



**Haldane Society
of Socialist Lawyers**

Housing for the millions not the millionaires!

Last week Oxfam produced a report showing that the richest 1% of people on this planet are on course to own more than 50% of the world's wealth by 2016. This illustrates the madness of the capitalist system. There is no trickle down of wealth – there is a cascade up!

In Britain just 100 rich families saw their income and assets increase by a further £15 billion in 2014 and now have the same wealth as 30% of UK households.

Building boom – but no affordable housing

It is within this context that we see on the one hand a building boom of new build apartments throughout London, but on the other working class communities being priced out of housing. Slum accommodation and overcrowding are on the rise throughout London.

The failure of successive governments to commit to build social housing has compounded the problem in London. That failure has seen the number of

private sector renters, who now live in poverty, double in the last ten years.

Indeed the two groups who currently spend the most on housing as a proportion of income are private renters in the lowest income groups who spend 55% of their income on housing, and social renters in the poorest income group who spend 33%. These are the groups for whom there is no relief planned from the devastation of the housing crisis.

Adding to this disaster more than 11,000 individuals and families in the three months to September 2014 evicted. Shelter additionally reports that more than 40,000 families have been evicted in a year, a rise of 11.7%.

Some of these are a result of the insecurity of poverty pay, but a growing number stem from the shortage of homes for rent in an unregulated market where landlords can evict easily and where rents are rising. As the New Era situation showed hedge funds and speculators see social housing as a good investment – and if it was not for their heroic campaigning the tenants there would have been seen their rents skyrocket. >>>

Housing is a human right



Picture: Jess Hurd / reportdigital.co.uk

>>> As David Harvey the Marxist economist explains "Housing is a use value and an exchange value. The most important thing is people get adequate access to housing as a use value. We are told that in order to do that we should go through a market system and let the exchange value system take care of that. The exchange value system has failed and has failed miserably." Yet despite this tenants in social housing are now facing that fact that their homes are instruments in the market – and the aim is for the bond holders, the hedge funds see our homes as pawns in their financial games.

March for Homes – the fight continues

The Haldane Society of Socialist Lawyers not only welcomes this demonstration but will continue to support the campaign after today. We have been inspired by the actions of the E15 Mothers, the New Era housing campaigners and the Unite 1/1111 housing workers who took strike action.

We believe that human rights are not just civil and political rights (fair trial; elections etc) but are also socio – economic rights. We support the main demands of the march: Rent Controls; Hands off council

housing; Stop demolition of quality council homes; Affordable and secure homes for all; Cut rents not Benefits; End Bedroom Tax and welfare caps; Build new council houses.

- But we would add the demand for
- Rent control now! Democratic rent councils to decide fair levels in each area;
- A mass programme of council house building and renovation to meet demand;
- Hands off our homes! Bring all housing association stock and housing services back in-house;
- Living housing benefits that reflect the real cost of renting;
- Councils should use their compulsory purchase powers on long term empty properties and use them as council housing;
- Nationalise the banks and biggest corporations. For a democratic socialist society that puts the needs of the majority, including decent, affordable housing, before the profits of the tiny minority.

Find out more about the Haldane Society of Socialist Lawyers: www.haldane.org