

Enough is Enough campaign: A political fraud in service to the Labour Party and TUC

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The Enough is Enough campaign group held its launch rally August 17, headlined by Rail, Maritime and Transport Union (RMT) General Secretary Mick Lynch. Other speakers included Communication Workers Union (CWU) leader Dave Ward and Labour MP Zarah Sultana.

The campaign's five demands, "A real pay rise", "Slash energy bills", "End food poverty", "Decent homes for all" and "Tax the rich", have won broad support amid the greatest collapse of living standards since the Great Depression.

Lynch, who is fronting the campaign, is popularly associated with a wave of national rail strikes seen by many workers as the starting gun for a mass mobilisation against the Tory government. Since those strikes began, Royal Mail, BT, Felixstowe port workers, oil refinery workers, refuse collectors and Amazon warehouse workers have launched strike action.

1,500 people filled the opening rally in London, with local rallies being held across the country and a national rally against fuel prices announced for October 1. Half a million people have signed up to Enough is Enough.

Workers in Britain, like their counterparts internationally, are facing a social catastrophe. Inflation is at 12.3 percent (RPI) and is predicted to reach 17.7 percent by the end of the year. Domestic fuel bills are being hiked a further 80 percent in October, with the NHS warning of a "humanitarian disaster" and thousands of deaths from fuel poverty this winter.

Immense social anger is building against the Tory government and a Labour opposition openly opposed to any fightback by workers. Enough is Enough has been launched to police and suppress this social anger, to shield the Labour Party and trade unions from political challenge and prevent an uncontrolled eruption of the class struggle that would threaten the survival of British imperialism.

The *Guardian's* Owen Jones, in an August 23 column, noted, "When millions of Britons believe rioting is justified over the soaring cost of living, it's not hyperbole to describe the nation as a powder keg. According to a ComRes poll commissioned by the *Independent*, 29% of voters believe violent disorder is appropriate given the circumstances. Among 18- to 24-year-olds, nearly half think rioting is justified; and even among 35- to 44-year-olds it's over 40%. If such a large chunk of the electorate believes that it's justifiable to smash stuff up in protest even before the projected hike in energy prices plunges millions of households below the waterline, what fury awaits this winter?"

Jones writes that mass opposition to "the imminent humanitarian catastrophe we face... needs to be channelled in ways that can actually force the government to satisfy popular demands, without laying waste to major British cities." He advances Enough is Enough as the basis for preventing social disorder.

What would it take to realise any of the demands put forward by Enough is Enough?

Firstly, it would require the mobilisation of the entire working class against the capitalist class, its state apparatus, and a political struggle

against the Conservative government.

Millions of workers know this, with the demand for a general strike being voiced on picket lines across the country. Yet at the organisation's launch rally, not one speaker made a call to bring down the Tories—including Lynch, who only days previously had spoken of the need for a general strike.

To associate the campaign with a general strike would, however, threaten to ignite mass working class struggles that would put Lynch and company in direct political conflict with the Trades Union Congress and the Labour Party—something they want to avoid at all costs.

When Lynch raised the need for a general strike, he insisted that only the TUC could call one. Yet he did not even use Enough is Enough's launch rally (or any other public platform) to demand this is done—let alone make the necessary call for workers to break free of the TUC's straitjacket and unify their struggles against the common enemy. Instead, he leaves his fellow union bureaucrats free to systematically divide workers, while delaying strikes through protracted consultations and balloting.

Behind the scenes, Lynch is working with key union officials to limit workers to the fruitless task of lobbying the TUC for "coordinated action". The August 27 *Observer* reported a "series of motions tabled by the country's biggest unions ahead of the TUC congress next month", including the two biggest unions, Unison and Unite, as well as the RMT, calling for the TUC to "facilitate and encourage industrial coordination between unions so workers in dispute can most effectively harness their union power to win".

Unite General Secretary Sharon Graham "made it clear she was not talking about unlawful secondary action – one union not in dispute supporting another", reassuring her fellow bureaucrats that nothing was being asked of them other than to take out their desk diaries.

Of equal concern for Enough is Enough's leadership is avoiding any direct conflict with Sir Keir Starmer's Labour Party, which functions as the Tories' de facto coalition partner. Starmer has earned the hatred of broad masses of workers for his ruthless pursuit of a pro-business, pro-war agenda that has seen him threaten his own MPs with suspension if they criticise NATO or even attend a picket line. This forced the opening rally's speakers into verbal contortions, offering polite criticisms of Starmer while continuing to urge support for Labour.

Lynch issued the extraordinary two-liner, "I don't care if Labour win the election. I hope they do win the election," before insisting that "it's in our interests" that Labour "do get in."

Ward demanded of his audience, "Never forget there's some great Labour politicians. They deserve our support because they are with us. And that will grow."

This is an attempt to advance the increasingly tenuous and marginalised presence of the handful of "left" Labour MPs in the Corbynite "Socialist Campaign Group" as proof that Labour can still be pressured into acting on behalf of the working class. The Socialist Workers Party joined in

fostering such illusions, writing of the rally, “The atmosphere echoed those of Jeremy Corbyn’s rallies in 2015 and 2017.”

But any association with Corbyn is necessarily shameful because ever since he was elected party leader in 2015, the Labour “left” has proved its absolute hostility to any struggle against the right-wing. It is thanks to Corbyn’s refusal to oppose the Blairites, despite the massive mandate he received in two leadership elections, that they were free to wage war on Labour’s own members using trumped-up accusations of “anti-Semitism” and take back direct control of the party after Corbyn’s cowardly retreats had alienated millions of working-class voters, leading to the general election rout of 2019. His political legacy was the election of Boris Johnson as prime minister and Starmer as leader of the Labour Party.

The Corbynites are loyal representatives of the Labour and trade union bureaucracy and the capitalist state. They are determined not to be associated with any political challenge to Starmer or with calls for the bringing down of the Tories. Only two relative unknowns from the Socialist Campaign Group of Labour MPs are officially involved in the campaign—Zarah Sultana and Ian Byrne—who were both only elected to parliament in 2019. Corbyn and others have limited themselves to tweets of support for a project they will have been involved in since it was first conceived. The day following the launch meeting Corbyn tweeted a photo of himself alongside Sultana and Lynch on a rail workers picket line.

A major consideration for Corbyn is to avoid being placed in a situation where his oppositional political credentials can be challenged. The *Weekly Worker* group, for example, wrote, “We are not told, but many suspect (not least in the Labour bureaucracy) that this campaign could be a dry run for a new party that could involve unions such as RMT, plus some purged Labour MPs, and draw in the various fragments of the post-Corbyn Labour left.”

Such speculation is deeply problematic for Corbyn, who has rebuffed all appeals from his supporters to break with Labour and form a new party in favour of entreaties that those expelled by Starmer are readmitted—so that he can better assist in maintaining Labour’s control over the working class. Connections to the Socialist Campaign Group have therefore been deliberately downplayed, though its involvement with Enough is Enough is central.

This is confirmed by the listing of *Tribune* magazine as the campaign’s only official media backer. *Tribune* was bought in 2018 by Jacobin, the semi-official publication of the Democratic Socialists of America, and now puts out four issues a year boosting the left credentials of Corbyn et al, just as Jacobin does with Bernie Sanders and others in the Democratic Party. It even secured Sanders’ backing for Enough is Enough.

Zarah Sultana has been left to fly the public flag for the Corbynites, having already demonstrated her political spinelessness by withdrawing her name from a Stop the War Coalition letter criticising NATO for pouring “fuel on the fire” in Ukraine, less than an hour after Starmer threatened to remove the Labour whip. At Enough is Enough’s rally, she could not even bring herself to mention Starmer’s name when stating her intention to continue attending picket lines.

Providing a political amnesty for Labour and the TUC and opposing a movement to bring down the government means focusing attention on what Sultana describes as “bridging social movements, parliamentary politics, and the labour movement, all working together to win for working people.” Meanwhile Lynch and Ward promote Enough is Enough as a non-party political campaign, confined to pressurising others to act. “I don’t care if it’s the Scottish National Party in power, I don’t care if it’s Plaid Cymru,” Lynch emphasised, “We want to kick the Labour Party into a position where they have to follow Enough is Enough. We want to make the TUC go there, we want the trade unions to go there, we want the Green Party to go there, we want the liberals to go there.”

The working class can protest and complain, but they must not take up a political struggle against the bourgeoisie and its parties. This must be

prevented at all costs, freeing the ruling class to wage a proxy war against Russia in Ukraine, enforce mass austerity, let COVID claim thousands more lives, and prepare a state crackdown on the working class, including outlawing the right to strike.

Enough is Enough will not “kick” any of these parties or the TUC into line. It will disarm workers in their fight against those imposing the diktats of the major corporations and banks.

Carrying through such a political agenda relies on workers’ illusions in a handful of militant-talking trade union leaders including Lynch. But it also relies on a lingering belief that the trade unions can be utilised as instruments of class struggle under conditions where the pro-capitalist and anti-working class character of the Labour Party is clear to millions.

But counterposing the trade unions to the Labour Party limits the working class to strikes and protests, concealing the necessary political struggle against those political organisations that are the essential prop of capitalist rule in Britain. Writing in 1929 on the “Errors of syndicalism” and addressing the members of the Communist Party of Great Britain, Leon Trotsky explained:

“From the example of Britain, one sees very clearly how absurd it is to counterpose in principle trade union organization to state organization. In Britain, more than anywhere else, the state rests upon the back of the working class which constitutes the overwhelming majority of the population of the country. The mechanism is such that the bureaucracy is based directly on the workers, and the state indirectly, through the intermediary of the trade union bureaucracy...”

“[T]he Labour Party which, in Britain, the classic country of trade unions, is only a political transposition of the same trade union bureaucracy. The same leaders guide the trade unions, betray the General Strike, lead the electoral campaign and later on sit in the ministries. The Labour Party and the trade unions – these are not two principles, they are only a technical division of labour. Together they are the fundamental support of the domination of the British bourgeoisie. The latter cannot be overthrown without overthrowing the Labourite bureaucracy. And that cannot be attained by opposing the trade union as such to the state as such, but by the active opposition of the Communist Party to the Labourite bureaucracy in all fields of social life. In the trade unions, in strikes, in the electoral campaign, in parliament and in power.” (*Trotsky’s Writings on Britain*, Volume 2, New Park, 1974, page 248)

The working class is entering into a decisive struggle against the British bourgeoisie. This demands the development of an industrial and political offensive, not only against the Tories, but against the Labour and trade union bureaucracy which together police the working class on behalf of big business, the financial oligarchy and the state.

The Socialist Equality Party calls on workers to initiate strikes and mass protests and to take on the task of preparing and organising a general strike through the building of rank-and-file workplace committees and working class communities. The fight for a general strike must be coupled with the demand for an immediate general election to defeat the political conspiracy of the Tories and Labour and advance a socialist response to the cost-of-living crisis and the reckless drive of British imperialism to World War III against Russia and China.

The critical issue facing the working class is the resolution of the crisis of revolutionary leadership. Its resolution requires the building of the Socialist Equality Party and its sister parties throughout the world.



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