

TWT Opening Rally: The Struggle for a Socialist Future

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SPEAKERS

Dave Ward, John McDonnell, Samantha Napa, Ash Sarkar, Rafeef Ziadah, Travis Dupree, Rashidda Tlaib, Laura Hother

Ash Sarkar 05:23

Hello, and welcome to the launch of TWT 2020. cohosted by the Rosa Luxemburg foundation. It's a little bit different from the hangover, and germ spreading extravaganza we're used to in Brighton and Liverpool, but as compensation for not being able to breath in each other's faces, this year the world transformed team have been working absolutely flat out to curate a whole month of online event discussions. That's a whole month. So, the first thing tonight, and I'm not much of your time because we've got some incredible speakers lined up, we've got man like john McDonnell, we've got activists from all around the world and we've got a whole quarter of the squad Congresswoman Rasheeda Talib. I know we've managed to snag some Americans for the evening. But what I do want to say because I do have the benefit of a captive audience of around 400 of you at the moment is that I want to highlight the story that was just so skillfully woven by Jack Barraclough's video which you've just seen, because obviously last year's election was was devastating for us here on the UK left, and from Poland to Hungary to Portland and Kenosha it feels like the authoritarian white nationalists have right on the march and making gains, but we don't have the luxury of licking our wounds, we don't have the luxury of wallowing of mourning or withdrawing from the world. And that's because coronavirus has laid bare the brutal inequalities of racism, of the exploitation of workers of border regimes, on which the world as we know it is built. But these inequalities aren't a strong foundation. They're fractured. They're not stable, and just take a look around you. Power isn't as comfortable as it would like to be. And we've seen that with the rebirth of blacklivesmatter in the wake of George Floyd and Breonna Taylor's murders at the hands of police. We as our government begs us to resume long commutes just so the rentier class and Prest a Manger can keep squeezing money out of the productive economy. And we see it as a generation of students here fought and won against an algorithm, which would hold that futures hostage to somebody else's idea of how social class should work. These are contradictions, these are challenges that demand, new answers and new ways of, and there's an urgency to this moment that we're all in, which makes the work that happens here at TWT and political education - the exchange of tools and tactics and strategies all the more important. And now more than ever, we need

to reach across the borders which keeps us locked in our little bubbles and work internationally. That's what tonight is all about. So, without much more rambling from me, I would like to introduce our first speaker. He has been an MP for decades, but please don't hold that against him. He's been a gravitational force for the UK left. He's been our teacher. He's been our voice in the House of Commons. Please welcome John McDonnell

John McDonnell 08:58

Thanks. Thanks, Ash. I'm very grateful. Thanks for joining us at all it's gonna be a good. It's gonna be a good session, the coming months of TWT - well month of frenetic activities. It gives us all the chance that we need now just to stand back and take stock of where we're at now. As you - as Ash just said it's been a startling last 10 months, around the loss of the election, and now potentially standing on the edge of a massive recession. I don't want to push people over the edge but I can't not mention the worst nightmare possibility of Trump being reelected which our American comrades will be doing all they can to ensure doesn't happen. A passage right for extinction rebellion today to be reminding us of whatever is happening. Well we continue to face the overhanging threats to our very existence on climate change so we really need the space TWT is going to give us over this next month to talk about yeah where we're at and also more importantly, where we go next. Back in the screen when the pandemic hit us it was pretty clear that the experience of the pandemic itself was prompting people to reassess just what they valued in life. That's for a threat to you, your family and your community, no matter how distant it makes you think again look around and people looked around, and they saw yes yes we need each other. But when also they also saw that when it comes to it we rally around, and we support one another. And we knew that I think most of us thought there was a real opportunity that opened up for lessons to be learned about the way our society, our economy, our politics and how they operated but how change was needed. and the pandemic sort of has acted like a pressure test on how our society is organised the weaknesses and the failings of our system have been exposed under the pressure of the pandemic. Exactly as Ash has said, the way the inequalities in our economic system. There's so many people powerless and vulnerable to poverty. The way a decade of austerity has left our public services, especially the NHS and our caring services so ill prepared to deal with the pandemic and, yes, so many of their staff vulnerable to the pandemic as well and how many of the lives have been lost. And often you know it showed the way the establishment politicians were not just incompetent, but acted with impunity as though the rules never apply to them. So a window opened up for the talk of serious trend. Despite the tragedy of the pandemic at least some good came of the Covid crisis. And it's true, the serious debate was started on the change as needed, and also what's possible ideas have flooded in. And as a starting point, this - let's be clear - there's been a firm rejection of austerity, and we enjoyed the last 10 years. And this led onto solid support expressed for the need for real investment in our public services. So naturally investment actually we've been arguing for in recent years, and also led to the call for proper pay for workers, particularly those who provide us with the care and support we need. And you know there's, I think there's been a growing shared understanding of the need to organise our society so that in a decent society. Nobody should have to go without essentials in life, food, warm, shelter, health and cloth. And yes, connectivity. I think there's also been a recognition of the vital role that the state would play in marshalling the resources needed to deal with a crisis, to protect people and their livelihoods, but also to set us up for the future. It's also been important as well as the ideas. What's been absolutely thrilling. Is that alongside the ideas for change have been the campaigns for change. NHS workers, demanding decent pay opposing privatisation renters renters

halting evictions and opening up a whole debate about the very existence of landlordism in our society. Trade Unions exposing the exploitation of the crisis by unscrupulous employers like British Airways, and trade unions demanding, not just ongoing job support a stronger right to have a say. And of course, as Ash has said that just magnificent magnificent mobilisation of Black Lives Matters movement to secure racial justice and equality. People saying we're not putting up with this any more. And you know, even with the, all the organisational challenges thrown up by the lockdown campaigning has continued to break out on such a wide front of issues. And it has been, it's been truly inspiring, a motivation to do what we can to support this campaign a small group of us launched the Claim the Future project to help network the thriving architecture of progressive researchers policy experts and think tanks to back up the campaigners those campaigning on the ground so they're backed up with a whole range of - for research and ideas, and it ranged from issues like migrant's rights employment rights social care, and many, many other issues as well. Well, let me just sound, a note of caution and some urgency and that's, I think this month is is a month of urgency for us, unless we're active and vigilant, that window that we saw opening up for progressive change may soon be closing. And the reality is that there are some of the acting to slam it firmly shut. And yeah I'm anxious I'm fearful that they could succeed. I fear, you know, well, in fact, I fear the worst of what could happen, the pandemic reminded us of the good values of care, self sacrifice and solidarity, in which all of this should be the basis of a decent society, unless we're careful, the politics of Trump and Johnson. Will swamp - will swamp, the debate was sweep aside the potential of that opened up the change. And they'll reassert all of the bad values of self interest greed and division. for the Depression was knowing, Trump has been calling for years he's a proto fascist yet has no respect for democratic virtues the established democratic conventions and institutions that are the bullwark of democracy, the rule of law respect for the truth. And also the prime duty of protecting the safety of the people you represent, he operates with impunity accountable to no one. Deliberately sowing division. And as we've seen again this week even putting lives risks to stay in power. But here in the UK Johnson is just a more polished version of the same act buffed up for a British audience and with the added British upper class sense of entitlement. He's demonstrated the same lack of respect for Parliament, the rule of law and the truth. And so far been buoyed up, as always, supine tightly controlled leader, and to a certain extent, he's got away with it, but also just like Trump without a care, the damage caused, Johnson will deploy division and scapegoating especially of migrants, whenever needed to prop up his career. So we do need to recognise that we are in a fundamental struggle for the future. First of course we're campaigning to protect people from the impact of the pandemic, and the associated recession. In practice, This means of course yes exposing the incompetence of Johnson, and his regime but also means being solidly alongside supporting the actions of those in the campaign's the renters the migrants, striking and demonstrating trade unions, and the Black Lives Matter movement, as we're doing all that we must also aim to keep open the window to a progressive future. So we take one of these individuals. Our task is to - ideas that are emerging. And that cumulatively are building up the vision of a remarkably transform society. So the next few weeks under the auspices of the world transformed. We will hear and discuss and will firm up. Many of these ideas that will form the programme of the left that we need to win the battle of ideas and claim the future. It was so invigorating as that the progressive movement in this country, and globally is mobilising that scale, again, we're back. And we're on the march. Solidarity.

Ash Sarkar 18:39

John McDonnell the people's Chancellor, thank you so much for joining us. From the back benches of the House of Commons to the frontlines of housing activism I'm so excited to introduce our next speaker, Samantha Napa is a housing activist with PEACH [People's Empowerment Alliance for Custom House] in East London. She has personal experience of living in absolutely dreadful conditions in Custom House, but has been part of a tenant's campaign, not only fighting for justice but also securing wins at the same time so Samantha, please take it away.

Samantha Napa 19:11

Thank you. Hi everyone, my name is Samantha Napa, I'm 31 years old, and I'm a single mom of two, and I work for a finance company called Zopa, and I've done over the past five years. I've lived in Newham all my life, growing up in Stratford, and I've been moved to a hostel at the age of 17. And after having my first child, I was offered a two bedroom property and Custom House. And you can imagine that was a major relief for me, you know, me and my son, we had a place that we can call home. But that excitement didn't last long. I moved to custom house in 2011, July, 27, to be exact, and that's my son's birthday so you can imagine how happy I felt I knew about Canning Town growing up, but not so much about Custom House. Living in Custom House, it's been a roller coaster, I've met some amazing people, and who are now friends for life. And I've really grown up mentally a lot. To be honest, having fun in this day and age, especially in Newham. It's really challenging, as there's nothing for kids to do, and I do fear for my son's safety at times. I initially got moved to Custom House by the Council that I'm living in now. But this property was managed - is managed by Mears who are another landlord. Initially I wasn't aware of the small print and never really thought about long term what's going to happen with these properties. As I was told that the properties will be getting knocked down. So we'll be living here for a maximum of five years. And then after that, we'll be moved on to secure housing. Nine years on, I'm still here. Living here, I started to see a lot of issues mainly rent. The amount I was paying and the fact that I kept falling into arrears just didn't make sense. I was always in debt. I was being issued with court dates, eviction warrants and mentally that was very scary especially having two kids. My main priority for them to have security and not having that I was living on edge. I was always stressed out. I just never had peace, and I was dealing with this all by myself. So one day a neighbour, and she knocks on my door we just started speaking, and we came onto the subject of our landlord. And she was also going for a roller coaster as well. So she invited me to a PEACH meeting, randomly. Bearing in mind. I've never heard of them. She explained who they are and what they do and what they stand for. So the word PEACH stands for the People Empowerment Alliance of Custom House. So, I went to the meeting with no expectations, and boy was I blown away. There was loads of residents living in the same fear as myself, their properties were in bad conditions, there was mould, another tenant, her roof collapsed, almost crushing her son. The list was endless. And they was all paying ridiculous amounts of rent, which was mind blowing because these are council properties, and so it didn't make sense. But the thing that really stood out for me was that we all wanted the same thing. And that was Mears out of our lives. We didn't want to pay them, we didn't want to deal with them, we wanted to curate for our families, better living conditions like that's all we really wanted. So hearing all of this from other residents. It was overwhelming - initially I really felt violated like and instantly I felt like no something needs to be done. So the organisers of PEACH, who are Dan, Hero and Des at the time, they were so supportive. They guided us, they listened to us and they taught us how to fight the right way. Like I know how to write an email and explain something if it's not right. But that didn't really get a response. But when we came together as residents, all of us crying for the same thing, the council had no choice

but to listen. It was the impact of numbers, and what PEACH done was to show us not to fear. There's nothing wrong with wanting better. And that's where the strength came from, because we came together, fought together, and we won together. We met with the mayor of Newham directors of the housing of Mears, we protested, even the mayor of Newham have actually joined us. We made a film which has received over a million views. And recently we put out another film which has received tremendous support. We have won a lot of things because of these actions. But the biggest one of them all so far is having our rents cut by 60%, which if I'm really honest with everyone. It hasn't sunk in for me yet. Now we'll be able to save money, have extra money, living debt free is the dream. But this fight hasn't been easy, it taken years to get here. And when the COVID hit, it was a lot for some of us, especially in overcrowded accommodation stuck indoors with kids, and having to still work. You know we have weekly meetings as tenants but also known as the MEARS Cats, but due to the lockdown we was unable to see each other, which for some people was hard as we had become a family. And thankfully, to technology we kept on meeting via Zoom, Facetime, phone calls and an odd knock on the windows, just to check if everyone's okay. We even made PEACH kitchen which served hot meals. Especially - which gave free food to people - especially for those who couldn't go shopping, as there's no supermarket in Custom House, and this really kept us spirits alive as we knew that we wasn't in this alone. There's times that you lose hope. But we have to keep pushing, and that's what I've learned as an individual, and also being a member of PEACH. We're pushing even still, as there is a bigger fight to fight as the regeneration is happening in the area. And this can go really wrong, as seen in Canning Town for example, families were promised to move back to their homes. They was promised houses instead of flats, there was promised low rents, and they received the complete opposite. And no one was able to fight for them. So the fight is now to ensure the whole community. Get some control what Custom House will look like in the future, such as counselling and property, houses for families, youth centres for the children places for the elderly and a better GP service. We have to keep pushing and expecting better. And that's why I'm a member of PEACH still fighting for my community and for more. Thank you.

Ash Sarkar 25:17

Thank you so much, Samantha you guys are just badass, love. But thank you so much for joining us. That was just - I don't know - a shot in the arm and I don't know about everyone else but I really needed to hear that. Just to remind everyone that the world transformed is only made possible by your donations so if you've got a few quid knock it out and you'd like to support the work that they do please go to theworldtransformed.org/support, and the link should be appearing in the chat any second now. It was so wonderful to hear from Samantha. An example of a community coming together to fight, and to win and talk on similar themes, the interconnection between class and racial liberation. I'm so excited to introduce Travis Dupree, a trade union organiser who organises with fast food workers, precarious workers in the fast food industry he's been involved in a strike for black lives, and he is one of the leaders of the fight for \$15 so big fan of your work! I'm just here, stanning your work. I'm gonna go away now. Please speak to the people.

Travis Dupree 26:29

Thank you, Ash this is great. I'm so hot. My name is Travis Dupree I work with SEIU on the fight for 15, and I lead our coalition work, figuring out how we partner with folk and like Ash said so. We had the gruesome murder of George Floyd, in Minneapolis, Minnesota. In June, and during our work with the

movement for Black lives, they all often ask us how can labour show up in the moment you know labour doesn't have a history of being a racial justice organisation, but we identified the need to solve in a space, and even better to lead in a space that garner's a coalition that cares about people's lives right but you all are doing it all, it's happened all over the world. And, like, like we saw in the video, like 2020, it really feels like a year that folks aren't taking it anymore. So we decided to do strike for black lives. And what we're able to do was to have over 50 organisations, go on strike in over 100 cities in the United States of America. We have never done anything like that, it hasn't happened that way, particularly around. Black Lives, the liberation of black and brown people. So we brought out 50 groups, and struck in 100+ cities, during a pandemic. And what has showed us as us as the movement for black lives, and the left in the United States, is that there actually is a pathway to power, you know, for the longest our adversaries have been able to isolate us until we really couldn't figure out how to work together here in settings right so the immigration groups are fighting here, the racial justice groups are fighting over here, the climate justice groups are fighting here right and then like economic justice groups and labour fight here. But what we found is that this is different because it's not just black people stand up for black live. It's white people it's Latino it's Asian, everyone is coming around saying that, like, if one of us is hurting, we're all hurting right? So this is why the voices are so much broader right are so much louder. There's so much more sustainable, because people identify, in order to make a better country. It has to be better for everyone. So we really struggle with how do you reach people during a pandemic. But as we talk to people virtually at like events like this is this opportunity for us not to always talk about what we agree on. But the share our differences, right? and figure out that we don't have to focus on those differences but let's acknowledge them. Let's throw what we agree on. And we're very, very excited how people are coming together, leading to this election, our opposition here in the state we call them 45, right, is very very scared of a large group of people coalescing around our country. Right, as I talk to you now. He is in Kenosha, Wisconsin, where we had our latest public police killing, and he's stirring up our adversaries and it's caught the violence. So I'll just close by saying it to you all the work you're doing is incredible and is seen all over the world, and will not be easy, but it's very very possible, but I will leave you with words, pathway to power right we have to come together. Regardless of who gets the credit, but there's a lot to be done but there are a lot of possibilities in your friends here in the states that are very proud of you, and look forward to supporting each other as we go forward. so thank you and keep up the great work.

Ash Sarkar 30:21

Thank you so much Travis for joining us. It's so great to hear you speak especially on that intersection between class struggle and racial liberation. There are muppets out there who will try and make you think that those two things are separate, they're not they're intimately connected. Our next speaker is I think our youngest speaker frighteningly young. Her name is Laura Hother she's a student nurse from Liverpool, and I'm so excited to hear from you and the reason why I'm so excited to hear from you is because you're someone who wasn't relying on the election cycle to get politicised you saw what was going around you during the COVID crisis that led you to participate in the fight for a nurses health care workers pay rise So Laura Please, take it away.

Laura Hother 31:06

So, as nurses, we know that the public loves us but in our day to day lives were undervalued or underappreciated and we're over worked. We're burned out by this government and it's why we are

campaigning. So I chose this career because I absolutely love it, but I didn't choose the cuts the loss of a fifth of our pay since 2010, or the privatisation of the NHS. So we've continued to work in absolutely impossible conditions on the frontlines, and we've been disappointed that we could not achieve the standard of care that we went into our NHS for even before the virus. So I'm Laura so I'm a 21 year old student nurse. So I'm organising for a 15% pay rise for NHS workers in Liverpool. So I got involved because I was just so tired of seeing my colleagues I absolutely exhausted and patient Safety being compromised, and I was disgusted at the hours staff had to work just to make ends meet. and the state that this left their mental and physical health in. And after everything I've seen and the detrimental results of the cuts and understaffing it was time to do something about it. So the last few months, they've been emotionally exhausting, seeing patients struggling to breathe, their terrified expressions, having to try and talk to families on the phone, about that acutely unwell relatives, and you know when you couldn't see them was really hard, not being able to provide that same level of reassurance. And we also had restricted toilet and drink breaks and shifts where I couldn't take my break to change my PPE because it meant the natural rotation of staff wouldn't have had any. So, I saw the NHS Workers Say No page on Facebook and seeing so many people feel and relating to the same frustration was like so inspiring. And like ignited my fire which didn't really require much, but the group has shown me what can be achieved when we stick together so as of August we had 36 demonstrations, with 10s of thousands of new activists who had never even been to demonstrations before. And these are organised across the UK demanding justice for NHS workers. So with the support that the NHS has right now across the country, and the government's weakened position and we represent a chance to defeat them on the last strongest issue which has health care. So we're demanding our 15% pay rise, which is a fair wage considering the 20% pay cut since 2010 and nurses NHS staff I've spoken to has told me how much worse off they are since 2010 have agreed this one can't retain our staff. So we need to be able to recruit and retain nurses so we can run our wards and provide that proper patient care. We can't possibly uphold patient safety when we're understaffed and we can't meet demands at the service and that was even before COVID. So can you just imagine the horror of what we had to go through during the pandemic when we had no PPE, we still have 44,000 nursing vacancies, even more patients requiring one to one care. So really like everyone just needs to get involved our unions needs to listen to us and get on board and this campaign will start and see some movement from them with GMB and Unite documents, but there's 12 more to go. If there are over, 80,000 people self organising for 15% pay rise you'd have thought it makes sense to back us and follow the momentum, you know they're supposed to be the voice of their members so I don't see why they should hold back when they could go big and make a win. So, across the political spectrum, our politicians need to listen to us, 77% of everyone in this country have supported a 10% pay rise for NHS staff, so failing to back us actually means failing to listen to the public. We've fairly earned this wage that we're asking for. We have yours in your family's lives in our hands, like, every shift is so unpredictable that you never know what's going to happen and you have the skills and knowledge to notice react and escalate to ensure that a person is safe, and NHS worker save lives, and to make the world a better place through the way we improve people's health. So health care is our greatest and strength its what people want. They need to be cared for and loved and every single fight that we face as a movement, whether it's austerity, corruption or systemic racism. The future of the left, and we went by thousands of health care workers becoming politically activated and engaged, we're the people of the public trust and piles upon. So imagine what would happen if your NHS workers had the pain the political awareness to begin to talk about something like climate change or imagine what happens to housing if we begin to speak about that as a

health issue. So we're your best weapon and that's why you should support us. So in two weeks time we're going to go out again we're gonna take the streets. We need you just turn out and come and get involved on 12th of September. We're organising with our workplaces to get more NHS staff involved and say this off of social media, and to a place where we can have power. So we need to get our leaflets printed by unions hand them out in your workplaces, speak to five people following with me and spread the word about people involved. Steward our demos, join our Facebook groups NHS workers say no and spread the word because NHS workers are getting organised to fight for NHS, and you should tip. That's me.

Ash Sarkar 36:17

Thank you so much for joining us, Laura. I'm gonna there, 12th of September, right?

Laura Hother 36:22

12th September, nationally.

Ash Sarkar 36:24

12th September, National Day of actions, support your nurses. Come on! What you thinking? Our next speaker is a London based academic a spoken word artist, and is currently in Athens enjoying a bit better weather than I am right now. She also has a new book out called revolutionary feminism, so you should definitely cop that in here to sort of emphasise the international links which holds us all together from migration to the arms trade the way in which this history connects us and creates these links of obligation. Please, take it away Rafeef Ziadah.

Rafeef Ziadah 37:01

Thank you very much Ash and thanks to everybody at the world transformed, I was there last year and spoke at two panels and it was so energising and wonderful to be with everybody, especially the fact that we managed to have honest conversations about very difficult topics like migration and how we stand on migration so virtual hugs to everybody I know we can't see each other in person this year but we're trying our best to create what we did last year. One of the first things that stuck out for me when I first was invited to do this was this concept of the world turned upside down. And as a Palestinian refugee. I can't remember a time when the world wasn't turned upside down. If you think of a child in Gaza today who's 13 years old, they've grown up under a military siege, their entire life. If you think of a child in Yemen. The situation has been extremely similar. All of this is of course perpetuated and continues with the support of the entire British military establishment, and the arms industry. This is something that's quite crucial to discuss. When we're speaking about reimagining the world when we, when we speak about imagining demanding and building. We cannot isolate what's happening within the borders of the UK from what's happening internationally. There has been a growing conversation about the role of British colonialism, of course, in the world. For me the important parts about that reckoning of with British Empire and that conversation is that it's not history, it is very much a part of the present. Speaking very much from a perspective of a Palestinian refugee. It was a British colonialism that had a strong hand in the impact of the majority of the Palestinian population becoming refugees. And of course the UK continues to support and arm Israel diplomatically militarily etc. So I wanted to start there. because while COVID has really laid bare the inequalities in society, built on structural racism, classism, and obvious sexism when you look at who actually does the jobs in society and how

much they get paid. It has also really brought up this conversation around international relations, how these relations operate on a global scale, how the systems of surveillance, because COVID of course has brought with it, all of these structures of surveillance that were meant to just accept, how they also operate on an international scale, whether it's through the arms industry or the surveillance industry or was the after the Iraq war to be called the homeland security industry. So for the majority world. COVID has made visible and laid bare those tensions that have existed on an international scale for a very long time. Of course, what has been threading a lot of this together for governments like the UK Government is an anti immigrant rhetoric that hasn't just started with Boris Johnson but has certainly intensified in the last period scapegoating migrants as an existential threat vilifying them as the root cause of terrorism, low wages, and unemployment, as if all society's ills have to do with migrants immigration asylum seekers and refugees and not to do with a decade of austerity, that has been imposed on people. Now, when we want to reimagine our world. Let's begin with what we have right now. We have a world where our worth our ability to move to survive to study depends on a piece of paper that a lot of people take for granted, called the passport. I grew up without one. That's knowing exactly what it means not to be able to attend university, although you have the grades but you don't have the correct documents, a society that values people simply based on these documents that you're paying is a society that devalues humanity itself, because we believe a piece of paper issued by a grumpy civil servant is much more important than what a human has achieved when the European Union says Black Lives Matter, and they issued that type of statement, just a few weeks into the process and they nicely neglected to mention anything about black lives in the Mediterranean, and the concept of black people and how the European Union has essentially work to turn during it to killing field for migrants. If we want to demand, imagine, and to rebuild. Having an honest conversation about borders, and how fundamental they are in the contemporary capitalism. It's not a coincidence that when the Grenfell tower fire happened. There were Syrian refugees that were living in that building. The fact that many of the skilled essential workers have also been migrants, is also a very deep and important part of this conversation that sometimes we forget to integrate. So again, I want to say that in reimagining in demanding in rebuilding. We need to get beyond this, this topic of trying to say there are some good migrants, and bad migrants, there are ones that are economically productive and we love them, but there are others that aren't there are legal and there are illegal migrants, we have to start with an understanding that the reason people leave. To begin with, has to do with capitalist exploitation. Many times, premised on excessive militarism emanating from countries like the United States, or the UK. We need to understand that that fundamental fact and bring it into all our conversations. If we want to speak of internationalism as well. In the last period as we were heading up to the election, there were many voices that said, we just need to focus on bread and butter issues. Let's not speak about anything international anything outside the borders, let's say in the safe zone. I don't think we can afford to do that anymore. We cannot afford to pander, and to live in some kind of nostalgia of simply going back. We need to be much more imaginative, think of ways that fundamentally question the basics that people take for granted, like a human being is only a human being, if they have a piece of paper called a passport. We need to question those things and be much bolder in our imagining of a new world. And I just wanted to end with a quote by Raymond Williams, which I think is really important at this time because quite often I get asked, well you know how do you stay hopeful things are so dire the situation is so terrible look at what's happening. I've lived in extremely difficult circumstances where people continued under very harsh conditions of siege, bombardment, militaries all around them continue to hope, and to survive. So we are in much better situation in places like the United Kingdom. We can just

get that truck to really try to imagine things that are more critical and to work together. The quote I wanted to end with by Raymond Williams is to be truly radical is to make hope possible, rather than despair convincing. And this period of COVID while a lot of people are very towards the despair. I think the world transformed can be discussing building together, imagining together on a new ground that takes our movements, linking them together, intersectionality is not simply about the intersections within us as individuals, but the intersections of our struggles, not seeing things like race and sex as separate issues, but actually their combination I think once we start to think in these more fundamental ways we're bound to win. Thank you.

Ash Sarkar 45:11

Thank you so much for Rafeef. I love a bit of Raymond Williams thanks for chucking that in the mix and thank you for joining us tonight. We've got two more incredible speakers lined up for you. We've got Dave Ward and we've got Rashida Talib. Up first is Dave what's the general secretary of the Communication Workers Union, and I am not supposed to have like a favourite trade union that kind of undermines the project of, you know, worker solidarity, but I think I have a favourite, other than my own. It's the CWU because what they've been doing as well as consistently backing from the most urgent radical policies that are so needed, is that they've been taking the trade union and putting it right back at the heart of community, especially during this pandemic. So, can't wait to hear from you, Dave please. The floor is Yours.

Dave Ward 46:07

Thanks everybody. Really please to be with you tonight. The CWU has been a strong supporter of TWT. Since its inception, and we are obviously very strong supporters of the Corbyn McDonnell project. We've demonstrated that over many years. And, you know, for me, despite the election defeat, despite the fact that the pandemic has brought with it a public health crisis that's unprecedented, and an economic crisis that looks like it's going to take us into the biggest recession that we've seen, and we face mass unemployment. We still firmly believe as a trade union. That's a bold and ambitious agenda. And that needs to be rooted within our values of universalism, of equality, and of collectivism and but I also believe that there's a huge responsibility. Today on trade union leaders to build on the work that's being done in highlighting the role of key workers in keeping workers safe while staff work. And we have a responsibility to lead this particular fight. And for me, you know, I've always believed that the trade union movement should be able to reach every single divide in society. We have that unique opportunity to turn campaigns into action. And I suppose for me the biggest challenge facing the trade union movement, one that I'm up for, and one. I want to work with other trade unions, to really push forward, is how do we mobilise an army of workers - there's still 6 million people that are members of trade unions and we cannot win these fights that we're going to face without collectivising those fights. And we can take huge comfort, huge inspiration from the achievements of Black Lives Matter. And I've seen that mobilise people in a way that we've both been unable to do in the trade union movement beyond individual trade unions and particular ballots for industrial action. And I see a responsibility on trade unions to take those fights on so the fight against racism is a trade union fight, and it's one that we take into the workplace, but it's one that we have to link to the issues that we face in the wider world of work in the CWU has been leading a campaign for a new deal for workers. And whilst I understand individual unions will be fighting against job losses and are finding things job losses now. And we can't lose sight of that overall overarching agenda. I'm pleased that the trade union movement recently has

agreed, the leaders, for a new organising charter. Personally, I'm very open to new models of collectivism. I'm very open to the idea that you know the models that we've had for many many years, may not necessarily fit the world of work that we see today, we're open to working with all of the groups - renter's associations, we take a particular interest in because a lot of our members will be renting, and if you're a member of a trade union, you can be a member of a renters association as well. So let's work together. Let's set out what our shared political and industrial demands are. I saw today highlighted was a report from a think tank Autonomy, which the CWU has worked with and the CWU put forward for the four day week. And these are real objectives and should be objectives that can help deal with unemployment. And there's a, an economic argument that costs sink when you consider the cost of unemployment that we're going to face to start thinking seriously, not just in the wake of the pandemic, but also in the reality that we're going to be facing a fourth industrial revolution, the onset of artificial intelligence, these things demand, new and fresh solutions and working towards for about a week for workers, we can start that in the public sector. It could be an answer to the intensification of work that is causing work related stress, it can be an answer to unemployment, and it will cost it. But our job is to mobilise people. And for me, this is the challenge that I want to be part of leading with other trade unions. I think we can do it within sectors of the economy. So we've been pushing for common bargaining agendas where trade unions in a particular sector comes together to route out insecure employment. We can do it as a TUC, collectively, but I'm here to say that tonight, we have to work to fight for a new deal for workers, we have to take what's been highlighted for key workers. During the pandemic. And we have to take it further. And for me, this is the big message that trade unions must lead this fight, independently, frankly, of Labour. We support a Labour Party. But we can't wait for Labour to change things, and movements like the trade union movements, must step up now. And we must be ready to work with all progressive bodies, partner with those bodies that lead that fight in the workplace. We're going to make the world of work the number one political issue. We're going to make changing the balance of power in workplaces and things that I've been talking about with our own union. We will be doing expanding the role of postal workers in their community to support to support people working from home, fighting for the rollout of universal superfast broadband and fighting for a post office network they're still linked into communities, the high street and making sure that we can say that into a post bank and infrastructure bank. These are things that will change society. But more than that, we want to lead those fights in our own union and work with other trade unions to fight for a new deal for workers, and all those progressives on the left, and particularly the project that John started out with tonight, the claim our future project. I'll finish with this point. I think that there's lots of us who can talk about the theory of politics. But my point is this trade unions are in a unique position to mobilise and take action. Thanks very much.

Ash Sarkar 53:31

Awh, thank you so much for joining us, Dave. And please don't tell anyone that I said you're my favourite union. I say that to all the unions. Thank you so much, and thank you to the 700 of you that have joined us this evening for this opening rally we've, of course got our final speaker. But before I even mentioned her name before I even introduced her. I just want to say you can go to theworldtransformed.org, and you can get a pass for the rest of this festival, it's a month of events, of workshops, of discussions and the TWT team have been just working absolutely flat out put it together for you, there really are some incredible events I do strongly encourage you to go there and get your path and also if you want to support the work that they do this kind of, you know, political education that

you won't find anywhere else. Go to theworldtransformed.org/support and chip in a few Bob, if you've got it kicking about. So without further ado, I'd like to introduce our final speaker of the night she has one quarter of the squad. When protesting Donald Trump in 2016 a MAGA type screamed at her 'get a job'. So she did in the House of Representatives, but she's not just some kind of empty figure or token, or symbol. She is a tireless fighter on behalf of working people she is a supporter of Medicare for All she has been highlighting the injustices and human rights abuses in the ongoing occupation of Palestinian territories. She has been a supporter of the green new deal and please somebody screenshot this, so I can send this image to my mom. So, thank you so much for joining us Rashida Tlaib. Take it away.

Rashidda Tlaib 55:21

Thank you so much Ash thank you so much to all of you for continuing to speak truth to power. So much of the folks I know that are chiming in are many of the activists and people on the ground but you give credibility to the work that many of us who dare to run for office and dare to win are in the faces and sometimes you feel alone, but with the kind of movement work I've seen on the streets and with people that are just heard from labour social justice movement our artists. It's been so inspiring so thank you all so much. You know I've been asked to talk about the rise of white nationalism and one of the things in important lessons I know for myself and so much of the work that I've been doing in the Detroit area is around the 2016 presidential election and what I've learned from there is, you know, one of the things that we need to do, and I think we need to do it in a very quick way is, you know, making sure that the American people understand they can't afford another four years of this, you know, racist and fascist regime. You know, Donald Trump isn't a fluke. He didn't appear out of nowhere. He is a national evolution of the Republican Party in conservative politics in the United States of America and its combination of decades of work. He has destroyed the federal government and the administrative state to deregulate industry. One of the first things he did was an executive order during the pandemic one of the first things he did during the pandemic is to say let's not enforce the Clean Air Act, or the Clean Water Act. He not only did that he went to maximise corporate profits, no matter the harms to our health in our economy. He waged war on the rights of racial minority women, LGBT plus community, our neighbours. Liberals are wrong to dismiss him as some sort of glitch in the status quo. He is still deeply supported by the conservative voters and Republican legislators, many who I serve with the support has worked to instal very conservative federal judges, destroy Obama era regulations to enrich the already wealthy through the Republican tax cuts scams. He needs to be taken seriously. For what he represents, and instead. Many are, you know, making jokes about his appearance, laughing off of his various comments and just derangement. But we laugh our own risk. We can't dismiss it anymore. We have to combat Donald Trump's fascism by focusing on policy not personality and making both pledges to voters, about how progressives will improve their lives. We will win by giving voters the belief that the policy we fight for will make meaningful improvements and their quality of life. We win by campaigning on universal free health care, free college, by telling younger generations that we will fight for their future with the green new deal that fights climate change. By campaigning to tax the rich to pay for a better life for the masses, making elections about personality, about who is vulgar and who isn't will not deliver the electoral results liberals hope for. People aren't motivated to take the time off necessary to go vote to jump the hurdles that working people face to participate in our elections because the candidate is nice. It's true. They jump, those hurdles because a candidate embodies a better future. They are inspired by it. We also need to learn to campaign for

highest offices in a deeply grassroots way. Meeting voters wherever they are, and having one on one conversations that speak directly to their needs. That's how I was not under estimating the power of the human contact the mainstream mainstream corporate media's mission is to destroy or distort the reality and manufacture consent. We need to reach past the cable news propaganda and the social media manipulation and make a lasting impact on voters. I have always campaigned by going door to door to speaking to voters on their porches and their couches in their living room, saying they may not have been remember a single policy item I talked about, but they remember that I had an honest conversation with them that I care deeply enough to spend my time with them, instead of some time as some sort of billionaire-lead fundraiser. When you make that connection with a voter. It's a connection for life. We need to see our mission as one that requires competing at elections at every level, down to the smallest local offices, the local government level, we change our politics and move it leftward when we occupy power when you'd be surprised how much power local offices have when the person in that position is willing to fight to challenge the status quo, defeating fascism isn't something that happens, one vote, every four years. It's something that happens every single day, and all of our communities. It is sustained and it is organised. It is supported by the masses. Politics isn't a game for us. It isn't something to be won or lost, it's a struggle for our lives. And as a person that is the eldest of 14. I've taken care of people all my life. And one of the things is being a child of immigrants. My father fourth grade education my mother eighth grade education, grew up in a UAW household. One of the things I remember, is how empowered my father felt, every single time he went to the polling station. But why he met that candidate. He knew that person. He felt that person cared. And yes, it is that kind of simplicity, sometimes that we I think oversee and understanding this movement work. And I just want to remind all of you. It doesn't matter. It doesn't really matter who's in Congress in the White House at this very moment when you think about transformative change. It matters I understand, but at this moment transformative change happens in the streets when we demand it. Look at the labour rights movement, look at the civil rights movement. All of those movements started in the streets. And then it reached Congress, and then it reached the Oval Office. So believe in the work that you're doing will change people's lives for the better. And I thank you again all of you so much for allowing me to be in your space, and I'm so grateful again for your work.

Ash Sarkar 1:02:08

Thank you Rashida, so much for joining us. I remember my mom and how she felt when she went to vote and she bribed me into thinking politics was important by always buying a huge watermelon afterwards, which I think, got me associating voting labour with eating delicious watermelon and I voted Labour ever since. So, thank you so much for joining us. Thank you to all of our viewers we've had I think over 700 of you and there are so many of these events to come over the next month so please go to theworldtransformed.org, sign up to the events. I think there might be one or two prize announcements to come but don't quote me on that otherwise the organisers are gonna kill me. There's just plenty to get excited about tonight has been incredible. I want to thank every single one of our speakers for making the time to join us tonight. Thank you for tuning in.

1:03:07

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