with the aggression it faces from the Turkey state. The Rojavan experiment of people organising themselves without central government is a lesson we should all learn from. We hope Turkey, Syria, Russia or America don't destroy this success story.

SOLIDARITY WITH HONG KONG PROTESTERS

With over 2000 arrests, hundreds of injuries and thousands of tear gas canisters fired the anti-government movement in Hong Kong is still increasing – even after the withdrawal of the Extradition Bill, which sparked the demonstrations.

Hong Kong Chief executive Carrie Lam recently banned demonstrators wearing masks to crack down on demonstrators, but thousands ignored the ban. She also passed an Emergency Law that gives her outrageous power to bypass Hong Kong's lawmakers.

Lam though, is just a puppet for the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). While previous demonstrations have known there is the threat of military action from the Chinese Liberation Army, this time it's more than just threats. Protesters claim the Chinese military are both disguising themselves as Hong Kong police officers and operating secretly.

Several people, including an Indonesian reporter, have been shot in the eye by rubber bullets;

two people have been shot by live rounds, one of them in the chest; numerous protestors have suffered fractured bones after being arrested, one got beaten up so badly they were left with brain haemorrhage.

In October, a 15-year-old female body was found in the sea, completely naked. The authorities concluded there was 'nothing suspicious' about the death. She was an active protest organiser and strong swimmer. Many in Hong Kong believe dozens of protestors have been killed but reported as suicides.

While the protestors' five demands may not seem that radical to us in the UK (complete withdrawal of the extradition bill from the legislative process; retraction of the "riot" characterisation of demonstrations; release and exoneration of arrested protestors; establishment of an independent commission of inquiry into police conduct and use of force during the protests; resignation of Carrie Lam and the implementation of universal suffrage) we also need

to remember that many see they are fighting for their very lives. Maybe as the protests continue, demands around better housing, employment and rising prices may also be talked about.

With the United States of America using the protests to have a go at China, the protestors need to be careful not to start relying on support from the USA. The Kurds in Syria paid heavily with their lives doing this. Also support from the USA could divide the protestors and water down their tactics and demands.

So what could be done besides sending more gas masks and protective helmets to Hong Kong? The CCP's stability, and Chinese nationalism comes from its enormous economic power. After oppressing Tibet, threatening Taiwan, building concentration camps to "re-educate" Uigur Muslims, Hong Kong is the next Chinese victim.

But there are acts of solidarity. Houston Rockets manager Daryl Morey's 'stand with Hong Kong' tweet divided the NBA league, or gaming giant Blizzard's banning of gamer Blitzchung, when he supported the Hong Kong state, are just two.

We should see the Hong Kong "crisis" as yet another case of oppression by the CCP. Under its one party rule, China has become a fascist capitalist state which the global markets have been supporting for decades: everything is made in China, everyone buys from the Chinese. Is it time to rethink the real cost of all this?



REDUCE, REUSE AND RECYCLE

A friend's child wrote this and we think it explains as well as any of us adults why the climate and environment are so important and that we need to do something about it.

My name is Kerry and I'm only 14 years old. Last year in my school I was one of the eco team group who were looking after the school environment - recycle, picking up litters, participating in Haringey viola meetings and encourage other to do the same with posters and school workshops.

Seeing people in the street, or around me, not doing good thing was making me very mad till my mum took us for a short break to France to visit our family members. There I learnt so much and was amazed about their lifestyle.

In my auntie's house, the saving of water and electricity was unbelievable. Washing the dishes with only 2 bowls of water to wash and rinse, no flushing the toilet at night to save water, recycling every paper napkin, all the lights switch off when no one in a room, no leaving technical devices on when not in use. So much that I can't remember. I said to my mum, wow, why don't people do the same in London? When we got home I kept doing a few of these things.

From that experience of 3 R's of reduce, reuse and recycle I knew the world needs to change for us all to live better.

At school I learnt so much about climate change, and we need a long term change to help the Earth in many ways. If not there will be huge health effects - both directly and indirectly. We need to improve the air, weather, water and ecosystems - the sad thing is it's a matter of life and death. The major greenhouse gases are in

water vapour, which causes about 36-70% of greenhouse effect; carbon dioxide (CO₂), which causes 9-26%; methane (CH₄), which causes 4-9%, and Ozone (O₃), which causes 3-7%.

After the lesson, my friend and I decide to support, and be part of, the global climate strikes in 2019. Their aims are very catchy and interesting - to take a stand against the climate crisis - and this was the motivation for us to get involved. With no help or support from our

teachers, all we needed was a letter from our parent to the school admin, to explain why their children are missing school on the day of the strike.

Being part of the global climate strike wasn't a waste of time but good. People don't know exactly the problem. Our leaders care but are very slow to take action and are missing the opportunity to have a better earth, better world, better life and, better people.

Together Stronger.



WHO WE ARE In 1991, Haringey Solidarity Group (HSG) emerged from the Anti-Poll Tax campaign. We wanted to create a long-term, vibrant, non-hierarchical group, unlike political parties where ambitions and posturing displace real politics.

We believe in ridding ourselves of the current system which places profit and power before people's needs. This involves getting organised, fighting back and collectively taking those decisions which affect our daily lives.

We think people should take control of their community and workplace struggles, support each other, encourage practical solidarity, build the necessary skills and knowledge for these struggles and generate strong, permanent, grassroots networks.

Many of us are involved with local residents', community and campaign groups within the borough. We support workers in dispute, campaigns against public service cuts and threatened community amenities. We are active on environmental, housing and claimants' issues and resist state controls.

Come and share your views at our monthly meeting. We welcome your involvement and with practical activities including distributing this newsletter and producing other materials including posters and leaflets.

For more about HSG, visit www.haringey.org.uk, befriend us on Facebook, contact us at PO Box 2474, London N8, phone 0845 2235270 or email info@haringey.org.uk