



Wake Up

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MASSACRES IN BEIRUT AND PARIS

The Islamist group Daesh (ISIS) claimed the 43 civilians killed by bombings in Beirut. And now it has claimed 129 people killed in Paris on the evening of 13 November. In Paris, gunmen opened fire in many crowded cafes, dance halls, and stadiums.

The most effective fighters against Daesh in Syria and Iraq have been the relatively secular-Muslim Kurdish forces. The US and its allies have given them dribs and drabs of aid, but no more.

The US and its allies remain in league with the Turkish regime of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, which has often turned a blind eye to Daesh activities because it hopes they may weaken the Kurds and the Assad regime.

The US and its allies also remain in league with Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and the other Gulf states, which are responsible for funding the Sunni-sectarian trend of the Syrian resistance, from which Daesh has nourished itself. Their operational aim in Syria and Iraq now is just to keep the conflict continuing and contained, and ensure no side gains a decisive advantage, with the hope that after some duration of bloodshed all sides will be weakened enough for them to preside over a compromise deal acceptable to all the strong states in the area.

Solidarity with the victims of Daesh terror, and effective action to cut the roots of this gang, must therefore be through the independent and democratic struggles of the international working class, Muslim, Christian, Jewish, atheist, and other — and not through any sort of common front with big-power governments, let alone with their attacks on civil rights.

British prime minister David Cameron has suggested that he will try again to get a parliamentary majority for Britain to bomb targets in Syria.

At most, increased bombing of Daesh might strengthen other Sunni-sectarian anti-Assad groups, or the Assad regime, that is, just shift the balance between the rival reactionary forces.

Only politics based on democratic and working-class mobilisation in the whole region, against US and French allies like the Turkish and Saudi government, and actively supporting the Kurds' struggle for national rights, can create better alternatives.

Civilians are not responsible for the actions of governments. And the Daesh leaders are conscious political actors motivated by a deeply reactionary Islamist ideology.

They are not stupid, nor are they automatons who simply react to whatever US and European imperialism does. They have their own conscious political strategy which we should take seriously.

FIGHT TO DEMOCRATISE LABOUR - JOIN MOMENTUM



Since Jeremy Corbyn became Labour leader, Labour has: unequivocally opposed the Tories' new anti-union laws; opposed Tory spending cuts and committed to reversing them; committed to returning schools to local authority control; passed conference policy in favour of workers' right to strike in solidarity with other workers (currently illegal); and more.

All of this would have been practically inconceivable before his election. During his campaign and since, tens of thousands of people (many of them working-class, many of them young) have flooded into the Labour Party. Inspired by the platform of Corbyn's campaign, they understand that his attempt to transform Labour into a vehicle for anti-austerity politics is now the cutting-edge struggle for anyone interested in changing society in workers' interests. Trade unions affiliated to Labour (like UNISON) should support that effort.

The Blairite knives are out for Corbyn, and right-wing Labour MPs may try to unseat him around the May 2016 election. The left in Labour must move fast to redemocratise the party, handing power back to the members and affiliated unions, away from the Parliamentary party.

The formation of "Momentum", a network aimed at organising Corbyn's support base, is a positive step. But something more than a loose network, promoting broadly anti-austerity politics, is needed. Labour's grassroots left needs democratic organisation, promoting socialist ideas - that is, a radical alternative to the type of society we live in now, based on workers' democracy.

Wake Up urges all readers to join the Labour Party, get involved in "Momentum", and argue for that kind of alternative and those politics.

THE CUTS CONTINUE

The Chief Executive and Corporate Directors correspondence to staff suggests an additional £30m in 'savings' (cuts) will be found next year.

This comes as the Chancellor prepares to deliver his spending review. The Government continue to insist that the deficit must be cut and that means austerity. The recent legislation passed by the Government will now commit all future Government's of any party to 'deficit reduction.'

Sadly our councillors, many of whom we voted for and want to fight the cuts will no doubt with reluctance pass on these cuts to us and the residents of the district as services near breaking point, levels of stress are on the up and job security is at an all time low.

Wake Up are a bit more optimistic about the state of the economy. The money is there for the services we need and the staff to deliver them. The councillors should not implement the cuts but fight this Government tooth and nail to take the money of the rich and the banks and use it to fund the services we all work hard to deliver.

VOTE JOHN BURGESS



Unison members will have received their ballot paper for the general secretary election, voting opened on the 9th November and it closes on the 4th December.

John has an impressive track record of leading a series of fights against the so called 'easy council' in Barnet (he is Barnet Local Government Branch Secretary). Wake-Up is supporting John's candidacy and calls on unison members to vote for him in the upcoming election, John is a rank and file, anti-austerity candidate and he is committed to fighting the Tory government's austerity measures and cuts.

He stands for a serious fight against austerity and coordinated strike action to defend pay, jobs and conditions.

A joint Trade union campaign and grass root campaign against austerity and to defend the NHS.

Putting money and resources into branches to provide more support for rank and file workers.

Fighting discrimination and inequality in the workplace and society: standing up against the scapegoating of migrants and those on benefits.

An increase in strike pay from one day of action.

Opposing anti-trade union laws and breaking them if necessary.

John is a rank and file worker who is facing the same attacks from the tory government as other workers and he will take a workers wage if he becomes general secretary.

In the face of the huge assault from the government on the welfare state and local government, unison needs to take the fight to the government and needs to punch its weight. The current general secretary, Dave Prentis who is re-standing for election has been general secretary since 2001 and deputy general secretary since 1993. Under his long and underwhelming leadership, he has consistently presided over a right wing, undemocratic and arrogant bureaucracy that has sold out dispute after dispute including the 2011 and 2014 pay dispute. Dave Prentis' track record shows that he is not fit to lead the Union.

We cannot continue with the same approach at the top of the union that has led to defeat after defeat, Wake Up urges works to vote for real change and to vote JOHN BURGESS FOR GENERAL SECRETARY

AUTHORITY OF THE YEAR?

A win at the Insider Media Yorkshire Property Awards, bringing together 'almost 500 of the top developers, investors, architects and advisers from across the region.' has decided Wakefield Council has cut the mustard above both Leeds and Sheffield.

The Chief Exec informs readers of the Wakefield Express and the council website that,

*"In the last financial year we secured £207m of private sector investment and created over 900 jobs
"We have a clear vision for sustainable economic growth and job creation"*

This would include the white elephant of Merchant Gate, the masses of 0 hour contracts the Council has helped secure for residents with Poundworld and TK Maxx then?

HAVE YOUR SAY!

Wake Up as you know is a big fan of the results of the Have Your Say survey, where the Council gets to hear how stressed we are, how we are not listened to, but STILL remain passionate about our jobs.

Every year the council get to ignore the results but feel reassured that they have consulted a minority of staff. This year even with the promise of potential prizes and incentives to fill it in, (*Our sources tell us the prizes are neither a pay rise or the guarantee of a job*), the deadline has still been extended to get a better turnout.

Some managers seem to have taken an approach of cajoling their staff into completing the survey and 'helpfully reminding' them of some of the successes that their areas have achieved before hand. Thanks but no thanks.

Wake Up would encourage everyone to fill the survey in honestly but to not just let these issues wait for an anonymous survey but to raise our voices now, stand together and fight for the kind of Council services we want

MORALE CONTINUES TO DROP

The knowledge that the Council will be trying to cut an additional £30m has left a lot of staff feeling nervous and anxious for their future.

Even the most optimistic (stupid) managers have been warning of the potential for job losses and further restructures, which more often than not just lead to fewer people doing more work.

Wake Up hears that the managers briefing with the Chief Executive, left many of them thinking about their own jobs and futures.

Numerous reports of staff saying that they fear for their future have reached Wake Up and we would think most of our readers.

Whilst this is a natural and understandable response after 5 years of austerity and attacks on working conditions and jobs, it is important that this does not lead to us giving up and accepting our fate. A concerted campaign including working with the working class communities we serve could help to turn the tide. To do otherwise will surely mean failure.

DEFEND DOCAS

The Government are currently trying to push through the Trade Union Bill. As Wake Up reported previously this has many consequences that would seriously damage the ability to take meaningful industrial action.

In another attack on Union finances the bill also changes the way the union contributions can be collected.

Currently union subs can be taken directly from workers' salaries in a system called Deduction of Contributions at Source (DOCAS) or check-off. Check-off costs the employer very little and this an ideological attack on union finances to try and weaken the labour movement.

This attack must be fought by the union through organising activity and industrial action against the removal of check-off and the wider trade union bill, nationally unison have been very conservative in their response to the law, Dave Prentis has meekly talked about launching a legal challenge but no other action has been seriously proposed.

Workers and the unions should also put pressure on Wakefield Council to not enforce the legislation. Formally the Council voted for a motion against the Trade Union Bill. Now is the time to hold them to it.

Check-off is not however the ideal model in which to collect union contributions. It gives power to the employer over union finances and the the ability to know whether workers are in a union.

Workers should be aware of this issue and the effect it could potentially have upon the ability of the union to fight the current austerity onslaught and prepare to move to direct debit for their

contributions if the legislation is successful to ensure that the union's finances are not crippled by this offense on trade union freedom.

What is *Wake-Up*?

Wake Up is a rank-and-file socialist bulletin, published at least monthly, written by Council workers, for Council workers. It is published by the socialist group Workers' Liberty, but is produced with the help of submissions and stories from supporters.

For more information or to find out how you can help or submit a story email wakeup.bulletin@gmail.com by 30th November 2015