

Oppose Tory, Liberal and Labour cuts Support the anti-cuts election challenge

Paula Mitchell and Bob Severn

As trade unionists prepare for the biggest ever public sector industrial action, many are also thinking about the political side to their struggle.

The movement against the cuts could force this government into real crisis, but many people also recognise that New Labour is no real alternative.

Labour councils are presiding over massive job cuts in local government – 140,000 local government jobs have been lost.

In the civil service, many workers have no confidence that a Labour government would reverse the

enormous Tory/Lib Dem cuts.

All of us – workers, the unemployed, students, parents, children, pensioners, everyone fighting the 'austerity' cuts – lack political representation.

In the 1980s, under Margaret Thatcher's Tory government, 20 Labour councils said they would refuse to cut jobs and services. Two – Lambeth and Liverpool councils – stayed the course and refused to listen to the 'sensible' – ie pro-cuts – instructions from the Tories and also Labour's national leaders, and kept to the promises they were elected on.

Liverpool council – led by supporters of Militant, the forerunner of

the Socialist Party – won £60 million of extra funding by mobilising the support of the people who elected them. This money was used to fund desperately needed jobs, homes and services.

But today there are not 20 Labour councillors, never mind councils, that are refusing to make cuts. Instead, they wash their hands by saying: 'the Tories made us do it!'

We shouldn't pay!

However, the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC) does not accept this. Any councillor that puts the people who elected them before their career should be prepared to fight for the needed funding to protect all our vital jobs and services. If they refuse to do this, they should stand aside.

TUSC first stood candidates in the 2010 general elections in opposition to all cuts, and then in the 2011 local authority and Welsh Assembly elections, some standing under the Trade Unionists and Socialists Against Cuts banner.

TUSC provides an opportunity for local groups of trade unionists, community campaigners and socialist organisations who want to stand candidates in elections to appear on the ballot paper, if they so wish, as part of a wider challenge – as TUSC candidates rather than as 'Independents'.

TUSC is also willing to work alongside anti-cuts candidates of



TUSC campaigners in Cardiff photo Wales SP

other groups.

TUSC will look to support anti-cuts candidates in the 2012 local and regional elections, including in the Greater London Assembly elections (see box).

If you oppose all cuts and privatisation, and want to help or stand as an anti-cuts candidate in the May

elections, get in touch with TUSC today.

To become a TUSC supporter, and/or sign the GLA election pledge, go to www.tusc.org.uk
Alternatively, write to TUSC, 17 Colebert House, Colebert Avenue, London E1 4JP, email info@tusc.org.uk or phone 020 7702 8667.

London elections: Support for trade union stand grows

Trade unionists are supporting the call for anti-cuts election candidates in the 2012 London assembly elections.

"We, the undersigned, support the call for trade unionist and socialist candidates to stand in the Greater London Assembly elections in 2012, committed to opposing all cuts, privatisation and PFI"

New PCS civil service union signatories, all in a personal capacity, include:

Adam Khalif NEC, GEC London liaison; **Gordon Rowntree** industrial officer; **Ruth Saunders** DWP regional committee; **Dave Spagnol** DWP regional committee; **David Plummer** London and south east committee; **Candy Udwin**; **Alexis Edwards**; **Mark Benjamin**; **Joan Tracey Benoit**; **Linda Finch**; **Selina Wendt**

To add your name to the statement go to www.tusc.org.uk or email jpjreddie@yahoo.co.uk

Greece and Italy get unelected technocrats - Southampton gets chief executives!

Gavin Marsh

Southampton Anti-Cuts Union

A November Southampton city council meeting approved the 'change programme', newspeak for the wholesale privatisation of council services.

Tory council leader Royston Smith said we face a 'financial crisis and a global crisis which we cannot deny or avoid'. He is right in saying this. However we, working people, are not responsible for this crisis.

There is no way that the council can make an estimated £50 million savings over the next three years without a devastating impact on jobs and service provision. They are

attempting to mask this by inviting outside providers, like their friends Capita, to do the dirty work. Nothing will be safe from these profit mongers if they got away with their plans.

Gas, electric, water and rail privatisation were a bonanza for the bosses. Council tax payers are being asked to line the pockets of the super-rich and suffer huge cuts.

What is scandalous is that the cabinet will just be asked to rubber stamp cuts after 'delegating responsibility' to the chief executive, an unelected and unaccountable individual to implement these changes.

Unfortunately New Labour councillors have not offered an alternative proposal, allowing the Tories



Workers lobby Southampton council photo N Chaffey

to mock them over their "mythical manifesto".

Southampton Anti-Cuts Union and Southampton Shop Stewards Network will redouble its efforts to defeat these disastrous plans. The recent council strikes and the public support they received, alongside the one-day public sector strike on 30 November, show the growing mass opposition to the austerity agenda.

- **No mandate for the cuts diktat**
- **No to privatisation of council services**
- **Defend local democracy**
- **The city council financial crisis is not of our making**
- **For a budget based upon the needs of citizens not the bankers and billionaires**

Tories and Labour fail to give 'Any Answers'

Peter Scott

Worcester Socialist Party

I went to a recent recording of BBC Radio 4's programme Any Questions in Worcester.

There were questions on Northern Rock's sale to Virgin, youth unemployment and the lost generation, scrapping the rise in fuel duty and paying for it with a lower rise in benefits and should Cameron try to regain powers from the EU.

Labour MP Diane Abbott urged that Northern Rock should be run on a "different model" and said "not to keep it state run" but to be the old mutual-style building society. Later she said: "Nobody is saying there shouldn't be cuts."

Owen Patterson, Tory minister and MP for Shropshire North, supported Ian Duncan Smith for Tory leader and was parliamentary

private secretary to Ann Widdecombe.

He said several times that the UK is borrowing £232,000 a minute. The audience seemed to think he should answer the questions, but he thought we should realise that he knew what was best for us. One person asked what planet he lived on.

Tory minister Owen
Pattison said "everyone is
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austerity programme"

He said "everyone is better off because of our austerity programme". He said there were 90,000 vacancies in retail and 44,000 in hospitality. It seemed a mystery to him why

people were not taking these low-paid, insecure, probably part-time jobs with no career prospects.

Telegraph journalist Ian Martin, even more right-wing, made a point of saying how difficult things were. He put on a sad face, particularly when saying that the UK's state sector was bigger than that in the USSR and that 'obstacles' to creating jobs – such as the minimum wage – had to be done away with.

An audience member pointed out that times did not appear to be too hard for Mr Martin.

Patterson told us we could not dump our debt on the next generation, that we had all "been on a cruise, first-class" but now the bill had to be paid. Shouts of "when did the cruise start?" came from the hall.

The Tories plan to reduce working class people's living standards and will do so unless a determined opposition is mounted.



Socialist Party members in Unite are supporting and taking part in the 30 November strike.

We say:

- **TUC – set the next strike dates**
- **For a strategy to build up action to win**
- **Oppose all cuts – we shouldn't pay for the bankers' crisis**