The Brexit pantomime threatens to fracture the traditional political set-up of the British ruling class. Yet the whole issue just diverts attention from the dire situation experienced by the working class. Theresa May has announced that austerity is over but the most savage cuts that have been implemented in recent years are not going to be reversed.

It’s a Bosses’ Crisis but Workers Suffer

Working class people have seen reduced in-work benefits, cuts to unemployment and dispensed with, subsidies, allocations, or paring down of a whole range of local government services and amenities, including the cancellation of school and house building programmes. Inadequate funding has pushed areas of public health and education to the brink of collapse. Whether it’s called universal credit or job seekers’ allowance, people without paid work have to find a way through a demeaning maze of bureaucratic hoops to get the meagre ‘benefit’ they are entitled to. The massive rise in the use of food banks is set to increase, the shortage of “affordable housing” will remain and reports of hidden and not-so-hidden homelessness will continue.

On the jobs front, where the official statistics show that more people than ever are in “work”, far from a contented, prosperous working class looking forward, the meeting agreed to draft a statement which the attending organisations could support and forward, the meeting agreed to draft a statement which the attending organisations could support and forward, the meeting agreed to draft a statement which the attending organisations could support and forward, the meeting agreed to draft a statement which the attending organisations could support and forward, the meeting agreed to draft a statement which the attending organisations could support and forward. After discussion of the situation and how to chart a practical way forward, the meeting agreed to draft a statement which the attending organisations could support and publish in their press. The CWO was delegated to produce the first draft which we present here. It is self explanatory, applying the same approach as revolutionaries adopted a century ago.

No War But the Class War (NWBCW)

Worldwide capitalism is in a long term and deepening crisis which is taking us down the road to generalised war. There are more than 60 local wars going on today. Every one of those destroys the lives of our working class sisters and brothers while different gangs of bosses struggle for control. Most of these wars are between the clients of the key imperialist powers. They are proxy imperialist wars which, together with open trade wars, are harbingers of a wider global conflict. The drive to war is an outcome of the operation of the capitalist system itself. It is not the result of a few mad or bad capitalist leaders and only the overthrow of the capitalist system can prevent war. The only alternative we face is war or revolution.

Supporters of No War But the Class War (NWBCW) are aiming for the revolutionary overthrow of capitalism by the working class and the creation of a new global system of production. We are for a system based on common ownership to directly satisfy everyone’s needs. This will be controlled democratically by the working class via a global system of workers councils. Production for profit and the system of nation states and borders will be eliminated. In the process capitalism’s degradation of the planet will be reversed and humanity will be able to plan for sustainable development.

To achieve this we need to organise ourselves on a global scale and spread the understanding of both the need to create a new society and consciousness of how to achieve it. The working class itself needs to organise internationally, and to organise and strong enough to influence internationalist communists are well enough to influence others who support these positions.

If our alternative makes sense to you, get in touch with the CWO and help us argue for a revolutionary perspective inside the rest of the working class.

No War But The Class War!
The Crisis in Care For the Elderly

“Elderly care is the fulfilment of the special needs and requirements that are unique to senior citizens.”

Another Sign of the Deeper Crisis of Capitalism:

A 20 years ago old people reveal a bit about a society. The UK is one of the richest countries in the world. But it is a world which is only managing to stave off economic collapse by piling up debt and turning just about every aspect of life into a commodity nexus for financial speculation. Of course, this is not to say that capitalism glorifies youth and plays on sex appeal to sell commodities predates the current crisis. By the switch to a more global mode in the first sector and more in denial about the fact of ageing, never mind the process of death and dying. This cultural frame can help explain how nurses in a hospital ward for ‘the elderly’ can respond to someone in their death throes simply by putting up the bed rails and leaving him for the other patients (or should we say ‘bedblockers’) to contemplate. To treat the last stages of life as an illness that a patient ought to recover is part of a wider mindset that puts every infirmity of old age into the same bracket as a youngster with a broken limb: with a bit of time and some physiotherapy then the patient can get back to ‘independent living’.

Of course this is perfectly possible for some. Not every older is on their last legs. But when a local authority complains that the home care workers they employ to ‘speed up recovery’ and get people back on their feet within 6 weeks are not meeting their ‘targets’ we begin to smell a corporate rat. Last April Birmingham announce that ‘only 20 per cent of clients are independent after receiving the service’. So they set a new target of 80 per cent at the same time as proposing a ‘more flexible’ shift system for the care workers that puts an end to full-time jobs. OK. Now it’s clear. We’re in the capitalist land of ‘targets’ and cost-cutting: as well as freeing up valuable and costly hospital beds Council bosses claim the changes will make the service more productive and save £2 million a year. (Birmingham Live website) And since the main cost to the Council is the care workers’ wages then, logically, they have to be cut! No wonder there have been over 460000

We welcome anyone interested in this vital task to come and discuss with us.

The revolution programme serves no purpose at all if it exists only in the minds of a limited number of “thinkers” who are deluded into assuming their ideas are being transmitted “to the class” when they are not. A revolutionary programme serves no purpose at all if it exists only in the minds of a limited number of “thinkers” who are deluded into assuming their ideas are being transmitted “to the class” when they are not.

The majority of care givers are women.

On the other hand the people employed to administer the system are having done the impossible on the lowest pay can an employer get away with. As one ex-care home worker who is now on benefits told us: “I will see images of carers sitting with residents, remaining and having fun, [but] that just wasn’t true. Many were short-staffed; that’s four people for 50 [residents]. My time would be spent making sure people were dry and comfortable. Many find themselves going well beyond the boundaries of duty, out of simple concern for other human beings. Home carers who have to supply their own car, visit up to 6 ‘clients’ in an hour and possibly fill in a worksheet for each visit are in an equally precarious position. And the situation is getting worse. More and more care workers are on zero hour, agency work which they dare not refuse. Last year one of Britain’s care agencies, Newcross Health Care Solutions made the headlines for docking pay and firing workers who called in sick (£50!). Many are getting stressed out and burnt out. Some are seeing the need to resist. Unison has been having a field day enroling new members from the care agencies. For many the anger they are, the more the union has been pushed into taking some sort of action, as in Birmingham where the care workers are seeking to unionise the problem, not the solution. It is obvious that a single group of service workers needs the active support of the public to be viable. It is equally obvious that ‘actions’ limited to one local authority or city are easy to contain and pick off one by one. Of course, this is not just a care workers or service sector dilemma. The most pressing problem is that there are really no solutions within crisis-ridden, class-divided capitalism where a tiny minority at the top are getting richer as the living standards of everyone else are being ground down. The workers are being sold their own houses as an act of genocide. As we said, the NHS mess is as a result of the deeper capitalist crisis within which there is no progressive solution.

This dire situation really does pose the question of what sort of society we should and could be living in in the 21st century. The material and human means exist for a completely different kind of society. A society that actively addresses the deeper problems of society such as poverty, hunger, oppression and war: We call it communism but this vision has nothing in common with Stalinist state capitalism and the old USSR. As we said, the NHS mess is as a result of the deeper capitalist crisis within which there is no progressive solution.

The FTSE 250 listed outsourcing giant Mitie sold its domestic care business for £25m last year after racking up large losses, while Mears... said last year that it was losing £1m a year on its home care business, and was handling back unprofitable local authority contracts. These are the small fry. In 2011 the bankruptcy of Southern Cross, so far the biggest care home provider, is an ominous sign of the kind of collapse of one of the biggest home care providers, Allied Healthcare (owned by a German private equity firm Aurelius, after being bought up from Saga for £183m in 2015), which “lacked the ongoing funding or new investment necessary to ensure the business can operate beyond November 30, 2018”. In the event the company was sold to another dodgy financial group for “an undisclosed amount” which promised to guarantee no disruption to people’s care. Well, that’s a relief. But the writing is on the wall, at some point another “management” collapse and a media outcry is in the offing.

All this translates into increasing misery in the real world. On the one hand ‘senior citizens’ are not being looked after as they should and could be, whether at home or in residential care. As we said, the majority of people, with terminal illnesses can be home, people with terminal illnesses can be left alone. Negative reports are increasing, and can leave the ‘client’ simply wishing to be put back unprofitable local authority contracts.

Far from being charitable bodies, most care homes are shrouded in the hands of investment finance capital, mainly private equity companies which “traditionally offer high returns” on their investments for investors. According to the British Private Equity and Venture Capital Association the typical “private equity manager will work alongside the company management team to enhance the value in the business--- from the top-line growth, efficiency savings, cash generation and procuring the ”to sell on” centres, marketing and sales, improving reporting and human resources”. Then, after “a fixed-life, say normally 10 years, the private equity founder will have had to return the investors’ original money, plus any additional returns made”. In other words the private equity sharks out are to make a quick kill.

As well as the fees that more and more families have to pay as the old NHS dictum of ‘free at the point of use’ dissolves into thin air, the care homes demand an increasing share of the revenue from local authorities (about 60% of care homes residents still get some funding from LAs).

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