

Tragic effect of recession



The crisis affects all but the 1% photo Paul Mattsson

Bill Mullins

What a tragic waste of human life this economic crisis is creating! In the Socialist (issue 694), we read about the Warwickshire couple who committed suicide because they didn't have enough to live on and had been ignored by the social services for months.

Mark and Helen Mullins (no relation) walked ten miles into Coventry each week to collect food parcels from the Salvation Army. But they had no refrigerator to keep the food in so stored it in the garden.

How are an adult couple expected to live on £57 a week? That is all Mark got for Jobseeker's Allowance. Until a few years ago unemployed people got an amount far nearer a worker's wage when it was called unemployment pay. But we can thank the last Labour government for slashing this

crucial benefit.

The crisis hits many sections of society. Recently Jack Shemtob, a Transport for London (TfL) manager, within minutes of being told he was redundant after 30 years, leaped to his death from the TfL offices.

Even a well-paid solicitor Vincent Buffoni killed himself when his company lost work and he could no longer afford to pay his son's £30,000 a year public school fees. His law firm had been hit by the recession and he had already mortgaged his home for £60,000 to pay the fees.

Each tragedy has its own dimensions but the crisis is leaving no part of society untouched - except those who will make a killing from the crisis, the bank/bond traders, the spivs who leech on other people's misfortune and the Rachmanite landlords who exploit the system's inability to build enough homes to meet people's needs.

Obituary - Geoff Atkins

It is with great sadness that we report the passing of comrade Geoff Atkins following a long struggle with cancer. Geoff was an inspiration to workers and the trade unions as a class fighter and an advocate of the Marxist ideas supported by the Socialist and its predecessor Militant.

Geoff and others were pioneers in building support for Militant through the 1960s. Such determined efforts laid the foundations for Militant's rapid growth in the 80s.

Geoff was one of a group of young socialists who joined Militant in Brighton from the Young Communist League in the 60s. His theoretical clarity and the conviction to argue for his ideas made him a feared opponent of the right wing on Southampton Labour Party's general committee as support grew for Militant, with supporters elected to the city council

in the 80s.

Very active during the miners' strike and then in the Anti-Poll Tax campaign, he was always enthusiastic and set a confident example for the new generation to follow. Aside from his political fervour, parties at Geoff and Sue's were always a night to remember and it was in this spirit that he and Sue approached the last few years, continuing to live life to the full.

Geoff continued to follow political events closely. In February he attended Southampton's anti-cuts demonstration, saying how much more he wanted to do. In May he nominated his local TUSC candidate for the Southampton elections. Geoff was greatly respected and will be much missed by comrades, friends and family. Our best wishes and thoughts go to Sue, Alan, David and family.

Nick Chaffey

Why I became a socialist

Scott Jones

As a teenager in 2008 I left college with great confidence in finding work. However life is all about timing. I had 'chosen' one of the world's worst recessions to try to find my first job. I was unemployed for almost 18 months.

This difficult period politicised me. But at first I was playing the blame game which led me to the incorrect populist ideas of nationalism, despite its right-wing ideas contradicting my liberal viewpoint, lifestyle and my knowledge of history, which soon allowed me to see the error of my ways.

Recognising ignorance is the first step to wisdom. The next step is achieving wisdom and this was when Marxism entered my field of vision!

I was an anti-capitalist who had been attracted to nationalism but the problems I faced were faced by working class people worldwide. An internationalist alternative to capitalism is the only way forward for the people



At the launch of the Jarrow march photo Paul Mattsson

and our planet.

I became a committed socialist. A society run for the needs of the many and not the profit of the few is the only way to overcome the political, environmental, economic and social problems that we face.

I joined the Socialist Party at the beginning of 2011, a momentous year of working class struggle.

The Socialist Party puts a fighting programme on the most important issues and workers and combats the betrayal of Labour.

State intimidation of young protesters

On 14 November, my nephew was arrested after taking part in a protest outside Knowsthorpe incinerator in Leeds against Stericycle. This global waste disposal company has a contract with Harlan Interfauna, the last UK company breeding dogs for research in animal experiments.

Stericycle take the bodies of dogs killed for research purposes from Harlan's laboratories to their incinerators. If Stericycle pulled out of the contract, Harlan would have to build its own incinerators at consid-

erable cost.

My nephew and three other activists chained themselves together and stopped lorries getting into the incinerator. The police arrested them for aggravated trespass, handcuffing them and putting them into a police van.

After two hours in the cells my nephew was arrested again on suspicion of causing intimidation to persons connected to an animal research organisation. Two officers aggressively interviewed him. His solicitor says the police approached

this like a terrorism case, with Homicide and Major Enquiries Teams drafted in from Hull.

Six police officers turned my nephew's house upside down, seeking 'evidence' and confiscated an animal rights poster, two computers, three memory sticks and internet router.

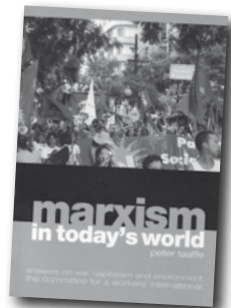
Four teenagers face blatant intimidation as the state tries to stifle democratic protests. The labour movement must stand up for them.

Dylan Murphy

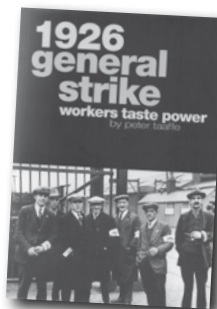
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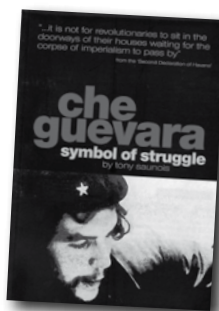
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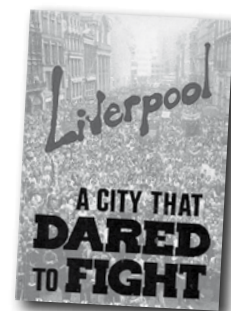
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