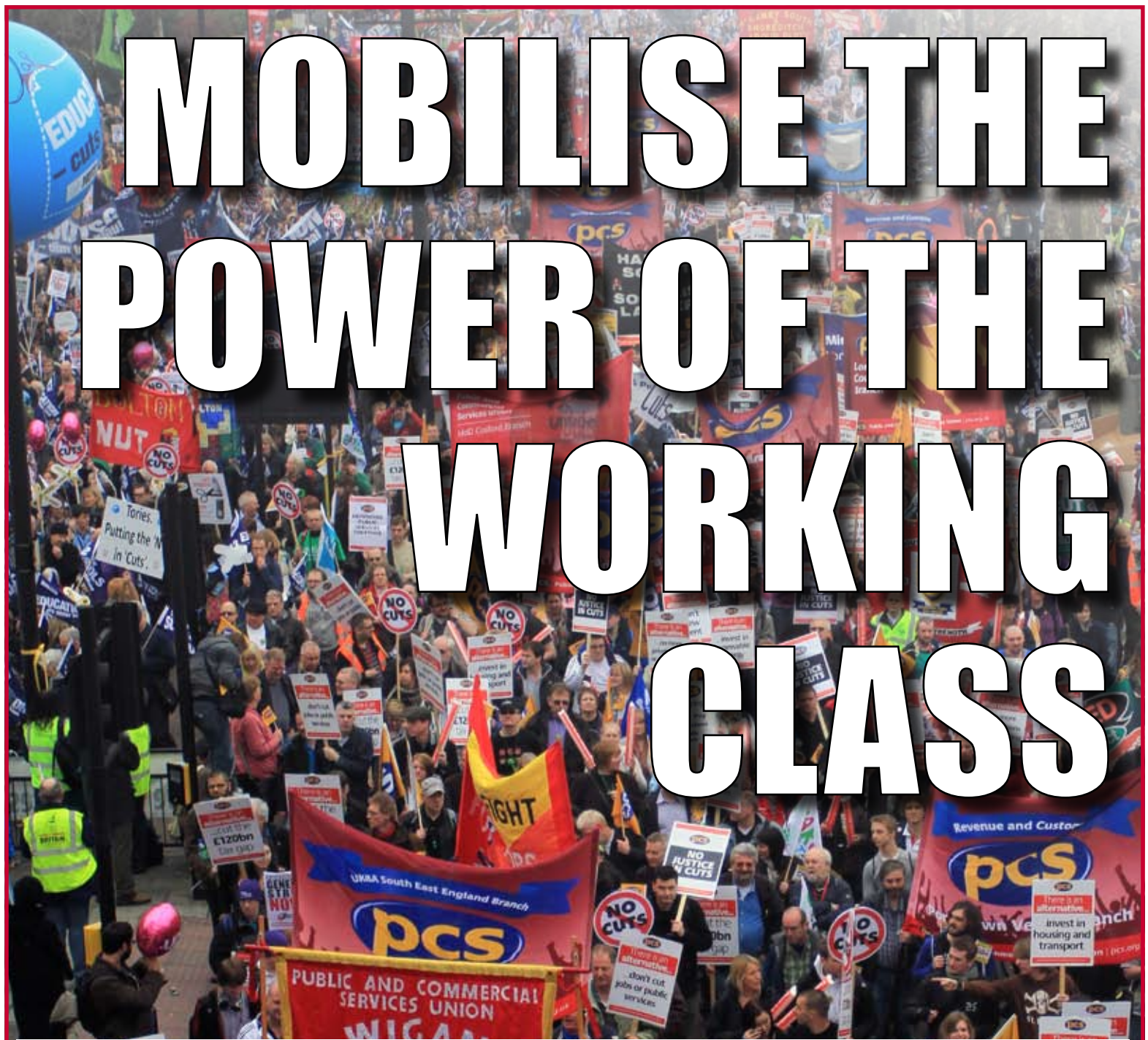
the Socialist

70p
Solidarity price £2

8-14 September 2011
Issue 684

MOBILISE THE POWER OF THE WORKING CLASS



Sean Figg

The trade union fightback against the Con-Dems' austerity agenda is underway. Half a million demonstrated in London in March; in June 750,000 civil servants, teachers and lecturers took coordinated strike action.

In our determined campaigning for both these important first steps, the Socialist Party played a vital role.

These, however, were just the opening skirmishes in what will be a long war. The Con-Dem government, egged on by big business, remains single-minded in its relentless onslaught on jobs, pensions, terms and conditions, and public services.

But we are not yet fighting at full strength. It is clear that the majority of the TUC leadership has no strategy to stop the Con-Dems' cuts and no alternative to Labour's "slow" cuts.

The right-wing leadership of the biggest public sector trade union – Unison – is dragging its feet. Unison members in local government and health are desperate to join their colleagues across the public sector in coordinated strike action to save our services.

Socialism 2011, the Socialist Party's weekend of discussion and debate, will tackle the key questions facing the trade union movement. How can we mobilise the full power of the organised working class?

How can we unite the public and private sector unions in industrial action? How can we defeat the anti-trade union laws? What strategy and programme do we need?

Socialism 2011

www.socialism2011.net
Socialism 2011
a weekend of discussion & debate
london 5-6 november

Socialism 2011 is a weekend of discussion and debate hosted by the Socialist Party. It takes place in London on 5 and 6 November. If you want to defeat this government of millionaires book your ticket today!

We will hear from leading trade unionists from across the movement and workers in struggle.

Socialism 2011 will explore the issues that the right-wing trade union leaders are scared to touch. Book online at www.socialism2011.net or phone 020 8988 8779. Cheques should be made payable to 'Socialism' and sent to Socialism 2011, PO Box 24697, London E11 1YD

Sessions will include:

- How can we build fighting unions?
- How can the anti-cuts movement win?
- NHS: big business' latest brand?
- 'Free' schools at a high price: defeating the attack on comprehensive education
- The hardest hit fight back
- Lessons of the Minority Movement and the National Shop Stewards Network today
- How can councillors fight the cuts?

What we stand for

The Socialist Party fights for socialist change – a democratic society run for the needs of all and not the profits of a few. We also fight, in our day-to-day campaigning, for every possible improvement for working-class people.
As capitalism dominates the globe, the struggle for genuine socialism must be international.
The Socialist Party is part of the Committee for a Workers' International (CWI), a democratic, socialist international that organises in over 40 countries.

Our demands include:

Work and income

- Trade union struggle to increase the minimum wage to £8 an hour without exemptions as an immediate step towards £10 an hour. For an annual increase in the minimum wage linked to average earnings.
- All workers, including part-timers, temps, casual and migrant workers to have trade union rates of pay, employment protection, and sickness and holiday rights from day one of employment.
- An immediate 50% increase in the state retirement pension, as a step towards a living pension. Reinstate the link with average earnings now.
- Reject 'Welfare to Work'. For the right to decent benefits, education, training, or a job, without compulsion.
- Scrap the anti-trade union laws! For fighting trade unions, democratically controlled by their members. Full-time union officials to be regularly elected and receive no more than a worker's wage.
- A maximum 35-hour week with no loss of pay.

Public services

- No to privatisation and the Private Finance Initiative (PFI). Renationalise all privatised utilities and services, with compensation paid only on the basis of proven need.
- Fully fund all services and run them under accountable, democratic committees that include representatives of service workers and users.
- Free, publicly run, good quality education, available to all at any age. Abolish university tuition fees now and introduce a living grant. No to academies!
- A socialist NHS to provide for everyone's health needs – free at the point of use and under democratic control. Kick out private contractors!
- Keep council housing publicly owned. For a massive building programme of publicly owned housing, on an environmentally sustainable basis, to provide good quality homes with low rents.

Environment

- Major research and investment into replacing fossil fuels with renewable energy and into ending the problems of early obsolescence and unrecycled waste.
- Public ownership of the energy generating industries. No to nuclear power. No to Trident.
- A democratically planned, low fare, publicly-owned transport system, as part of an overall plan against environmental pollution.

Rights

- Oppose discrimination on the grounds of race, sex, disability, sexuality, age, and all other forms of prejudice.
- Repeal all laws that trample over civil liberties. For the right to protest! End police harassment.
- Defend abortion rights. For a woman's right to choose when and whether to have children.
- For the right to asylum. No to racist immigration laws.

New workers' party

- For a new mass workers' party drawing together workers, young people and activists from workplace, community, environmental and anti-war campaigns, to provide a fighting, political alternative to the pro-big business parties.
- Trade unions to disaffiliate from the Labour Party now and aid the building of a new workers' party!

Socialism and internationalism

- No to imperialist wars and occupations. Withdraw the troops immediately from Iraq and Afghanistan!
- Tax the super-rich! For a socialist government to take into public ownership the top 150 companies and banks that dominate the British economy, and run them under democratic working-class control and management. Compensation to be paid only on the basis of proven need.
- A democratic socialist plan of production based on the interests of the overwhelming majority of people, and in a way that safeguards the environment.
- No to the bosses' neo-liberal European Union! For a socialist Europe and a socialist world!