

Rebecca Long-Bailey responds to reports that Sir Philip Green has agreed to pay £363m into BHS pension fund

Rebecca

Long-Bailey MP, Labour's Shadow Business Secretary, commenting on reports that Sir Philip Green has agreed to pay £363m into the BHS pension fund, said:

"The 20,000 members of BHS's troubled pension scheme will no doubt be relieved to see almost a year of uncertainty come one step closer to resolution. But this deal falls far short of justice being done.

"The £363m contribution – a capitulation to months of pressure, despite his claim that it is voluntary – is peanuts to billionaire Sir Philip, yet will leave an outstanding hole of £200m in the pension scheme."

Taiwan's 'February 28 Uprising' unrelated to 'Taiwan independence'

Archives and witness statements have indicated that Taiwan's "February 28 Uprising" had nothing to do with "Taiwan independence".

Tuesday marks the 70th anniversary of the uprising.

Some witnesses recalled the occasion, saying that there were no slogans or leaflets advocating "Taiwan independence" during the campaign, and most Taiwan people believed that ideas advocating "Taiwan independence" are false and absurd.

"What the Taiwan people are seeking is local autonomy, rather than separating from the motherland," Li Wei-kuang, head of a Taiwan people association in Shanghai, was quoted by archives as saying.

As "Taiwan independence" secessionist forces described the uprising as a conflict between provinces, Li recalled that people in Taiwan were not against people from other provinces, but only hoped to seek their help and

cooperate with them.

On Feb. 28, 1947, a Kuomintang (KMT) party enforcement team assaulted a woman near Taipei railway station as she was selling contraband cigarettes.

The incident caused a bloody confrontation between Taiwan civilians and the KMT authorities, which developed into an island-wide movement against the despotic rule of the KMT.

The uprising was a spontaneous mass movement of the people of Taiwan for democracy and autonomy, but some people in Taiwan interpret the uprising as a "Taiwan independence" movement, completely distorting the true story.

An Fengshan, spokesperson for the Taiwan Affairs Office of the State Council, told a press conference last week that "Taiwan independence" secessionist forces twisted the uprising for their own gain, adding that their intentions are despicable.

The Taiwan people have a glorious tradition of patriotism, and participants of the uprising made enormous contributions to territorial integrity.

People across Taiwan also marked the civilian uprising to mourn the victims and calling for an understanding of the true nature of the event.

Among various ceremonies held across the island Tuesday, a symposium was held and attended by more than 100 people including participants of the uprising and their family members, as well as historians and academics.

"The Feb. 28 uprising was against the despotic rule of the Kuomintang Party (KMT) on the island at that time, and has no connection with current 'Taiwan independence,'" said Chen Ming-chung, 88, a participant of the uprising.

[If the Chancellor has no plans to cut top rate of tax to 40p he can simply put the record straight – John McDonnell](#)

John

McDonnell MP, Labour's Shadow Chancellor, responding to Philip Hammond's refusal at Treasury Questions today to rule out cutting the top rate of tax from 45p to 40p in next week Budget, said:

"It

is alarming that the Chancellor is happy to admit he is prepared to continue

with brutal cuts to disability payments next week, but he won't rule out further unfair tax giveaways to a wealthy few such as cutting the top rate of tax. When he is slashing public services in this parliament how can he not rule out another handout to the wealthy?

"Philip Hammond has shown that he is prepared to follow on with George Osborne's failed austerity cuts, and it looks like he could go even further than his predecessor with the tax giveaways to a wealthy few – paid for on the backs of the disabled and the poor.

"It is very simple, if the Chancellor has no plans to cut the top rate of tax to 40p in this parliament then he can simply put the record straight."

[Labour councillor joins Exeter Greens](#)



Green Party

28 February 2017

The Green Party in Exeter have gained their first city councillor, following the defection from Labour by Alphington councillor, Chris Musgrave. Councillor Musgrave says he has been drawn to the Green Party because of their deep-seated commitment to openness and transparency in local government, something he says is 'in short supply with the current Labour administration.'

Councillor Musgrave says he has become increasingly disillusioned with a 'small clique making decisions behind closed doors' and a refusal by the Labour group to accept proper scrutiny in decision making. He also accuses the Labour-run council of ignoring the results of public consultations, Cllr Chris Musgrave said:

"Openness and transparency is in short supply in the local Labour Party. Major decisions are increasingly made by a small clique behind closed doors

with the majority of councillors locked out of the process. Whenever I have challenged the Labour Party and Labour-led council on major decisions – which is exactly what I believe I should be doing as an elected Councillor – I have been told in no uncertain terms to be quiet.

“I have become convinced that the best way I can serve the residents of my ward is by joining the Green Party, which is clearly committed to open and transparent local government. I have also become increasingly convinced that the Greens have the right policies for protecting public services, safeguarding our local environment and tackling the city’s rising inequality.

“The Tories seem incapable or unwilling to challenge Exeter Labour, so it will be up to the Green Party to hold the Labour Party to account. As the city’s first Green councillor, I intend to do just that.”

Molly Scott Cato, Green MEP for the South West, has expressed her delight that Exeter has its first Green councillor. She said:

“Great news for Exeter! The South West is the strongest region of the country for Greens. This defection builds on resounding wins in recent local elections in [Weymouth](#) and the [Forest of Dean](#) – where Greens unseated a UKIP councillor. People across the region are coming to realise that the Green Party offers effective opposition and a clear alternative vision to business as usual”.

Caroline Lucas MP, co-leader of the Green Party, who studied as an undergraduate at Exeter University, said:

“It’s great that Exeter now has a Green councillor to hold the Labour run council to account. Greens are committed to working hard for their communities and fighting the corner of local people. This defection will strengthen our local party and puts us in good stead to win further seats in the coming years.”

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[China lifts 12.4 mln people out of poverty in 2016](#)

China beat its annual target by lifting 12.4 million people out of poverty in 2016, official data showed Tuesday.

"The progress was partly due to large financial resources, amounting to more than 230 billion yuan (34.33 billion U.S. dollars), earmarked by the central and local budgets," said Su Guoxia, spokesperson with the State Council Leading Group Office of Poverty Alleviation and Development.

"More than 30 million poor people from more than 900 counties benefited from these resources," Su said.

China's financial institutions issued 818.1 billion yuan of loans to aid the anti-poverty drive, and outstanding loans now total 2.49 trillion yuan. About 8.01 million households have received micro-credit, worth a total of 283.3 billion yuan.

Su said that more financial resources would be added to tackle poverty in 2017 to ensure the government met its annual target to reduce poverty by 10 million people.

China has vowed to eradicate poverty in the country by 2020, when China to become a "moderately prosperous society."

To meet this goal, China must lift 10 million people out of poverty each year from 2016 to 2020.

By the end of 2016, there were 45 million people living in poverty, many in areas without roads, clean drinking water or power.