

MARCH AND STRIKE AGAINST AUSTERITY



Lobby the TUC to call a general strike

Sunday 9 September Brighton
Assemble 1pm at The Level park - Union Road, Brighton BN2 for march at 1.30pm to Brighton (conference) Centre and then rally
Speakers include Bob Crow, RMT general secretary and Mark Serwotka, PCS general secretary
For updates and transport information go to www.shopstewards.net or email info@shopstewards.net or phone 07952 283 558

At least 500,000 marched against the cuts on 26 March 2011. photo Paul Mattsson

Rob Williams
National Shop Stewards Network chair

The cracks in the Coalition are becoming open splits. This is a weak government that can be defeated. However, left to its own devices, it will stagger on, unleashing the remaining 85% of the biggest austerity programme for 90 years. Even this prediction may be optimistic. Last autumn chancellor George Osborne added another £30 billion to the original target of cutting £81 billion from public spending and now the latest reports say that this could be increased by a further £17 billion!

Those who have already suffered know

what the cuts will mean. 350,000 public sector workers have lost their jobs. Those still in work are in the middle of a four year pay freeze. Benefits have been slashed. One million young people are on the dole. Students have had their tuition fees trebled and EMA abolished. Now the government is planning to try and destroy national pay bargaining, implement massive further cuts in benefits and much more.

In contrast, for a few at the top Britain is booming. The Office of National Statistics reported that the wealthiest 10% are now 500 times richer than the bottom 10%. Much of this is based on the generous pension pots of the rich - the very people who are recommending cutting retirement benefits of low-

paid public sector workers. For instance, the CEO of disgraced G4S - which has just bungled the security at the Olympics - has a pension pot of £8.7 million! After getting the sack from Barclays, 'Diamond' Bob's pension is a big part of his £2 million payoff.

Meanwhile many working-class pensioners get barely £100 a week on the state pension. Others like the workers in the Coryton oil refinery in Essex, as with the Visteon pensioners in 2009, will see their retirement benefits slashed because the company has gone into administration. For most young people a living pension is a pipedream.

The Socialist Party welcomes the demonstration on 20 October called by the TUC to protest at the Con-Dems austerity onslaught.

We will fight to make it even bigger than the 500,000 strong 26 March 2011 demo. But it isn't enough. If the trade union leaders used that mobilisation as a platform to call for a 24-hour general strike before the end of the year this government of U-turns could be defeated. That's why we appeal to all workers, pensioners and young people to join the NSSN lobby of the TUC on 9 September to call on the TUC to make sure that we not only march together in October but then strike together to stop the cuts.

See page 4 for details of the latest victory for the witch-hunted Unison Four - judge calls Unison "shabby".

Miliband and Labour - no real alternative to Con-Dems

Ed Miliband became the first Labour leader since Neil Kinnock in 1989 to speak at the Durham Miners' Gala. He was immediately attacked by Tory peer, Baroness Warsi, herself under investigation for fiddling her expenses. She has lambasted him for "cosying up to his militant, left-wing union paymasters". Is she correct? Does this represent a break with the past? Has Ed become red?

The fact that he went at all has marked him out from Blair and Brown - Tony Blair declined to go in 1995 and took his now infamous trip to genuflect at the feet of Rupert Murdoch instead. This was despite the fact that his constituency was a Durham mining seat.

Last year Miliband refused to attend because militant trade union leader Bob Crow was on the platform. This year he declared himself proud to be following in the footsteps of Keir Hardie - but Keir Hardie pioneered the formation of the Labour Party to provide an independent voice for the working class. A party free of the influence of the Liberals, a party of big business.

Would a Labour government be in that tradition? Miliband will not reverse the Con-Dem cuts, he only pledges that Labour's cuts will be slower. He condemned the public sector pensions' strike in June of last year. He refuses to promise to increase taxes on the rich.

He does pledge to reverse the government's changes to the NHS - this is welcome but only scratches the surface. Hospitals are already under threat of bankruptcy and closure because of the Private Finance Initiative (PFI). Although this was first brought in by a Tory government it was a main plank of Blair and Brown's policies.

According to health expert Allyson Pollock, PFI is associated with a 30% reduction in beds, staff, A&E departments and whole hospitals. Yet Labour shadow minister Liam Byrne, immediately defended PFI when it was blamed for the threatened bankruptcy of South London Healthcare Trust. PFI projects with a total capital value of £54.7 billion have so far cost us over £300 billion, which has gone straight into the pockets of big business.

Miliband stands at the head of a party that represents big business and the rich; he has no answer to the profound capitalist crisis in

the EU and worldwide, beyond mild attacks on Murdoch, bankers' bonuses and the rich.

During his speech at the Gala hecklers shouted: "What about trade union rights?" It is Labour's refusal to contemplate abolishing Thatcher's anti-trade union legislation that is one of the decisive factors that puts them on the side of the bosses. In 2011, three quarters of Labour's funding came from the trade unions but this is the complete opposite of 'he who pays the piper calls the tune'.

Reclaiming Labour?

Unite, under the leadership of Len McCluskey, is currently running a campaign of working to 'change the Labour Party from within'. However, for the trade unions to reclaim the Labour Party it would require a mass influx of trade unionists into the party who would then have to wage a battle to recreate the long destroyed democratic structures of the party. We do not believe that this can be achieved.

Unite had set a target to recruit 5,000 Unite members to the party but unsurprisingly has so far failed to achieve this. This reflects the profound disillusionment with Labour amongst trade unionists.

At GMB conference, another Labour-affiliated trade union, one-quarter of the motions questioned the link with Labour and Socialist Party member and former Liverpool City councillor Tony Mulhearn received a standing ovation in the manufacturing section when he called for a new workers' party. We argue for Unite and others to stop funding New Labour and to begin to build a new party.

Nonetheless a serious campaign to reclaim New Labour by affiliated trade unions would be a step forward from the current policy of the majority of the union leaders of clinging to the coat-tails of the Labour leadership.

A serious campaign would have to demand that Labour adopts a socialist programme. Key demands would include the repeal of all the anti-trade union laws and opposition to all cuts in public services, not just in words but in action.

At the moment workers are involved in a continuous struggle to fight to defend their jobs, wages and conditions and the right to organise not just against the Tory government but against Labour councils implementing the cuts. For example in Southampton,

which has passed from Tory control to Labour following months of strike action and campaigning by council workers.

In the recent local elections, trade unionists that stood under the banner of the Trade Unionists and Socialists Coalition (TUSC), opposed all cuts and called for the formation of a new, mass workers' party. For this they were publicly attacked by Unison regional full-timers and the now leader of the council. TUSC candidates were asked not to stand in the city.

Now, within weeks of this Labour victory, it is the Labour council carrying out £13 million in cuts, including the closure of a local swimming pool and threatening redundancies.

But pressure from below, by trade unionists and community campaigners, given a voice by the TUSC campaign, has pushed two Southampton Labour councillors to vote against the cuts (see article below).

TUSC gives its full support to these councillors' anti-cuts stance. The effective role of the Southampton TUSC campaign is in stark contrast to the attitude of some others on the left, including the Socialist Workers' Party, who unfortunately enter uncritical alliances with Labour councillors carrying out cuts, both in anti-cuts campaigning and combating the EDL.

However, one swallow does not a summer make. There are only four Labour councillors in Labour councils nationally who have come out against the cuts. Contrast this with the 1980s when over 20 Labour councils were prepared to resist Thatcher's cuts.

Coalition weakness

This Con-Dem coalition is on the rocks. The Tory revolt against what they saw as a Lib Dem attack on their privileges in the House of Lords has marked a watershed in the life of this government. The Tory backbench 1922 Committee, which itself was formed to oppose coalition with the Liberal Party at that time, is in revolt against David Cameron.

The government's economic policy is in tatters with open talk that Osborne will be replaced by William Hague at the Treasury. Miliband had the opportunity to defeat the Con-Dem coalition but once again Labour MPs trooped through the lobbies with the government.

We can't look to Labour for the fight back. In reality Southampton is a harbinger of the next Labour government. No doubt, like Southampton council, Miliband will protest that his hands are tied - he will say that they have no choice. We say there is an alternative.

The trade unions can fight - victories have been won by determined strike action, as the recent concessions won by the London bus-workers have shown.

PCS leader Mark Serwotka received a great reception at the Miners' Gala. In contrast to Miliband's speech, workers stood and listened intently to his call for opposition to all cuts; this is a result of the fighting lead that the PCS has given.

The leadership of the main trade unions cannot leave it to Labour, which has no strategy to bring down this government. That is why the National Shop Stewards Network (NSSN) lobby of the TUC in Brighton on 9 September is so important.

Unions which do not see this as a vital next step are making a mistake. Pressure is building from below - we need to direct it at the TUC to make the slogan of the 20 October demo a call for a one day general strike to unite the public and private sector against the policies of this rotten government.

But there is also the need to give a political alternative. The phenomenal growth in electoral support for the radical left coalition Syriza in Greece shows the potential for a left alternative to Labour in Britain. TUSC, which was unanimously backed by the recent RMT conference, can begin to play that role.

Armed with a socialist programme including taking over the banks and the big corporations under democratic control, a new workers' party could rapidly build popular support.

The over £750 billion lying in the vaults of big business could be used to create jobs, to build hospitals, schools and houses. Taking over the banks and the big corporations under democratic control would lay the basis for a society that could meet the needs of the overwhelming mass of the population as opposed to a few thousand millionaires and billionaires.

See website for detailed report of the Durham Miners' Gala

Southampton: Two Labour councillors vote against Labour council cuts

In the 3 May elections, the Tory council in Southampton suffered a heavy defeat. This followed months of strikes and mass demonstrations by council workers with the backing of the local community.

Now, significantly, two councillors in the new Labour administration have voted against their own party's cuts.

Tensions had risen again as Labour met to vote on their post-election mini-budget. Council trade unions, expecting the restoration of their pay, savagely cut by the previous Tory council, have been left hanging.

Still in negotiations, a recent offer failed to meet union demands as it included 90 redundancies. Worse still, Labour increased its previously proposed cuts from their February budget by a further £800,000, to almost £13 million for this year.

To the outrage of the local community, council workers and local councillors, this mini-budget brought forward, without any prior discussion, the closure of Oaklands Pool with a threat to a further 30 jobs.

Unison general secretary Dave

Prentis, at Unison conference, hailed the victory of Labour in Southampton, as a great step forward for members.

In just a few weeks every promise, to consult, to restore pay, to avoid redundancies, is in tatters.

Council workers are furious at these proposals having been encouraged to believe that the Labour Party would be different to the Tories.

But as we have consistently warned, leaders of the Labour group had no intention to break from the austerity agenda.

Even union officers who had previously encouraged the idea of backing Labour have described it as unacceptable.

Standing up

At the council meeting on 11 July the Labour group faced the anger and determined opposition of local councillors Keith Morrell and Don Thomas, whose ward includes Oaklands Pool.

Having spoken out prior to the council meeting, the councillors received the public support of the

Unison, Unite and GMB council unions.

Decisively when it came to the vote on the Labour budget, both councillors voted against the cuts.

It is now an urgent task to build support around this stand, firstly to stop the closure of Oaklands Pool but also to challenge the planned cuts as a whole.

Socialist Party members got strong support from the local community at a recent campaign stall to save the pool and oppose cuts.

Undoubtedly Keith and Don will come under attack from the Labour group. With the backing of the unions, socialists and the anti-cuts movement this must be resisted.

It is those who voted for cuts who should be suspended and expelled from the Labour Party. If the council unions continue to encourage members to join the Labour Party it must be on the basis of opposing the cuts and removing those councillors who will not back such a stand.

Once again it poses the question of political representation for the anti-cuts movement.

Southampton Socialist Party has given its full public support to the



photo Paul Mattsson

Southampton council workers fighting the the previous Tory cuts

stand of the councillors.

However, the Labour budget shows that union support for the Labour Party is untenable and reaffirms the urgent task of giving

the anti-cuts movement a political voice that will give unconditional backing to the trade union struggle against cuts.

Southampton Socialist Party

London 2012 Olympics G4S scandal shows failure of privatisation

The government's insistence on outsourcing the Olympic Games security to private company G4S has backfired spectacularly. First home secretary Teresa May announced that an extra 3,500 army troops would be deployed to make up for G4S's failure to recruit and train sufficient staff. And now it has emerged that nine police forces will also be roped in to fill the short-fall.

It appears that a report presented to Home Office ministers last September, which raised serious doubts

£60m

Paid to G4S in 'management fees' in the last two years

about G4S's security capabilities, was ignored. And a G4S insider is reported as saying that the company knew way back in January that it wouldn't be able to fulfil its games contract.

Scandalously, G4S pocketed nearly £60 million in 'management fees'



over the last two years of its games security contract. Its chief executive, Thatcherite Nick Buckles, received £5.3 million in salary and other benefits last year.

One of the issues has been a huge number of people not turning up for their first day on the job. Is it any surprise given the poor pay and working conditions they were expecting? Let's not forget this is the same company that forced unemployed people to sleep under London Bridge before working 14 hour shifts without any pay for the Jubilee events.

This is yet another failure of privatisation. G4S' shares nose-dived following the shambles. Leading members of the government have argued that the company should have to pay a fine or be punished in some way. But this is nowhere near enough. G4S shouldn't receive one penny of public money.

One anonymous blogger, Inspector Gadget, tweeted: "At least it's only security at a 2 week sports event. Thank God we're not letting the private sector into critical jobs like NHS and policing..."

Wales NHS Reject the Case for Cuts report

Dave Reid and Ronnie Job

The Welsh government-commissioned report into NHS services in Wales is becoming increasingly discredited. 'The Case for Change', which calls for 'centralisation' of Welsh NHS services, was supposed to be an independent report. However health campaigners have suspected for some time that the outcome of the report was predetermined and would justify cuts and local closures under the guise of concentrating expertise.

Ronnie Job, secretary of Swansea Trades Council and a long standing campaigner for the NHS said: "The Case for Change, in reality The Case for Cuts, should be thrown out and any attempts by the Labour Welsh Government to implement it's recommendations must be fought by trade unionists and community campaigners linking together on an all-Wales basis."

Leak

The disclosure that Marcus Longley, the author of the report, was colluding with the Welsh government following a leaked e-mail correspondence between him and senior Welsh government officials, will therefore come as no surprise to health campaigners.

Longley denies that the government influenced his report and claims that his report was produced "without bias or influence". How-

ever it is clear that he and the government both had the same agenda before he wrote the report: to 'centralise' critical hospital services.

Central to the report is the idea that the current configuration of hospital services is unsustainable and even dangerous - that the shortage of medical staff and cash for the NHS means that it is no longer possible to maintain specialist services in district hospitals.

It is proposed for example to reduce the number of A&E departments in south Wales serving a population of two million covering an area of 2,300

square miles to just four!

It is true that there is a shortage of both cash and specialist medical staff. The Welsh Labour government has cut spending on health by even more than the Con-Dem UK government. In effect the Welsh NHS has had to empty its pockets to help bail out the banks and pay for the economic crisis initiated by them.

And there is a shortage of specialist doctors, especially in Accident and Emergency. But surely staff should be trained to meet the needs of the health service, not shrink the health service to match the number of staff?

NHS: Fight to defend national agreements

A leaked document has shown that 19 NHS organisations in the south west have formed a consortium with the intention to break away from the national collective agreement. Once free they intend to launch an unprecedented attack on the working conditions of health workers, who, if these plans were ever implemented, would see cuts in pay, an increased working week, less annual leave, and reductions in sickness pay, to mention just a few.

Roger Davey chair of Wiltshire and Avon Unison health branch (personal capacity) said:

"This is not just an attack on health workers in the south west, but also has huge implications for all public sector health workers throughout the country. If the consortium succeeds in its plans, not only would it end national terms

and conditions for NHS staff but would give huge encouragement to other public sector employers to break national terms and conditions and drive down the living standards of workers.

"This is why it is vital that there is a national response to this threat, not just from Unison, but from all trade unions. The document reveals an absolute determination by the employers to break the power of the unions. Our response should be just as unequivocal. We should say clearly to the employers and the government that if any attack is made on our national terms and conditions we will respond with regional and national industrial action."

All Unison members should be demanding that the leadership of our union takes decisive action on this vital issue.

For more information see issue 725

Olympic-watch

Exploitation

Olympics sponsor Adidas, whose workers make the uniforms for Britain's Olympics Team, is being investigated by the London Organising Committee for the Olympic Games (Locog) after it emerged that it pays its garment workers in Cambodia £10.00 for working a 48 hour week. The Cambodian garment workers who make Adidas's Olympics products are mostly women with children who can barely afford to pay their rent or feed their families.

The legal minimum wage in Cambodia is far below an actual living wage, but Adidas is not even paying its workers the minimum wage according to the law. Workers exist in poor living conditions in accommodation rented to them by the factory owners. It is common for whole families to live in one room. If workers do manage to achieve a wage rise, the owners simply raise the rents. The only wealth the Olympics will bring is into the pockets of the capitalists.

Dave Younger

'Brand protection'

You couldn't blame people for wondering about the priorities of the Olympic organisers. They're scrambling around to find enough security staff for the Games but meanwhile have nearly 300 uniformed 'brand police' patrolling high streets around the country in their purple uniforms.

Apparently this is the biggest 'brand protection operation' in UK history. The 'experts' will be checking that no company is illegally associating itself with the games or 'damaging the brand' of Olympic sponsors including McDonalds, Coca-Cola and BP. Advertising during the Games can't include words such as 'gold', 'sponsors' and even 'summer'!

Approved items only

According to a report on Radio 5, people will be barred from entering the Ol-

ympic site if they are wearing a t-shirt with political slogans on. The example given was a picture of Che Guevara! This is what a world run by corporations - or at least McDonalds, Coca-Cola and Cadbury's - looks like.

Not forgetting Locog of course, who will virtually be running a state within a state in the boroughs surrounding the stadium with powers to ban political stalls and protests. People will also be searched for excessive picnics - a job for Yogi Bear obviously! Apparently you will be allowed a 'reasonable' amount of food but not so much to prevent you from having to buy the bland, homogenised pap from the largest McDonalds in Europe at some point during the day.

Ken Douglas

At a glance...

- Four MPs who sit on the Culture, Media and Sport select committee have accepted free tickets to the Men's 100m final, worth £480 each, from BT.
- Those who went for the more expensive Olympic tickets, some sold for in the region of £1,000, may find themselves regretting the decision - it seems there is no guarantee that higher price means better seats. Some will even be completely unprotected from the likely heavy and frequent rainfall during the Games.
- Hundreds of thousands of tickets for some of the most popular Olympic events have been secretly sold to official sponsors despite promises that they would be available to the public.
- Experts have expressed fears that the pollution in London may cause athletes to have breathing difficulties, chest pains and sore throats - a couple of weeks of what Londoners have to put up with all the time!

Them...



Record breakers

A recent survey of recruitment consultants found that the number of vacancies, both temporary and permanent, had declined at the sharpest rate in three years. It is predicted that if present trends continue then unemployment will hit 3 million soon - a figure last seen in the 1980s.

The latest figures released last month revealed that at present there are 2.61 million people unemployed, around one million of them aged 18 to 25. You'd think that the government would be concerned about the situation. That perhaps they'd tackle the problem by creating jobs and training through socially useful public works. But what would their big business mates get out of that?

Paul Callanan

Stuck at home

54% of families are cutting back on day trips this summer because of

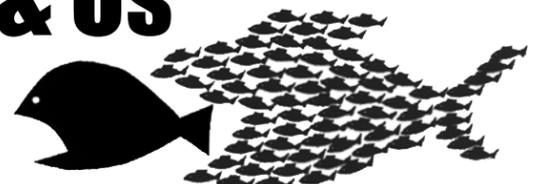
the cost - an average of £80 a day. A study by charity Family Action showed that transport, food and entry costs mean that many families will be staying at home.

Probation privatisation

The government has awarded a £37 million contract to private company Serco to supervise offenders on probation on community 'payback schemes' in London.

A spokesperson for the probation officers union, Napo, rubbished the government's decision, saying: "This marks the beginning of the privatisation and fragmentation of the probation service. The only way that Serco can achieve the savings they claim is by the reduction of the number of staff and their wages. This will mean that the level of supervision will deteriorate and the breach rate will escalate."

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Witch-hunting Unison leadership “shabby” declares judge

Glenn Kelly

In a humiliating response to Unison's attempts to bully four witch-hunted Socialist Party members out of defending ourselves in court due to lack of money, Lord Justice Elias has called Unison “shabby”.

The judge went on to say: “Imagine if it was an employer trying to do it to a union, one would be shocked”. In another attack he said: “What do you want, do you want no opposition at the appeal, is that it? Or is this just a grudge match?”

Unison is wasting members' money by appealing against two previous decisions by the courts that found that the union leadership's action against the four was “unjustifiable”.

On 17 July Unison demanded the right to claim costs if they win the appeal. The four's costs are £100,000. But the Unison leadership's demands

were thrown out of court.

It is disgraceful that, through this demand for costs, Unison risked reinforcing case law by defending the bosses' right to claim costs against workers. It is bad enough that the union is acting in a malicious way against us. But to damage the rights of all British workers is unforgivable.

99.9% of employment tribunal cases will obviously be a worker verses an employer. In most cases workers cannot have costs awarded against them in an Employment Tribunal or Employment Appeal Tribunal.

But if a worker wants to appeal or defend an appeal to the court of appeal against an employer, they can face costs of £100,000 or more if they lose. In most cases this allows a bullying employer to force workers to back down.

It is clear that the Tories are looking to ratchet up the anti worker laws to aid the employers in carrying out cuts and protect their profits.

They have already given the right to the bosses to unfairly sack a worker who has less than two years' service without being taken to a tribunal. They are about to charge workers £1,200 if they want to lodge a claim at a tribunal - which they will not necessarily get back even if they win.

Through this attempt to extract costs, the Unison leadership was seeking to further weaken a workers' right to take on the employers in the courts.

We could not have afforded to defend our case if we had not won this costs protection order, so we would have had to withdraw. Unlike in the lower courts, the case would have gone ahead in our absence.

If in those circumstances Unison had won, it could not have claimed its costs against us anyway. So Unison had nothing to lose by stating it wouldn't claim costs against us - unless of course its intention was to bully us out of being represented.



Lobbying one of the many disciplinary hearings Unison demanded
photo Suzanne Beishon

Seafarers unite to defend jobs and expose exploitation

Ben Norman

RMT members in Southampton and Portsmouth have launched a campaign against the exploitation of foreign seafarers by Condor Ferries. These workers are paid as little as £2.35 an hour due to a legal loophole.

Unite members at the same ferry terminal have announced a ballot for strike action in their battle against council plans to cut the contracts of quay assistants.

The newly formed Southampton Shipping branch of the RMT have called a demonstration, on 21 July at Portsmouth's International Ferry terminal, against the exploitation of foreign seafarers.

Condor Ferries take advantage of EU directive 'mode 4' which allows the recruitment of workers from across the EU. However, a loophole in employment legislation means they can avoid paying European workers the national minimum

wage when the ships are at sea or in UK territorial waters.

“It is disgraceful that companies like Condor are grossly exploiting foreign workers,” said Mick Tosh, RMT member and chair of Portsmouth trades council. “Everyone should be concerned about ships being crewed by workers on poverty pay.”

“We are seeking as much support as possible from RMT branches, trades councils as well as local groups,” said Darren Proctor, RMT Southampton Shipping branch secretary. “Condor and other shipping companies are jumping through legal loopholes in an effort to exploit seafarers and employ a reduced number of ratings due to the work roster.”

Unite have announced a ballot for strike action by quay assistants, who are responsible for tying and releasing cross channel ferries.

The ferry terminal is run by Portsmouth city council (PCC) who are seeking to fire and re-hire the workers on inferior contracts. This will

force them to guarantee to work beyond their contractual finishing time of midnight, resulting in 13-hour shifts.

“Unite has made numerous approaches to PCC to find a negotiated way forward, one that rewarded the commitment of quay assistants,” said Unite convenor at Portsmouth city council, Richard White. “However, PCC has chosen the heavy handed approach of dismissal and re-engagement on inferior terms - something which we will vehemently challenge.”

The attacks on the quay assistants' contracts are part of Portsmouth city council's wider austerity offensive, which is leading to cuts in public services, as well as workers' terms and conditions across the city.

While the RMT campaign and the Unite action should be united, the campaign must also link with council workers and the wider public sector unions to build a broad movement across the city to defeat austerity and defend jobs.

Support striking Remplo workers!

Rob Williams

For months the Con-Dem government have stated their intention to close 36 out of 54 Remplo factories across the UK. Remplo workers had already voted overwhelmingly to take strike action on 19 and 26 July to save these plants and the related jobs. Now this has added urgency because on 10 July the government announced the closure of the first 27 plants, possibly by Christmas.

This is a further attack on disabled people who want to have a choice of what form their working lives take, whether it's supported employment or mainstream employment.

Remplo factories play a vital role in helping disabled people have a sustainable, independent working life as opposed to being left to rot on the unemployment scrapheap, reliant on ever diminishing benefits.

The plants were originally developed to ensure wounded returning soldiers from World War Two had a job. It stands alongside the NHS as an historical legacy won through the Labour government elected in 1945.

This was as a result of the pressure of working people to avoid the miserable fate that faced those who survived World War One, who were promised 'a land fit for heroes'. Now these disabled workers, along with the rest of the working-class are targeted to pay for a crisis caused by

the greedy and corrupt bankers and the tax-avoiding rich - all represented by this cabinet of millionaires.

It's a scandal that 2,000 disabled people were made redundant in 2008 when the New Labour government closed 29 Remplo factories. The majority of these are now living a life in poverty on benefits. This is the future facing Remplo workers today if the Con-Dem government close these factories.

Contrary to the view of the Sayce report for the Department for Work and Pensions and Tory minister Iain Duncan Smith, Remplo factories are not ghettos of out-dated employment. They are manufacturing facilities that employ skilled workers who produce high quality products. Unfortunately the skill and loyalty of these workers has not been matched by senior managers who have displayed a dismal record of mismanagement in recent years.

Remplo senior management received £2 million in fat cat bonuses while at the same time failing to bring work into the factories!

The Socialist Party and the National Shop Stewards Network (NSSN) fully support the Remplo workers in their fight to keep their factories open through these strikes and whatever action these workers deem necessary, up to and including factory occupations. We urge all trade unionists and the general public to join us in the campaign to defend Remplo workers now!

No free fall to the bottom!

Darren Proctor, RMT Council of Executives for shipping, and branch secretary RMT Southampton Shipping spoke to the Socialist:

“We want to highlight how shipping companies are exploiting workers in the industry. Seven years ago Condor Ferries had seven ships with crew working two weeks on, two weeks off on union terms and contracts. Now crew are working three months on, one month off, 12-hour shifts, seven days a week.

For us this not a race to the bottom, this is free fall! This is a health and safety issue for crew and passengers travelling out of Portsmouth. Look into the reports of incidents on Condor of fires and hitting the quay, that is a sign of fatigue on board.

Through the Mode 4 European legislation, workers are on very low wages. Condor have defended this saying that crew are paid four times the wages in Ukraine but this is on a ship sailing from Portsmouth to Guernsey!

If they get away with this in shipping, think how many other companies are looking at how they can utilise this to make more money.

We have to raise awareness about how workers are being exploited. We want people to see that behind Condor is a massive investment bank with £150 billion in assets, more than enough to pay decent wages.

The RMT have raised these issues with Portsmouth council who own the ferry port, but they say it has nothing to do with them. Local people paid for the new terminal in Portsmouth, they want to know why the local council is exploiting the labour of local workers.

We are holding a protest and public meeting on Saturday and urge people to come and give their support.”

Protest

Saturday 21 July,
8am Portsmouth
Continental Ferry
Terminal.

Public meeting

21 July, 6pm
The Registry,
1-2 St. Michaels
Road, Portsmouth,
PO1 2EE

Rail cleaners strike

Warrington trades council helped RMT members employed as cleaners on the Trans-Pennine Express route as they leafleted passengers outside Warrington Central station on 14 July.

The cleaners were on strike against the rock-bottom pay and conditions offered by Carlisle Cleaning and Support Services, their employer.

One particular bone of contention is the 25p per hour attendance bonus which is withdrawn if an employee has even one day off

in the month - even if it is annual leave!

Not surprisingly RMT secured a big majority for the strike and has built membership by campaigning - some of those leafleting had only been members for a matter of months or even weeks.

Many passengers wished them well and decried the way things are now - rock bottom for hard working cleaners, while the company makes ever-increasing profits.

Andy Ford
Warrington trades council

Tories stick the boot in on care funding

The Con-Dems government white paper on adult social care funding in England represents a further blow to elderly and disabled people requiring financial support. Individuals and cash-strapped local authorities will continue to foot the bill. And with a possible cap on the costs individuals have to pay set as high as £100,000, the government's proposals are worse than the Labour appointed Dilnot report. As Sue Powell argues, the government's strategy is all about cost cutting and privatisation of services, dressed up as 'reforms'.

The private care industry will be the only winners of the recent Care and Support Bill. The Con-Dems' latest white paper will help enshrine the idea that elderly people who cannot afford adequate care have been "feckless".

A 2010 Tory election poster attacked Labour's social care proposals and featured a gravestone inscribed: "Now Gordon [Brown] wants £20,000 when you die. Don't vote for Labour's new death tax".

Now the Tories will introduce a universal deferred payments scheme to allow pensioners going into residential care to borrow from their local council - the so-called "death tax".

The Dilnot Commission, set up by Labour, recommended a "shared payment" system, with the state and individuals each paying more. Gordon Brown wanted a ceiling of £20,000, Dilnot £35,000-£50,000 - to be paid after death upon sale of the individual's property.

According to Dilnot his scheme would cost less than one-thousandth of the government's total spending. But even this is apparently unaffordable and the Tories want a cap of £100,000. Yet this savings busting ceiling won't cover accommodation costs!

Ros Altmann, director general of Saga, said: "Will this system stop people from losing their life savings including their family homes? The answer is no, people will still lose everything."

Means testing

Currently people with savings above £23,250 pay the full costs of help in their own home. Only those with assets of less than £14,250 get all their care paid for. The same means test applies to residential care, but the value of a person's home is taken into account. Due to council cuts many people now use their savings to pay for meals on wheels, home help, etc. Around 40,000 people al-

ready sell their homes to pay care costs each year.

As people live longer, the more likely they are to spend in care homes. 10% of us are expected to live for eight years in residential care, costing £245,000 to £363,000.

Around 400,000 elderly people are in residential care; by 2031 it will rise to 750,000. The true figures are higher, but family carers and many hospital beds account for people too ill or incapacitated to return to their homes, for who there is no suitable care home.

The NHS is going to be hit again, as the government intends to transfer an extra £300 million of its funds to local councils to help "integrate" social care and health services.

There are plans for a "voluntary scheme" so people could insure themselves and "individually make the choice to be protected by a capped cost scheme". Only those who pay into the social insurance scheme would get the benefits.

The bill also raises the idea of people borrowing from councils - deferred payments - which would only delay the sale of family homes. When the cash runs out, most people will be forced to fall back on the local council's help and face being moved to different homes.

For a generation or more, families have assumed they can inherit - or borrow on - the value of the family home. This money is then used to buy homes and pay for their own care. In future, how will ordinary people survive in their old age, especially as wages and pensions are being driven down?

Fewer people can afford their own homes; fewer will inherit anything if care costs of £35,000, £50,000 or £100,000 have to be paid - as proposed.

Local councils will be given responsibility for care provision under this bill. Yet there will be no extra cash and this year alone sees a shortfall of £1 billion in councils' adult social services budgets. The number of older people in England



Elderly people will be expected to pay up to £100,000 for residential care, plus accommodation costs

receiving council funded care has fallen by 11% in the last two years.

Cost-cutting is not only callous, but counter-productive. Proper support in the home would mean fewer people in need of residential care. The neglect of elderly people in the home has a bad effect on mental

How will ordinary people survive in their old age, especially as wages and pensions are being driven down?

and physical health. An open letter from experts and charities warned that an estimated 800,000 older people are already without basic care: lonely, isolated and at risk.

Many people cannot cope with personal budgets - a Labour idea which the new bill makes a legal right. Last year saw individuals choosing personal budgets go up by 53% to 429,349. Personal budgets are supposed to "empower people" but they cost more for less. In prac-

tice, people are pressurised into them because the system is a charter for privatisation.

Privatised failings

Care provision is a postcode lottery with 152 different systems and numerous private providers. Closures of homes due to abuse of residents, poor standards and financial irregularities abound.

The collapse of Southern Cross is one notable example. The supervision of homes has proven a fiasco. The government acknowledges this: it "wants to reassure people that they will not be left without care and support if a care provider fails, the government will be consulting later this year on proposals for greater oversight of the social care market."

Frankly this is not very reassuring. Health minister Andrew Lansley described his social care proposals as "the most radical reform of care costs in 64 years". Jeremy Hughes, CEO of the Alzheimer's Society says: "Millions of vulnerable people had been promised radical reform but... are being massively let down. This white paper is not worth the paper it's written on."

The problem, say the Tories, is the care system is unaffordable because people are living longer. On the contrary, we cannot afford their system - and can't wait for its demise.

We say:

- **Abolish means-testing of individual social care funding. Residential care costs should be met from an expanded NHS budget.**
- **Renationalise and reintegrate privatised residential care homes back into a publicly funded and run universal care service.**
- **Home care services to be provided by local authorities with funding guaranteed by central government.**
- **Full training of social care and support staff on trade union negotiated rates of pay and working conditions.**
- **Overall costs (estimated at £2.2 billion a year by 2015-16) could easily be met by the multi-billion savings generated by nationalising the major banks and financial institutions under democratic control.**
- **Nationalisation of the 'commanding heights' of the economy, ie the top 100-150 corporations, would allow the democratic planning of trillions of pounds of resources to meet the employment and social needs of the population.**



photo Paul Mattsson

Con-Dems axe Independent Living Fund

The Tory/Liberal coalition announced on 12 July its plan to close the national Independent Living Fund (ILF) in April 2015 and transfer responsibility for funding the care packages of ILF users to local authorities in England and the devolved administrations in Wales and Scotland.

Given the huge cuts in social services being implemented by councils across Britain as they wield the 'little axe' and do the Con-Dems' government bidding, there is a genuine fear among ILF users that their large care packages will be reassessed by councils in 2015 and they will lose much of the help they currently get.

Some local authorities are starting to apply upper funding limits to care packages that are equivalent to the cost of residential care.

Roughly £750 a week for disabled people aged between 18 and 65, and £450 a week for those over 65.

Those ILF users who have a 24/7 care package which usually costs between £1,600 and £2,000 a week have needs that mean they cannot be left without assistance or care at any point during the day.

Without the additional support of NHS funding, such ILF users will from 2015 only avoid being forced into residential care if their local council is willing to significantly breach the upper funding limits that will be commonplace by then.

It is vital that opposition is built to the closure of the ILF and that a national demonstration is organised in September to lay the ground for an active campaign to reverse this disgraceful decision.

An Independent Living Fund user



photo Paul Mattsson

The London Olympics

The greatest sporting, and money-making, show on earth

World records will not be the only things broken at this year's Olympic and Paralympic Games. Promises for a lasting legacy – affordable housing, decent jobs, increased sports participation, and the rest – are being broken, too. The greatest sporting show on earth has been dragged down by crass commercialisation, and become a test-bed for increased state repression. In this edited version of an article in *Socialism Today*, Manny Thain reports on the neo-liberal Games.

It all began with a lie: that the London Games would cost £2.4 billion. That figure was never credible. Inexplicably, it did not include VAT or security expenditure. With these costs added, the bill would have totalled £3.9 billion – 20% VAT on £2.4 billion equals £480,000, plus the wildly out-of-control spending on security, around £1 billion.

So far, however, the elastic Olympics budget has been stretched to £9.3 billion. It all adds up to a massive swindle, a rip-off for working-class and middle-class people who stump up the most in direct and indirect taxes.

The government (via taxpayers) is paying £6.2 billion of that, the rest coming from the lottery (an indirect tax on the poorest). Despite assurances that the private sector would part-fund the major construction projects, the House of Commons Public Accounts Committee, reckon that less than 2% of the Olympics budget has come from private funding.

The London Organising Committee for the Olympic Games (Locog), the body in charge of 'delivering' the Games, has raised another £2.1 billion to stage the show. Two-thirds of this has come from sponsorship by big business.

Locog gets a contribution from the International Olympic Committee (IOC). The rest is from ticket and merchandising sales – again, mainly out of our pockets. Locog is headed by Lord Sebastian Coe, a gold-medal-winning athlete, former Tory MP, a 'world ambassador' for Nike sportswear, and multi-millionaire.

Sponsors

The IOC's main sponsors each pay over £60 million on ten-year contracts. This is capitalism, so in return for that money the corporations wield colossal power. In other words, at this fiercely competitive event, the organisers go to extraordinary lengths to protect the sponsoring companies from competition. It is unlawful for non-sponsors to use the word 'Olympics', the five-rings symbol or the Games' mottoes.

To protect broadcasters' rights, spectators are not allowed to upload images of events onto YouTube, or post pictures from inside the Olympic village on social media. Twitter will block non-sponsors buying promoted ads with hashtags such as #London2012. Athletes are banned from uploading video or audio recordings.

It remains to be seen how strictly the laws are applied to individuals, but the impression given so far is that the authorities really do mean business.

It is impossible to get a breakdown of ticket allocation for all the events. Lord Coe & Co refuse to provide this information. What is clear is that the more prestigious the event, the more the ticket allocation favours officials and sponsors.

The Guardian reported that, of the 80,000 seats available for the men's 100m final,

only 29,000 (36%) have gone to the public. For the finals in the velodrome, 2,500 of the 6,000 seats will go to the public.

Even this late in the day you may get a ticket if you have connections with officials from 54 of the world's 204 countries represented at this year's Games – the source of a booming black-market trade. The IOC has been forced to announce that it will investigate, although any report will probably be delayed until after the Games are over. What it shows is the rotten state of world athletics' administration, run by an unaccountable, privileged clique at the top.

'Olympic family'

The preferential treatment for the 70,000 members of the so-called 'Olympic family' – officials, athletes, media, assorted hangers-on – does not stop there. It is one thing to ensure that the athletes are well taken care of.

They, at least, play a worthwhile role at the Games. It is quite another to roll out the red carpet to thousands of cosseted, bloated bureaucrats and political leaders, some from the world's most oppressive regimes.

They will be given exclusive border control lanes to speed their way through customs. They will be rushed to the sporting venues and hospitality suites along special road lanes, whizzing past the 'little people' struggling through London's traffic. Transport officials have warned of 100 days of travel disruption for the capital's residents.

An extra 585 civil service workers are to be drafted in, while summer leave has been cancelled for existing staff. Yet 880 jobs have been cut from the UK Border Force since 2010 by the Con-Dem coalition government. As soon as the Games are over, the axe will fall again, with a further 1,550 workers due to be sacked in 2014/15, culling staff numbers down by 18% to a total of 6,440.

Of all the legacy commitments, you might think that the aim to increase participation in sports would be straightforward. Half the job will be done by the incredible performances on track and field.

But the government has abandoned its target of getting one million more people playing sport by 2013.

The numbers swimming regularly in 2010-11 actually fell by 435,000 compared with 2007-08, with those playing tennis, football and rugby also falling. Among those aged 16 to 19, overall sports participation fell by more than 100,000 to 825,900.

The Con-Dems have taken the baton from New Labour, whose policy of selling off school playing fields ensures that young people get off to a very bad start. Since 2004, the budget for school sports has been slashed from £216 million to £35 million, with 3,400 sports coaches and coordinators sacked, and grants for 1,300 proposed playgrounds scrapped.

One legacy guaranteed by the London Olympics and Paralympics will be a further strengthening of the repressive powers of the state. The security operation behind the Games is the largest in the UK since the second world war.



TUSC campaigning at the Olympic Park during the London Assembly elections this year photo London Socialist Party

The Con-Dems have put the boot into people with disabilities, in spite of another legacy promise to widen their access to sport. At present, 18% of disabled adults undertake physical activity for more than 30 minutes a week, compared with 38% for non-disabled adults. The government plans to replace disability living allowance (DLA) with personal independence payments from 2013.

DLA is a non-means-tested benefit worth between £20 and £131.50 a week, paid to about 3.2 million people. It helps with the extra costs of transport, equipment, care and other needs. It has been crucial in enabling disabled athletes to participate and compete.

Atos Healthcare

To enable it to do this, Atos Healthcare, which describes itself as 'the UK's leading occupational health service provider', has been brought in to test 11,000 claimants a week under a £100 million-a-year contract.

As a matter of course, Atos passes disabled people fit for work, driven by targets to get 500,000 people off benefits. It has left thousands wrongly denied payment. To add insult to injury, Atos Healthcare is a major sponsor of the Paralympics, paying £62 million over ten years.

Another claim which has fallen at the first hurdle is that the Games will be the 'most ethical ever'. The Independent on Sunday (6 May) reported a survey by Playfair 2012 into sweatshops producing goods for the Games.

It cites mistreatment at factories in the Philippines and China supplying Adidas, and factories run by Next in the notorious

free-trade zones in Sri Lanka. None of the factories allow union membership.

Dow Chemicals is a £63 million IOC sponsor and is funding a £7 million fabric wrap around the Olympic stadium. Dow continues to deny any responsibility for the 1984 toxic gas and chemical disaster in Bhopal, India, which killed up to 20,000 people, and injured hundreds of thousands. Legal action is still being pursued in the US and India by victims and their families.

The Olympic Park has also been the focus of many protests by construction workers blacklisted in Britain, with effective trade union organisation kept off site.

One legacy guaranteed by the London Olympics and Paralympics will be a further strengthening of the repressive powers of the state. The security operation behind the Games is the largest in the UK since the second world war.

Alongside 13,500 troops and thousands of police officers, there was to be 48,000 private security staff. The company G4S was to train 23,700 personnel and should have had 10,000 on duty in a contract said to be worth £284 million. (See page 3)

The Games will boost the privatisation of security services, further undermining any accountability to local communities.

Central to an understanding of the Olympic/Paralympic Games swindle is seeing how the bid was won and the stitch-ups that followed.

Before London won the Olympic bid, the Chelsfield property company had plans to build a huge shopping complex in Stratford, in the east London borough of Newham. In 2004, it was bought out by three companies: Westfield, the world's biggest shopping centre operator, Mul-

ton work on the shopping centre.

As the New Labour government was preparing its £50 billion bailout and nationalisation of the banks, £5.9 billion of public money was pumped into the Olympic project to bail it out, too. The government agreed to finance the athletes' village, taking Land Lease on to manage it. Westfield was given £200 million of public money to pay for roads leading to the shopping complex.

Again, money taken from taxing working-class and middle-class people was handed over to some of the wealthiest property and construction companies in the world.

When the 500-acre Olympic Park reopens after the Games, in 2013, it will be named the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park. It is the first park to be built in London since Victorian times and the first to be called a royal park since then. But London's eight royal parks were created in 1851 with the passing of the Crown Lands Act.

This transferred parklands owned by Queen Victoria into public ownership. In contrast, the Olympic park and its contents will be run privately.

The Olympic Park Legacy Company (OPLC) is the quango that oversees the park. Chaired by Baroness Margaret Ford, it has already sold the athletes' village to a consortium led by the Qatari royal family, and plans to sell off the other bits of the park.

Privately run

The OPLC is to be replaced by another quango, the London Legacy Development Corporation (LLDC), with considerably greater powers over a far larger area. This means that a huge part of east London will be run privately, effectively out of the control of local government.

The legacy promise is that up to 11,000 homes will be built in the Olympic park, with 35% of them supposedly 'affordable'. It is unclear how many of those will actually materialise.

Changes brought in by the Con-Dem government in April mean that rent charged for so-called 'social housing' (subsidised housing mainly provided by housing associations) can be increased up to 80% of market rent. This is a massive increase.

Newham includes 13 of London's 15 most-deprived wards. Nearly half the population lives below the poverty line and 70% of children live in low-income households. There are 32,000 households on the council's waiting list. People have no choice but to rent privately.

The consequence is that very little, if any, of the new housing will be affordable to the vast majority of the people in Newham or the other Olympic boroughs.

The Olympic and Paralympic Games are occasions to celebrate and experience inspirational feats of skill, speed, strength and stamina.

They are a chance to participate in a great global party as athletes and spectators come together, watched by millions. The capitalist system, however, only has eyes for short-term profit.

For the multinational corporations, the Games are just an immense merchandising opportunity. They dictate the pace, aided and abetted by the rotten political establishment and corrupt officialdom.



Campaigning against workfare in the Westfield shopping centre photo Senan

As the New Labour government was preparing its £50 billion bailout and nationalisation of the banks, £5.9 billion of public money was pumped into the Olympic project to bail it out, too.

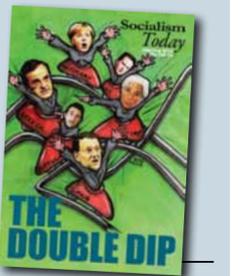


Building workers and other trade unionists protest against the blacklist outside the Olympic site photo Suzanne Beishon

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Bristol protests counter racist EDL

Matt Gordon
Bristol Socialist Party

About 1,000 anti-racist demonstrators gathered in various locations across Bristol to protest against the march of the far-right, racist English Defence League (EDL) on Saturday 14 July. As the event coincided with the Bristol Pride event, there was also a separate anti-racist march organised by the LGBT community.

Pressure from campaigners had forced the EDL to keep their march confined to backstreets of the city, far away from passers-by and ordinary Bristolians. Their march - which was only seven minutes long - muscled up a national mobilisation of only 300 supporters. An enormous £500,000 was spent policing it.

There were over 1,000 police officers drafted in from all over the country, with 14 arrests on the day including for racially aggravated assault. In the days preceding the march the police had written a series of belligerent articles in the local press sowing confusion and attempting to intimidate anti-EDL protesters into staying at home. This even went so far as a last minute change of venue, with protesters being warned not to assemble in the planned assembly point in the centre of Bristol. This did not prevent trade unionists, anti-racists, members of community groups and even young families with children from assembling in the centre for a march through the city and rally in the nearby Castle Park.

Confusion

The main organisers of the event, a temporary group set up under the name 'We Are Bristol', in reality Unite Against Fascism (UAF), also



Anti-racists protest against the EDL marching in Bristol photo Bristol SP

bear some responsibility for the confusion on the day. Weeks of organising meetings between UAF and local anarchist groups had unfortunately resulted in the calling of two separate events, one in the centre of town and one at Temple Meads railway station. Even as late as the week before, no negotiations had begun with the police, no march had been organised beyond a 'static protest', and no trade union stewards had been appointed or organised to help defend the march from EDL attack or police harassment.

The Bristol and District Anti-Cuts Alliance had raised concerns about this and put out a call for stewards. As a result, on the day, local trade unionists, including Socialist Party members and a large delegation from PCS, stepped up to steward the protest. But even after the march had

begun to move, led by various trade union banners from across the region including Cardiff Trades Council, there was an attempt by UAF to 'hold the centre' and keep part of the protest in one place, despite having no clear strategy for breaking through police lines or confronting the EDL. It was at this point that several protesters were arrested and the police moved in to kettle the remaining protesters. This would have cut the protest in half before it had even started but was fortunately prevented by the trade union stewards who kept the march together.

Fighting austerity

Assorted Labour Party members - councillors, an MP and a prospective mayoral candidate - turned up to speak at the final rally. However,

no criticism of New Labour's support for austerity was raised by the UAF's speakers. Only Roger Thomas, speaking in a personal capacity from PCS, drew attention to the Labour Party's culpability in administering the cuts that destroy communities and help racism to thrive, and called for an alternative of jobs and homes, not racism.

This message got a great response and shows that many demonstrators understood that the fight against racism and all forms of discrimination needs to be linked to a fight against the conditions that divide us in the first place. The UAF organisers said they could not take up these questions because they wanted a 'broad umbrella' that would maximise turnout on the day. However, a mass united demo was not achieved, instead there were disparate protests.

Faith groups and Muslim community leaders followed the Liberal Democrat councillors in tolerating the EDL's march in return for holding a 'multi-faith' event in celebration of diversity on Sunday 15 August. Some Muslim leaders even went so far as to call for dialogue with the EDL!

It was the organised labour movement that was best able to outnumber and embarrass the EDL on the day, and even though, as a result of the massive police presence, we could not physically block the EDL from marching, this was still a success. But the EDL and groups like them will not be defeated unless we can build fighting organisations to resist the austerity that does so much to alienate and divide ordinary people of all races, religions and backgrounds.

Tolpuddle festival shows fightback needed today

Sean Brogan
Exeter Socialist Party

Every year trade unionists make their way to the village of Tolpuddle in Dorset to mark the imprisonment and release of six agricultural labourers in the 1830s.

The six Tolpuddle Martyrs were arrested for trying to form a trade union, and sent to Australia. But, after three years of trade union campaigning including a march through London and an 800,000-signature petition, the six were pardoned and returned to Britain.

At this year's festival, the anger against this government was vocal. Railway workers in the RMT, TSSA and Aslef unions voiced their concerns about the massive redundancies proposed in the McNulty Report. Teachers in the NUT, NASUWT and ATL are being swamped by attacks from the new academies and so-called 'free schools'. PCS and Uni-

son members campaigned against cuts in the public sector. The POA prison officers' union is fighting for the right to strike. Postal workers in the CWU are continuing to fight the privatisation of their service. The list of grievances was massive. There was even a 'Kids Union' marching!

Trades Union Congress

In these circumstances, it is the responsibility of the Trades Union Congress to organise a fight back against an unprecedented undermining of jobs and services. It has called a national demonstration against austerity on 20 October, but the question is what next?

Socialist Party members handed out leaflets calling on the TUC to organise a 24-hour general strike and urged support for the National Shop Stewards Network lobby of the TUC in Brighton on Sunday 9 September. We received a lot of support with over 100 copies of the Socialist sold.



On the festival march photo Sean Brogan

Save our server!

The Socialist Party has launched an appeal to raise £12,000 to enable us to buy a new computer server. We are getting a great response from Socialist Party members and readers of the Socialist.

Thanks to: Clive Dunkley £10, Nick Doyle £20, Liz Weightman £50, Dave Crane £20, Mark Wright £30, John Newland £50, Neil Wareham £20 and Martin Reynolds £100.

Please consider donating to the appeal. Every donation, no matter how big or how small, is very welcome and will take us nearer to our goal.

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Ken Douglas

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At last year's summer camp photo H Sell

Brazil: 'Miracle' economy slows

Marcus Kollbrunner

Liberdade Socialismo e Revolução
(CWI, Brazil)

Brazil, as part of the BRICs (Brazil, Russia, India, and China), has in recent years been seen as a 'hope' for the global economy. These "emerging" economies would supposedly be the new motor for the world economy as the old powers, Europe and the USA, slow down.

Despite the Brazilian economy also being hit by the world economic crisis in 2008, the prevailing logic was that with the intervention of the Lula and Dilma governments (both from the 'Workers Party'), the worst case scenario was avoided and a fast rate of economic growth would return to the country. After a fall in GDP of 0.3% in 2009, there was a recovery in 2010, with 7.5% growth.

The PT and Lula exploited this fact heavily during the elections of 2010 to attempt to sell the idea that the country had changed, that the policies of the government were correct, and that Brazil was now an emerging world power – the sixth largest economy on the planet.

But despite some advances, the weaknesses of the Brazilian economy are revealing themselves, and

In the public sector there are important strikes against wage austerity and lack of funding for public services

the effects of the crisis are becoming more evident.

It is important to remember the limits of the "reduction of poverty" that Brazilian leaders are boasting of.

There has been some improvement for the poorest layers of people during recent years. The raising of the minimum wage has increased income for the lowest-paid workers and the 'family allowance' has had some effect for the poorest families.

However, what took place was primarily a redistribution of income from one section of workers to another, as many workers with higher

salaries, mainly public servants, lost out.

Looking at the balance of wealth between labour and capital, there has been no redistribution. In fact, the opposite has taken place. Profits have broken all records and the richest become even richer, with a Brazilian billionaire, Eike Batista, now ranking among the ten richest people in the world.

Brazil's growth

Brazilian industry passed through decades of weak growth. From 1981 to 2003, the average yearly growth was only 1.4%. But from 2004 to 2010, the growth leapt to 5% per year.

Together with an increased minimum salary, lower unemployment, and growth of credit lending, this led to an increase in consumption. The principal motor behind this was the growth of exports of primary products, mainly to China.

But the industrial motor of the economy didn't follow this growth. Instead, relatively stable growth, abundance of speculative capital worldwide, combined with the highest interest rates in the world led to an inflow of capital that strengthened the real (the Brazilian currency). This has increased the price of Brazilian goods worldwide.

The logic was that Brazil exported primary goods to China, and imported cheaper industrialised goods, to the detriment of domestic industry.

New slowdown

In 2011 the contradictions of the economy began to show themselves. The real increased in value again, almost returning to the peak levels of 2008.

This had a deleterious effect on industry, which began stagnating even as consumption continued to grow, sending inflation surging past 7%. The government hit the brake, increasing interest rates and implementing barriers to the inflow of dollars – what president Dilma called a "financial tsunami".

The result was that Brazil had the slowest growth in South America last year. Since the second half of last year the economy has almost stagnated, as it has been affected by the crisis in Europe and the slowdown in China.

The Dilma government is trying to repeat the measures implemented



The appreciation of the real has hit Brazil's industry

in 2008: incentives to consumption through tax breaks, lower interest rates, and expansion of credit, especially for investment in big projects linked to the World Cup, the Olympics, and infrastructure.

Accumulated debts

Indebtedness and debt arrears have increased, which has served to limit the capacity of families to increase consumption based on credit.

In March 2012 families spent 22.3% of their income on servicing debts, compared with 15.5% in January of 2005. This is an even higher level than in the US, where debts are certainly restricting consumption.

Debt defaults on car loans hit new record levels in April. Debt arrears on credit cards, the main form of household debt, have also increased.

No matter what the official propaganda says, Brazil's economy is still quite vulnerable.

Brazil's "external liability" – that is, capital invested in Brazil that belongs to foreign owners – has increased. A part of this is constituted in fixed assets, such as mines, factories, and shops. But the majority is invested in bonds, shares, and other financial instruments that can rapidly be withdrawn from the country.

Besides that, and also in contradiction to the official propaganda, public debt is still a huge problem. The real public debt

is now equivalent to 78% of GDP.

Class struggle

There has been a significant growth in strikes over the last two years. In the private sector, workers have struggled to get a share of the economic growth and huge corporate profits.

Many struggle for very basic rights, like the workers in the huge infrastructure projects who revolted against a lack of basic accommodations such as toilets, and who demanded the right to see their families at least once every three months!

But also in the public sector there are important strikes against wage austerity and lack of funding for public services, like the huge student strike at the national universities at the moment.

These struggles are still fragmented, however, and the left has still not managed to build organisations that can unify the struggle and break the dominance of the movements that are linked to the government, like the trade union federations CUT and Força Sindical.

Together with the necessity of building a coherent socialist political alternative, these are fundamental tasks for socialists to prepare for the huge battles to come, just like those in Europe and Latin America. These movements can and will arise in Brazil as well, more quickly than many imagine.

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

www.socialistworld.net

The CWI website contains news, reports and analysis from around the world. Recent articles include:



Stormy period for the world economy

Capitalist crisis and workers' mass struggles take global dimensions.

Finghín Kelly, Socialist Party (CWI Ireland)



Venezuela: A crucial year for the working class

Elections amid political polarisation and economic uncertainty.

Denise Dudley, (CWI Venezuela)



Netherlands: Socialist Party leads in polls ahead of September general election

Working class faces battle against cuts.

Pieter Brans, Socialist Alternative, (CWI Netherlands)

Spain: Class struggle erupts

After marching for 19 days striking coal miners from Asturias and Leon arrived in Madrid on 11 July to demand that the right wing Popular Party government of prime minister Mariano Rajoy reverses his decision to slash subsidies to the industry and protect jobs. On arriving, the miners were greeted by thousands of supporters, trade unionists and anti-austerity protesters. True to form, Spanish police attacked the rally firing rubber bullets and making arrests.

Last month Rajoy boasted that the European Union bailout of Spain's banks meant avoiding making further budget cuts to the economy. However, in a volte face he announced to parliament a new raft of austerity measures and tax increases amounting to €65 billion. This included ending the Christmas pay bonus to civil servants, whose main trade union threatened strike action.

Unemployment is already at 25%



(over 50% youth unemployment) and one in four Spaniards have been pushed into poverty by the recession and cutbacks.

The depth of the economic crisis has ushered in the most intense period of working class struggle in recent months. The bank bailouts and austerity measures will do nothing to solve the problems of Spanish capitalism. On the contrary, they can only deepen the recession.

Only a working class government, on the basis of socialist policies, is capable of charting a way out of this impasse.

Solidarity picket of Turkish Airlines

On Saturday 14 July an international 'Day of Action' protest took place demanding the right to strike and reinstatement of 305 sacked Turkish aviation workers.

Hava-Is the aviation trade union had been in negotiations with Turkish Airlines over several months over 'Mass Employment Agreements', which broke down. The government, with the backing of the Turkish president Abdullah Gul, then brought in a new law preventing aviation workers from taking strike action. The airline workers reacted to the ban with a one-day strike. Following this action 305 workers were sacked.

On the day of action in Hackney, London, Turkish trade unionists and political activists organised an eye-catching protest outside travel agencies that sell Turkish Airlines flights, with banners and placards

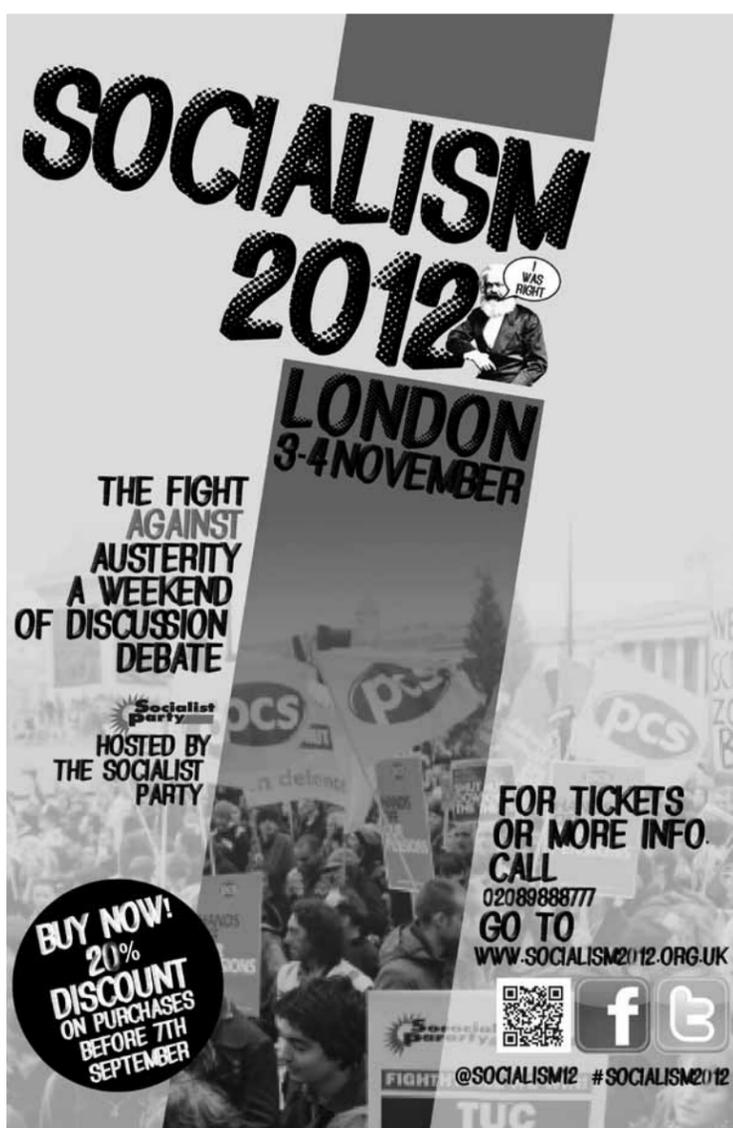
and a giant inflated rat (supplied by the Unite trade union)! Similar events were held around Europe.

Many shoppers, pedestrians, local business people took leaflets and signed the petitions in support of the sacked worker, while activists chanted "the workers united will never be defeated". Unite produced placards showing its support for the aviation workers.

Turkish workers and trade unionists explained how the banning of strikes was against Turkey's own constitutional law and contradictory to the United Nations' International Labour Organisation (ILO) charter.

A further protest was held outside the Turkish Airlines UK HQ in Hammersmith, West London.

Patrick Atkinson, Hackney Socialist Party and Unite-LE 1111 branch (personal capacity)



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Review: BBC TV documentary "When I get older"

Terry Pearce

Acute poverty and loneliness face many pensioners in Britain. This programme asked four pensionable age 'celebrities' to stay with four 'ordinary' pensioners in their homes, highlighting the lifestyle gulf between celebrities and the rest of us.

TV presenter Gloria Hunniford stayed with Ivy Ward, who suffers from depression, living alone and existing on £3.24 a day disposable income, as do two million other pensioners. Gloria found it impossible to shop for food on such a poverty budget. One million pensioners are under-nourished.

Pat was struggling to care for her husband Malcolm. Leslie Joseph stayed with Pat and was her carer for four days. Pat needed respite from the daily grind of caring for Malcolm. Half a million pensioners only go out one day a week, which must be especially hard for those providing 24-hour care for loved ones.

The celebrities then spent three days in care homes, most of which are now privately owned and run. Activities and stimulation are very limited. In the home Leslie Joseph visited there was only one activity a day, no minibus and a meagre £100 a month budget for activities.

Several celebs commented on lack of stimulation in the homes leading to boredom and depression. The government should put vastly more resources into social care and



Gloria Hunniford and Ivy Ward photo BBC

take the private sector out of the equation. Lack of resources is leading to deteriorating social care both at home and in care homes.

Care of the elderly should not be run by profit-hungry private providers, it should be paid for out of taxation and run by the public sector with staff paid a decent wage and properly trained.

The programmes offered no solutions. Some pensioners confronted Jeremy Paxman and Tory minister David Willetts on Newsnight. Instead of placing the blame with the greedy bankers, these establishment figures tried to blame pensioners for young unemployed

people's plight, parroting the Tory mantra that pensioners receive pensions and benefits that the country cannot afford.

The pensioners said they put £40 billion into the economy while corporate tax-dodgers rob society. They also pointed out that they should have the right to retire at 60, allowing young people more jobs!

Pensioners are fighting for better pensions now and for all those coming along behind them. We also need better care for the elderly. A united fight of pensioners and youth based on a socialist programme is the way to end pensioner poverty once and for all.

Music review:

Long live the struggle by The King Blues

In April The King Blues announced they would split up after their fourth and final album Long Live The Struggle released this month.

The London based band, who draw influence from a wide range of genres including folk, punk and ska have grown a large fan base of largely politicised young people hooked by their lively sound and political lyrics.

Long Live the Struggle has songs covering a range of relevant political issues. This Is My Home is sung from the viewpoint of a family caught up in the riots. Fast and energetic tracks such as We Are The Future and When The Revolution Comes show why The King Blues have become firm favourites to play on protests and picket lines.



Definitely worth a listen and shows the key role music can play in expressing political feeling.

Ryan Holmes
Newcastle Socialist Party

Rich Tory MP tries flying a few kites

Nick Boles, yet another rich public school/Oxbridge educated Tory MP, has been flying kites testing how much resistance right-wing policies on old people might face.

His suggestion that pensioners' winter fuel payments, free bus passes and TV licences should be

means-tested or even abolished is only slightly more extreme than ideas pushed by the Cameron government.

The National Pensioners Convention (NPC) points out that universal benefits "help to mitigate against the UK's totally inadequate state

pension.

Attacking the winter fuel allowance will only cost more in the long run as older people suffer from the cold and put more of a strain on health services." The NPC is organising a lobby of parliament in October as a shot across Boles' bows.

Bankers are "useless mouths"

There is - quite rightly - outrage when far-right thugs attack disabled people. Cameron and the media do just the same, using their wealth and power rather than their fists.

Disabled people are among the hardest hit by cuts. Cameron's ideological assault echoes the eugenicist argument that disabled people are "useless mouths." People can see many "useless mouths" around the cabinet table, in the banks and boardrooms.

The Disabled Teachers' Conference on 30 June-1 July involved speakers from UCU and PCS unions who are also involved in opposing the ferocious attack on disabled people.

Sasha Callaghan of UCU described a "reign of terror" by the undeserving rich against the poor. "The government's attitude to the poor harks back to the 19th century Poor Law. Our past is in front of us." The NUT's Allan Grey added that after Cameron's vicious attacks on disabled people, we might believe "the Labour Party would represent us but I hardly need to say we can't."

PCS representative, Austin Harney, revealed that PCS members are being disciplined for merely telling claimants that they have a right to "access to work" support. But PCS has balloted on its political fund



Some of the hardest hit by the cuts photo Paul Mattsson

so they will be able to stand trade union candidates against pro-cuts candidates from any political party.

The government thinks disabled people are weak and have no allies. Certainly many charities which disabled people depend on folded in the face of the government onslaught. Downing Street should be in the middle of a perfect storm of

recrimination from the charities but they are not.

The butcher has his big knife, but the lamb to be slaughtered has an open mind! Only a fighting, socialist, trade union movement can provide the strong allies that disabled people need.

Derek McMillan, Mid Sussex
Socialist Party

Obituary: Reg Fitch

Reg Fitch sadly lost his year-long battle against a brain tumour on 18 June aged 64. He was one of the Brighton Fitches - a family with a long proud socialist tradition.

His twin brother, the late Rod Fitch, was a Militant supporter (precursor to the Socialist Party) who stood as Labour's parliamentary candidate for Brighton Kemp-town in 1983.

Reg and his wife Jean were stalwart Militant supporters, campaigning tirelessly against the Thatcher government's cuts, supporting the 1984 miners' strike, and the anti-poll tax battle.

Reg, a roofer, was active in his TGWU branch, fighting for recognition, justice and compensa-

tion for members suffering from asbestos exposure. Recently Reg supported the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition.

Reg worked hard raising money for our fighting fund, organising meetings, leafleting and canvassing for socialist candidates.

The police once stopped him on suspicion of fly posting against Thatcher's hated "workfare" Youth Training Scheme (YTS).

Reg explained that he was covered in wallpaper paste as he'd been decorating his front room and had popped out for a drink!

Reg kept his socialist principles throughout his life, and will be very sadly missed by his family and all his comrades and friends.

Ted Watson

Teachers fight school privatisation

Over 100 new 'free schools', to open in September, were announced on 13 July, which will more than double the total number of free schools in England. Proposed free schools included a 'virtual school' in Staffordshire where students would study from home, and a boarding school near Windsor that would charge £10,500 – not very free!

Coventry NUT joint secretary Jane Nellist explains, in a personal capacity, why socialists oppose free schools and academies.

The acceleration of the 'academies' programme by the Con-Dem government, which was disgracefully initiated by the previous Labour government, has increased the number of academy schools in England to over 1,900 (Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland currently have no academies or free schools).

Nearly 400 of the academies are 'sponsored' by organisations such as private businesses including Harris Carpets and E-Act, as well as religious groups such as Oasis.

Free schools, although state fund-

ed, are completely independent and do not even have to employ qualified teachers. Segregation in our

Education secretary Michael Gove does not oppose schools making a profit

school communities will increase. Staff conditions and pay will be challenged with no democratic control or planning.

This government promotes free market competition as the best way of improving services. This is fragmenting our schools. It erodes and eventually will – if not stopped – destroy the more democratically planned and accountable comprehensive school system that, despite all the rhetoric, has ensured that more young people succeed.

What comes next is privatisation. Tory education secretary Michael Gove has made no secret that he does not oppose schools making a profit. There are billions of pounds to make out of our public services such as education, and private companies are hovering like vultures.

New Labour

Coventry, a city that was at the forefront of driving through comprehensive education, is unfortunately not immune to this. In the first round of sponsored academies under New Labour governments, two of our schools became victims.

Despite a campaign, many parents were swayed because the schools had had no investment in their buildings for years and this appeared to be the only way of getting a brand new building. However, because of the strength of trade unions in the city, attacks on teachers' pay and conditions have been minimal



Pupils supporting the Tile Hill school strike against becoming an academy photo Coventry SP

and both schools work within the general network of schools in the city.

With the new government in 2010, the academies programme was cranked up to include 'converter academies'. Schools which have Ofsted gradings of 'good' or 'outstanding' can take on Academy status with no sponsor involved. Some Coventry schools quickly saw this as an opportunity for various reasons, including the shoring up of school budgets by not paying into funding, such as facilities budgets, or becoming more attractive in the competition for pupils.

Last summer, teachers and support staff in two of those schools, Woodlands and Tile Hill, took strike action which quickly created a real fighting campaign and helped force the Labour controlled city council into a more oppositional approach.

Forced academies

Because the voluntary conversion of schools had not increased at the pace demanded by the government, it introduced forced academies. Schools, mainly primary,

fell prey to this hastily introduced measure. Many local authorities (LAs) quickly succumbed. However, some communities have stood

Worthing: public support for anti-academy strike

On Thursday 12 July, NUT and NASUWT teaching union members at Worthing High School, Sussex, held a well supported strike against the school becoming an academy. The plans to change the school's status were marked by a lack of consultation with staff.

The public support for the strike was fantastic. A strong picket and protest outside the school gates attracting frequent honks from passing cars.

At the post-strike rally a long list of supportive messages from across the country was read out. The rally attracted a number of parents and supporters, as well as teachers, and showed the determination of all to continue and escalate the campaign through the summer and into the next term.

Jon Redford

firm, such as Downhills Primary School in London.

In Coventry, the school at greatest threat of becoming a forced academy is Henley Green Primary School. Despite having no legal reason to – the school's most recent Ofsted was a strong 'satisfactory' with many elements of 'good' – the LA was told by the Department for Education to intervene. The LA, the first to do so, challenged this directive with a judicial review which is now being heard. Parents are adamant that this school will not become an academy. Trade unions across the city will unite to support the school against any attack.

Forced academies have resulted in strike action. Across the country, parents are mobilising to save their local schools from academy status and the infestation of free schools in their communities.

Get involved in those campaigns and defend our schools. Teachers should make sure their union branch keeps them up to date with school campaigns. Yes to a properly funded democratically controlled and accountable education system – no to privatisation!

Sheffield teachers unite

A Sheffield demonstration on 14 July, called by the NUT and NASUWT, saw over 500 people attend. The demonstration was twinned with a similar protest in Oxfordshire as the two unions were targeting the parliamentary seats of Lib Dem deputy prime minister Nick Clegg and Tory prime minister David Cameron. The demonstration was to defend education, public services and jobs, and is a positive example of both major teacher unions' recent commitment to work together. The NASUWT and NUT have balloted members to take action in the autumn term over pay and working conditions.

Following the initial rally, which saw a number of local teachers and trade unionists speak, there was a march to the city centre.

The main rally saw more speakers, including NUT general secretary Christine Blower.

Afterwards a meeting of around 20 was held by the National Shop Stewards Network, where I spoke alongside trade unionists from Remploy and the recent recycling workers dispute in Sheffield.

Steve Faulkner, Sheffield NUT rep (personal capacity)

Top-up fees: £50,000 debt leads to to 50,000 less students

Claire Laker-Mansfield
Socialist Students national
organiser

'Education is a right not a privilege' was one of the main slogans of the tens of thousands of students who protested in 2010. We recognised the Con-Dem's tripling of tuition fees would cut off thousands from higher education, and have unfortunately been proven correct.

In England, where £9,000 is now the standard cost of a year's tuition, the drop in university applications has been the highest at 10%.

Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland have also seen drops in applications: 3%, 2% and 5% respectively. In total, 50,000 fewer young people have applied for university.

The spectre of £50,000 debt hangs heavily above our heads. When the government raised the cap on fees they ludicrously claimed it would have little effect on applications.

The Lib-Dems in particular, embarrassed by their flagrant disregard of election pledges, were at

pains to add a veneer of 'social conscience'.

Even now the Con-Dems are attempting to spin statistics, pointing to lower reductions in applications from the very poorest.

But they skilfully 'forget' that applications from this group are already many times lower than those from people of more affluent backgrounds. This is thanks to a combination of poverty, underinvestment in primary and secondary education and the previous £3,000 fees (introduced by New Labour in 2006).

The bulk of the 10% reduction in applications are from middle income families. Increased debt, as well as the slimmer chances of finding a decent job after graduation, can make higher education seem like a gamble too far.

But the drop could have been greater. With one in five young people out of work, the prospect of 'waiting it out' at university and hoping things improve still looks like the best option for many.

This year's intake also face brutal cuts, privatisation and the threat

of course or even whole university closures.

Only a determined mass campaign of students united with teachers, lecturers and the rest of the labour movement would be able to drive back the government and secure the right to free and decent education for our-

selves and future generations.

Socialist Students will be building for mass student turnouts at both the 20 October TUC march and the 21 November National Union of Students demonstration. These must be used as a springboard to further action, including mass student walkouts and occupations, and sup-

porting workers' strike action.

Help Socialist Students build the fight for our future – contact clairelaker@socialistparty.org.uk



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Suzanne Beishon

London organiser, Youth Fight for Jobs and Education

A staggering £24 billion is expected to be spent on the Olympic Games, but young people face little enjoyment and no long term benefit from this costly outlay.

The inaccessible ticketing system means that most people living on the doorstep of the games will be watching the events through TV screens. Promises of jobs, homes and services from the Olympics already lie in the gutter.

An Olympic Development Authority report showed that, from 2008 until 2011, only 1,580 unemployed people got jobs on the Olympic site. Only 205 were from the Hackney Olympic borough.

Rents have soared during the run-up to the games. Landlords seeking to take advantage of the event are forcing people out of their homes if they can't afford more cash.

While council house waiting lists are through the roof, of the measly 2,818 homes that will be left from the Olympic village only 675 will be social housing with six boroughs sharing 107 of those and Newham having the leftovers.

Democratic rights during the games are under attack with exclusion zones that include putting 9pm curfews on under-16s until the start of November, giving the police the right to disperse groups of two or more, and the right

to remove anti-Olympic posters and propaganda. As well as this, council tower block tenants face having missiles on their rooftops as part of the Olympic security operation.

While the rich get ready for their costly few weeks of fun, young people face a future of poverty and inequality with rising fees, the slashing of Education Maintenance Allowance, soaring rents, slave-labour workfare schemes and sky-high unemployment. All of this is to pay for a crisis created by the banks and big business.

We are told that there is no money for jobs and education while the bill for the Olympics continues to rise. Yet £750 billion is sitting in big business bank accounts as these fat cats see no 'profitable outlets' for investment.

We're getting organised to demand that the fantastic facilities built for the Olympics, instead of being demolished or sold to the private sector, be used to provide genuinely affordable housing and leisure facilities to benefit local communities.

Young people and trade unionists from across the country will be sending teams to Hackney Marshes to compete in the Austerity Games on 23 July, the week before the Olympics.

The games will launch the Youth Fight for Jobs and Education Manifesto, 'A Future for the 99%'. Our athletic events will highlight the plight of young people in the shadow of these expensive and corporate Olympic Games. These include the Race to the Bottom, Job Jump, Property High Jump, Deficit Discus, Hardship Hurdles and more.

A Future For The 99% Manifesto of Youth Fight for Jobs and Education

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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 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 un-recycled 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!