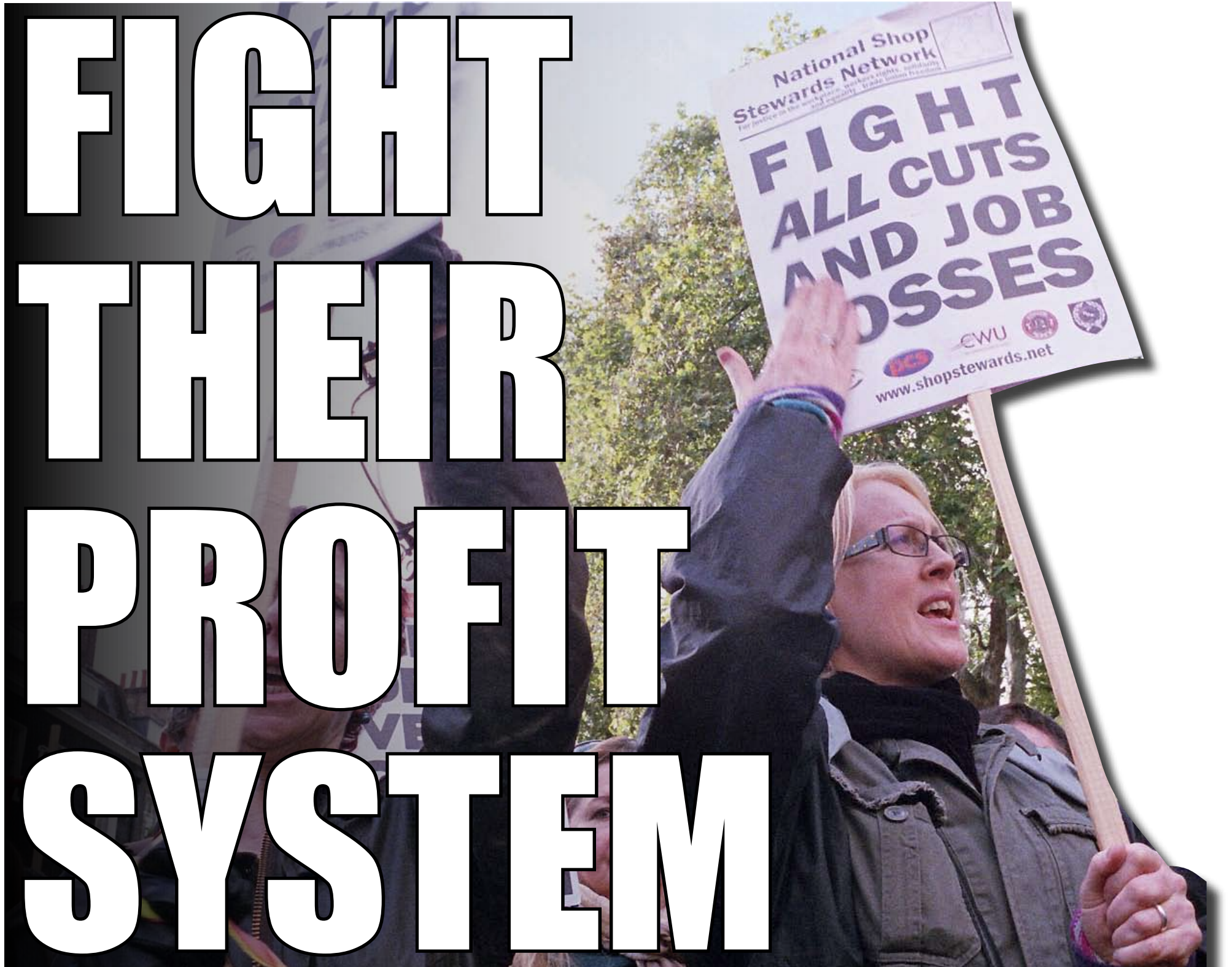


## World in crisis: make the super-rich pay



The G20 summit: US politicians blame the eurozone for the unfolding major crisis in the world economy. Eurozone politicians blame the US. Tory Chancellor George Osborne blames everyone else. Starkly exposed is the fact that not one of the world's leaders has a clue about how to end the spiralling crisis of capitalism. But across the world the 99% continues to fight back – and increasingly that includes searching for an alternative to the capitalist system itself. This was reflected in the standing ovation received by Socialist Party member Tony Mulhearn, a candidate in May's mayoral election in Liverpool for the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition, when he addressed the manufacturing conference of the GMB union. Here we carry extracts of his speech:

“Without doubt the trade union movement is facing its greatest challenge, attacked on all fronts by a Con-Dem government mired in sleaze and corruption.

This government is reeling from the latest round of Murdoch revelations. Tory culture secretary Jeremy Hunt has been exposed as Rupert Murdoch's inside man at the very heart of government. Murdoch, the great advocate of austerity, up to now has been running a shadow state.

This is further confirmation that this government is the handmaiden of the wealthy and powerful. Millionaire Osborne expresses shock having recently discovered that his rich friends are avoiding paying tax!

They say the cuts are necessary as there is no money left. That is the falsehood belched out by the media day after day and by leaders of the three main political parties. The reality is there is a £120 billion gap of evaded, avoided and uncollected tax. There is some £750 billion of unused capital lying in the banks.

Remember Osborne's prediction of a “march of the makers” where manufacturing

would bring growth back to Britain's economy and where redundant public sector workers would find work in the private sector. Well, a GMB study has shown 3,400 manufacturing jobs are being lost every week on average.

The same Osborne promised at the begin-

ning of 2011 that an economic revival was underway.

‘Grandiose’ growth of 1.7% - pathetic in itself - was expected. The reality is a contraction of 0.2% in the last quarter of 2011! ”

**Continued on page 2**

The Socialist Party's programme includes:

- **No cuts!** For mass trade union-led struggle, involving all those suffering under austerity, to stop all privatisation and attacks on jobs, services, pensions and living standards
- **End unemployment and poverty!** Share out the work with no loss of pay. For a decent, living rate of minimum wage, pension and benefits
- **Exact a 50% levy on the hoarded billions** of the super-rich to invest in public services such as health, care and education and in manufacturing of socially useful products and services
- **Nationalise the banks** under democratic control with compensation paid on the basis of proven need
- **Build a new mass workers' party** to provide a political alternative, based on struggle, to the pro-big business parties
- **International solidarity** with all those fighting back against the capitalist crisis
- **A socialist alternative** based on democratic planning of the resources of the planet to meet the needs of the overwhelming majority and the environment – not just of the 1%!

**If you agree – join the Socialist Party. Call 020 8988 8777**



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# The case for a socialist alternative to austerity

Tony Mulhearn was a member of Liverpool city council from 1984 to 1987 and held the key role of President of the District Labour Party during this time. The council was led by the '47' socialist councillors.

**Extracts from his speech to the GMB manufacturing conference is continued from page 1**

In a recent speech (19 January) Cameron promised new legislation, which he claimed would make it easier for people to set up co-operatives and small businesses. This is part of his scheme to get "more people engaged in a genuinely popular capitalism". He wants "an ownership society". He wants a nation of shareholders, savers, and homeowners - as well as new entrepreneurs - who will enjoy the "success of capitalism". 'Fairness' is the slogan of the day. How credible is this coming from a cabinet of Con-Dem ministers where 18 out of 23 are multi-millionaires.

Their personal wealth reflects the huge inequalities of income and wealth in British society. This is exemplified by the fact that the share of net income received by the top 1% was 4% in 1978, this has risen to 10%. In 1974 the share of national output going to wages was 64%. Now this has dropped to 54%, the working class is £100 billion a year worse off.

These changes reflect both the trends in capitalism (de-industrialisation, casualisation of the workforce), and the policies of successive governments: a financial free-for-all through deregulation, huge tax cuts for big business and the wealthy, and an assault on trade union rights.

Incredibly, Cameron comments that "the last [New Labour] government made something of a Faustian pact with the City... It seemed frightened of challenging vested interests, believing... that the interests of big business were always one and the same as those with the economy as a whole." As if he's doing anything different. [...]

Capitalism has become more and more dominated by parasitic finance capital. For instance, in the 1880s, total British bank assets were equal to 5% of GDP. By the time of the great crash in 2008 they had risen to a staggering 500%.

In short, finance now plays a new role, not to develop the means of production, but as a cash cow for the domestic and global super-rich. It uses its political muscle and its direct control over much of government policy to suck the life-



Tony in front of one of the houses built by Liverpool council in the 1980s photo Harry Smith

blood out of the economy.

We know of the spiralling exploitation with young people now working for no wages, and the horror stories of people working for as little as £1 per hour; and the latest grotesque spectacle of workers dumped under a bridge in London to oversee the Jubilee.

One of the main aims of Cameron's co-operatives bill is to promote the development of small businesses. However, small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs), are being ruthlessly squeezed. Those that supply goods and services to bigger companies in the manufacturing sector are being hit by the stagnation of manufacturing. [...]

## Alternative to austerity

The reality of present-day capitalism, however, is that it is dominated by giant companies and big banks. It is an absurd fantasy to believe that just anyone can start a successful business and grow big.

But I'll tell you what is popular: When offered a menu of ideas associated with François Hollande as alternatives to austerity, the response is overwhelming. 95% supported a growth strategy to create jobs and reduce unemployment; 70% agreed with redistributing wealth from the richest; 74% supported the creation of a national investment bank to lend to businesses for growth; and 73% backed support for young people to go to college or university.

But what should Labour be demanding? Ed

Miliband could demand a 50% levy on idle cash to support a massive job-creation programme with a massive clamp-down on tax avoidance.

In Greece, Spain and France movements against austerity are building up and developing as we speak.

I've heard Labour shadow ministers arguing that nationalisation would be difficult.

But would it? In 1998 the top 100 companies accounted for 68% of the market capitalisation of all companies. By 2008 the share of the top 100 had risen to 87%.

In Britain there is an incredibly high level of monopoly in a whole range of industries. [...]

Despite the claim of the Thatcher government to be opening up the power companies to competition through privatisation, six big companies now control the retail electricity market: EDF Energy, Centrica, RWE npower, E.ON, Scottish Power, and Scottish and Southern Energy.

What these facts show is that capitalism is less and less competitive and less and less popular. And only a dyed in the wool member of the Adam Smith society would argue that private ownership of the banks and monopolies serves the public good. Big banks and corporations dictate to governments. But they are still not satisfied with the enormous wealth they have stacked up. [...]

Both Cameron and Ed Miliband claim they are seeking "a new model" of capitalism. But capitalism offers only a bleak future of economic stag-

nation and social crisis. What we need is a new model of society, a socialist reorganisation.

Improving human wealth and happiness depends on socialist planning which depends on taking over the giant banks and companies that dominate the economy. They need to be run democratically, on the basis of a plan, to meet the interests of the great majority of society, not the wealthy few who currently control them. Democratic workers' management and control would ensure that the economy was run efficiently.

Another issue the trade union movement needs to address is this: In the face of the crisis workers are entitled to expect our political leadership to offer a radical solution, to defend us. Yet Ed Miliband refused to support the great strikes and demos last year. He declares if he was elected tomorrow he would carry out the cuts, and is proud to retain the most draconian anti-trade union laws in the Western World.

This from a party funded by the hard-earned contributions from the trade union movement.

He comes to Liverpool and he gives fulsome praise to Joe Anderson for his responsible cuts policy then condemns the 47 [socialist councillors in Liverpool in the 1980s] who fought Thatcher and built the houses, created the jobs, opened nursery classes, gave jobs to apprentices.

If they are not prepared to fight to defend our class with the same determination that Cameron

Support the electoral

opposition to cuts:

**www.tusc.org.uk**

See the website for plans for TUSC's future election strategy and how to get involved

and Osborne defend their class then the trade unions should break the link and set about creating a genuine party of the working class

Already candidates standing on the no-cuts platform of the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition are making their mark in elections. I came fifth out of 12 in the Liverpool mayoral campaign, attracting 5,000 votes.

Such a party could be dedicated to defending the gains established in the post war period, repealing trade union laws and fighting for the establishment of a just civilised socialist society where everyone could share in the fabulous wealth currently in the hands of the top 1%.

# Packed Coryton refinery meeting backs action to win

Dave Murray

It was standing room only at the National Shop Stewards Network (NSSN) public meeting in support of Coryton oil refinery workers on Monday 18 June.

A series of fighting speeches from the platform electrified the meeting and led to a serious discussion on how to deliver effective industrial action at Coryton and campaign for solidarity action from workers across the fuel refining and distribution industry.

The platform included Kevin Parslow from the NSSN, Rob Fitch, deputy convenor from the Basildon Visteon occupation, Steve Hedley from the RMT, Russ Ball, Unite regional officer, Linda McCulloch, Unite's national officer for the chemicals sector, Ray Morrell from Right to Work and Labour councillor Byron Taylor.

With the exception of the Labour Party spokesman, the message from the platform was clear: the Coryton refinery can be saved if the workers

take industrial action, and if that action is spread across the industry.

In his contribution, Steve Hedley took a little time to contrast the attitude of today's Labour politicians on cuts and support for workers in struggle with figures from past struggles, from Poplar in the 1920s to Liverpool in the 1980s.

He suggested that, like prayer, seeking support from the Labour party could do no harm if not relied upon, and that the Coryton workers could rely first and foremost on their own industrial action and the solidarity of their brothers and sisters in the organised working class.

The discussion from the floor started with Steve Gillan, general secretary of the Prison Officers Association, who explained soberly and from direct experience how it is possible for a union to take effective action to defend workers, no matter what the law says.

Other notable contributions were made by a construction electrician who explained how the sparks achieved their recent victory, and a Coryton worker who made a call for

the occupation of the plant as the next step in the campaign.

There was a brief interlude when it was pointed out that there were two or three BNP members in the meeting. From the chair I proposed a vote that we ask them to leave. The vote was carried overwhelmingly and the BNP left, not without complaints and threats.

Summing up, Linda and Russ from Unite made the call for all possible support at a lobby of the Department of Energy and Climate Change at 4pm on Tuesday 19 June.

For obvious reasons they could not go into specific plans for industrial action at a public meeting. However, the Coryton workers clearly have the full backing of their union at this point.

Socialist Party members and NSSN supporters who are in, or who have contact with the refinery and fuel distribution industries will be raising the issue of solidarity with the Coryton workers as a matter of urgency.

Events are unfolding very quickly and it is possible that within days Coryton workers will be taking action

and approaching their brothers and sisters at other refineries and at fuel

distribution depots. We must be prepared to stand with them.

## Background info

Coryton is a major oil refinery on the Thames estuary in Essex. It refines about 20% of the region's fuel, and is a major supplier of aviation fuel for the south of England. The plant's parent company went into receivership in January and has been in the hands of Price Waterhouse Cooper (PWC) ever since.

Just over a week ago it came out that PWC was intending to sell the refinery to a front operation for the Shell Oil company, whose plan is to dismantle the refinery and set up a terminal for the import and storage of refined fuel on the site. This would mean the end of about a thousand employees' and contractors' jobs.



The meeting gave a sense of the power of the working class photo Sean Figg



# The 1%: “definitely in this together”

Ben Norman

As the prime minister faced questioning at the Leveson inquiry, lead counsel Robert Jay QC read out a text message that Cameron had received from former News International chief executive Rebekah Brooks. The cosy relationship between Brooks and Cameron was laid bare - “We’re definitely in this together”.

Since the Con-Dems launched their austerity offensive their mantra, repeated from the dispatch

The slogan, supposed to evoke the mythical wartime unity of the blitz and shared sacrifice, has now revealed just how different the lives of Cameron and his class are from the rest of us in austerity Britain

box to the local council chamber has been, ‘we are all in it together’. The slogan, supposed to evoke the mythical wartime unity of the blitz and shared sacrifice, has now revealed just how different the lives of Cameron and his class are from the rest of us in austerity Britain.

The text dates to the eve of Cameron’s 2009 speech to the Tory party conference and a matter of



Brooks looked forward to a “country supper” with Cameron

weeks since the Sun newspaper had switched support from New Labour to the Tories.

## “Yes we Cam”

Sickeningly Brooks refers to parties with Samantha Cameron and ‘OEs’ (Old Etonians) before claiming to look forward to joining the then leader of the opposition for a “country supper”.

Brooks ended her text with “Yes We Cam”, a wince-inducing parody of the Obama 2008 slogan which would become the Sun’s headline following Cameron’s speech. The Sun had chosen its editorial position on Cameron’s speech before it was made, a practice the newspaper’s editors have long denied.

Cameron’s testimony also revealed that he had 1,404 meetings with ‘media figures’ while in opposition, and 13 a month since entering

government. He then denied that there were any “overt” or “covert” arrangements between the press and politicians.

He can refute it all he likes but the inquiry has made clear what socialists explain. Capitalism is a system riven by class divide. The super-rich, who live in worlds insulated from austerity, act in their own interests. This includes using the big-business owned media as a battering ram against opposition to their anti-working class policies.

But now we can see that they are all, Cameron, Brooks, Jeremy Hunt, millionaire ‘Minister for Murdoch’, Labour’s Tony Blair, Murdoch himself, as well as some of the police tops, in it together in a web of phone hacking, corruption and profiteering.

In that web alone is plenty of reason to bring down this hated government.

## Them...



### Strike scare

The government will stop at no dirty trick to scare people away from taking strike action. The lowest paid workers are having yet another safety net stripped away – under the new Universal Credit system they will no longer be able to claim working tax credits if their income drops due to taking part in strikes. The fact that the government thinks this will be enough to put people off says a lot about how low paid many workers are. Never mind the fact that the measly benefits on offer don’t amount to anywhere near what most of these workers would lose in a day’s pay. Never mind the point of the benefit in the first place – to make sure there’s a somewhere-near-decent minimum income for workers. No, the most important thing for work and pensions minister Iain Duncan Smith and his cronies is attacking our democratic right to strike.

prices are kept down and standards are pushed up. Or so they say. But the government has been forced to accept that it doesn’t always work that way. They’re having to reorganise the scheme that provides free milk for under fives because the prices have been so inflated by outsourcing to private companies.

The cost of the scheme has doubled in three years with the average spent per pint of milk being 60p last year compared to 45p retail. Some areas are claiming nearly £1 per pint – even Cameron and Osborne know the price of milk shouldn’t be that high!

### Golden goodbye

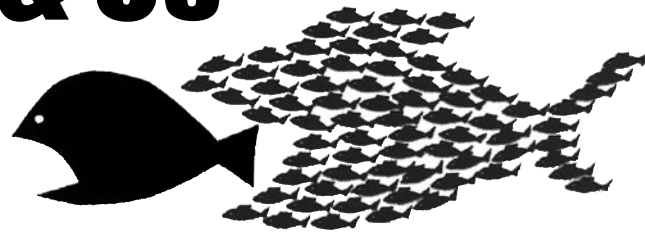
A former boss of Kent county council got a payout of £420,000 when she was made redundant after only 16 months in the job. She must have done something really spectacular to deserve that, you might think.

And in a way she did – she cut £340 million worth of jobs and services – leaving 1,500 workers on the dole. Somehow we doubt their redundancy package was quite so generous.

### Milk snatchers?

The private sector is the modern way, right? ‘The market’ will make sure

## ...& Us



# British economy: “black cloud overhead”

Sean Figg

The government is desperate. Its economic policies have failed, and worse than that, it is clear they are compounding the economic malaise. Austerity is destroying demand in the economy and can be squarely blamed for the ‘double-dip’ recession the economy entered at the end of last year.

In May, David Blanchflower, former Bank of England official, pointed out that the ‘recovery’ from the 2008-2009 recession is the slowest in over a century, even slower than the Great Depression. In the 1930s, it took 48 months for the output lost in the crash to be recovered. Today, in the same space of time, only half of lost output has been restored.

With the now regular downward revision of growth figures, the economy grew just 0.7% throughout the whole of 2011. A study by the European Commission suggests that economic output could still be below the 2008 level 70 months on from the 2008 crash!

According to new study by the Institute for Fiscal Studies, in 2010-11 median income fell by 3.1%, from £432 per week to £419 per week and mean household income fell by 5.7%, from £542 to £511. They

say this is the largest one-year fall in median income since 1981 and the largest one-year fall in mean income since records began in 1962.

These comparisons reveal the deep crisis faced by British capitalism. Mervyn King, governor of

# 5.7%

Fall in mean household income in 2010-11

the Bank of England, has become the British ‘Dr Doom’. In the annual Mansion House gathering of the City elite, he spoke of the “large black cloud of uncertainty” hanging over Europe and Britain.

Continuing with the imagery, King described the “long shadow” cast over Britain’s economy, the “black cloud overhead”, the “ugly picture” and the impending “turbulence ahead”.

It is true that the eurozone is “casting a long shadow” over Britain. Leaving aside the devastating effect a eurozone break-up or recession would have on UK exports, it is the exposure of UK banks that is



Mervyn King says there’s “turbulence ahead”

exercising the minds of the ‘strategists’ of UK capitalism. According to Nomura, a Japanese finance multinational, the exposure of British banks in a “severe-recession scenario” to losses on bad loans is second only to Spanish banks!

An index published by the Economist shows that the eurozone is in the grip of a credit crunch more severe than 2008 which poses major liquidity issues for UK banks reliant on the European inter-bank markets. The possibility of a Greek

exit is now regularly referred to by commentators as a “Lehman style event”.

Cameron and Osborne have responded to this with a plan to throw more money at the banks. The intention is to encourage bank lending, kick-starting the economy and easing the credit crunch spilling over from the continent. For starters, an emergency facility was activated last week that will offer at least £5 billion per month in six month loans to banks to ease liquidity problems.

The main course, however, is the announcement of a “funding for lending” programme, killing two birds with one stone, whereby a further £80 billion of long-term ‘loans’ would be made available to banks at below market rates of interest in return for demonstrating increased lending to the private sector.

### Private sector

Tory ministers still cling to the idea that the private sector will save the day. They cannot understand why it doesn’t. The £750 billion sitting in the accounts of big business dwarfs the proposed new lending. It is not for want of cash that private sector activity has not increased.

More fundamental is the profit-driven nature of investment for big business, currently a risky venture in the economic turmoil engulfing the world.

But for the capitalist politicians Cameron and Osborne, something else must be to blame – the banks, the eurozone – for the failure of their shibboleth to materialise.

They have been forced to concede some ground to the reality of the contradictions of capitalism, now, instead of the private sector “rushing in” as the public sector is cut back, it has to be coaxed, coddled and bribed.



Join the fightback! Join the Socialists! [www.socialistparty.org.uk](http://www.socialistparty.org.uk) • Phone 020 8988 8777 • Text 07761 818206



# Unison conference: members show anger at pensions 'offer'

Jane James

At the first day of Unison's 2012 local government conference on Sunday 17 June, the service group executive (SGE) gave an outline of the government's pensions offer. The SGE leadership stressed many times that the conference could not decide whether to accept the pensions deal. This was up to the members, who should be consulted.

The retirement age will be linked to the state retirement age, which will be 68 by 2044. Workers under 37 may have to work until they're 70! There were many examples of how people cannot and should not work to that age.

It would now be a career average instead of a final salary pension. At the usually lower Consumer Price Index (CPI) measure of inflation,

rather than Retail Prices Index (RPI) combined with a worse accrual rate, they'll get a lower pension after paying for longer.

## Work longer, get less

Many of the delegates spoke about working longer and getting less. There were calls to join with other unions to take more action.

Last year people were saying "name the day" for strike action. Unison general secretary Dave Prentis responded that it would take more than one day to defeat this government. Yet after just one day of strike action, the Unison leadership signed-up to the government's 'heads of agreement'.

Many delegates, including Socialist Party members and others on the left, demanded that, first of all, the consultation does

not take place in July and August, when most school workers would be away from their workplace and many other workers would be on holiday. Therefore it would be very difficult to engage with these workers to explain the offer.

There were also demands that the SGE should make a recommendation to the members on how to vote, but the SGE refused.

The leadership castigated ordinary reps for saying these issues should be discussed in the workplaces. The leadership said the decision should be just left to members, forgetting that everybody in the audience were members!

## Fringe meeting

A lunchtime fringe meeting on pensions was absolutely packed. Glenn Kelly reminded the meeting about

the high pay and pensions that Unison officials get. This was repeated inside the conference in the afternoon, with a lot of anger shown by delegates.

The other complaint was that the pensions offer was a 'done deal' negotiated behind members backs with no consultation.

There were solidarity greetings from Spain, with the point made that British workers will end up in the same conditions as Spanish workers unless we fight back. There were also lots of contributions about how brilliant the 30 November strike day was.

It was an extremely lively debate with many delegates very angry at the leaders, who seem to want to get the deal signed by not sending out any recommendation, giving the impression that there's nothing else to go for.

## In brief

### Runcorn walkout

Hundreds of workers on the Runcorn thermal power station construction site walked out in support of ladders - workers doing insulation work - demanding that more local workers are hired by one of the contractors.

An unofficial walkout on Tuesday 12 June was followed by a demonstration and mass meeting of the whole workforce the next morning.

Steve, who works on the site, said: "There's 6-700 workers on the site here. The job's running behind already through problems with the design of the plant."

"It's written into the Supplementary Project Agreement that they will use local labour wherever practicable."

"The majority of the firms are employing the right ratio of local labour to travelling labour, but C&D Insulation are using more travelling labour than they are locals."

"The scaffolders decided to walk out first of all, and once they'd gone out the rest of the trades followed in solidarity."

The workforce went into work at 9am with optimism that C&D will step back into line.

**Hugh Caffrey**

### Sheffield indefinite strike

Monday 18 June saw the 15th day of strike action in the last month taken by Sheffield recycling site workers.

While the council was clearly stung by the lambasting it got from the strikers at last week's council meeting and there are rumours of talks to be held, the GMB members have voted to increase the pressure by calling indefinite strike action from Saturday 23 June.

Their aim will be to close down all five sites. They need practical and financial support. Socialist Party members will help set up a support group that can raise money and also mobilise to help picket all sites 24 hours a day.

Please send messages and especially financial donations to: Peter Davies (Sova Strike Fund), GMB office, 188/190 Norfolk Street, Sheffield, S1 1SY. Please make cheques payable to GMB. Email [peter.davies@gmb.org.uk](mailto:peter.davies@gmb.org.uk)

**Alistair Tice**

### Kirklees solidarity action

From 12 to 14 June, around 400 admin workers took strike action in Kirklees protesting against appalling attacks on their pay and conditions by the newly elected Labour council.

Kirklees Unison is fighting under the slogan of 'no to cuts in pay, hours or jobs'.

Pickets descended on workplaces calling for solidarity support. Bin workers refused to cross picket lines in a brilliant show of solidarity. The following day, pickets swooped on the council's computer centre, and yet again, all union members refused to cross the line.

The Unison branch has now demanded an industrial action ballot for its entire membership to ensure the council is brought back to the negotiating table.

Messages of support to: Kirklees Unison, 4 New North Parade, Huddersfield

**A Kirklees Unison member**

### RMT election

London RMT organiser Steve Hedley, is standing to be the union's assistant general secretary. The six-week ballot opened on 28 May. To help Steve's campaign, contact him on 07545 530526.

# Ford workers: 'Pension strikers aren't greedy'

Pete Mason

Salaried workers at Ford staged a 24-hour strike across the UK on Monday 18 June, after the company tied November's pay negotiations to closing the final salary pension scheme to new entrants.

On the picket line in Dagenham, east London, Unite and GMB union reps told the Socialist: "The company is following the trend of all major companies, and is clearly one step closer to closing down the final salary pension scheme for all workers at Dagenham."

The hourly paid workers had already voted very narrowly, no doubt with great reluctance, to accept similar terms to those now being offered by the company to the salaried staff.

"The company has refused to have meaningful negotiations with the trade unions," a rep on the picket line said.

"We believe they are hiding behind the current economic climate

See indepth workplace

reports and pictures at:

[www.socialistparty.org.uk](http://www.socialistparty.org.uk)

to get their workers onto poorer pay and conditions."

Another rep said: "I began working here at 16. I didn't expect when I was 54 to be fighting for my terms, conditions and pension. Workers who go on strike over their pensions are not being greedy. They've paid into it over years."



photo Pete Mason

# Improved offer in Metro workers' pay fight



photo Northern region SP

Elaine Brunsill

Following a successful 24-hour strike on 7 June - that completely halted the Tyne and Wear Metro - drivers, ticket inspectors and engineering workers covered by the Red Book Agreement were offered an improved pay award along with travel concessions on other train operating companies.

Further action has been suspended while workers consider the offer.

In a separate Metro dispute, Churchill cleaners are set to continue their struggle in support of a victimised worker and against a 0% pay offer, which stingy Churchill bosses had the audacity to describe as generous! This is despite Churchill's pre-tax profits increasing by a massive 81%.

RMT regional organiser Micky Thompson expressed his "concern and frustration" at the local media who were quick to attack striking train drivers for being 'well paid', but had not reported Churchill cleaning staff fighting against poverty wages.

Micky went on to say: "It is immoral that on a publicly funded Metro these poverty wages exist."

"Despite a supporting resolution from the TUC, pressure from the RMT and public support, Churchill Contract Services have not once responded, or attempted to contact us."

You can tell Churchill Cleaning Services what you think by emailing: Regional Director: [simon.wrenn@churchillservices.com](mailto:simon.wrenn@churchillservices.com); Senior Area Manager: [Louisa.Clarke@churchillservices.com](mailto:Louisa.Clarke@churchillservices.com); Operations Manager: [Mark.Whyte@churchillservices.com](mailto:Mark.Whyte@churchillservices.com)

# Leicester food workers strike against job cuts

Michael Barker

On 18 June, 500 workers at Leicester's RF Brookes factory took their third day of strike action.

Former owner Premier Foods dismissed 200 workers in September 2011. Now the factory is being ransacked by new owner Ranjit "Chicken King" Boparan and his wife's Two Sisters Food Group.

193 jobs are for the chop with redundancy payoffs less than half the rate under Premier Foods.

A strong, enthusiastic picket line was made up of hundreds of workers - many having spent decades at the factory without taking strike action.

Tony Lewis, from the Bakers, Food and Allied Workers Union (BFAWU), said that the workers will strike for two days every week until mid-July, by when they hope to have obtained support from other workers.

Negotiations at their sister plant in Rogerstone Park, south Wales, could also result in action.

Please send messages of support to: [Tony.Lewis@bfawu.org](mailto:Tony.Lewis@bfawu.org)



On the picket line photo Steve Score



# Poverty and homelessness to skyrocket Join in the Austerity Games!

**Suzanne Beishon**

London Youth Fight for Jobs

This summer London will play host to the costly Olympic Games. While many look forward to a 'summer of sport', in its shadow, workers and young people in London and around the country face, not just months of disruption and misery that go with the £24 billion games, but poverty and homelessness as the cuts bite.

Housing in London stands on the brink of a crisis. With more cuts to housing benefit due to come in next April, a new government-commissioned study has shown that 40% of London landlords plan to stop renting to housing benefit tenants in the next year, dwarfing the already high 33% nationally.

## More benefit cuts

Tens of thousands of working and poor families face being forced out of their homes as a result of the changes. The increasing lack of affordable properties only promises to exacerbate the problem and force people onto the streets or into insecure, temporary accommodation.

The government argues that the changes will stop families from claiming hundreds of thousands of pounds for large properties in expensive areas at the expense of the taxpayer and that landlords will be forced to lower rents.

The reality is that greedy rip-off landlords, who are the real beneficiaries of housing benefit, will not lower rents. In fact, 37% of landlords in London have said they are more likely to evict tenants or not renew tenancy agreements, three times higher than the 11% that said they would consider lowering rents.

The reality is that over the last year there has been a 61% rise in the



Youth Fight for Jobs campaigns for affordable housing for all

number of households with children living in bed-and-breakfast accommodation and homelessness has seen increases of 14% nationally and 36% in London, with children increasingly at risk.

We refuse to accept the government's scaremongering attacks on so-called benefit scroungers to justify the return of Dickensian poverty stricken conditions.

While the real scroungers - the tax-avoiding super-rich - splash out on the luxury services on offer around the Olympic games (for between £295 and £4,500 per person you can get a champagne reception and four course dinner with your

Olympic ticket) Youth Fight for Jobs will be organising to show workers and young people that, in the seventh richest country in the world, we can, and should, be afforded the right to a decent home and a decent future.

That is why young people and trade unionists from across the country will be sending teams to Hackney Marshes to compete in the Austerity Games on Monday 23 July - the week before the Olympics. We will be launching the Youth Fight for Jobs Manifesto: A Future for the 99%, which lays out the problems faced by young people in Britain today and a strategy



of how to get organised and fight for a decent future.

We will be putting competitors through their paces with ten athletics events from the Race to the Bottom to the Deficit Discus and Property High Jump to highlight the

plight of workers and young people, lost underneath these expensive and corporate Olympic Games.

**To get involved in Youth Fight for Jobs or the Austerity Games email**  
[youthfightforjobs@gmail.com](mailto:youthfightforjobs@gmail.com)

## Flight of the rats

**Lynn Walsh**

Wealthy rats are leaping from the sinking ships. As the eurozone lurches from crisis to crisis, the rich and the super-rich in Greece, Spain, Italy and even France and Germany are transferring their wealth to 'safe havens'. The three main havens, it seems, are gold, Swiss francs and upmarket London property.

House prices in England and Wales are stagnant, with a very low volume of sales. But the prices of luxury properties in Mayfair, Knightsbridge, and South Kensington are soaring.

## Soaring sales

The number of properties going for over £2 million has risen by 86% since 2009. Sales of upmarket properties in these prime areas have increased over 50% since March 2009.

The average price of houses selling in these prime central London locations is now around £1.2 million. This contrasts with the average house price of £160,417 in England and Wales. Even at this price, a house is unaffordable for most people, given the squeeze on incomes and tighter mortgage conditions.

Yet estate agent Rupert Des Forges "expects it will take just a few weeks to find a foreign buyer for a 1,530 square-foot, or 140 square-metre, apartment within a mansion, with



Apartments in London's the Shard will fetch up to £50 million

concierge, in South Kensington that is listed at £3.25 million, or \$5 million. Someone recently bought two larger properties nearby for around £7.5 million a piece. The buyer was an investor eager to move cash out of the eurozone - in that case, Italy."

(If You've Got It, Expatriate It, International Herald Tribune, 5 June)

The super-rich, the oligarchs, the ship-owners, the property speculators, made billions during the boom, avoided paying taxes and are now getting out. This kind of exit is not open for workers whose only escape will be to fight the attempt to land them with the crippling cost of the crisis.

## Them and us

Another London estate agent, Georges Verdis, with many Greek clients, "said that he had instructions to buy five large family homes worth tens of millions of pounds in central London if Greece has to leave the euro after elections that are to be held on 17 June. His clients fear severe social unrest if there was a default and a messy exit from the currency... Their money has already been wired outside the eurozone." (IHT, 5 June)

In stark contrast, the latest figures from the Homes and Communities Agency show that the desperate shortage of affordable homes in England is worsening. During 2011-12 there were just 15,698 "affordable housing starts" (11,130 for rent and 3,448 for purchase). This was a 68% fall on the previous year.

Each year in England an estimated 250,000 new households are created. What chance have they of finding a decent, affordable home?

## The child poverty mirage

Many people may have been pleasantly surprised recently to see in newspaper headlines that "child poverty is down". Is this a rare success for the Con-Dems' social strategy? Do cuts really encourage the 'big society' to solve all our problems? But just a little further reading showed the latest figures were nothing to get excited about.

In 2010-11 there were 2% (300,000) less children classed as living in poverty than the previous year. But the main reason for this is that child poverty is calculated based on the number of children in households with below 60% of the median income - which was down £13 per week from the year before.

So the great success is... everyone has got poorer so the very very poor aren't quite so far behind the rest any more. Many of those children claimed to have been lifted out of poverty have seen no change in their circumstances whatsoever.

And even using this lower figure, 18% of children - that's 2.3 million - still live in poverty. When housing costs are included, 3.6 million children are living in poverty. Almost two-thirds of households accepted as homeless last year had children. Unsurprisingly given the government's attacks on jobs, wages, benefits and children's services, there's no chance of hitting the target of eradicating child poverty by 2020.

Contrary to work and pensions minister Iain Duncan Smith's com-

ments suggesting that the solution for these families is for the parents to "get a job" (there aren't enough) it's not just the unemployed we're talking about - 61% of children in poverty have working parents, up from 45% in the mid 1990s.

**2.3m**

Children living in poverty

**61%**

Of these have working parents

The problem is not a "cycle of dependency", it's not "problem families". The problem is a society run in the interests of a tiny rich minority rather than democratically planned to meet the needs of the overwhelming majority.

The Socialist Party fights for a socialist society where we can achieve full employment, decent wages and massive investment into desperately needed services to make sure no child is balancing on the breadline.



# GREECE ELECTION - MAJORITY VOTE AGAINST AUSTERITY

## Clear socialist programme for struggle needed

The relief of the capitalist world leaders attending the G20 summit in Mexico didn't last long. Within hours following the narrow general election victory of Greece's pro-austerity New Democracy party, the rally of share prices on stock markets ended and Spain's government bond yields exceeded a euro-busting 7%. The capitalist crisis can only inflict further pain and ruination for millions of Greek people and beyond. And as the article, opposite, on the Greek election concludes, only the fight for a socialist alternative can end this living nightmare.

### Socialist MEP's solidarity visit



Irish Socialist Party MEP Paul Murphy speaking at a Syriza election rally

Paul Murphy the Irish Socialist Party MEP for Dublin was in Greece during the election as part of the European left group of MEPs supporting Syriza. Paul penned the following on his blog immediately after the election result.

“The narrow victory for New Democracy comes after an incredible campaign of terror against the Greek people, which far surpassed the campaign people in Ireland were subjected to during the referendum campaign. A conscious decision was made by the Greek political, economic and media establishment, in collaboration with their European partners, to portray this election as a referendum on leaving the euro and so frighten people into supporting the right. “Tonight’s victory will prove to be pyrrhic and short-lived for the capitalist establishment here. Any right-wing government that is formed will face such resistance on the streets and in the workplaces, together with a massively strengthened left opposition in the parliament, that it will not be able to implement the level of austerity demanded by Merkel and Co.” See [www.socialistworld.net](http://www.socialistworld.net) for all Paul’s blog posts



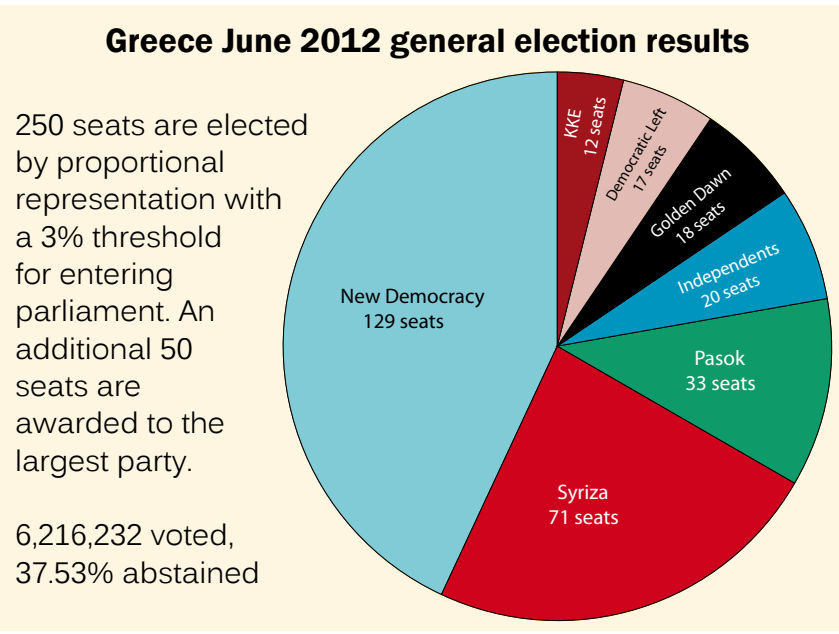
Alexis Tsipras, leader of the left wing Syriza which won 71 seats with 27% of the popular vote

**Nicos Anastasiades**  
Xekinima, Greek section of the Committee for a Workers’ International (CWI)

The outcome of the elections in Greece has left the majority of the population with mixed feelings. On the one hand, there is the victory of the right-wing New Democracy, which conducted a huge campaign of fear and was able to rally all the conservative elements of society. Nonetheless, the parties that explicitly backed the European Union, International Monetary Fund and European Central Bank (the ‘Troika’) bailout conditions got less than 50% of the vote. On the other hand, the left-wing Syriza, while not coming first in the election and thereby taking the bonus 50 MPs, still got almost 27%, the highest vote that any left party in Greece has won in the last decades. Alarmingly, the neo-Nazi Golden Dawn won almost 7% of the vote. These results (see chart) reflect the political tensions that have shaken Greece during the last two and a half years as a result of the economic crisis and the impact of the policies of the Troika.

**New Democracy**  
How did New Democracy, associated with causing Greece’s punishing austerity measures, emerge from the election as the largest party? It was one of the most polarised election campaigns, probably the most polarised, since the 1980s. New Democracy (ND), accompanied by EU and IMF officials, local and international media, institutions of the ruling class and all the other capitalist parties waged a huge campaign of fear. “If Syriza is elected we will be kicked out of the euro...” “There will be a social catastrophe...” “There won’t be any medicine and petrol...” were some of the usual phrases used by ND spokesmen. ND managed to increase its vote from 19% in the previous election to nearly

30%, but this was not done on the basis of support for its programme. The question of Greece’s future in the euro and Greece’s debt was the main focus of the ND scare campaign. They used the fear of many workers that Greece is a small economy and cannot survive ‘isolated’ from the eurozone and EU. According to polls, a third of the population voted with the euro issue uppermost in their concerns. The ND’s propaganda was ‘helped’ by Syriza, whose leaders did not have a clear position on the question, and put forward different proposals, creating confusion among big sections of the electorate. But it was not only the euro question. Syriza was declared as the ‘root of all evils’. New Democracy accused Syriza of being linked to terrorism, to political violence and to corruption! This McCarthyite-style witch-hunt was aimed at mobilising the most reactionary elements of the older generation. There was a clear split in the voting results according to age. Among the over 55s, New Democracy and Pasok got more than double the percentage vote than from voters aged 18-54. There was also a clear voter differentiation between the rich areas (for example in Ekali, a rich neighborhood in Athens, New Democracy got 70% and Syriza 6.5%) and the poor ones (in Nikaia-Renti, a working class area, Syriza got around 38% and New Democracy only 17%). Antonis Samaras, the leader of ND, stated after the results that Greece will “honour its signatures” ie continue along the austerity road. Of course, given the huge combined anti-austerity vote, he was also forced to talk about the need for “policies for growth”, saying that he will try to negotiate with the Troika a more ‘loose’ economic policy. It is clear that a new ND-led coalition will be a government of crisis and austerity attacks and will face big struggles. Greek and international capitalists and bankers do not have a ‘humanitarian’ approach to the Greek drama. They will continue to impose brutal cuts policies, but perhaps at a slightly slower pace or in nicer packaging. The new government will continue



Steelworkers in Athens have been striking against wage cuts and job losses

to provoke huge workers’ struggles and social movements. Now, however, these struggles will have a political perspective, that of bringing to power a left government. This will boost the combativeness and the determination of the masses, even if for the time being, the basic feeling is that of disappointment over the victory of ND.

**Left vote**  
It is maybe the first time in Greek history that the second party in an election has enjoyed bigger celebrations than the first. Syriza made a huge leap, from 4.6% (315,627 votes) in the 2009 elections, to 16.78% (1,061,282) in the 6 May elections, and to almost 27% (1,655,053) on 17 June. This shows the huge potential for the left to grow during a period of crisis. Syriza became a pole of attraction when it posed the question of power, calling for a “left government” and challenging New Democracy, on the slogans of scrapping the bailout memorandum and ending austerity. By doing so, Syriza gave hope to big sections of workers and youth, who saw a way to end the nightmare imposed on Greek society during the last two years. In the run up to the latest elections, there was a clear trend towards Syriza, but it was not an enthusiastic one. Syriza leapt to 27% in the polls just after the 6 May elections. That means that in the one month pre-election period they did not manage to increase that support, while ND was constantly gaining ground. On the one hand, people saw Syriza as the only alternative to punish the “parties of the memorandum”. On the other hand, people saw that Syriza did not propose a clear alternative to the implemented policies. The leadership of Syriza kept a clear distance from advocating a socialist programme, which is the only possible way out of the present crisis. They actually tended to water down Syriza’s programme in the weeks before the election and moved to the right.

One of the central tasks facing Syriza therefore is to engage in a serious political debate on the programme that they put forward. The basic deficiency of Syriza is that it does not have a rounded-out socialist programme to deal with the crisis. There were radical elements in what it proposed, but these were pared back as the election date approached (for example the demand to “nationalise the banks” became “public control over the banking system” and the slogan “for a government of the Left” changed to “a government of all the Greeks”). Xekinima, the Socialist Party’s counterpart in Greece, which campaigned for a Syriza vote, argued for a clear socialist programme. This included ending all austerity, non-payment of the debt and nationalising the big banks and main planks of the economy under democratic workers’ control and management. Also, part of Syriza’s problem was that different spokespersons were saying different things. ND used that ‘multilingualism’ to accuse Syriza of not having a clear orientation. They were not completely wrong in that sense. Syriza took part in the elections with a programme which created illusions that a change of policy can be achieved without clashing with big capital in Greece and Europe. This alienated some of the most politically conscious sections of the working class (who voted for Syriza but had serious doubts), and a fear among other working class voters that Syriza may become a ‘new Pasok’, promising a lot of things that it cannot fulfil. Another weakness was that Syriza does not have deep roots in the workplaces and the neighbourhoods. There was an attempt to organise local meetings before the election, and some events saw significant numbers attend, but the overall picture was that the decisions were taken at the top of Syriza. The sharp drop in the votes of KKE (Communist Party), (losing 50% of its votes from 6 May) and the anti-capitalist formation Antarsya (losing 75% of its votes from 6 May) led to Syriza becoming the dominant force on the left in Greece. But can Syriza replace its programme of reformist illusions and confusion with a socialist programme to create a vehicle for the masses to take power? Or will Syriza fail to develop its potential and be in danger of becoming politically ‘absorbed’ by the system? Xekinima, which participated in Syriza’s local organisations, intends to play a role in this process, working with the rank and file of Syriza and developing alliances, in its attempt to push Syriza in a leftward direction.

**Neo-fascist threat**  
The consolidation of the near 7% of the vote by the neo-Nazi thugs of Golden Dawn is an alarm bell to all workers and progressive people in Greece and Europe. Its ‘election campaign’ was a mixture of violence, threats and political cannibalism. Its vote came from a part of the population which is desperate and alienated due to the economic and social crisis, without any previous political experience, and politically confused and disorientated. The infamous beating of the KKE MP Liana Kaneli on live TV, which shook a big part of the population, actually seems to have helped Golden Dawn reach that part of the population which seeks ‘radical and immediate solutions’ against the whole political system. Its

**Socialism Today**

The Socialist Party’s magazine June 2012 issue includes:

- Greece: workers vs capitalism  
Tony Saunois (CWI) and Andros Payiatos (Xekinima - CWI Greece) report.

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### Health services collapse under austerity cuts



Psychiatric workers protest against massive cuts in funding

Greece’s public services are collapsing under the hammer blows of recession and austerity. The health service has suffered a 40% cut in funding for hospitals, including massive job cuts. Health workers have seen their monthly pay slashed by hundreds of euros. Hospitals are squeezing the supply of essential drugs, cancelling non-urgent operations and rationing health treatments. The cuts have also caused a sharp rise in HIV/Aids and malaria cases. If all this wasn’t bad enough then the situation facing patients at the psychiatric hospital on the Greek island of Leros is utterly desperate. It’s reported that by next month the hospital will not have enough food to feed its 400 patients. The financial crisis has meant that the government has not paid €8 million owed to the hospital from the social security fund. Consequently the hospital cannot pay its suppliers.

propaganda was also based on the rise of criminality which they try to equate with immigration. Golden Dawn’s position will now be strengthened, and the left must come together to form anti-fascist committees in every city, neighbourhood and workplace to stop their rise. austerity parties will solve none of the country’s difficulties but instead will continue to pauperise the already impoverished Greek people. This will at some stage provoke a massive renewed fightback by the working class. Xekinima conducted a major campaign to support Syriza in the election, and at the same time firmly put forward the need for a clear socialist programme. We will meet the battles ahead with determination, to end this rotten system and lay the basis for a socialist society.

**New period**  
In the months to come, Greece will continue to be the weakest link in the weak EU chain. A new governing coalition of pro-



[illegible]



# Egypt's military instigates a 'soft coup'

**Niall Mulholland, CWI and David Johnson** Socialist Party (CWI England and Wales)

**E**gypt's Muslim Brotherhood stated the revolution is facing 'a life and death moment' after it claimed victory in presidential elections but now faces an attempt by the ruling military junta to impose a 'constitutional coup'.

The official results of the second round presidential elections will not be known until Thursday 21 June (after the Socialist is printed). However unofficial tallies suggested that Mohammed Mursi, the presidential candidate for the Muslim Brotherhood's (MB) Freedom and Justice Party (FJP), won with 52% of the vote.

But just as polls closed the ruling Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (Scaf) gave itself new sweeping powers in a 'constitutional declaration'. This effectively binds the hands of the incoming president and increases military dictatorship in the post-Mubarak era.

It gives the generals powers to initiate legislation, control the budget, appoint a panel to draft a new constitution, postpone new parliamentary elections until the constitution is approved and strips the president of any authority over the army.

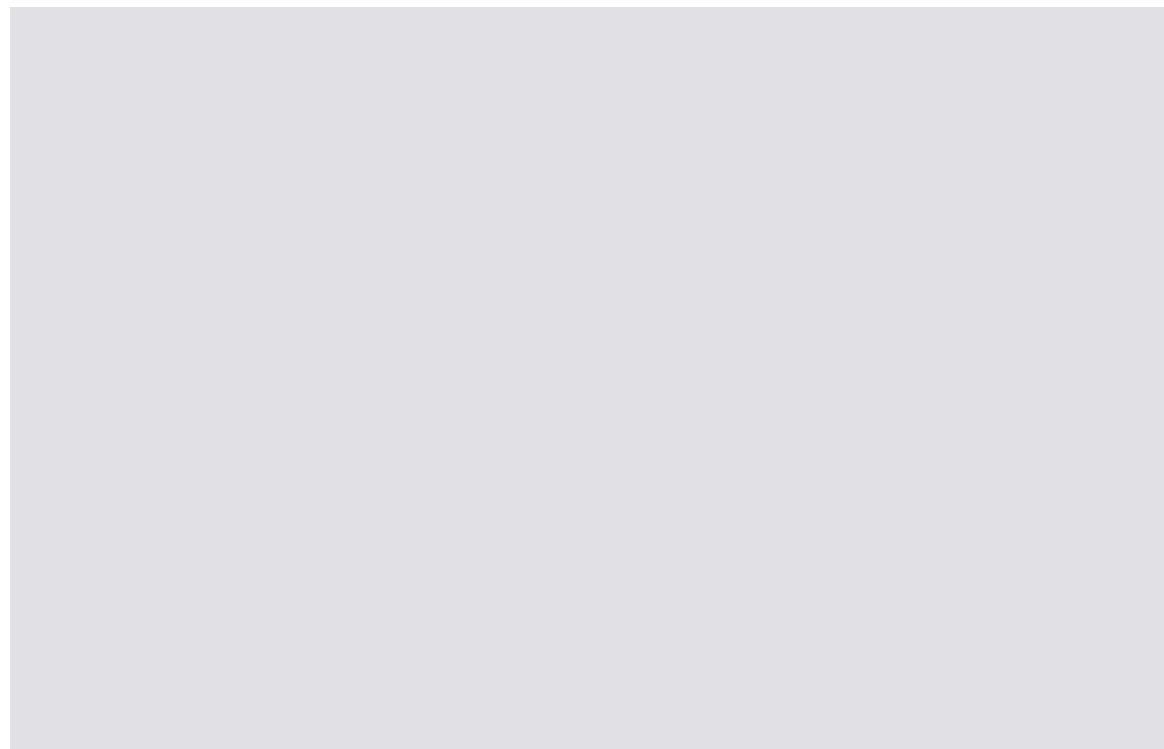
It also formalised the army's ability to detain civilians and to bring troops onto the streets during "internal unrest".

This follows a ruling by the High Constitutional Court on 14 June - stacked with Mubarak-era supporters - that decreed parliamentary elections held earlier this year were unconstitutional, leading to the dissolution of the Islamist-led parliament.

On Monday morning, 18 June, soldiers prevented MPs from entering parliament. The court also supported the right of Mubarak's last prime minister to run for president.

The concerted moves by the High Court and generals mark a serious escalation in the struggle for power between the old regime and the rising power of the Muslim Brotherhood.

More importantly, it is another



assault by the Mubarak-era forces against the working masses and revolutionary opposition.

Since the '25 January revolution', last year, over 1,200 protesters have been murdered by the regime, 8,000 maimed and 16,000 court-martialled. Thousand are in military jails, with many of them on hunger strike.

The two presidential candidates, the Muslim Brotherhood's Mursi and Ahmad Shafiq, a former minister in Mubarak's regime, each gained only about 25% of the votes in the first round.

## Nasserist

Despite the strong show of support for Hamdeen Sabbahi, the radical 'Nasserist' candidate whose vote was just 3% behind Mursi and 2% behind Shafiq in the first round, there was no candidate for president to represent the interests of the working class and the poor.

Shafiq was backed by Scaf which has ruled Egypt since Mubarak's downfall. This is the same regime that ruled before the 25 January 2011 revolution, minus Mubarak,

his sons and a few other henchmen. Shafiq stands for the continuation of rule by this pro-big business regime, with Scaf retaining power behind the scenes.

Shafiq made the need for security and 'law and order' his main campaign issue. But behind talk of the need to cut crime is the clear threat to clamp down on the rights to protest, to organise independent trade unions and to strike. After 18 months of revolutionary turmoil, Shafiq stood for counter-revolution to end the challenge to the ruling classes' right to exploit the rest of society.

Mursi's share of the vote was almost half what his FJP had won in the parliamentary elections earlier this year, falling from ten million to 5.8 million.

He tried to portray himself as the candidate to defend the revolution against the restoration of the old regime. That is not easy for him given the MB's role before, during and since the revolution.

For years, the MB leadership avoided direct confrontation with the Mubarak regime, despite frequent arrests and imprisonment of its leading members.

At first, the MB opposed the 25 January uprising. It was only after large numbers of MB youth ignored these 'leaders', joining other youth in Tahrir and other city squares, that the MB leadership was forced to change its tune and declare its support for the revolution.

After the downfall of Mubarak, the MB leaders cooperated with Scaf until November. Coming under massive pressure from below, they then supported a demonstration called for 18 November but continued to avoid outright confrontation with the generals.

MB leaders have continued to swing between cooperation with Scaf and opposition, depending on whether they have felt under greater pressure from the generals or the masses. The MB leaders opposed independent working class action and, in particular, strike action.

The MB leaders represent the interests of a section of the capitalist class who were excluded from political power under Mubarak's regime. They use right-wing, political Islam to build a base of support among the most conservative layers in society. Since their election to parliament, MB MPs have been trying to remove women's and children's rights.

In the second round presidential elections, many of the exploited in society, for want of a class alternative, voted for the MB as a 'lesser

evil', in opposition to the Mubarak-era forces and the rule of the generals. Others voted for Shafiq, not because they want to see the rule of the generals, but because they feared political Islamists imposing their will on society.

Most tellingly, however, were the millions who decided not to vote at all, in effect boycotting the election.

The Scaf is relying on repression and intimidation, as well as widespread exhaustion and a craving for stability among big parts of Egyptian society, in order to maintain their rule. The so-called months of "democratic transition", under the control of Scaf and with imperialist backing, is clearly revealed to the Egyptian masses as a complete fraud.

Following the outcome of the presidential elections and the military's coup there may be a feeling of demoralisation among some workers and youth.

It is also possible that the crude intervention of the pro-Mubarak Courts and Scaf's new repressive legislation, can act as the 'whip of counter-revolution', provoking new mass protests and an upsurge in revolutionary struggles.

Whatever the timing and course of new mass resistance, the MB cannot be relied upon to lead it in the interests of working people.

## Independent alternative

As the revolution last year showed, to win democratic and social gains, the working class can only rely on its own collective power and methods of mass struggle, including general strikes. And by building a strong, independent political alternative to all pro-capitalist parties.

If Mursi takes office in the current circumstances, he will be without any real powers. However, as the Guardian points out (19 June), it may be in the interests of Scaf to see "a weak civilian president who can be blamed when the economy deteriorates further".

As well as the political and 'constitutional crisis', Egypt's economic crisis takes centre stage. Currency reserves are falling by about \$600 million a month, as the rich take their money out of the country and income from tourism remains low.

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has offered a loan on condition that there is 'broad political support', meaning that politicians of all governing parties sign up to their programme of tax rises and public spending cuts, especially on food and fuel subsidies.

Whether it is tax rises and spend-

ing cuts, or rising inflation and growing unemployment, the price for workers and the poor is the same - a massive attack on already desperately low living standards.

A Mursi presidency, even if largely toothless, can end up being blamed when workers' living standards and their newly-won democratic rights come under renewed attack. This will lead to disillusionment among Muslim Brotherhood supporters and splits among its base. But unless the Left offers a clear socialist alternative, the more right-wing political Islam of the Salafist Nour party can gain.

Even the limited reforms promised by the Nasserist candidate Sabbahi - including raising the minimum wage and unemployment benefit for youth and opposing austerity measures - will require a major struggle.

They must be part of more far-reaching measures, including nationalising all the big corporations and banks, under democratic workers' control. This would enable the economy to be democratically planned in the interests of the vast majority of society.

## New revolution

The 25 January revolution marked the entry of the masses onto the stage of history and led to the overthrow of Mubarak. But the rule of the capitalist class and their army generals continues.

A second revolution is needed to change society - a socialist revolution in which the working class leads the poor, the small farmers, middle classes and youth to take power from the bankers, big business and Scaf. A mass movement with a socialist programme could win the ranks of the armed forces away from the generals.

The most important task facing revolutionary workers and youth in Egypt is to organise and build independent trade unions and a mass workers' party that can unite workers, youth and the poor together to fight for their interests.

Increasing attacks on living standards and attempts to withdraw newly-won democratic rights by whatever regime is in power will inevitably result in new waves of struggle, sooner or later.

There will be many opportunities to build workers' organisations and for workers to learn the need for a second, socialist revolution. Part of this struggle entails workers fighting for real, lasting democratic rights and social change, including the convening of a genuine constituent assembly and for a workers' government to fundamentally change society.

## The Committee for a Workers' International

The Committee for a Workers' International (CWI) is the socialist international organisation to which the Socialist Party is affiliated. The CWI is organised in 45 countries and works to unite the working class and oppressed peoples against global capitalism and to fight for a socialist world. For more details including CWI publications write to: CWI, PO Box 3688, London E11 1YE. email [cwi@worldsoc.co.uk](mailto:cwi@worldsoc.co.uk) The CWI website contains news, reports and analysis from around the world.

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the Socialist postbag

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Capitalist narrowband

The article in Them and Us (Socialist 721) on the villages in Cumbria about to lose their broadband service perfectly sums up the private sector's attitude to costly investment in vital services. Broadband would have been confined to densely populated areas if it wasn't for substantial public investment. Private companies like BT and Virgin Media prattle on about the dynamic private telecoms market but when it comes to providing broadband in loss-making areas they aren't interested until the government, local council or regional development puts large wodge of cash in. Left to its own devices capitalism will never fully develop public service. The Liberal government in 1912 realised that the only way to develop a comprehensive telephone network was to nationalise the various local private telephone companies in existence at the time. Capitalism has similarly shown that it can't develop broadband either.

Clive Walder  
Birmingham Socialist Party

Sugar's sour wine

I recently watched the final of The Apprentice. The main character in this theatre of cruelty is a pantomime villain, Lord Sugar, who sets tasks of varying degrees of daftness and then humiliates the participants. And after all this, what great ideas for industry did these finalists come up with? One was yet another call centre – even one of Sugar's supporters thought this a tawdry idea! There was a website to help people buy ingredients for recipes. Sugar derided the idea that people plan their meals before they cook them. His Lordship presumably has someone else to do that for him. A recruitment agency proposed by someone who already runs a recruitment agency was the winning idea. There was also a fine wine hedge fund. This isn't for people who actually drink wine, it's for people who want to invest in fine wine as a hedge against the economic crisis. Now there's an idea to improve the lives of millions of ordinary people. If this shows the best in British entrepreneurs, heaven help us all.

Derek McMillan

Slavish bias

BBC TV news' rapturous rubbish and hysterical homage during the jubilee 'celebrations', from gushing, posh-accented BBC bores was too much to bear. So I complained. I wrote that, if this state-sponsored propaganda came out of North Korea, Britain's media would jump on their high horses, waxing lyrical



about the free and unbiased nature of 'auntie'. Their reply is interesting. "We understand you felt that our coverage of the Royal Family has been biased in favour of the monarchy. The Diamond Jubilee is a major international event which will be of interest to a large audience and will receive widespread media coverage..." "BBC News is an impartial broadcaster

and we don't take a position on the rights or wrongs of republicanism or the monarchy. Stories are always judged on editorial merit no matter what the subject and we will apply the same rules of impartiality to this story as we would any other". Impartiality? If the BBC coverage was impartial, I'd hate to see drooling slavish bias!

Phil Rawsthorne

'Free school' no solution

Katie Price, aka Jordan, is part of a group of parents opening a free school in Kent for children with visual impairment. Her ten year old son, Harvey, has severe disabilities and his current school is closing because the charity that runs it can't access enough funding. Understandably, Price wants to make sure her son has the best care and education possible. She says she will use her public profile to promote the new school. But I wish she had used her public profile to highlight the lack of funding for the existing schools instead. She says she doesn't want to criticise the government – being allowed to set up her own school is good enough. But not everyone is in a position to be able to do that! What we really need is public investment to make sure every school is properly funded and accountable with well paid, well trained teachers – so-called 'free schools' will never give us that.

Louise Campbell

Boycott hypocrisy

The Con-Dem government, along with European leaders such as Merkel, plans to boycott the Euro 2012 football championship in Ukraine and Poland. No government ministers would attend England's three group stage matches in protest at the Ukrainian government's imprisonment and ill-treatment of opposition leader and rival capitalist politician Yulia Tymoshenko. Cameron's government, which allowed Sri Lanka's blood-soaked president Rajapaksa and democracy-hating King Hamad of Bahrain into Britain for the Queen's jubilee celebrations, is now seemingly boycotting ministerial jollies to defend human rights. Or is it? If England's footballers qualify for the quarter finals, the Foreign Office bigwig said: "We are keeping attendance at later stages of the tournament under review". So, will it be a week of human rights concerns then another week of ministerial parties? Surely that's capitalist coalition politics in a nutshell.

Keith Whitehead

Profit-transmitted disease

The media has recently reported on the alarming increase of a new antibiotic resistant strain of the sexually transmitted disease (STD), gonorrhoea. Less well publicised is why this declining infectious disease has now made a comeback. The main reason is Big Pharma profit. It was much more financially rewarding for pharmaceutical companies to research and develop drugs to combat HIV/Aids for example, than to develop new drugs for a STD considered to be receding. Clearly, a market-driven approach to healthcare can leave the human population vulnerable, whereas a publicly owned pharmaceutical industry, driven by the aim of meeting human need, could treat all debilitating diseases.

Simon Carter

2012 Earth Summit  
Why Rio+20 will cut no ice

Pete Mason

Every day an update of the extent of the ice in the arctic sea is posted on the National Snow and Ice Data Centre website. On 10 June, this update showed that the polar ice cap had shrunk below the previous record-setting year of 2007.

The Northern Sea Route round the ice cap (the Northeast passage), became ice-free for the first time in the satellite record in August 2005. This year it is almost ice-free already.

The earth's ice cap faces the sun and its white surface reflects back sunlight like a gigantic sunshade. That ice is thinning four times faster than the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) models predict.

Despite clear evidence of rapid warming, the forthcoming United Nations Rio+20 Earth summit, to be attended by 120 world leaders, will once again show that the capitalist nations are incapable of doing any more than fiddling while the planet burns.

Already negotiations have fallen into "disarray" in advance of the summit – this despite no legally binding commitments even being requested.

The Guardian (6 June) points out the central capitalist contradiction: "G77 [neocolonial] countries have argued that while the goal [of low carbon economies] is acceptable, they risk being at a competitive disadvantage in the race for future global markets and are suspicious that the green economy is a pretence for rich countries to erect 'green' trade barriers on developing country exports."

There is every reason to be suspicious. As long as the world economy's mainspring is capitalist competition, the so-called free market, a collective effort to reduce global emissions of carbon dioxide is continually undermined.

Even the International Energy



photo M Cooper

Agency (IEA), formed by the OECD to defend the oil-based profits of the multinationals against the Middle East-based oil cartel OPEC, has a number of reports and statements by leading officials warning about the dangers of climate change.

"A technological transformation of the energy system is still possible, despite current trends" which are "failing to meet the deployment objectives needed," its latest Energy Technology Perspectives 2012 executive summary says: "Low-carbon electricity is at the core of a sustainable energy system. Renewable energy technologies play a crucial role in this respect."

Yet the "share of energy-related investment in public research, de-

velopment and demonstration (RD&D) has fallen by two-thirds since the 1980s" painting a "bleak picture": the "window of opportunity is closing rapidly" the report says. The technology to achieve that goal is available. Natural gas is no solution. Coal use must be reduced.

Ultimately the IEA will defend its paymasters, and cannot draw the necessary conclusion: That investment in R&D has plummeted and deployment has failed because capitalist Big Oil still pulls the strings of government.

A socialist solution, which starts from the nationalisation under democratic workers' control of the energy and transport multinationals, is the only answer.

TV review  
Secret History of the Streets, Deptford High Street

Pete Redfarn

A previous BBC TV programme, The Tower, about Deptford in south London, said that the area was full of drunks and criminals and the 'cure' was to move in rich yuppies. This programme, The Secret History of the Streets, was similar, but also cast the old London County Council (which became the GLC in 1965) as the villains.

In Victorian times, Deptford High Street was classified in Booth's famous maps as a prosperous area, known as the Oxford Street of south London. The programme failed to explain the cause of either this prosperity, or of its decline.

Deptford was the Tudor site of the Royal Dockyard. In the 19th century, it became the Royal Navy Victualling Yard and Stores Depot, and the Foreign Cattle Market. All these closed during the 20th century, together with wharves along the Thames. Surrey Docks in Rotherhithe closed in 1969.

In the 1960s the Pepys council estate was built on the dockyard site, while the rest was used by News In-

ternational from 1980 until it closed in 2000. Local factories also closed, such as United Glass, and Molins cigarette machine factory (now a McDonald's).

This culminated in the closure of Deptford's Jobcentre last year. No jobs (except for betting shops and scrapyards), so no Jobcentre. The main cause of Deptford's poverty is deindustrialisation and unemployment.

The programme, though, blames it all on council 'planners'. It showed some examples of insensitive decisions by middle class bureaucrats to knock down homes in the 1950s and 1960s. But the programme had to admit that some houses in Deptford lacked bathrooms.

I imagine it is difficult to deal with a terrace of houses, some war-damaged and others not, some improved and some not really fit for human habitation. Can you demolish one house and leave its neighbours standing?

Former Labour councillor Nick Taylor pointed out in this programme that 1960s Deptford housing estates such as Milton Court were hard to let. That estate had

many tower blocks, some of which have since been demolished. With the lack of local jobs in the 1970s, it is not surprising that families preferred to move to 1920s council estates in Bellingham and Downham, designed in garden city style.

Ironically, local tower blocks, such as Aragon Tower, are popular with the rich. Perhaps this is because they have other homes, and send their kids off to boarding school as soon as possible.

Many local residents were interviewed but hardly any appeared in the programme. Was this because of the anti-working class, anti-Deptford bias of the programme?

One yuppie couple were shown, viewing a house in the small, posh conservation area of Albury Street. The programme said this house was like the homes which were demolished 40-50 years ago. However it admitted that Albury Street houses were 18th century "captains' houses", not working class dwellings.

This programme did not analyse the dire effect of crisis ridden capitalism on Deptford's working class population – and that failure showed.



# GMB delegates question link to Labour

Ian Harris

The 2012 congress for the GMB general union, one of Britain's fastest growing unions, showed some successes in the private sector but also frustration from rank and file delegates over pensions and the union's relationship with New Labour.

Three recent successes stood out:

- At London Olympic sites, GMB has become virtually the only union among security staff, recruiting up to 400 members a week. The union is also taking steps to ensure that GMB members are preferred for employment by G4S and other security firms after the Olympics.

- A long campaign against bullying, discrimination and blacklisting for Carillion workers in Swindon and London. Legal pressure and strike action has forced Carillion to back down over blacklisting and offer compensation in some cases. A Carillion delegation spoke to rapturous applause. General secretary Paul Kenny announced GMB was withdrawing all investment from Carillion holdings – though members might ask why these investments were made in the first place.

- After an intense legal struggle, workplace organising and several strike ballots, GMB became the first union in the world to negotiate a national bargaining agreement – won by Asda distribution workers – with retail giant Wal-Mart. But the struggle continues to gain such an agreement for the thousands of Asda store workers, who have already won national recognition.

For the public sector, Kenny and other speakers lauded the 'day of action' (note not 'strike') over pensions on 30 November 2011. But no

mention was made of the sell-out that followed in December, nor how the fight could be continued.

At a fringe meeting, the national pensions officer explained the attacks on state and public sector pensions. All attempts in negotiation and legal wrangling failed.

Platform speakers said that, across different branches of the public sector, members returned surveys clearly rejecting the pensions deal, which expects members to work longer, pay more and get less for their pensions. A question from the floor asked whether this meant further strike action over pensions. The answer was long and convoluted, but meant 'no'.

## Popular subject

25% of motions from branches called into question the union's stance towards the Labour Party. Though many of these motions were shot down pre-congress or ruled out of order by the standing orders committee, many got through.

As 2012 was not a 'rules congress', disaffiliation could not even be discussed, despite an impassioned point of order raised by a delegate from Leeds at the immediate start of the conference.

But motions condemned Labour's stance towards 30 November and public sector cuts. The political session that followed saw a three-hour hammering of the Labour Party, as delegate after delegate expressed their disgust at the weakness of the Labour leaders.

But none of the delegates called for the creation of a new party, or the possibility of supporting candidates other than Labour. This seemed to come more from a sense of traditional loyalties and the lack



GMB members in Swindon march against Carillion bosses' bullying photo Matt Carey

of a sizable alternative, rather than subservient attitude to Labour. Very

Motions  
condemned  
Labour's stance  
towards 30  
November

few delegates mentioned the idea that Labour might have made 'nicer

cuts' or stopped cuts altogether.

The GMB Central Executive Committee's special report, given by Kenny, criticised Labour including the party's lack of democracy. But Kenny still concluded that Labour was the only game in town, and made a plea for activists to get involved in Labour at a local level, in an attempt to reclaim the party.

Among many lay delegates however, it seems there is a search for an alternative to the GMB's official position, as shown by the manufacturing section's response to Tony Mul-

hearn's speech (see page 2).

Socialists in the GMB should support the 'Student Worker' initiative to recruit more young workers to the union, as currently only 6% of members are under 30.

Many delegates took a Socialist Party newsletter, and 30 copies of the Socialist were sold.

Annoyance at the stage managing of congress was widely expressed. Despite the political views of the leadership, it is clear that there is the possibility for the left to grow within the GMB.

## Unite needs strategy to step up fight against austerity

Kevin Parslow

Unite London and Eastern region delegate (personal capacity)

Unite's 2012 policy conference, on 25-28 June, meets as the struggle against the Con-Dem government and the capitalist system it defends is intensifying in Britain and Ireland.

Following two years when the union's members have been at the forefront of some of the most important battles in the labour movement, the conference must discuss a way forward to get rid of this government.

Unite participated in the pensions' battle. It should produce a strategy in all sectors where it is involved to step up and win this battle. It is welcome that Unite has worked with other unions, particularly fighting unions like PCS, to take the battle forward and has refused to sign the 'heads of agreement' in the civil service and health pension schemes. However, it should recommend rejection of the proposals for the local government pension scheme and call further action.

Unite should build for the 20 October TUC demo around the demand for a 24-hour general strike against cuts and austerity. It should also link with organisations, like the National Shop Stewards Network, which are bringing the working class together across unions.

Unite has also been the key union in private sector disputes such as the 'sparks' construction electri-

cians, Unilever and others. It is in the forefront of current struggles, particularly the oil refinery workers at Coryton (see page 2) and the London bus workers (see page 12).

What has been important, particularly in the construction electrician's dispute, is the way that Unite members have led the way in deciding the pace and direction of their campaigns and were backed by the union. This was crucial in ensuring the vicious Besna proposal was defeated by the sparks, although already construction companies are making further attempts to cut wages.

## Fight or flight

These developments have confirmed the Socialist Party's analysis that the election of left general secretary Len McCluskey and a left executive in a period of austerity would force the union to fight or be weakened. The union's executive put forward a policy of opposition to all cuts, a big step forward.

However, while this is linked to a strategy of remaining in the Labour Party in an attempt to change it, it cannot have its full political effect. Unite is trying to get hundreds of its members to join Labour in the hope of reclaiming it.

Yet councillor Kingsley Abrams, a Unite member who abstained from supporting cuts by a Labour council, remains suspended by Lambeth Labour group! Unite must give support to all Unite members who refuse to

back cuts. If the current strategy of trying to reclaim the party does not work, then Unite will have to consider an alternative to pro-big business New Labour. A number of reso-

Support the electoral  
opposition to cuts:  
[www.tusc.org.uk](http://www.tusc.org.uk)

lutions point in that direction by calling for Unite to withhold part of its funding of Labour. The executive has produced a statement to compromise conflicting resolutions.

Similarly, statements on both Trident and nuclear energy attempt to resolve conflicts between the dangers of these products and the workers in these industries, where Unite has a sizeable presence.

Socialist planning of energy and the manufacture of socially useful products are the only way to use the skills of the workers in the industry to make things people need and safeguard the environment without making redundancies.

Unite has gone through a period when it has been partially subsumed in the process of the merger of its predecessor unions. That process is nearly complete and Unite will have fewer internal distractions. This conference must give a lead to workers throughout the labour movement, including those not yet in unions, in continuing the fight against austerity and proposing a socialist programme for the working class.

## UCU: Time to fight on pay and pensions

UCU members

The University and College Union (UCU), representing over 120,000 workers in universities and colleges, is currently consulting members over whether to accept a fourth consecutive year of real-terms pay cuts.

Employers have offered university workers 1%, falling far short of inflation yet again. Unite and EIS have already rejected the offer, while GMB and Unison are consulting their members. UCU is recommending rejection, and Socialist Party members will be campaigning for this outcome.

UCU is also committed to action on pensions across further and higher education following its recent Congress meaning that co-ordination with other public sector workers in dispute is now possible this autumn.

Members must ensure that the union leadership carries this decision through with a serious programme of industrial action on pensions and pay.

UCU members also need to link with students fighting for public education, to build the movement needed to beat the Con-Dems' austerity programme for universities and colleges.



**walesshop  
stewardsnetwork**

Conference - Saturday 30  
June, 10am-3pm  
Temple of Peace, King  
Edward VII Avenue, Cardiff

With 88% of the planned public sector cuts still to come, the ongoing struggles against pension and pay cuts are just the beginning of the challenges facing trade union representatives in the workplace.

### Speakers include:

Katrine Williams, chair PCS Wales; Les Woodward, Remploy national convenor; Owen Herbert, RMT council of executives; Cerith Griffiths, Wales FBU chair; John Hancock, POA NEC; Mark Evans, Unison local government service group executive member for Wales (personal capacity); Claire Job, Swansea Health Unison (pc); Ramon Corria, secretary Cardiff Trades Union Council; Rob Williams, National Shop Stewards Network chair

**Plus plenty of time for discussion and workshops**



# SUPPORT THE LONDON BUS STRIKE

FRIDAY  
22  
JUNE

## A London bus worker

The regional secretary of Unite the union, Peter Kavanagh, has told reps from London bus garages that, after a 94% vote for action, an official 24-hour strike would start across the capital from 3am on Friday 22 June.

This first London-wide strike for a generation was called after the capital's private bus companies refused to pay a bonus for bus workers who will be coping with an extra 900,000 passengers during the Olympics and Paralympics. Transport for London (TfL), who supposedly control the whole system, are refusing to intervene. If necessary a second strike could be called for the Olympic Games' opening day, 27 July.

Almost all the bus workers I spoke to wanted to see this action through. My garage had Unite posters on the walls informing members of the strike and my rep told me that ten drivers had joined the union on that day alone. As we spoke, a driver came up and asked what could he do about the strike, but wasn't in Unite. We said "Join!" and that was recruit number eleven.

A driver from Catford said only a few drivers would come into work and the mood was supportive. But drivers weren't as worried about the £500 bonus as to get back for the way management was treating them. They never even offered a bonus which almost everyone else in passenger transport is getting. The driver also thought a strike now would help when the main pay negotiations come round.

Another rep said the union would call for another strike after the Olympics as the bosses' response to the union's annual pay claim was a pay freeze! One driver who left Unite because it wasn't doing anything for workers at her garage definitely wouldn't cross a picket line.

A roadside controller said he'd be expected to drive

a bus on strike day along with other management. "But the first abuse I get, I'll be chucking all my passengers off and calling in to say I'm bringing my bus back to the depot on health and safety grounds."

When East London buses had a strike a couple of years ago, management had to call in the few buses on the road precisely because they were getting dangerously overcrowded and drivers/scabs/managers were getting threats.

The battle is now on. Leon Daniels, a TfL boss, accused bus workers of being 'reprehensible' for striking. Daniels earns £234,906 a year and is in line for a bonus of £80,000 tied to the Olympics!

The last major all-London strike was in 1982, in solidarity with nurses. If we win this struggle after years of inactivity, it will loosen management's grip and give new confidence not just to bus workers but to all workers.

## Olympic bonus awards have already been agreed for the following workers:

Heathrow Express: **£700**

Network Rail: **£500**

Docklands Light Railway: **£900**

Virgin Rail: **£500**

London Overground: **£600**

London Underground: at least **£850**

BAA staff: up to **£1,200**



Bus workers on a protest in 2010 photo Paul Mattsson

## What we stand for

**The Socialist Party fights for socialism – a democratic society run for the needs of all and not the profits of a few. We also oppose every cut, fighting in our day-to-day campaigning for every possible improvement for working class people. The organised working class has the potential power to stop the cuts and transform society.**

**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 socialist international that organises in over 40 countries.**

**Our demands include:**  
**PUBLIC SERVICES**

- No to ALL cuts in jobs, public services and benefits. Defend our pensions.
- 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 and 'Free schools'!

- 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.

## 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.
- Reject 'Workfare'. 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. Support the National Shop Stewards Network.

- A maximum 35-hour week with no loss of pay.

## 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! Support the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition as an important step towards this.

## SOCIALISM AND INTERNATIONALISM

- No to imperialist wars and occupations. Withdraw the troops immediately from Afghanistan!
- Tax the super-rich! For a socialist government to take into public ownership the top 150 companies and the banking system 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' neoliberal European Union! For a socialist Europe and a socialist world!