

# class

Centre for Labour  
and Social Studies

## Annual Report

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Year End March 2016

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## Introduction

**This report outlines the activities of the Centre for Labour and Social Studies (Class) from April 2015 to the end of March 2016.**

2015-16 was a year of evolution for Class. The General Election was the major focus up until May 2015, and the result delivered a new and unexpected political climate. The election of Jeremy Corbyn as Leader of the Labour Party created further questions and opportunities for Class. In light of this changing context and the desire for greater public outreach a Director was recruited in late 2015. Dr Faiza Shaheen joined Class in February 2016.

During 2015-16 Class continued to have support from 15 unions, with 12 contributing financially, representing a wide range of industrial sectors. The importance of a strong foundation across the labour movement is vital to ensuring the focus of Class is grounded in the experiences of working people. In 2015-16 Class engaged many more trade unionists, academics, journalists, opinion formers and activists – raising its profile as a major resource for progressive thinking.

In June 2015 Class co-ordinated a letter from leading economists urging Osborne not to enshrine permanent government budget surpluses in law, the letter was published on the front page of the Saturday Guardian edition. Our events at the Labour Party Conference in 2015 were again standing room only, attracting high-profile speaker such as Owen Jones, Francis O’Grady and Ros Wynn-Jones. We continued our tradition of outreach work outside of London, holding events on defeating austerity in Leeds and Cardiff. The Trade Union Bill was a key focus, and we published blogs and held joint events in the effort to defeat the bill.

Class published a total of 10 publications last year, which ranged from an essay series on aspiration to our extensive pre-election briefings which were distributed in hard copy form to thousands of activists across the country. We published nearly over 150 blogs addressing developments including the Budget, benefit sanctions, zero-hours contracts, rent control, arts and culture funding, academies and bankers’ bonuses. Our trade union policy library now hosts 40 research documents from our supporting unions.

Last year Class commissioned over 150 blogs for our website and for placement on other blog sites. Authors included Simon Wren-Lewis, John Trickett MP, Caroline Lucas MP and many more. Subjects covered in blogs included zero hours contracts, banking, fair pay, inequality, immigration, the Budget, living standards, housing, environment, education, aspiration, fiscal surplus, blacklisting and austerity.

Over the coming year Class will increase its activity, producing high quality primary research, promoting and popularising ideas in and outside the labour movement. As well as continuing to engage and promote big ideas, we will work to ensure the voice of working people is taken seriously in policy formulation. Class will continue to stress the role of organised labour and trade unions in the economy and how we begin to reverse growing income inequality and build a progressive economy that delivers for all. Our papers will be more incisive and strategic, our media operation much wider, our events bigger and better, our connection with policymakers greater, our influence on political parties stronger, but above all, our work will be far more inclusive of grassroots activists in the battle of ideas to shift the debate. Over the next important period Class will work tirelessly to this end.

## Organisation and Administration

At the end of our fourth year Class has three permanent members of staff – Dr Faiza Shaheen (Director), Ellie O’Hagan (Media and Communications Officer) and Dulcie Fairhurst (Project and Events Officer). Class is an independent organisation supported by a number of trade unions. While the day-to-day activities of Class are run by the staff and overseen by the elected Officers, strategy, policy priorities and the overall management of Class are the responsibility of the Management Committee. At the end of March 2016, Class had the support of 15 trade unions.

### Supporting Unions 2014-2015



### Management Committee

The Management Committee is made up of representatives of supporting unions, Officers of the Institute of Employment Rights and nominated parliamentary advisors from the Class National Advisory Panel. Nominated officers from the Management Committee act as Directors of Class for financial purposes. The 2014-15 Management Committee and Officers were:

- **President:** Tim Roache – GMB
- **Vice-President:** Isabelle Gutierrez – MU
- **Vice-President:** Geoff Shears – IER
- Christine Blower – NUT
- Manuel Cortes – TSSA
- Nick Cusack - PFA
- Ian Hodson - BFAWU
- Keith Ewing – IER/Kings College London
- Andrew Towers – CWU
- John Hendy QC - IER
- Carolyn Jones – IER
- Chris Kitchen – NUM
- James McGowan – ASLEF
- Steve Murphy – UCATT
- Andrew Murray – Unite
- Doug Nicholls – GFTU
- Gerry Morrissey – FEU
- Matt Waddup - UCU
- Dave Watson – PCS

#### *Parliamentary Advisors*

- Jack Dromey MP
- Jon Trickett MP

### Class National Advisory Panel

Class has an extensive National Advisory Panel of experts who offer policy guidance on their specific areas of expertise and assist in whatever capacity they are able to.

More information: <http://classonline.org.uk/about/panel>

## Events

Class has held a number of very successful and well attended public events including our annual national conference in November with an attendance of over 400 people. Other events include:

**Cardiff - Defeating austerity, free trade deals and attacks on trade union rights, Monday 13 April 2015, Cardiff**

Supported by Class and others including the Morning Star, the Institute of Employment Rights, War on Want and People's Assembly, and called for by the Campaign for Trade Union Freedom, we took part in an event in Cardiff to hear employment experts and trade union activists discuss the future of the union movement.

**Leeds - Defeating austerity, free trade deals and attacks on trade union rights, Tuesday 28 April 2015, Leeds**

Supported by Class and others including the Morning Star, the Institute of Employment Rights, War on Want and People's Assembly, and called for by the Campaign for Trade Union Freedom, we took part in an event in Leeds to hear employment experts and trade union activists discuss the future of the union movement.

**Post-Election Public Debate, Tuesday 19 May 2015, London**

Class held free post-election public debate with leading commentators, politicians and trade unionists on where next for the Left, Labour and the union movement.

**The Trade Union Bill 2015: Free public meeting, Wednesday 29 July 2015, London**

Class held an event with the Institute of Employment Rights (IER) and the Campaign for Trade Union Freedom (CTUF) to discuss the Government's draconian new Trade Union Bill and what steps the labour movement needs to take to expose the unfair and undemocratic nature of the government's proposals.

**TUC Congress 2015: After the Election: Where next for the labour movement? 14 September 2015, Brighton**

This event focused on where next for the labour movement and the wider left following the 2015 General Election.

**The Trade Union Bill and Beyond, Thursday 11 February 2016, London**

Class held event with the Institute of Employment Rights (IER) and the Campaign for Trade Union Freedom (CTUF) to discuss the Government's Trade Union Bill currently being debated in the Lords and the next steps for the labour movement in challenging the Bill and its likely impact.

**Labour Party Conference 2015: After the Elections: A Vision for the Future, Tuesday 29 September 2015, Brighton**

This event focused on a vision for the future for the Labour Party and the wider labour movement following the results of the 2015 General Election and the recent Labour Party leadership election.

**Labour Conference 2015: Where next for the left?, Sunday 27 September 2015, Brighton**

We discussed the issues and policy areas they think the Labour Party need to make a priority in the coming months, following the recent General Election and Labour Leadership elections.

## Publication Releases April 2015- March 2016



### [The First 100 Days](#)

What should a progressive government implement?

*Think piece, 29 April 2015*

This collection of essays from a selection of leading progressive thinkers brings together the priorities for achieving real change across a range of policy areas.



### [Briefing: The Queen's Speech 2015](#)

*Factsheet, 28 May 2015*

This briefing focuses on the announcements in the 2015 Queen's Speech, including the plans for an EU referendum, an extension of Right to Buy and attacks on the rights of workers, and what this means for ordinary people, trade unionists and the labour movement.



### [Briefing: The Tax Lock](#)

Ellie O'Hagan

*Factsheet, 1 May 2015*

After the Conservatives pledged to introduce a "tax lock," an unusual move which would legally prohibit them from increasing income tax, National Insurance, or VAT for five years, this briefing looks at what this means in practice.



### [The 'budget surplus' rule scam](#)

Prof Malcolm Sawyer

*Think piece, 7 July 2015*

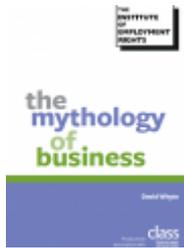
In June George Osborne outlined his plans for a new 'budget surplus' law. This paper sets out how the central purpose of government fiscal policy should be the provision of high quality public services and a progressive tax system with the balance between public expenditure and tax revenues designed to secure high levels of employment.



### [Briefing: the Government's proposed new Trade Unions Bill](#)

*Factsheet, 13 July 2015*

This joint briefing from Class and the Institute of Employment Rights (IER) outlines further details on the various parts of the Trade Union Bill and provides analysis of the likely impact of the proposed legislation ahead of its publication.



## [The mythology of business](#)

Prof David Whyte

*Briefing, 24 August 2015*

This publication has been released by the Institute of Employment Rights to dispel some of the myths surrounding business and its supposed benefits and seeks to shed some light on the lies that are used to deny workers their rights and diminish collective bargaining power.



## [What is aspiration?](#)

How progressives should respond

Owen Jones, Christine Blower, Bruce Bennett, Imogen Tyler

*Think piece, 25 August 2015*

Aspiration has been largely depicted as a value that cannot co-exist with left wing ideals. This essay series will explore the issue of aspiration from a progressive standpoint and asks whether aspiration can be a left wing value.



## [Changing the debate on migration](#)

*Briefing, 11 September 2015*

The refugee crisis that has escalated in Europe due to conflict across the Middle East and North Africa has further shown the human consequences of this xenophobic rhetoric. This updated pamphlet, supported by Migrant Rights Network, provides facts on refugees, asylum seekers and migration and is an important tool for challenging the current narrative.



## [Briefing: Spending Review 2015](#)

*Factsheet, 27 November 2015*

This briefing focuses on the announcements in the November 2015 Spending Review, including the news that approximately 2.6 million working families will be on average £1,600 a year worse off as a result of the Chancellor's proposals.



## [Budget Briefing 2016](#)

An in-depth briefing following the 2016 Budget

*Factsheet, 18 March 2016*

This briefing focuses on the announcements in the 2016 Budget, including the news that the Chancellor has failed to meet his debt and welfare targets and will also struggle to meet his 'surplus' rule.

## Website and social media

Class has increased its web and social media presence significantly over the past year – we now receive an average of 7,000 impressions a day on Twitter, we get 24 link clicks a day from our Twitter profile, and our top tweet of the year was viewed 58,000 times. At the end of the year our Twitter followers stood at over **12,800**, up 4,500 since the end of last year and Class has **3,601** likes on Facebook, meaning our likes have nearly doubled in a year.

We are continuing our strategy of tweeting PMQs and key political events. These include Jeremy Corbyn's keynote speech to the TUC conference, as well as Andy Burnham's speech to the Kings Fund, and various events on the EU referendum.

It is a core strategy of our web and social media presence to respond to the news cycle. This is both to ensure our publications reach a wide audience, but also to allow Class to intervene at key moments of the political debate.

Since Faiza Shaheen joined Class as director in February 2016, a key element of our online strategy is to promote Class to broadcast media by using the blog as a platform for Faiza to respond to the news cycle. This has proved very successful, securing meetings and interest from several major broadcasters.

## Press and media

Class has enjoyed growing publicity over the year with articles across numerous newspapers and websites as shown below. With the appointment of Director Faiza Shaheen, the level of publicity for Class has already increased and will no doubt grow further.

### Coverage

**There is no economic reason for Osborne's surplus plan. It's time Labour stopped playing catch-up - Simon Wren-Lewis, New Statesman, 18 June 2015**

**The 79 economists are thinking too narrowly - Letters, Guardian, 16 June 2015**

**George Osborne's Tea Party settlement is the stuff of cold sweats - Aditya Chakraborty, Guardian, 16 June 2015**

**Hysterical Keynesians need to ditch the hyperbole if they don't want to be ignored - Ryan Bourne, City AM, 16 June 2015**

**UK Labour leadership race begins in earnest - Samira Shackle, Deutsche Welle, 15 June 2015**

**Academics attack George Osborne budget surplus proposal - Phillip Inman, Guardian, 12 June 2015**  
**Osborne plan has no basis in economics - Letter (from Class), Guardian, 12 June 2015**

**Queen's speech: unions attack Javid strike action crackdown - Kevin Rawlinson, Channel 4 News, 27 May 2015**

**Non-dom plans are 'negative' and 'misguided' - Mark Sands, Mortgage Strategy, 15 April 2015**

**Experts slam Conservatives' right to buy plans - Tim Clark, Building.co.uk, 14 April 2015**

**No shelter for non-doms - Editorial, Morning Star, 9 April 2015**

**Experts blast 'misguided' Labour non-dom plans - Mark Sands, Money Marketing, 8 April 2015**

**Does inequality work? – Faiza Shaheen on The Big Questions, 28 February 2016**

**Minimum wage – Faiza Shaheen on Newsnight, 1 April 2016**

### Blogs

Last year Class commissioned over 150 blogs for our website and for placement on other blog sites. Authors included Simon Wren-Lewis, Frances O'Grady, Owen Jones, Helen Goodman MP, John Trickett MP, Caroline Lucas MP, Nick Lowles Rebecca Winson and many more. Subjects covered in blogs included zero hours contracts, banking, fair pay, inequality, immigration, the Budget, living standards, housing, environment, education, aspiration, fiscal surplus, blacklisting and austerity.

Again, we have used the appointment of the Director to create a specific Class 'voice' through a new blog series written regularly to reflect on current events and debates. In the coming year we will seek to build the profile of this blog series and give it more prominence on the website.

## Finance Report 2015-2016

1 April 2015 - 31 March 2016

Income	(£) Actual	(£) Budget	2014-2015
2015 Donations <sup>1</sup>	97,500	144,000	165,000
Unite the Union	50,000		
GMB	10,000		
TSSA	5,000		
NUT	5,000		
Musicians Union	5,000		
BFAWU	1,500		
CWU	20,000		
GFTU	1,000		
Sales	100	-	200
Events	1,500	8,700	7,730
Tickets		3,000	
Sponsorship	1,500	5,000	
Food		500	
Stalls		200	
Grants	-	-	
Interest receivable	113		122
<b>Total</b>	<b>99,213</b>	<b>152,700</b>	<b>172,930</b>

<sup>1</sup> 2015 donations from UCU, PSA and NUM paid in 2016 accounting period due to timing of payment (total: £5k); Aslef was processed under 2014/15 (£2.5k).

Expense	(£) Actual	(£) Budget	2014-15
Salaries, wages and training	112,527	110,600	99,351
Events	7,491	15,050	13,114
Website and publicity	5,014	5,500	20,339
Travel and subsistence	2,029	1,550	3,472
Office expenses and printing	1,055	3,450	23,428
Professional Fees	1,275	1,500	4,008
Bank Charges and Interest	36	66	66
General Expenses / Contingency	-	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>129,427</b>	<b>137,716</b>	<b>164,178</b>

<b>Taxation</b>	22	66	24
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<b>Net Surplus/Deficit after tax:</b>	<b>-30,236</b>	3,280	8,874
<b>Cash in bank:</b>	52,169		
<b>Creditors</b>	7,465		
<b>Reserves:</b>	44,704		74,940