

# REBEL CITY

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## Scandal, sleaze, lies and corruption

Corruption and lies go hand in hand. And, we see this daily from politicians and the elites.

It can seem corruption is the way politics works nowadays. And we are not talking about some third world country. We mean developed countries, specifically the UK. We see more and more corruption and lies from politicians. We are no longer surprised or shocked. But we should be angry.

Boris Johnson and his clique secured Brexit on the basis of lies. In October 2020 Boris said Brexit would let Britain take back “full control of our money, our borders and our laws”. They would give the NHS £350 million more every week and all of us would benefit from leaving the European Union. Total lies. We left the EU and life has got worse not better. The gap between rich and poor has increased; health and care workers are exhausted and every day we hear of staff shortages and crap pay; waiting lists are longer; the list goes on. Chancellor Rishi Sunak tells us “extra money for education would allow per pupil spending to return to 2010 levels by 2024”. It's disgusting he feels proud they haven't increased spending on education for 14 years, and until 2024 it's actually gone down.

Under Covid-19 some 47 companies were given contracts for PPE totalling £4.7 billion after referrals from politicians and officials.



Many were linked to MPs, all of them Tories.

In May 2020, the £119 million PCR testing contract was awarded to *Immensa* without being put out to tender. In July 2021 *Immensa* got another £50 million. That's while 43,000 people may have been given incorrect PCR test results between 8 September and 12 October, mostly in south-west England.

Around climate change Johnson said: “When it comes to tackling climate change, words without action, without deeds are absolutely pointless.” Then he flew into Cop26 in Glasgow from Rome, rather than getting the train. In the recent budget he REDUCED taxes on internal flights! He moans about China's coal mines yet opens a new one here.

*Article continues on page 2...*

Johnson told campaigners against Heathrow's airport expansion: "I will lie down with you in front of those bulldozers and stop the construction of that third runway." Then he went to Kabul, missing a Commons vote that approved the plan, when he was foreign secretary.

This hypocritical government claim they are doing everything to protect the environment but received over £1.3 million from fossil fuel interests and climate sceptics since 2019.

The list of government's lies and corruption just goes on. Some would say Boris won the last election with corruption and lies. Below are a few of dozens of examples.

£37 billion of public money thrown at a private company that comprehensively failed to achieve "its main objective" to reduce Covid-19 transmission levels. Some consultants were being paid over £6,000 a day!

Owen Paterson MP repeatedly approached ministers and officials on behalf of two companies who paid him over £100,000. Paterson was paid more than £8,000 a month for 16 hours' consultancy work by *Radox Laboratories*. Geoffrey Cox MP receives at least £6m from a second job. Head of the Conservative 1922 Committee Sir Graham Brady receives £10,000 a year for 12 hours' work for *Snowhill Allied Holdings*, which is run by his constituent Michael Goldstone.

In the past 18 months, 148 MPs had second jobs, according to the register of members' interests. 114 of them were Conservatives. Their second jobs make up 87% of their combined income.

Some 17 MPs are landlords and have put their housing costs on their expenses, while earning thousands in rents.

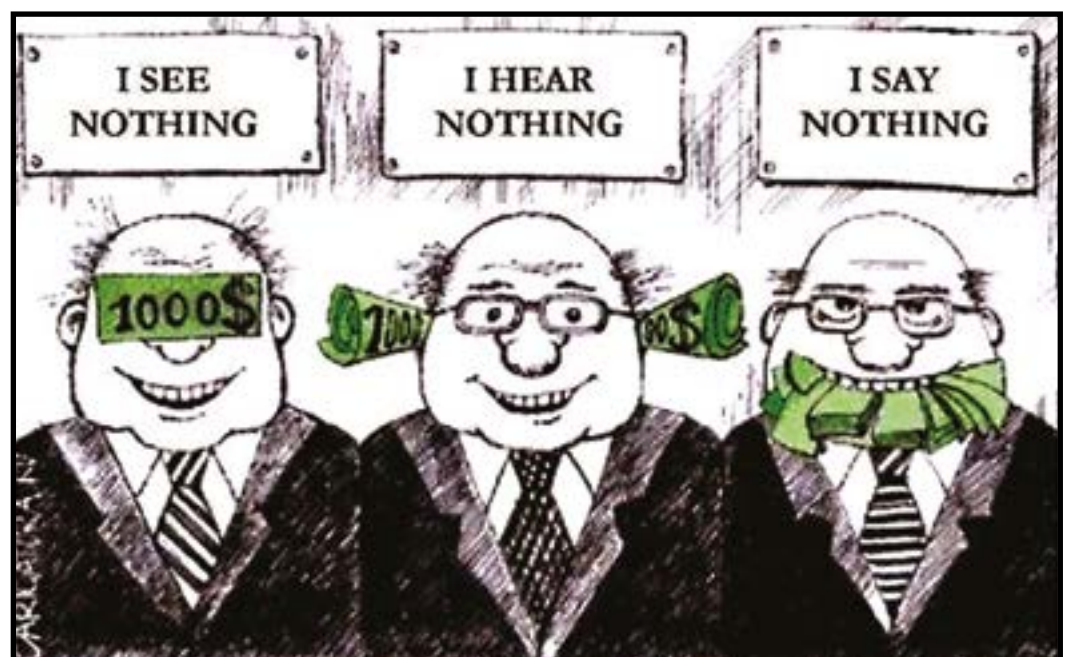
The National Audit Office last year found that firms referred to the VIP lane (via an MP) had a 10 times greater success rate for securing Covid related contracts than companies whose bids were processed via normal channels.

In addition, under the Tory Government you can buy yourself a title. Many Conservative party donors have been offered peerages.

Previously the government promised that nobody would have to sell their homes to pay for their social care costs. This didn't last long. Recent Tory plans show only richer people will benefit, while many poor people WILL lose their home – especially those in "red wall" seats.

If we want to stop the lies, scandal, sleaze and corruption this can only happen if we build a society free from the power of political parties, military and religious power. This can happen by organising ourselves, to struggle against the present system, via a mass movement. We can then achieve a society free of classes, hierarchy, powers and exploitation.

A society we all deserve to live in.



# **I don't need your Charity. We need Mutual Aid!**

From 2019 to 2020 it's estimated that 204,299 people accessed a foodbank in London alone. In 2021 this number has doubled to 421,426\*. In the news and on social media you'll probably see nothing but praise, thankful for the charities providing for these people in need. But this image is covering up the systemic issues that continue to worsen, making charity a temporary remedy to a sick society.

Charities often have to keep up a good public image, in order to appeal to the multi-million corporations, or the MP's that will endorse them to the press. This means excluding people who have a drug addiction, or severe mental health issues, or don't have legal paperwork- because those big buck donors don't want to ruin their public image by "endorsing" such things. Charities will also often run much like a corporation does, with all the proper hierarchies and systems in place. This can mean it's only accessible to those with internet access, a phone, a home address, etc. So due to the nature of charities existing under our government, and under capitalism, those who are most vulnerable are still neglected.

This is especially true at Christmas - lines to food banks to ensure parents have enough to feed their children and toy drives as well as Christmas appeals alongside adverts that convince us that if we don't have the right presents, the right food, and the right decorations that we're failing Christmas, by the same companies that fund these charities.

But there is an alternative, a way to ensure needs are met and those in need are protected - by running in defiance of capitalism and the government. Mutual aid, compared to charity,

aims to not only provide for people's basic needs, but also educate them about why these needs are not being met. Mutual aid provides food while helping you understand why you can't afford it. It doesn't turn anyone away, and doesn't rely on competing for donations from investors.

Take a shining example of mutual aid - the *Black Panther party*. When their government was attacking those most in need by cutting funding to low income, black neighbourhoods, the *Black Panthers* stepped up for their community. They provided food, education, medical care, legal assistance, and so much more, while showing those they helped that there can be another way. That their government had purposefully failed and neglected them, but with people working together, without greed or competition, our basic needs could still be met.

So next time you see a politician praising some hardworking charity, or a big company flaunting that they donated thousands to a Christmas charity appeal- think about why that benefits them, how that charity has to adapt the way they help people to keep appealing to these donors, and most importantly think about why that charity has to exist in the first place. Then think about how we can meet those needs with a community, instead of repeating the same structures and systems that are clearly failing. Companies and capitalism have failed us, the government has failed us, and we shouldn't have to pretend everything is working the way it is.



*For further reading, we recommend the short book 'Mutual Aid- Building Solidarity During This Crisis', by Dean Spade (2021)*

*\*<https://www.statista.com/statistics/382731/london-foodbank-users/>*

# Radical Housing Network: People's Housing Charter

The *Radical Housing Network (RHN)*, in conjunction with environmental and housing campaigners across the UK, are putting forward this charter of demands because they believe that, despite the terrible problems we face, there are still solutions available to build better communities and live safe secure healthy lives, in a clean and sustainable environment - if we fight for them. We at Rebel City certainly support these demands and we encourage people to support the charter. However, we have little faith that politicians will readily agree to these demands. The key point, as made by the *RHN*, is that we need to fight for them, self-organising and taking direct action.

The UK's housing 'crisis' is the result of decades of government failure to meet people's housing needs, while promoting ever greater inequality in access to land and property.

On any night in one of the richest countries in the world, more than 10,000 homeless families are living in a B&B while at least another 2500 people are sleeping on the street. These statistics are unlikely to be disconnected from the fact that the number of people in the notoriously insecure private rented sector has doubled in the last 20 years to nearly 20% of all households.

This lack of secure affordable homes is in large part the result of a mis-management of resources rather than lack of housing. Property speculators can profit from leaving hundreds of thousands of properties empty in the UK, and tax incentives promote the ownership of second-homes and *Air B&Bs* that divert hundreds of thousands more properties from becoming much needed homes.

Unequal access to housing has been exacerbated over recent decades by the transfer of housing and house-building from the public sector to private finance, and houses are increasingly seen as an investment vehicle rather than a fundamental human right. The failure of the 'free market' to deliver the affordable houses that people need has also been facilitated by a lack of real local democracy over planning and development.

The government's plan to further loosen democratic control over the planning process needs to be seen in this context of a country with extremely uneven distribution of wealth and power, racial inequality, and an unwillingness to tackle the biggest threat of all, which is the climate emergency.

Buildings produce no less than 40 percent of the UK's total carbon emissions, and construction produces 63 percent of the UK's 200million tonnes of rubbish a year. There is no way to reduce carbon emissions without radically overhauling the buildings we live in and what we build - but so long as there is profit in polluting there will be no change of course without drastic and dramatic



government action. First and foremost in order to make far-reaching and rapid decisions about how we use land then we need to own it - so the sale of public land has to stop and the buying of private land for community use has to start.

In the process of implementing these changes we could also create a much richer physical and social environment that enhances all our lives.

We call on local and national governments to adopt the following principles:

Housing is a right for all. Everyone should have a home that is affordable and in good repair, with enough living space and access to work, education and community amenities. Providing housing need not, and must not, contribute to the destruction of the environment on which we all depend.

To achieve these principles we need to adopt the following measures:

1. Convert long-term vacant properties to social housing.
2. Refurbish and repurpose - rather than demolish - existing buildings, to provide homes or to revitalise empty high streets through community use.
3. Where new buildings are necessary they must be built with sustainable materials and be truly carbon neutral (without 'carbon offset' payments).
4. Introduce and enforce rent controls and secure tenancies for all renters.
5. Tax the increasing value of private land to fund public investment - a land tax.
6. Retrofit all buildings to the highest environmental and safety standards including insulation and affordable renewable energy schemes.
7. Introduce participatory democracy in all areas of planning and control over our homes. This could include planning juries, citizen assemblies, tenant associations and tenant co-operatives.

*For more information:*

Video to illustrate the demands: [https://drive.google.com/file/d/1fxVc29j\\_851Rde5I4FSCmI-73putPDV8/view?usp=sharing](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1fxVc29j_851Rde5I4FSCmI-73putPDV8/view?usp=sharing)  
<https://www.radicalhousingnetwork.uk/>

# Save Nour and Fight The Tower

What started as a battle to save one of Brixton's most beloved local supermarkets, has launched a fight against gentrification in the community. In January of 2020, local grocers *Nour Cash and Carry* was served an eviction notice by the building's landlord, Hondo Enterprises. So much of the community rely on locally owned supermarkets, much like this one, for low-cost groceries, and for international foods and ingredients you wouldn't be able to find in larger chains. An online petition began from a campaign dubbed *SaveNour*, which raised tens of thousands of signatures, to not only save the community, but the Shaheen family who had ran the supermarket for over 30 years.

After months of raising awareness through social media, radio, local news, and even a short film interviewing Brixtonians about what *Nour* means to them, their fight was successful, and in June 2020 *Hondo* renewed their lease, and found a new unit to move them into Brixton Marketplace at an affordable rent.



This sadly wasn't the end of Brixton's battle with *Hondo*. *Hondo Enterprises* is a property investment company, with wealthy Texan club DJ Taylor McWilliams at its head, and they are rapidly buying up property in Brixton. The latest includes a large area by Brixton Market,

where they are planning to construct a giant 20 storey tower. This will massively change the face of Brixton, as McWilliams shapes the landscape into his own dystopian vision of office blocks and generic overpriced cafes and bars, raising the rent until none of the local vendors can afford to remain, and Brixton's melting pot of culture boils dry. *Hondo* promised to make 12.5% of the workspaces "affordable", only charging 50% of their full market rent. But as this will be a high spec, high-cost building, it would still not be affordable to small businesses in Brixton. Not to mention- there isn't any proven demand for office or workspaces to be added in Brixton, so it's very likely that it will be converted into luxury flats after a few years. That is, on top of the three years that it will take to construct it, affecting the lives and livelihoods of everyone living nearby.



The first renderings of what it would look like resembled the most depressing car park you've ever seen, and so they attempted to "trend-ify" it by adding some CGI plants and poetry readings, but it wasn't fooling anyone. This was an office block, and no matter how much they can claim there will be restaurants, concerts, kids clubs, and art shows, you can be sure none of it will be from or for the people of Brixton.

At the time of writing this, the decision on whether or not its construction will go ahead is down to Sadiq Khan on December 17th at a public hearing. He raised some issues concerning the height of the building, along with its effect on local businesses, which led to an amendment of *Hondo's* plan in November 2021, which didn't really address anything. They claimed it would create more jobs for locals, however according to their own figures, only 14% of jobs within the development would go to Lambeth residents, let alone to people in Brixton. Lambeth council's policy requires 25% local jobs at minimum. The campaign that began as *Save Nour*, now known as *Fight The Tower*, are urging people to submit their objections to Lambeth Council, and no matter the decision there will continue to be a battle against the gentrification of places as special and unique as Brixton.

If you want to learn more, stay updated, or find out how to get involved, visit [www.savenour.com](http://www.savenour.com), or follow their campaign on Instagram [@save\\_nour](https://www.instagram.com/save_nour), or Facebook [@SaveNourSaveBrixton](https://www.facebook.com/SaveNourSaveBrixton)



# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

In this section of Rebel City we answer questions we often get asked about anarchism. If you have a question you want answered, email us at [rebelcitylondon@gmail.com](mailto:rebelcitylondon@gmail.com)

## Would an anarchist revolution be violent?

As most revolutions are violent, and as the media demonise anything violent and destructive as anarchy, this is a fair question.

The short answer is violence may happen but it's not what defines an anarchist revolution. An anarchist revolution won't replace our existing leaders with another group of would-be rulers, with little fundamental change for most people. An anarchist revolution will change all aspects of society - all legal, political, and economic structures, including capitalism, will be replaced, and social relationships transformed.

Rather than an event, an anarchist revolution will emerge from a process whereby people increasingly realise they really don't have to put up with things the way they are, and that they themselves can organise society in a better, freer, fairer way.

This process might start by workers taking over and running their workplaces to benefit the community, rather than make profit for bosses and shareholders.



Or by people taking on the provision of services to the community. There are many examples round the world of workplace takeovers and of people organising community services for themselves.

Of course, such activity, won't go unchallenged by the state and by capitalism. Self-organising, anarchist or otherwise, is seen as a threat by those in power. So, such initiatives can expect either take over (think 'supermarket' food bank - you donate the food; the supermarket gets the credit and the profit), or increasingly violent attacks. However, the greater the number of people who refuse to be exploited, the greater our chance the existing order can be transformed without bloodshed.

## What would education in an anarchist society look like?

Education, like many other aspects in an anarchist society would have some broad guidelines. Amongst these would be it should be broad, lifelong, non-hierarchical, diverse, person centred, societal, voluntary.

People would be encouraged to learn just for the pleasure of it and people of all ages would be encouraged to learn side by side and become both the student and teacher. Even in present society many of us learn vast amounts from books, friends, family and just watching and talking to people. This is partly what we mean by education would be non-hierarchical. People learn at different levels so it would seem unlikely everyone in a class would, or should be the same age, and this would be encouraged to break down generational divides but also mean any of us can learn what we want to at any stage of our lives.

The idea you need to learn "x" at an early age to be able to do job "y" years later seems strange to us, and we would also assume many people would dip in and out of education throughout their lives as well as dipping in and out of work in the same way. Obviously others may have a specific interest and decide they want to learn more and more about a specific subject.

It's likely society would still need some specialist education and training for certain people at certain stages of their learning as (for example) surgeons do need a lot of specialised training. But this would be open to ever one and anyone who wanted to

pursue a specific field of learning. But even surgeons should also be encouraged to try other things as well as we can all benefit from knowing some history, poetry, art etc. etc. This kind of specialist education may still need dedicated buildings with the right equipment and people with the right expertise. But generally anarchists feel that education doesn't have to happen in a building specifically set aside for "learning". But even if people locally did decide to dedicate a specific building to learning, who attended and when would be decided between those who led the session and those attending. Those leading a session or sessions would need to commit to being there but anyone would be permitted to



attend one, some or none of the sessions, as they wished or other commitments allowed.

There wouldn't be a hierarchy of subject matter. Maths wouldn't be seen as more important than (say) art or humanities, or for that matter play or wellbeing sessions. All would be seen as equally important and accessible to whoever wished to attend.

We would certainly not have the kind of authoritarian, top down schooling that is meant to prepare and indoctrinate us as good workers for the benefit of the rich and capitalism. We would suggest people would want to learn about things like practical skills, critical thinking, problem solving, and social skills as much as they would want to learn Latin; science or algebra.

## Every killing is one too many

In early October, Tory MP David Amess was stabbed to death. At Rebel City we feel this was a cruel act. Amess shouldn't have been killed doing his job, even

though we see MPs as part of the problem rather than part of the solution.

After Amess' death the great and good came out in their masses to comment on his death. Priti Patel MP said "questions are rightly being asked about the safety of our elected representatives". Lindsey Hoyle MP said "MPs' security would have to be examined". Everyone from the Pope to the Archbishop of Canterbury was shocked someone going about their job was killed. Again Patel stated she had asked police forces to look at how they can protect MPs even more.

We say it again. Amess shouldn't have been killed doing his job.

But, in an average week 2 workers a week are killed at work. This never gets on the news and there is never a country wide "investigation" how these deaths can be stopped. But week in, week out, another two workers die due to unsafe conditions and employers neglect.

On average 30 people a week die on our roads – many of them children. Yet where is the Pope or the Archbishop of Canterbury calling for measures to be put in place to stop the weekly death toll? Instead we get faster and bigger cars.

On average 2 women are killed, mainly by current or former partners, every week – again not just once, but week in, week out. Yet where is Priti Patel asking police forces to look how they can protect vulnerable women better – or some might say at all.

On average 12 people a week are killed on our streets. Yet Lindsey Hoyle and all the other 649 MPs seem to be silent on looking how our streets can be made safer and how we could examine how people's security can be made safer.

You could add to this all the people who die as a result of poverty, cuts to benefits, bad/no housing or crap health care, let alone suicides.

Again - Amess shouldn't have been killed. But neither do we feel workers, women, young people or the poor should be killed or die either. What we do find disgusting is that our so called elected representatives will move heaven and earth to provide further protection for one of their own while not doing a damn about us dying. We need to create a society based on co-operation and sharing, where all lives are equally important: a society without rich and powerful people, and their protectors, the police, courts and military.

# INEQUALITY

Even during a pandemic they rob the poor to pay the rich.

Apart from the health inequality, this pandemic is also showing another devastating effect in our day to day lives. This is the wealth extraction by the rich, from the poor.

The number of millionaires globally rose from 5.2 million to 56.1 million over the course of the pandemic. This can't be done without wealth extraction, which is the transfer of funds from public services and working people to the top 1%. And that money comes from the very same working people most at risk - the poor and frontline workers.

Despite this, the government maintains a line that austerity, for most of us, will need to continue in order to pay for subsidising wages through the furlough scheme and other coronavirus governmental costs. This austerity, like all austerity periods, disproportionately affects the working class. Generally, the rich get wealthier in periods of austerity.

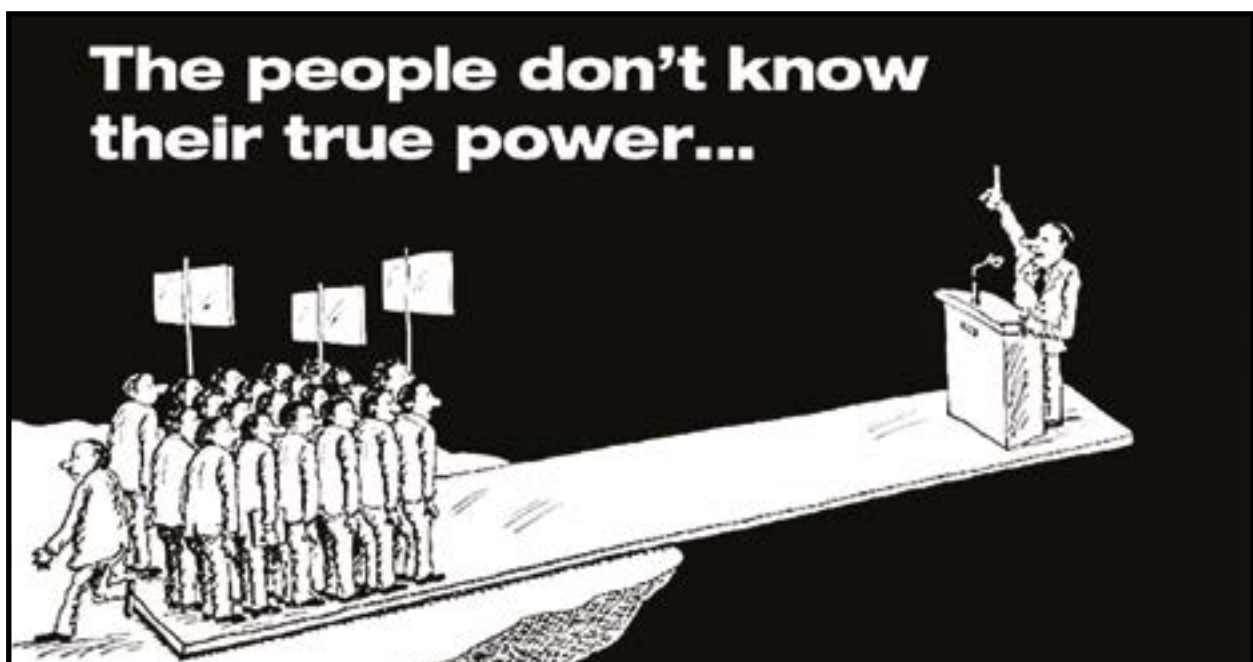
Households have seen food prices go up thanks to both an inflation rate of 5.2%, and also the reduction in worker's rights, as frontline workers most at risk are not given anything in the face of this price increase. With the reopening of society, demand for oil and gas has seen prices skyrocketing in the UK, especially with the collapse of many major

energy providers being predatorily bought out by other companies. Furthermore, a national insurance increase of 1.25% will see households struggling further in the face of this wealth transfer.

The question many ask is "should we not be fighting the government for an increase in wages to combat wildly rising costs of living in the UK?" While it's true that if your wages have not risen in line with the cost of living you will be worse off, this merely shows the cyclical nature of waiting for concessions from the government in the field of worker's rights and pay.

While some demand a higher wage, paid for via taxing the rich, the truth of the matter is that the provision of social services and the raising of the bare minimum wage by the state is merely a roundabout way of returning tiny portions of stolen labour to the working class. Minor reforms that claim to hold back the onslaught of capitalistic wealth extraction, but which in themselves are not only too small to make any systemic difference, are easily reversible by that very same state apparatus and must be continually fought for over and over again by the working class.

The true answer is, through organisation in the workplace and class struggle, it's possible for all working people to improve their conditions in their fight to own collectively, the fruits of their labour in the pursuit of a better society for all who are oppressed.





# A burning issue: the Edmonton incinerator

A Labour council, Enfield, has shown that it is no friend of the working class by its decision to go ahead with a new incinerator in Edmonton, which is in one of the poorest areas of the country, with 65% of residents from ethnic minority backgrounds. The current incinerator is coming to the end of its working life. Air pollution in Edmonton already goes beyond legal limits. Edmonton, as part of London, is heavily populated.

Yet a month before, similar plans for an incinerator near a leafy village in Cambridgeshire was rejected, because it might damage historic buildings, and wasn't "in keeping with the local neighbourhood". No such considerations for the population of Edmonton have been taken into account by Enfield council, for a neighbourhood with some of the highest levels of economic and social deprivation in the UK, with high levels of bad health. The *North London Waste Authority* (NLWA) has driven this through. It serves seven London councils, six of these have a Labour majority.

These boroughs are all represented on the board of the *North London Waste Authority* which is responsible for the incinerator. The NLWA is chaired by Cllr Clyde Loakes, deputy leader of Waltham Forest Council. Waltham Forest and other Labour councils have declared climate emergencies – a bad joke!

The incinerator will produce more than 700,000 tonnes of CO2 every year, and emit fine particulates that can damage the lungs of children, and affect other vulnerable people such as the elderly and people with disabilities, reducing life expectancy in one of the poorest parts of the UK. The amount of carbon dioxide pumped out annually will be the equivalent of an extra 250,000 diesel cars. If the plans go ahead, the working class community of Edmonton and surrounding areas will be saddled with a new, bigger, incinerator for the next half

century – replacing the existing one built in the 1970s. Air pollution in Edmonton already goes beyond legal limits. It's the health of working class and people of colour that suffers as a result. The campaign against this incinerator environmental disaster has now reached a vital stage.

The NLWA board will be making a crucial decision on 16th December on going ahead with the new replacement incinerator, and awarding the contract to *Acciona*, a Spanish multinational company. Other bidding companies have withdrawn, reflecting a strong campaign waged against the incinerator. Late September saw hundreds of local people, as well as Black Lives Matter and Extinction Rebellion (XR), close down the A406 North Circular dual carriageway and march together to the incinerator site. If the company can be 'persuaded' not to continue with its bid the sell-out Labour controlled NLWA will be left high and dry.

Following a successful protest at a Haringey Council meeting, there was a protest outside a full meeting of Waltham Forest Council on 9th December. Clyde

Loakes was given a warm welcome on the night!

On the ground mass actions continue to be essential. But all actions are needed in this phase of the campaign to make Acciona realise we mean business when we say we're going to make their life hell if they proceed.

It claims to be a green

company, "leading the corporate fight to mitigate the effects of the climate emergency and accelerate change towards a decarbonised energy model".

Call it out! Please send messages to Acciona via: <https://linktr.ee/StopTheBurn>. You can use this to make an easy to submit trustpilot review or send Facebook or Twitter messages. TELL ACCIONA IT'S NOT WANTED IN NORTH LONDON!

Haringey Council (one of the 7 LAs that make up the North London Waste Authority and next door to Edmonton/Haringey and Waltham Forest) has just called on the NLWA to pause and review the new incinerator plans, so the campaign is having an effect.



<https://www.islingtongazette.co.uk/news/local-council/haringey-council-asks-nlwa-to-pause-edmonton-incinerator-85310>

# Homes for need NOT FOR PROFIT

The housing crisis in London continues to deepen. There are 170,000 homeless in London, according to a report by the *Big Issue* (<https://www.bigissue.com/news/housing/britains-homelessness-shame-cold-hard-facts/>). Many more are living in overcrowded conditions and/or paying rents that take up the bulk of their wages. Looking around London with all the building work going on, you would think that the mayor, local councils and their private developer partners are busying building the homes we need. But this is not the case. The wrong kind of housing is being built. Instead of building permanent homes that everyone can afford, the homes are a source of profit for investors. The new properties are being bought up by buy-to-let landlords who will charge high rents to locals or else cash in on the *Airbnb* bonanza. Others buy up property as an investment, leaving homes empty and waiting for prices to rise.

People are fighting back. Groups like the *London Renters Union* are fighting landlord exploitation. Many estates are fighting to have their estates retrofitted rather than demolished and handed over to private developers. Retro-fitting is better for the environment as well as keeping local residents together.

The *Campaign against Empty Homes* has been recently set up as a coalition of different groups. However, it is the organisation *Action on Empty Homes* who has highlighted the role of empty homes and *Airbnbs* in contributing to the housing crisis. They released a report, 'Pretty Vacant' in 2020 which revealed some startling facts.

## The report reveals:

- London housing policy is based on meaningless and inaccurate data. There is huge variation in numbers of recorded empty and second homes between similar, neighbouring London boroughs.
- Wealth investment leaves an estimated 125,000 homes in London without anyone living in them.
- *Airbnb* and short-term lettings are sucking tens of thousands of homes out of London's residential supply.
- Tens of thousands of homes are under construction which are destined to deliver for investors without housing any Londoners.

Chris Bailey, Campaign Manager and author of the report for *Action on Empty Homes*, said: "This report reveals why the 500 plus high-rise towers with planning permission in London won't solve London's housing crisis. Too many are destined to end up pretty vacant as unregulated *Airbnb* lets, second homes and buy to leave investments, while



London councils spend over £700 million annually on insecure Temporary Accommodation for 57,000 families, including 80,000 children."

See: <https://www.actiononemptyhomes.org/pretty-vacant>

The Report has many policy recommendations including having a registry of residential property ownership and usage and challenging the concept of 'second homes' which in reality are often just investment properties. They also call for regulation of *Airbnbs*.

However, the report falls short of demanding that there is a complete halt to the building of homes for investment. In addition, the proposals for council regulation are vague and lack teeth. *Airbnbs* should be severely limited if not stopped altogether and homes that are not being used as residences should be taken over and retrofitted to be used to house the homeless. In Kensington and Chelsea there are almost 2000 empty homes. These could have been used to house the survivors of the Grenfell fire.

Strong action is needed to force change. Squatting in private buildings is now a criminal offence in England which makes it difficult to use this as a tactic. But the situation is so desperate that we need to think of how we can build a squatting movement despite the obstacles.

For information on the current legal situation on squatting see: <https://www.squatter.org.uk/>

For more information on all these issues see: <https://www.actiononemptyhomes.org/news/campaign>

# Times they are a changin'?

Are the times changing in the world of the big unions?  
We doubt it!

We're told Sharon Graham won the leadership of Unite against bureaucrats of Right and Left by prioritising workplace struggles against manoeuvrings inside the Labour Party. (In fact, she got the votes of under 4% of Unite's million plus members.) Unite then cut its contribution to the Labour Party down to the bare affiliation fee, though definitely/sadly did not disaffiliate.

Unite claims to have won pay deals worth over £25 million for 12000 workers in Sharon Graham's first 100 days in office; three quarters of the 43 deals through strikes or votes to strike. Often cited is Bexley where the lowest-paid refuse workers won an 11% increase. But the rhetoric about drivers' wage increases of 20% to 30% ignores the fact that the bosses were faced with a massive shortage of drivers.

Before her election she claimed "100% track record of success". at *British Airways (BA)* and *Go North West (GNW)* buses. In fact, fire and rehire contracts were withdrawn only because Unite agreed concessions, including job losses, that made such threats unnecessary. At the coffee giant *Jacobs Douwe Egberts* Unite "negotiated" an agreement cutting annual wages by up to £9,000.

Does anyone seriously expect the election of new leaders at the GMB and Unison to prove any different?

Some workers in mainstream unions, fed up with having to fight bosses and Union bureaucrats at the same time, set up independent Unions, with the workers in control of their own struggles.

That doesn't mean they have all chosen similar strategies - or even similar structures. Indeed, the United Voices of the World has abandoned its experiment with what sounds like everybody making all decisions together and reverted to a delegate committee structure with General Secretary.

The different Unions' histories have resulted, depressingly, in strong antagonisms and competition between some of them.

Examples of independent Union disputes in London that we know of included the avowedly revolutionary Industrial Workers of the World, expanding its campaigns in English Language schools; the very different Independent Workers of Great Britain drivers in dispute with *Ocado* in Acton; the United Voices of the World security guards battling Union busting at *Great Ormond Street Hospital*; the Cleaners and Allied Independent Workers at *Facebook Brook Street*; App Drivers and Couriers Union couriers against *Uber, Bolt* and *Addison Lee*.

In a periodic paper like *Rebel City info* about current struggles is likely to be out of date. Follow their websites, tweets etc for up-to-date reports.

All listed on our back page. They often call for, and welcome, support for their campaigns, including on the picket line!



**Rebel City** aims to cover all issues of importance to working class Londoners. We argue for a radical transformation of our city. Rebel City is collectively produced by a range of groups and individuals. 12 pages of quality anarchist reporting and analysis. Get it at Housmans and Freedom Bookshops, your local social centres, or from a friendly anarchist in the street or contact us and we'll mail you a copy! Get involved. Contribute articles and information. Take bundles and distribute them among your neighbours and workmates.

Contact: [rebelcitylondon@gmail.com](mailto:rebelcitylondon@gmail.com)



## DIRECTORY

### Get involved!

Here is a selection of campaigns and groups that are helping to make London the Rebel City.

### London-wide

- Advisory Service for Squatters:** [www.squatter.org.uk](http://www.squatter.org.uk)
- Anarchist Communist Group- London:** <https://londonacg.blogspot.co.uk>
- Anarchist Federation - Blog:** <https://aflondon.wordpress.com/>
- Anarchist Federation - Facebook:** [www.facebook.com/London-Anarchist-Federation](http://www.facebook.com/London-Anarchist-Federation)
- Angry Workers:** [www.angryworkersworld.wordpress.com](http://www.angryworkersworld.wordpress.com)
- Anti-Raids Network:** <https://www.facebook.com/antiraid/>
- Black Lives Matter:** <https://www.facebook.com/BLMLondon/>
- Cleaners and Allied Independent Workers Union:** [www.caiwu.org.uk](http://www.caiwu.org.uk)
- Disabled People against Cuts:** <http://dpac.uk.net/>
- DIY Culture - Blog:** <https://diyculture.home.blog/>
- DIY Culture - Facebook:** <https://www.facebook.com/diyculture101>
- Empty Cages - campaign to abolish prisons:** <http://www.prisonabolition.org/>
- Feminist Fightback:** <http://www.feministfightback.org.uk/>
- Industrial Workers of the World:** <https://www.iww.org.uk/londongmb>
- London Renters Union:** <https://londonrentersunion.org/>
- NoSafety, No Work Campaign:** [www.nosafetynowork.org](http://www.nosafetynowork.org)
- People's Land Policy: campaign for land justice:** [www.peopleslandpolicy.org](http://www.peopleslandpolicy.org)
- Radical Housing Network:** [www.radicalhousingnetwork.org](http://www.radicalhousingnetwork.org)
- Reclaim the Power:** <https://reclaimthepower.org.uk/>
- Rootz into growing:** <https://www.ubele.org/rootz-into-food-growing>
- Sisters Uncut:** <http://www.sistersuncut.org/>
- United Voices of the World:** <https://www.uvwunion.org.uk/>

### Local Groups and campaigns

- Alternative Estuary:** <https://alternativeestuary.home.blog/>
- Friends of Queen's Market - Upton Park:** <http://www.friendsofqueensmarket.org.uk/>
- Haringey Solidarity Group: local group that campaigns on a variety of issues, such as workfare, as well as producing a regular paper:** <http://www.haringey.org.uk/content/>
- Haringey Housing Action Group:** <http://haringeyhousingaction.org.uk/>
- Housing Action Southwark and Lambeth:**  
<https://housingactionsouthwarkandlambeth.wordpress.com/>
- Incredible Edible Lambeth:** <https://www.incredibleediblelambeth.org/>
- North East London Migrant Action:** <https://nelmacampaigns.wordpress.com/>
- South Essex Radical Media:** <https://www.facebook.com/southessexradicalmedia>
- Reclaim Holloway:** <http://reclaimholloway.strikingly.com/>

### Bookshops and Social Centres

- 56a Infoshop:** [www.56a.org.uk](http://www.56a.org.uk)
- Freedom:** [www.freedompress.org.uk](http://www.freedompress.org.uk)
- Housmans:** [www.housmans.com](http://www.housmans.com)
- LARC:** [www.larc.space](http://www.larc.space)
- May Day Rooms:** [www.maydayrooms.org](http://www.maydayrooms.org)

**Check the different organisations and campaigns for more events and actions**