

the Socialist postbag

Do you have something to say?

Send your news, views and criticism in not more than 150 words to Socialist Postbag, PO Box 24697, London E11 1YD, or phone 020 8988 8771, email: editors@socialistparty.org.uk. We reserve the right to shorten letters. Don't forget to give your name, address and phone number. Confidentiality will be respected if requested.

'Pregnant, cranky, in a union'

I saw a photo recently of a protester in Wisconsin holding a sign that said 'pregnant, cranky and in a union!' I'm sure women here in Britain will have plenty of sympathy for the sentiment!



It's bad enough that women are being affected twice as much as men by the cuts so far because women make up the majority of public sector workers and are also more likely to pick up the slack in the home for cut public services. But in its latest budget, the government has made things even more difficult for women workers!

Letting companies with less than 250 employees opt out of regulations allowing parents to work flexible hours will make having a job with young children virtually impossible. Unless the government plans to provide free childcare for the people they force to work nine-to-five? I think not.

The Con-Dems should beware - the British Wisconsin could be at the door of Number 10 quicker than they think!

Louise Campbell
East London

Stop LGBT scapegoating

The cuts will affect everyone in society except the super-rich who caused the crisis. Some groups will be hit especially hard.

Cuts to housing benefit will force claimants to share flats and houses until they are 35. This makes it even more difficult to find suitable housing.

Many Lesbian Gay Bisexual and Trans people could end up sharing with homophobic or transphobic flatmates, with the stress and dangers that brings, including the risk of domestic violence.

The NHS 'reforms' will chop the service into little bits and hand health care over to big business, putting services we depend on, such as safer sex advice, free condoms and lube, at risk.

Cuts and recession always lead to the growth of reaction as capitalist politicians and the far right look for scapegoats, putting LGBT people at risk.

We can't buy our way out with the fabled but non-existent pink pound. We have to fight to save and improve services and to end the rotten system that gives us cuts and prejudice.

Greg Randall
Socialist Party LGBT group

Unpopular 'Big Society'

A meeting of over 100 angry residents packed into Dunchurch Infants School, just outside Rugby, to hear the Liberal Democrats declare the only way to save the local library from closure was to staff it using 'big society' volunteers.

The meeting was told about the Tory-controlled Warwickshire county council's cuts which will result in 16 libraries being closed, including the local one in Dunchurch.

Myself and Pete McLaren, Trade Union-

ist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC) local election candidate for Dunchurch, were the only people to receive applause at the meeting.

We explained that there are alternatives to cuts and firmly stated that it wasn't acceptable to replace workers with community volunteers. We pointed out that this weak coalition government can be forced into u-turns, giving the example of the protests in the Forest of Dean which forced the coalition to reverse its decision to sell off the country's woodlands.

Where a lead is given and a fighting strategy to resist cuts is put forward people are determined and willing to fight back.

Clive Dunkley
Brownsover South TUSC candidate

No country for old people

Privatisation stinks! We all know it but every so often there is such proof of it that it needs to be remarked on.

We now have something in Britain called the 'care home industry!' Apparently it is struggling to turn a profit and is demanding that the state helps it out. Heard that one before?

Southern Cross, 'Britain's largest provider' has begged the NHS to transfer patients to its beds so it can raise income for rent and loan repayment to Barclays and Lloyds banks.

And what of those who rely on care? They appear to be a secondary factor in this picture - at least for the five landlords who own most of the homes.



On 26 March and beyond as we fight the cuts, let's demand an end to all privatisation and for those services that are rotting in private hands to be taken back into public ownership and properly funded.

Emma Smith

Council revelations outrage

On 17 March an article appeared on the WalesOnline website explaining that Rhondda Cynon Taff's Labour-led council had a £2 million surplus. This is the same council that only weeks ago threatened the entire workforce with dismissal unless they accepted worse pay and conditions. The council claimed they had no other choice to balance the budget.

The fact that this Labour council has forced through these savage cuts to the pay and employment conditions of its 10,000-strong workforce whilst maintaining a surplus of £2 million shows exactly how sincere the Labour Party is to opposing cut backs!

The council should use the current surplus as a temporary measure in order to avoid the cuts for now.

The council could then build a mass campaign to demand the money necessary for all the jobs and services needed.

Glyn Matthews

Little to laugh about in 'Carry On Cuts' budget

Sean Figg

Like so many sequels, George Osborne's second full budget as Chancellor will be a disappointing re-run of the first. Working class people will find little to cheer them.

Osborne's ludicrous headline promise that he "is not going to be asking for more tax rises or spending cuts" will be laughable to most. After having already announced cuts of £81 billion and put up taxes, for example the regressive VAT by 2.5%, are we supposed to thank him for not walloping us yet again?

No one will be fooled by the usual sops he will throw at us. Promises of extra money for apprenticeships and vocational training would be welcomed by the Socialist if they were genuine, ie paid a living wage and guaranteed a job at the end. But this is virtually ruled out. In every budget since the economic crisis hit, whether Labour or coalition, promises to help young people into work have

been made, yet youth unemployment remains stubbornly around the one million mark.

Why should we expect that Osborne is doing anything other than going through the motions yet again on this issue? And are these announcements meant to compensate for the bonfire of jobs in the public sector?

The Con-Dems' bizarre policy of "creative destruction" - the idea that the private sector will step in as the public sector is slashed - is a fiction, as the contraction of the economy in the last quarter of last year starkly demonstrates.

Osborne promises that this budget will be the "most pro-enterprise and

Anti-cuts meetings

Stevenage Anti-Cuts Union
Thursday 31 March, 7.30pm
Shephall Centre, Shephall Green, SG2 9XR

Waltham Forest Anti-Cuts Union
Thursday 7 April, 7.30pm
William Morris Centre, Greenleaf Road, off Hoe Street, E17 6QQ

Stopcuts.net

business-friendly in a generation". Hardly news from a millionaire, Oxbridge Tory! But his promised cutting of "red tape" will almost certainly be to the benefit of businesses at the expense of their employees.

According to research by the House of Commons library, up to 3.8 million people, including 1.8 million women, will not be covered by maternity pay regulations or the right to request flexible working and shared parental leave.

Despite the rhetoric, a new Ipsos Mori poll shows that 71% think the poor will fare worst under the Con-Dems' deficit reduction - ie cuts - programme. Working people and young people are not buying the lie that 'we are all in it together.'



Help support the fightback

Ken Douglas
Socialist Party treasurer

Can you make a donation to help us with our work? The Socialist Party depends solely on financial support from ordinary working class people to produce this paper and other material, like the leaflets we are giving out on 26 March.

Unlike other political parties we have no rich backers, no other sources of funding.

Why should you give your money to us? Read through the pages of this special TUC demo edition of the Socialist and hopefully we can convince you.

We have a history of militant working class struggle as you can see from the articles on Liverpool and the poll tax. We want to fight the Con-Dem cuts, as do the majority of ordinary people being hit by them, and we put forward a strategy of how we can fight and win.

But it doesn't stop there. We want

to change the way that society is organised and how resources are distributed. This means that we have to challenge the profit-driven capitalist system itself.

We are internationalists who link up with the struggles taking place across the globe to fight for a socialist world.

We need your support. If you agree with our ideas can you donate £5, £10, £100 or more? We can guarantee that every penny will be used in the fight for socialism.

Subscribe to the paper that fights all the cuts



On the 10 November 2010 student demo photo S. Wrack

Every week, the Socialist brings you news, analysis, comments and reports from around the country and the world. It shows a strategy to defeat the vicious cuts being implemented by the Con-Dem government.

In autumn 2010, the Socialist raised the idea of students walking out of school, college or university in protest at attacks on education. And when the government announced its plans for tripling tuition fees and scrapping EMA, that's exactly what students did! When the extent of the government's cuts became clear, the Socialist was almost alone in saying that an important demand of the anti-cuts movement had to be that local councils passed 'needs' budgets - a demand that many local anti-cuts campaigns have now adopted.

As well as reporting the anti-cuts fightback and putting forward the socialist alternative, the paper also carries reports from socialists involved in struggle around the globe.

So subscribe today to get the Socialist delivered straight to your door every week and join the battle against the Con-Dem cuts and for a socialist world.

Donate I'd like to donate £ _____ to the Socialist Party **please make cheques payable to Socialist Party**

Subscribe 12 issues £9 6 months £18 1 year £36 **please make cheques payable to Socialist Publications Ltd**

Western Europe: 12 issues £16, half year £32, year £50 **Rest of world:** 12 issues £25, half year £50, year £90

Return slip or pay at www.socialistparty.org.uk/subscribe

Name _____

Address and postcode _____

tel/email _____

Return to: Socialist Party, PO Box 24697, London E11 1YD or phone 020 8988 8777 to pay by card, to arrange a direct debit.

Credit card No: _____

Name: _____ Start Date: _____ Expiry Date: _____ Security Code: _____ Issue No: _____