

**Remember the people in
Halifax who marched for
democracy and an end to
poverty in August 1842, some
of whom paid with their lives**

Public Meeting

**to build for 180th anniversary
commemoration in 2022**

Friday 17 September 2021

7.15 pm

Maurice Jagger Centre

junction Lister Street & Winding Road, Halifax, HX1 1UZ

Speakers include:

Catherine Howe Halifax born author of *Halifax 1842*

Matthew Roberts Sheffield Hallam University

Cllr Jenny Lynn Park Ward councillor

Mark Metcalf Halifax freelance journalist

For more information email: info@calderdaletuc.org.uk

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Peterloo 1819

Halifax 1842

In August 1842, striking industrial workers in Halifax were attacked by 150 soldiers and 200 specially sworn in constables. At least four were killed whilst many others suffered brutal injuries that are likely to have killed them.

Workers were participating in a nationwide general strike that combined demands for better pay with an extension to those allowed to vote.

Massive wage reductions over the previous two decades had left many workers in great poverty.

At the same time only one man in seven had the right to vote at a General Election.

The strikers called for the same right for all men, because they believed their own parliamentary representatives would bring them some control over the laws under which they lived: laws fashioned to protect property and profit.

In the 179 years since that atrocity of 1842, what has changed for the people of Halifax?

The wealth gap between rich and poor is still here. In recent years it has widened under both Labour and Tory Governments.

Workplaces were hazardous in the 1800s yet are still not safe. We have had a disproportionately high number of COVID deaths in front line workers, and deaths from accidents continue because of cost cutting by employers who ignore Health & Safety laws.

Our environment has greatly changed due to industrialisation. Climate change needs measures taken that do not simply make ordinary people pay for polluting companies going green.

Housing costs - whether to buy or rent have risen sharply. Many young people still have no chance of owning their own home.

Unionisation is no longer a prosecutable offence but today there is still employer and government hostility to the existence of

trades unions with Amazon being the latest major company to refuse to allow unions to organise employees.

Tax avoidance is still a fundamental issue with many major companies such as Amazon failing to pay their fair share.

As in 1842, new technology threatens us with unemployment: driverless cars and automation mean millions face being out of work.

We have our NHS but it is facing privatisation with citizens paying exorbitantly for the building of Calderdale Royal Hospital because it was built using expensive private finance.

Today we have a national pension scheme but the state pension age has been increased. Capped pay rises (and pay freezes) for public sector workers also result in lower pensions on retirement.

Many of us enjoy the benefit of university education but students now pay for higher education and once they are saddled with debt, many cannot find decent jobs.

Sexism and racism are no longer left unchallenged as they once were but legislation is hard to enforce. Women should be safe. Ethnic minorities should be empowered to effectively challenge discrimination. The prosecution of attackers should be vigorously pursued.

Today, soldiers are not employed against demonstrators but there is an increasing militarisation of the police whose powers to prevent effective protests including strike action are set to be strengthened through the Policing Bill.

As in 1842 we still live in a society organised on the basis of profit before people.

We will not forget what happened in Halifax in 1842. We will campaign for the changes needed for a better, fairer, more equal society.