

OLYMPIC BRITAIN: we're priced out



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- Build a new mass workers' party to provide a fighting, political alternative to the three main parties of big business. See www.tusc.org.uk
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- Fight for a socialist alternative to capitalism, based on democratic planning and public ownership of the wealth to meet the needs of all – not just the greedy super-rich 1%

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the Socialist

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Jumping for jobs, hurdling against hardship... The Austerity Games highlight plight of young people

Suzanne Beishon

London Youth Fight for Jobs

As the world's eyes focus on one of the greatest events in the sporting calendar, young people and trade unionists from across the country arrived on Hackney Marshes, east London, to compete in the alternative Austerity Games.

Council ban

Despite Hackney Council's overzealous banning of the games, closing the toilets and café and locking of the car-park gates, the games were a huge success. The council's attitude is just another example of what has been widely recognised as an officious clampdown on protest and extreme levels of security and protection of corporate sponsorship for the London 2012 Games.

The example of the bagel shop swooped on for getting into the Olympic spirit and arranging bagels in the shape of the Olympic rings, shows the lengths these drones will go to to protect the likes of Coca-Cola, Samsung and Visa.

Free from the corporate restraints of the nearby high security-fenced

Olympic park, wearing and drinking anything of their choice, the Austerity athletes lined up to highlight the plight of young people in Britain today.

Through the eight events the athletes illustrated the key issues raised in the new Youth Fight for Jobs manifesto A Future for the 99% - like the soaring rental market with the Property High Jump.

The Student Debt Weightlifting showed the crippling situation young people are left with after university. The Job Jump long jump showed the increasingly common cycle of young unemployed people being forced into unpaid work experience just to be thrown back on the dole queue.

Alongside these were a number of events - Hardship Hurdles and Deficit Discus for example - that challenged the way a global elite has been able to hide £13 trillion from the taxman while ordinary working people suffer.

Cheating bankers

The Toss the Tory shot-put as well as the cheating and corrupt bankers team in their Trust Me I'm a Banker t-shirts added a light-hearted and satirical side to proceedings. In the



The Hardship Hurdles

Hardship Hurdles event one of the bankers literally brushed aside the hurdles representing unemployment, the scrapping of EMA, youth service cuts - such things presenting no barrier to the rich.

When the curtains come down on the closing ceremony of the Olympics and Paralympics in September they will leave behind a legacy of



Bankers help each other over the Property High Jump photos Paul Mattsson

increased repression of democratic rights, private housing, expensive and out of reach facilities and a transport system taken to the brink.

Meanwhile, the close of the Austerity Games is just the start of a fightback of young people against this government's brutal writing-off of a whole generation.

Up and down the country young

people will be organising regional launches of the Youth Fight for Jobs manifesto and campaigning to bring out the simmering anger and helplessness felt by young people in a coordinated, organised movement for a decent future.

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TV review: "what have the Olympics done for me?"

Paul Callanan

Youth Fight for Jobs national organiser

BBC Three's Free Speech series recently held a discussion on the Olympic Games. The main topic was on the question "what have the Olympics done for me?"

A poll of 500 young people carried out by the programme found that the Games made 71% of people proud to be British. But the most telling figure is that 62% said the money would be better used elsewhere.

The fact that vicious cuts are being made while an estimated £11 billion is being spent on the Olympics was a major theme of the discussion. In response to an audience member pointing out that the Olympics haven't provided jobs for local people, Tasha Danvers, a bronze medalist at the 2008 Olympics, said "in reality that was never going to happen."

The most incisive contribution came from Symeon Brown, from the group Haringey Young People Empowered. He pointed to the fact that for many the Games were "an expression of inequality" and to "the contradiction between austerity and lavish games".

He pointed out that most Londoners feel like "the Olympics are a corporate charity and we pay for

them". Many members of the audience took issue with the fact that the Games were supposed to promote health and fitness yet companies like McDonalds and Coca-Cola were official sponsors.

The response to all this from John Hayes, a minister in the Department for Education, was utterly pitiful, saying "how much does national pride cost?"

Even Tasha Danvers took issue with this line of argument when she responded "yes I was proud when I crossed the line, but at the end of the day I've still got to eat, I've still got to pay the rent. Pride doesn't fill my belly, pride doesn't pay my rent". A lesson the politicians, who coincidentally don't have worry about those things, would do well to learn.

Housing was also found to be a massive concern among young people in the audience. Symeon pointed out that according to a UN study the Olympics are the biggest cause of displacement in the world, due to sky-rocketing rents in the host cities. This was made much worse in London this year by the Tories' attacks on housing benefit for under-35s.

The attitude of most of the audience and most ordinary working class people in general was summed up by the response of one young woman to Hayes' point about how sponsorship led to more investment in sport. She said: "I don't really care



that much, I care about keeping hospitals open, having provisions for young people".

The programme was a small taste of how people really feel about the Olympics. Clearly, at a time when austerity is being imposed on working class people, when lives are being destroyed as a result of attacks on our jobs and services, the Games are going to seem like a big extravagance.

As Symeon said towards the end of the programme "these should be a public games" rather than the "corporate hospitality" event that we have now.

Pre-emptive arrests: "straight out of 1984"

Ian Pattison

East London Socialist Party

Straight out of 1984, on the morning of last year's Royal Wedding, protestors were pre-emptively arrested by the London Met police to prevent them organising anti-monarchy political activity or attending republican festivities on the day. The police justified the arrests on trumped up grounds of "stolen bicycles".

With similar attacks on democratic rights during this year's Jubilee and now the Olympics, the protesters involved decided to take the London Met police to court for breach of their human rights. This month, out of touch, un-elected judges in the High Court have found against the arrested protesters, and in favour of the unjustifiable actions of the police.

Around £11 billion has been spent on the Olympics, and big business want nothing to get in the way of their mega-rich profiteering. For example, a dispersal zone has been introduced in Leytonstone, not far from the Olympics site, for the duration of the Games and beyond - allowing the police to 'move on' people in 'groups' of two or more.

There will be tens of thousands of security personnel policing protest during the Games. Ground-to-air missiles have been installed on resi-

dential roofs.

Four graffiti artists were arrested for conspiracy to commit criminal damage and despite not being charged were banned from being near any Olympic venue, owning spray paint or marker pens and using most public transport for the period of the Games.

Fightback

The police will use pre-emptive arrests to intimidate working class and young people from fighting back against austerity.

On Saturday 28 July, as the Olympics start, Socialist Party members will join the Counter Olympics Network protest from 12 noon in Mile End Park, east London, which will feature events from the Youth Fight for Jobs 'Austerity Games'.



£13 trillion hidden from tax by super-rich Take the wealth off the 1%!

Naomi Byron

A sum of money the size of the US and Japanese Gross Domestic Product (GDP) together is being held in offshore tax havens. This enormous hoard could immediately pay off most of the deficits and debt that are being used to justify austerity, and create millions of jobs. Instead it sits in places like the Cayman Islands, making the tax dodgers that put it there even richer.

The report by James Henry for the Tax Justice Network, shows that between £13 trillion and £20 trillion has been looted from national economies so that the super-rich can avoid paying tax.

It's no exaggeration to say that we are ruled by the very people that are dodging tax. In Britain 'Lord' Ashcroft, who was treasurer of the Tory party for years and has donated more than £10 million to its coffers, has most of his wealth offshore so he won't pay UK tax. The fortune David Cameron inherited comes partly from his father's use of tax havens.

One rule for us...

Far from too much money being spent on public services, it is the bankers, speculators, profiteers and tax dodgers who are the cause of the massive debt burden being used to enforce austerity on the 99%.

But when Barclays and Bob Diamond are caught fiddling millions, or HSBC seems to be using their massive finances to help gun-running, money laundering and terrorism, they hardly receive a rap over the knuckles.

Henry points out that with the sums looted from sub-Saharan Africa, many of the countries there could have paid off their debts



We wouldn't photo Paul Mattsson

entirely.

However in this respect the report misses the point - most "highly indebted poor countries" have already paid off their "debts" many times over. But because of the economic power of imperialism and the legalised robbery of the finance industry, the interest alone has now ballooned to sums that would make a loan shark proud. Not a penny more should go to pay for these fake debts.

We have always been told that capitalism may be unfair, but it is the best system available because it creates jobs and wealth. This report exposes the big lie that private profits will be ploughed into creating more wealth. The money sitting in tax havens dwarfs even figures like the £750 billion currently sitting uninvested in the banks of big business in the UK.

Capitalism is not only creating misery for billions, it is a bankrupt system, incapable of maintaining current living standards let alone taking society forwards.

As long as the banking and finance industries remain under the control of the looters, we have no chance of even enforcing the existing puny laws on the super-rich.

Public ownership

The banks must be taken into public ownership, and run under democratic workers' control, in the interests of the 99%. Free personal banking, with cheap loans for small businesses and cheap mortgages. The banking system, like health and education, should be run in the benefits of society as a whole, not a minority of super-rich speculators.

Not-guilty verdict in Ian Tomlinson case End police violence

Claire Laker-Mansfield

"Police officers pelted with bricks as they help dying man" read the Evening Standard's headline on 2 April 2009.

The previous day the police had released the following statement about the death of a man at the G20 protests: "The officers [while trying desperately to save the man's life] took the decision to move him as a number of missiles - believed to be bottles - were being thrown at them." In subsequent statements they explained that the man had died of natural causes and that this death was 'not a surprise' to his family.

Had it not been for the amateur video footage which categorically proved this version of events to be a lie this probably would have remained the 'official' story.

The now famous footage showed how Ian Tomlinson, a newspaper seller trying to make his way home from work, was beaten with a truncheon and pushed to the ground in

an unprovoked attack by a police officer. Numerous witnesses subsequently confirmed that first aid was administered to Tomlinson by protesters and not the police.

No conviction

One might assume that this evidence would have been enough to ensure the swift prosecution and conviction of the officer involved. You might also expect a serious investigation into the way the police behaved more generally on the day. In particular, the 'kettling' of thousands of demonstrators for several hours and the police's routine use of violence were widely condemned.

But three years later, following the eventual prosecution of Simon Hayward - the officer who, according to the verdict reached at a coroners court in May, 'unlawfully killed' Tomlinson - no one has yet been convicted of his manslaughter.

The not guilty verdict reached on 19 July at Hayward's trial was an obvious blow to Ian Tomlinson's

family. But it is also of far wider significance. This case, its attempted police cover up and eventual 'conclusion', laid bare for millions the total unaccountability of the police as well as something of their role in repression.

The Socialist Party calls for a genuinely independent inquiry into the events of 1 April 2009. This should include representatives of the trade unions, activists involved in the protest and members of the wider public. And we need police accountability through democratic control by working class people.

Defend the right to protest

As the capitalist class and their representatives in parliament attempt to make ordinary people pay a higher and higher price for their crisis, they take tougher and tougher measures to try and stem the swelling tide of opposition. For this reason it's vital that we defend the right to protest, and fight for an end to police brutality and repression.

Olympic-watch

Slum living

One toilet between 25, one shower between 75, overcrowding and leaking roofs - these are the conditions facing the cleaners employed at the Olympic site. Most are migrant workers who have come to Britain specifically to work at the Games.

In stark contrast to the luxury of the Olympic village, they sleep in overcrowded metal cabins on a site that's been flooded so badly they have to use pallets as stepping stones. One told the Daily Mail that the site is "like a slum inside". When they arrived they were told there was no work for two weeks but that they still had to pay £18 a day 'rent'.

Many who came from poor countries with no prospect of decent work turned straight around and went home when they saw the facilities.

Custard spill 'emergency'

Olympic organisers and the police worked hard in the press to convince us that they aren't quite crazy enough to stop someone going into the Olympics based on what t-shirt they're wearing. They'd never overreact like that! Or would they? Six people were arrested on 20 July for suspicion of criminal damage by...spilling green custard. The six were doing a protest-performance in Trafalgar Square against the corporate sponsorship of the Games. One of the sponsors is Dow Chemical, owner of Union Carbide Corporation - the company responsible for the 1984 gas disaster in Bhopal, India, which killed 25,000 people.

25 police officers swooped on the performance when the custard was spilled to highlight the lies being told about 'sustainability' by Olympic sponsors including Dow, BP and Rio Tinto.

G4S-by-numbers

£284m
government Olympic contract

7
years since they won the contract

£57m
management fee

5,000
military personnel drafted in to plug the gap

8
police forces drafted in

£830,000
salary of Nick Buckles, head of G4S

£21m
Buckles' golden goodbye

Them...



Council tax madness

Yet more attacks on housing for the poor are filling the headlines - this time it's cuts to council tax benefit. The government is imposing a 10% cut - which is an average of £100 a year per household.

And it gets worse. They are giving each council the amount they used to get minus 10% and then leaving it up to them to distribute the rest. Benefit for pensioners is protected so the amount that non pensioners get will be dependent on how many pensioners happen to live in their local authority! For those who live near a lot of pensioners, the cut could be as much as 30% - a devastating amount to lose. But any attempt to divert the fight against cuts into divisions between young and old must be resisted. Only a mass united movement can stop austerity.

'Red' Ed?

It's been well documented that many of us feel politicians don't represent

us. They went to Eton and Oxbridge, their parents bought them houses in Chelsea and gave them start-up money for successful businesses.

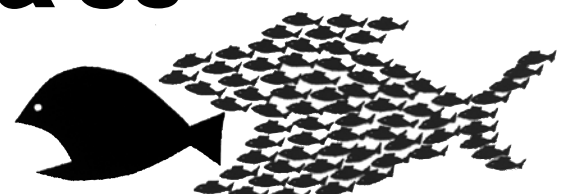
But 'red' Ed Miliband doesn't seem to get the message. He's so terrified of being seen as too close to the trade unions that he's having a drive for more Labour MPs who have worked for FTSE 100 companies or run their own small firms. Just what Labour needs!

Sainsbury's: 'live for less'

Unite the Union, as part of its campaign for a substantial pay increase at Sainsbury's has carried out a survey of workers at the company. Many report struggling with debt, relying on payday loans and being unable to take holidays or pay for basic necessities like their children's school uniforms.

Like many other retail workers, these are the working poor - working for minimum wage and relying on welfare benefits like tax credits to survive. Meanwhile the Sainsbury's chief executive 'earned' more than £3 million last year.

...& Us



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Save our factories! Remploy strike a big success

On 19 July, workers at Remploy factories across the country came out on strike to defend their workplaces and their jobs. The government are planning to shut all 34 factories and hand the work over to their big business friends. This is not only an attack on disabled workers, but the whole trade union movement. This was clearly recognised on the well-supported picket lines. These are just some of the inspiring reports we have received.

At both the Newcastle and Gateshead Remploy factories all available workers turned up for the picket line. Jim Dobson, factory leading hand and GMB rep, pointed out that of those made redundant by Remploy in 2008 - 80% are still unemployed.

Many of the workers pointed out that while the number of workers has been run down over the years, there has been an increase in the number of senior managers and directors.

Between 60 and 70 Remploy workers and supporters turned up in Stoke. Banners from PCS, CWU, North Staffs TUC and more joined the many Unite flags.

Local New Labour MPs rightly berated the Con-Dem government but the other two local Remploy factories were closed by their own New Labour government.

In Huddersfield, two workers were going into work but came out to join the strike, greeted by cheers.

In Portsmouth, Rosemary, who has worked at Remploy for 35 years said: "This is my life. If this place closes, would we get other work? If



One of the picket lines in the north east photo Newcastle SP

it closes it will affect everything, including our pensions."

Workers in Swansea explained that the plant could be profitable. In the alternative strategy developed by the Remploy trade unions, they estimate that the whole organisation could balance the books by 2017/2018, while providing work for 2,000 disabled people.

Close to 40 people crowded outside the Porth plant. There was a good mood in Aberdare and the whole workforce in Merthyr picketed in two shifts. There was staunch support for the strike from the local community.

There was a brilliant mood on the picket lines in Abertillery and at Bridgend, the site of the first Rem-

ploy factory in UK.

In Glasgow, Springburn took action when they were informed they were one of nine factories that the Con-Dems were looking to sell to a private company.

Workers held a union meeting and then occupied the canteen for several hours. Phil Brannan, GMB union convener, said: "I've been a union rep at the site for 32 years and we've never taken any unofficial action before." All 25 of the GMB members at the Dundee factory were on strike.

Thirty Remploy workers formed a confident picket line across two entrances of the biggest Remploy factory in London. Unite reps also offered support. Barking GMB shop steward Mark Holloway said: "Remploy provides an opportunity for disabled people to work in an environment that is safe and which understands their special needs, and gives them an opportunity to contribute to the local and national economy. "It is far better than a life on benefits."

The next strike is on 26 July.

- Keep all Remploy factories open
- Implement the Remploy unions' plan to save the business
- Full support from the whole trade union movement for Remploy workers
- Open the books to disclose exactly how much the directors are being paid
- For a government campaign to encourage public procurement of Remploy products
- For a 24-hour general strike to stop the Con-Dem government cuts

Olympic victory for London bus workers

A London bus worker

London bus workers have voted to accept the Olympics bonus deal offered by all companies operating Transport for London routes. There will be a minimum £500 for full-time workers and many will see £577.50 bonus before tax for working normal duties throughout the Olympics and Paralympics.

One day's action, with large picket lines at most depots, humbled the arrogant bosses. They saw the workers' mood hardening. Two more dates were fixed for action but in the end were unnecessary. This result is a victory. It proves strike action pays and united bus workers are strong.

Before the 22 June strike, the 20 operating companies would not even talk to Unite the Union. Bus firms totally underestimated the mood of workers to see this matter through to a successful conclusion.

A couple of days before the strike, London mayor Boris Johnson, sensing it was different this time and seeing his political career under threat, suddenly came up with £8.3 million. Yet still the bosses resisted chipping in, understanding the wider implications of concessions.

There was a feeling of outrage on the picket lines. Other passenger transport workers in the capital were to get a bonus for the extra pressures the Olympic Games will bring. Why were we singled out as unworthy? What about fairness?

The 71% vote in favour of the deal shows strong approval. But it



photo Paul Mattsson

also shows an important minority thought this wasn't enough. Many thought we had the bosses by the throat for once and should have pressed harder and won more.

True, we could have won more but this is a victory. It must be a first step in rebuilding Unite members' confidence and rebuilding the branches.

This dispute revealed all sorts of dissatisfaction among bus workers. Much of it is summed up as "bullying management". The pressure for change must continue at garage level, backed up where necessary by more united action.

Unite has said it will use the precedent of the Olympic bonus deal to pursue an all-London pay claim next year. Pressure from the members through strong, active branches is the way to make sure the momentum we have built up isn't wasted.

RMT campaign to end Condor's sweatshops launched

Ben Norman

'Pay up Condor, Condor Pay up!' It was to the sounds of the Pompey chimes that over 40 trade unionists and socialists gathered at Portsmouth Ferry Port on Saturday morning, 21 July, to protest against the exploitation of seafarers by Condor Ferries.

The protest was the launch of a campaign against Condor's practice of paying Ukrainian workers as little as £2.35 an hour for twice the hours of the average British worker. The protest coincided with a ballot result by Unite workers at the same ferry port who have voted unanimously for strike action to defend their contracts from the city council's cuts.

In a statement Ken Soar, group director of Condor, admitted that crew members are paid as little as £2.35 an hour. "Our crews are working on international freight vessels and their pay is very attractive to people living in the Ukraine. Their pay equates to approximately four times more than the average Ukrainian salary", Soar argued.

After using European Union directive 'Mode 4' to recruit 90% of their crews from Eastern Europe, Condor exploits a loophole in UK legislation to avoid paying the legal minimum wage. Condor claims that sailing to the Channel Islands is an 'international voyage', even though it is in UK territorial waters and the islands are a crown dependency.

Condor is owned by the Macquarie group, an investment bank which also owns Wight Link ferries in

Portsmouth. Macquarie, with assets of \$154 billion (Aus), is notoriously anti-union. Last year the transport union RMT and its supporters, including the National Shop Stewards Network, campaigned to defend engineer Paul Kelly, who was victimised and fired by the firm for his trade union activity.

At the meeting following the demonstration, RMT members and supporters discussed the need to build the campaign. Mick Tosh, RMT rep and trades council president, explained how agencies use similar practices across the transport industry. Researcher Linda Kaucher spoke of companies who exploit EU laws.

From the floor Socialist Party member and health worker Clare Blackwell said: "The NHS provides many examples of migrant workers being paid UK wages. The shipping industry needs to be taken under public ownership so private firms are unable to exploit and divide workers."

Further demonstrations in both Southampton and Portsmouth are planned to build the campaign. It is also a priority to learn from industrial disputes, such as that at the Lindsey oil refinery in 2010, in order to build links with the exploited European workers and cut across national divisions with demands for union rates of pay for all.

"Condor ferries are operating two 'sweatshops' out of a newly built terminal which is funded by the people of Portsmouth", said RMT Southampton Shipping branch secretary Darren Procter. "This campaign isn't about nationality; it's about fighting for fair wages for all."

In brief

Socialist Party website

The Socialist is proud to get reports from workers in struggle around the country. We do our best to fit them into the paper but also post material on our website.

This issue of the Socialist will cover two weeks, check our website for additional material on these stories and new reports.

www.socialistparty.org.uk

Stop job cuts

As previously reported, workers at RF Brookes of South Wigston, Leicester, are facing the possibility of closure of their factory by the '2 Sisters' food group. In May they announced 193 redundancies along with the slashing of the previously agreed redundancy terms. Members of the bakery workers' union, BFAWU, took four days of strike action in protest.

Management's response has been to increase the number of redundancies to 350, leaving a workforce of only 150 behind. The workers feel there is a clear plan to close the factory.

The BFAWU is correctly pursuing legal action. However, the Socialist Party believes that further workers' action is needed. To prevent closure the idea of a "sit in" at the factory should be considered.

Steve Score

Stop Essex fire cuts

Hundreds of striking firefighters and their supporters paraded through Essex's county town of Chelmsford on 18 July in a show of defiance against the dictatorial attitudes of the Fire Authority and the cuts in service it is trying to force through. FBU banners from as far afield as Northern Ireland and Cornwall showed that all firefighters are watching this dispute with great interest.

They heard from the general secretary of their union, Matt Wrack. Just before coming to address the crowd he had delivered notice of further strike action on 18 August to the chief fire officer.

Dave Murray

Olympic strikes

On 27 July, the Olympics opening ceremony day, transport union RMT members in Transport for London (TfL) (Customer Experience) are to strike again in their fight for a fair Olympics recognition reward.

They will be joined by RMT members on South West Trains, Serco "Boris Bikes", ISS and Initial tube cleaners and Carlisle DLR cleaners, striking over the same issue.

Living wage demand

John Lewis cleaners organised in the International Workers of the World (IWW) took their second day of strike action on 20 July. Forty cleaners and their supporters picketed outside the company's high-profile store on Oxford Street in central London.

John Lewis pays its hard-working cleaners only the minimum wage, a measly £6.08 an hour. But the cleaners are demanding the London Living Wage of £8.30.

The next strike is on 26 July when the Olympic torch passes down Oxford Street in front of the John Lewis store.

Ian Pattison

Outsourcing fails again For publicly owned and run services!

The Olympics G4S security debacle has further increased public opposition to privatisation. But for G4S at present, its failure to deliver on its contract will merely dent the massive profits of this large multinational. It has more business outside the UK than inside and has other contracts with the UK government that will go on.

Last year it received £759 million from the Con-Dem government for contracts that included electronic tagging of criminals and processing some benefits claims. The government is about to introduce security licenses that will hand even more work to large firms like G4S by pricing out in-house security provision.

Incredibly, support for G4S came from the general secretary of the GMB union, Paul Kenny. He praised the company for paying its workers £8.50 an hour as it's above the minimum wage and the London 'living wage'.

But anyone would struggle to live on this in London; while at the same time G4S chief executive Nick Buckles has a wage of £830,000 and is said to be in line for a mammoth £21 million package if he is forced to exit the company. The GMB could also have taken a cursory look at the money in the coffers of the Olympics corporate sponsors, to draw the conclusion that a higher wage should have been demanded for the security workers.

G4S has failed repeatedly before, for instance it once 'lost' seven prisoners when transporting them, but this didn't stop both Labour and Tory governments giving it more lucrative business.

Deportations were contracted to the firm Reliance by the government after G4S inflicted serious injuries when it had the contract previously, with a death occurring in one case. Now there are reports of brutality by Reliance guards, indicating that another scandal is emerging.

Casting an eye down the long list of privatisations and outsourcings that have taken place over years shows a corresponding long catalogue of failures and deficiencies. Yet the drive goes on.

Lloyds and RBS banks are being prepared for full return to the private sector despite the Barclays Libor scandal and HSBC's seeming aid to money laundering, not to mention the withholding of credit from small businesses and mortgage seekers by all the major

banks.

The police are being urged to privatise some functions, military procurement is being outsourced, wholesale privatisation of the NHS proceeds apace, parts of education, parts of the civil service - where is privatisation not being pushed? Often workers face worse pay and conditions when employed by the private companies, as the bosses engage in a 'race to the bottom' to minimise costs and maximise profits.

These profiteers enrich themselves, pouncing on buildings, equipment and training that have previously been paid for by the public sector. Then instead of investing their profits in industry - which they don't view as profitable enough - huge amounts of money are left idle. For example, hot on the heels of the G4S debacle came news in last Sunday's Observer that a global megarich elite has hived away £13 trillion into tax havens!

War on the public sector

The multi-millionaire Tory leaders in the cabinet vehemently detest the public sector and want to privatise and outsource as much as they can, to hand rich pickings to their big business friends and for themselves when they eventually leave the House of Commons. They also want to drastically reduce the size of the public sector in a crazy, counter-productive drive to lower the national debt,

and to be able to reduce the taxes the rich should be paying to help fund public services for everyone.

So they or their media allies ferociously attack the public sector as being inefficient and expensive, and public sector workers as being lazy, privileged and greedy. These are nothing but lies and distortions.

Waste

Time and time again, privatised services have been shown to cost more than publicly run services for the same standard of delivery, from the rail system to the building of new hospitals and schools. Sometimes the difference is shockingly great. Shareholders and directors use the security of public sector contracts to rake in vast profits, which they use to line their own pockets.

Accusations of laziness and greed aimed at public sector workers are monstrous slurs, especially considering that cuts have forced whole sections of the public sector workforce to work to the point of complete exhaustion.

What about efficiency? Unfortunately top managers in the public sector have often been trained in the same dictatorial management methods as those used in the private sector and they are not necessarily less prone to incompetence. Despite this, public bodies, being under closer scrutiny by elected councillors or MPs, and having the central aim of service provision rather than

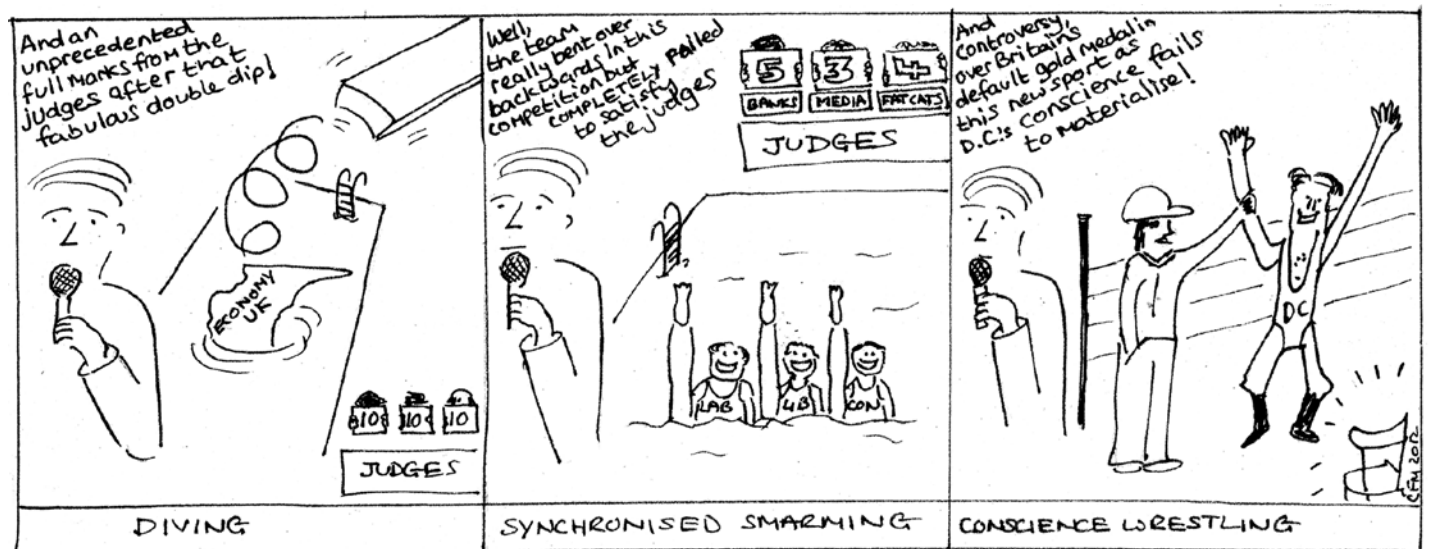
profit making, tend to be found by service users to be more 'efficient' than private bodies.

Public control through elected representatives is one of the crucial advantages of public sector organisations. The Socialist goes further than calling for democratic local authority or parliamentary control, adding that representatives of the public sector workers themselves, and trade unions, and people who depend on the services, should also be part of the committees that exert control.

This way the quality of the service and the pay and conditions of the workers providing it can be monitored from the point of view of those workers and service users, and any shortcomings quickly corrected.

The other vital superiority of public sector organisations is that with no exodus of money into the pockets of shareholders, as well as the sole aim being to provide the best possible service, there will also be more money available for that service provision. This is obviously preferable for the vast majority of people in society.

The only people who don't stand to gain are those in the super-rich elite at the top, who will continue to orchestrate the savaging of the public sector until an almighty response from the trade union movement is built to stop them in their tracks. The Olympics G4S debacle has further increased public opposition to privatisation.



Solidarity with PCS members fighting to defend services

A dispute over job cuts and privatisation in the Home Office is likely to result in strike action on 26 July unless ministers begin meaningful negotiations.

In a vindication of the PCS union's argument about cuts, a home affairs select committee report has criticised the UK Border Agency - the largest agency in the Home Office - for failing to tackle a total casework backlog of more than 270,000. The report points out that the immigration group, the section with the largest backlog of work, has seen the biggest cuts in staffing.

PCS general secretary Mark Serwotka said: "UKBA is clearly unable to cope and the backlogs are simply staggering... The Home Office simply cannot cut 8,500 jobs, a third of its workforce, and expect to maintain services to the public and the report exposes the folly of the department issuing compulsory redundancy notices to staff when it is clearly unable to cope with its workload."

Culture, Media and Sport secretary Jeremy Hunt has further inflamed the situation by raising the possibility of sacking Border Agency staff



who go on strike at the start of the Olympics.

The Guardian also reported that London's mayor, Boris Johnson, is among senior Tory figures urging the government to introduce a new minimum vote threshold for strike ballots.

The Socialist has previously highlighted the hypocrisy of this - austerity chancellor George Osborne, for example, received only 37.6% of the electorate in May 2010.

Other proposals, that must be resisted with the full strength of the trade union movement, include setting basic requirements for public services during strikes which would cover transport, hospitals, education and border control.

As we go to press the government is reported to be seeking a high court injunction against the action.

**In the meantime please send messages of support to: solidarity@pcs.org.uk
Also send complaints to the Guardian: letters@guardian.co.uk and the BBC <http://www.bbc.co.uk/complaints/complain-online/>**

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Summer printing schedule

This issue, 728, will cover a two-week period, as will the following issue, 729. After that we will return to printing the Socialist weekly. This is to allow the staff of the editorial department to take some holiday! However, given the number of workers' struggles, anti-cuts campaigns and other protests against austerity we recommend all readers keep a close eye on the Socialist Party website: www.socialistparty.org.uk You can also follow us on Twitter @Socialist_Party and on Facebook.

Kazakhstan

Workers struggle against bloody, corrupt regime

"Today, the division [between owners and workers] has become obvious. The owners number no more than 100 people... [Kazakhstan's industrial economy] has produced a united multi-ethnic group - a highly organised working class based in big corporations. From the end of 2011, [this has] defined political and social life.

"Our economy is held up by several supports. These are the powerful raw material production enterprises. If it enters somebody's head to completely mobilise their power, a crippling blow can be inflicted on the government and the state... [but] there is no direct contact between the working class and the political forces in Kazakhstan.

"But there are potential leaders - there are the Kazakhstan socialists, who have been working for many years on a professional basis, and now their time is coming."

These are not the words of a member of the Socialist Party, or the Committee for a Workers' International, the world socialist organisation to which it's affiliated, but unbelievably of former Kazakhstan prime minister Akeshan Kashegelden, interviewed in the Kazakhstan paper, 'Novaya Gazeta'.

The regime is planning to raise the retirement age to 68, which is higher than the life expectancy in Kazakhstan

Recently 400 socialists from across Europe and all around the world met in Belgium at the Summer School of the CWI. Ben Robinson reports from a well-attended commission on Kazakhstan and the struggles of the workers' movement there.

Despite massive repression in Kazakhstan, the ground is prepared for mass revolt against the bloody, corrupt regime of President Nursultan Nazarbayev. To the fore of this movement are the young Kazakh workers who now make up the majority of the labour in Kazakhstan's heavy industry.

Wages had been kept at the same level by employers for several years, pushing workers into poverty. A wave of suicides swept through the poor, with many deeply in debt. Every month, according to sources that support the Nazarbayev regime, ten suicides in the capital are linked to debts, while hundreds of people apply for psychiatric help.

While nurses live in poverty, corrupt bureaucrats purchase holiday villas in Europe. The regime is planning to raise the retirement age to 68, which is higher than the life expectancy in Kazakhstan.

The government pumps out propaganda, employing former Labour prime minister Tony Blair to advise and to represent them. But working people often tell each other that they wish they lived in the country that state TV reports on!

This has created huge dissatisfaction. The overwhelming majority of the population want to see Nazarbayev gone. Twenty years of capitalism has forced a harsh understanding - either the system forces living conditions to the level of Somalia or workers change the system.

Workers' offensive

But the working class is on the offensive, scoring spectacular victories against the bosses and placing demands on the Kazakh regime.

A battle against housing repossession won \$4.5 billion from the government. Workers have saved factories from closure and organised militant strike action. Recently, in Kazakhmys, a copper-mining company, a 100% pay rise was won - hundreds occupied the mine while thousands took part in solidarity action outside. In the same city, workers in the energy arm of Kazakhmys took strike action and won a 80% pay rise. Significantly, alongside the demands for higher pay, workers are fighting for the renationalisation of industries.

Social and industrial struggles are linking up. Those involved in the housing campaign travelled 1,500 km to support the struggle against a factory closure.

In these waves of struggle, CWI members play a key role. Through Socialist Movement Kazakhstan, and the new trade union Zhanartu, the CWI is able to help these

struggles organise and bring them together against the Nazarbayev regime.

This has terrified the government and led to cracks in the regime. Recent clashes at the Kazakh-Chinese border now appear to be part of a dispute between different wings of the oligarchy. It is possible that Nazarbayev could be removed after decades in power.

Nazarbayev has responded through increased repression. 16 December 2011 was a turning point for the struggle. After seven months of strike action, oil workers organised a mass rally to provide a peaceful outlet for the huge anger building up. At this rally, the organisers had previously agreed a central demand: to broaden and deepen the fight, calling for a general strike against the Nazarbayev regime.

Drowned in blood

This protest, however, was drowned in blood by the state, and the entire region was shut down. It is believed that up to 100 people died, although in an attempt to downplay the massacre the media and Kazakh ruling class claim only 17.

Through the Socialist Movement Kazakhstan, despite the regime's efforts, news of the massacre got out to the wider world. Campaign Kazakhstan organised immediate protests at embassies internationally, including Germany, Britain, Belgium and Poland. Although it is clear that the Kazakh state had prepared to go much further in putting down the strike, protests and international condemnation halted their actions.

Instead, the regime is dragging oil workers' leaders and supporters through the courts, organising a succession of show trials. To quote one defendant: "At the national security office, I was told to incriminate 15 others. I refused. They started to beat me, I was suffocated six times, threatened with rape and that photographs [of this crime would be] put on the internet. The commander put a loaded gun to my head several times and I was told I would be fed to the dogs."

The vicious sentences imposed were met with bottles and shoes thrown in the court room.

Activists from the opposition party Alga were also rounded up. Opposition parties in Kazakhstan can represent the whim or personal interests of one or another oligarch. Their party 'activists' are paid to be so and many have no real commitment. When some of them have been arrested, they have turned to becoming state witnesses against their own leadership. This sort of thing has led to a collapse internally in the Alga party.



Protesting outside the Kazakhstan embassy in London with Esenbek Ukteshbaev, leader of Zhanartu, photo the Socialist



Police in Kazakhstan

The regime used the trials and massacre as a threat to all those involved in struggle. Vadim Kuramshin, a human rights activist, has been arrested and jailed again, and is currently being dragged through a show trial.

Famous theatre director, Bolat Atabayev, was arrested and released, after coming under huge pressure to support the regime's case against the oil workers. The government is now attempting to effectively outlaw trade union activity, to drive workers' struggles even further underground.

But the effects of this repression are wearing off. The Kazakhmys copper workers' struggle signalled a new preparedness to fight back. Despite the personal risk, victorious energy workers filmed and circulated a video explaining the role that Zhanartu played in helping their struggle.

Struggle

The show trials could trigger further struggle. Yet more Zhanaozen oil workers trials are planned soon, but these could trigger mass protest, with political strike action at its heart.

A huge political vacuum exists in Kazakhstan. The official opposition parties, sponsored by oligarchs opposed to Nazarbayev, are in a state of collapse. The working class is currently the decisive political force but there is no mass party which unites them.

Socialist Movement Kazakhstan is campaigning for a new mass workers' party, and for a revolutionary constituent assembly where the workers and oppressed of Kazakhstan can come together and democratically decide how the country is organised.

But other forces are attempting to fill this space. Right-wing political Islamic groups, including those led by Naz-



Tony Blair and Nazarbayev

arbayev's relatives, are trying to make gains. A majority of workers and oppressed are from a Sunni Muslim background but there are also significant religious minorities, including Russian Orthodox Christians.

If the workers' movement is not sufficiently prepared, there is a danger that right-wing political Islam could make gains and that wings of the oligarchy could attempt to channel the existing huge anger in society along these lines.

Working with others in Campaign Kazakhstan, the CWI in many countries is stepping up support and protest action. This solidarity and financial support is vital. Time is running out for the Nazarbayev regime.

Members of the CWI, of the Socialist Movement Kazakhstan and Zhanartu are determined that the workers and poor will win a generalised struggle and that a government of workers and poor people will be established. They are confident that on this basis, the ideas of genuine socialism will spread once again across Central Asia and beyond. The crisis of capitalism worldwide is ploughing up fertile ground.

Campaign Kazakhstan

Campaign Kazakhstan plays a vital role in supporting movements in the country for democracy, human and trade union rights. Since its launch last year, it has succeeded in gaining support from prominent figures and trade unions.

Campaign Kazakhstan has two main roles. The first is to raise the profile of the struggle in Kazakhstan. Lobbies of the embassies, and of companies linked to the Kazakh regime, have a real effect on a regime committing atrocities against its population, and more protests are planned.

The campaign in Britain also recently hosted a visit of Esenbek Ukteshbaev, leader of the independent Kazakhstan trade union, Zhanartu. He spoke at the transport union RMT conference and the National Shop Stewards Network (NSSN) conference, as well as addressing a Socialist Party meeting at the Union conference and meeting with leading figures in the civil service union PCS.

International

Internationally the campaign is involved in organising visits by trade unionists and MEPs to Kazakhstan to report back on the situation.

The other role of the campaign is to offer practical solidarity, supporting those such as Vadim Kuramshin, the families of jailed Zhanaozen strikers and others. To carry out all of these activities the campaign urgently needs funds; donations from trade unions and branches. Several branches have already donated to the campaign, but more are needed.

Please raise this urgent issue today!

Make cheques payable to Campaign Kazakhstan and send to PO BOX 66682, London, E11 9ER. For more information and model motions, contact campaignkazakhstan.org campaignkazakhstan@gmail.com 07969 119 216

Campaign Kazakhstan sponsors include: Bob Crow, RMT general secretary, Martin Powell-Davies, NUT NEC, Jeremy Corbyn, MP, Paul Callanan, Youth Fight for Jobs national organiser, John Meale MP, Dave Nellist, former MP, Mick Whale, Hull NUT branch secretary, Andrey Hunko, MP for Die Linke, Germany, Paul Murphy, Member of European Parliament, Socialist Party, Themis Kotsifakis, general secretary of OLME, Greek secondary school teachers' union, Clare Daly, TD (MP) for Socialist Party, Ireland, Inge Hoeger, MP for Die Linke, Germany, Joe Higgins, TD for Socialist Party, Ireland, CGT Pôle emploi Lorraine, France.

Johan Rivas, Sindicato del Sector Público de Salud, Caracas, Venezuela, TU Senan, Tamil Solidarity, Antongilio Mannoni, Secretary of CGIL (Italian Trade Union Confederation), city of Genoa, Padraig Mulholland, President Northern Ireland Public Service Alliance, Patrick Zoomermeijer, Leader Socialist Party councillors Zaanstad, Netherlands, Simon Aulepp, chairman of teachers' union GEW, Kassel, Germany, Stephen Jolly, Councillor Socialist Party, Yarra, Australia, Jonas Brännberg, councillor Rättvisepartiet Socialisterna, Luleå, Sweden, Alfia Nakipbekova, musician, Holger Burner, musician, Julien Daigneault, Alternative Socialiste, Quebec, Canada, Roberto Ciulli, Director of Theater an der Ruhr.

The working class is currently the decisive political force but there is no mass party which unites them

Urgent action needed Vadim Kuramshin threatens hunger strike protest



Vadim Kuramshin

Campaign Kazakhstan Reporters

Vadim Kuramshin, a prison rights campaigner arrested six months ago on trumped-up charges, has declared that if the trial against him is not resumed within ten days he will start a hunger strike.

He has informed Samat Tolesbayu, the judge of the Zhambul'skaya oblast inter-regional court responsible for presiding over his trial, that a hunger strike would be a protest against the attempts to drag out the hearing and against his rights being restricted during the jury trial. Vadim stated that the evidence presented during his trial has revealed a number of crimes perpetrated by government officials.

We ask all supporters of Campaign Kazakhstan to protest personally against the unjust imprisonment of Vadim Kuram-

shin. Vadim is one of the best known activists in Kazakhstan and has been working with the Socialist Movement of Kazakhstan for many years. He faces a long prison sentence.

See: <http://campaignkazakhstan.org> for a model letter to make an email protest.

These protests have an enormous effect in improving his prison conditions and can eventually free him.

Please send urgent protests to: Head of Regional Court, hc-1@h.sud.kz Special Regional Court for Criminal Cases: hc-16@h.sud.kz And to the Kazakhstan embassy in London: Ambassador Kairat Abusseitov, 33 Thurloe Square, London, SW7 2SD. london@kazembassy.org.uk

Please send copies of the protests to kazakhstansolidarity@gmail.com and campaignkazakhstan@gmail.com



Protesting in Berlin photo CWI

Durham Miners' Gala Miliband - no friend of trade unionism

Elaine Brunskill

Ed Miliband spoke at the recent Durham Miners' Gala. This is the first time in 23 years that a Labour Party leader has spoken at the "big meeting". Last year Miliband was invited to speak, but declined as RMT union general secretary Bob Crow was also on the platform.

This year Bob Crow may not have been a speaker, but the RMT got their message across as a plane with their banner flew over the field with the message: "No to Con-Dem cuts; No to Labour cuts!"

One of the huge draws to the Gala is the traditional brass bands of the ex-mining communities. As the bands march through Durham city each one stops at the County Hotel, where trade union and Labour Party officials stand on the hotel's balcony. This year an increased number of bands played either the Red Flag or the Internationale, this was definitely aimed at Miliband.

Miliband was the last speaker at the rally. The applause was polite rather than enthusiastic.

His best response was when he told the rally the task of the next Labour government was to tax the bankers' bonuses and to get young people back to work. The promise to break the power of Murdoch and end the energy companies' rip-off tariffs, also got a good response, though one or two hecklers were shouting: "What about trade union rights?"

When Miliband finished it was noticeable that a sizeable minority did not applaud. Also, during the speech a couple of the brass bands were seen marching off the field, this was seen as a snub to the Labour Party leader.



PCS general secretary Mark Serwotka was the best received speaker

Afterwards I spoke to Dean Acastor of the prison officers' POA union: "He didn't say anything. It was just rhetoric. There was no substance to his speech, no promise to restore trade union rights."

'Oppose cuts'

Other Gala speakers included striking Spanish miners, who gave rousing speeches about the bitter battle unfolding in Spain (see page 9). Many people commented that Miliband participated in the standing ovation for the Spanish miners, but had crossed the PCS picket line at Westminster!

When PCS general secretary Mark Sewotka spoke many, who had been sitting on the grass, stood up to listen intently.

He said that from the platform he could see Durham Jail, and we should not rest until we see former News International bosses Andy

Coulson and Rebekah Brooks in there - this received intense applause.

Mark spoke of the young unpaid workers forced to sleep under bridges while working on security for the Queen's Jubilee. The despair of a JSA claimant who had chained himself to a railing, then set fire to himself. The débâcle of G4S.

He ended by saying: "We have to be united", but have to be clear on what basis, and that we should, "oppose all cuts in our services."

However, Mark missed an opportunity, in front of Ed Miliband, to clearly warn that PCS policy is to back candidates standing against parliamentary or council candidates who either support or carry out cuts.

The Socialist Party tapped into the mood of workers attending the Gala. Around 100 copies of the Socialist were sold alongside numerous socialist pamphlets and books.

Newcastle Pride

Commercialism vs politics

Bobbie Cranney

Newcastle Pride took place on Saturday 21 July. It soon became clear that the march was going to be bigger than last year. At least 1,000 people assembled and the march set off around 12 noon, going through the town centre and then to the Exhibition Park.

The mood on the march was light and jolly. When we got to the park there was a festival atmosphere. And there were many stalls from the Lesbian Gay Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) groups from colleges, universities, trade unions and workplaces.

There was a stage, but if there were any speeches I missed them. It was mainly cheesy music.

We set out our Socialist Party stall outside the women's tent, which had a different vibe - less mainstream and less commercial.

There had been some opposition to a women-only space. According to one organiser the women's tent had the lowest

budget of any tent, with all acts performing for free. It was generally judged to be a great success, and sitting outside was a good location for our stall.

Over the course of the day we sold over 30 of the Socialist Party's LGBT pamphlets as well as copies of the Socialist and pamphlets on how the cuts would affect women. Many people signed the petition against homophobia and the government's spending cuts. And there was a lot of discussion about how the cuts would affect LGBT people.

Although the mood of people seemed fairly laid back, there was a feeling of rebellion in some quarters.

Despite Pride becoming largely commercialised and depoliticised over the last few years there is a mood against this among Pride supporters all over the country. It will be interesting to see how this mood develops in the coming years and how Pride changes in these interesting times.



Sexuality, austerity & socialism - a Socialist Party LGBT pamphlet £1.50 including postage.



Women: Fighting Austerity, Fighting for Equality - a Socialist Party pamphlet £1.50 including postage.

Special offer to readers - both pamphlets for £2.50. Payable to Socialist Books, PO Box 24697, London E11 1YD. Discounts for bulk orders (5 or more copies) - phone 020 8988 8789.

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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: Roger Ingham and a west London member who both donated £100, Charlie Taylor £50 (Derby branch), Bill North £50 and James Cullimore £50 (Brighton branch), and a London member who donated £20.

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.

You can pay via the Socialist Party website at www.socialistparty.org.uk/donate and mark your donation 'Server appeal' or telephone 020 8988 8777.

Ken Douglas



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Spain's austerity government is facing revolt from below

Workers' organisations must build for a 48-hour general strike

Hannah Sell

Deputy general secretary
Socialist Party

Like the wildfires that are ripping across the mountains of Catalonia, 'Spanic' is spreading around the world's financial markets. It was triggered by the Spanish region of Valencia asking for financial help from Spain's central government; with the likelihood of other regions following suit - including the autonomous region of Catalonia, which has an economy the size of Portugal.

As the inevitability of Spain following the 'Greek road' looms large in the minds of the markets, Spain's ten year bond yields (the interest charged on government borrowing) have reached an all-time high and stock markets have fallen worldwide.

The size of the bailout Spain would need would be enormous, probably more than €300 billion, and would be difficult for the capitalist powers to finance, including German capitalism which would be expected to pay the lion's share.

The fear that Spain will crash out of the euro - either this time or with its likely future bailouts - bringing the whole edifice down with it, is reflected in the recent downgrading by Moody's ratings agency of Germany, Luxembourg and the Netherlands from 'stable' to 'negative'.

There is no way out of this crisis for world capitalism, reducing its strategists and governments to flaying around trying to find the latest 'quick fix' to prevent catastrophe. On one thing, however, they are clear. It is working and middle class people who will have to absorb endless pain to pay for the crisis, while the elite remain rolling in cash.

In Greece, where the population has suffered a catastrophic fall in living standards, with 91% of the population worse off by an average of one-third over the last two years, the 'troika' (the European Union, the International Monetary Fund and the European Central Bank) is now likely to demand another €2 billion in cuts, forcing Greece out of the eurozone if the government



Firefighters greet Asturian miners who marched to Madrid to protest against massive job cuts

does not accept this appalling price for continued membership.

The Greek population has been in revolt for two years, with over 15 general strikes. If the government tries to implement more cuts it will fall, posing the coming to power of the Coalition of the Radical Left - Syriza.

And Spain is following Greece, not only economically, but with the scale of its revolt. There is an outright refusal to accept the Greek levels of misery that the eurozone and the right-wing government of prime minister Mariano Rajoy are trying to force down their throats.

As €65 billion of cuts were announced in the Spanish parliament (the biggest cuts since the fall of the Franco dictatorship), workers, young people, and the unemployed followed the road taken days earlier by the Spanish miners (see below) and took to the streets.

"Hands up, this is a robbery!" yelled the protesters as a massive demonstration, estimated at 800,000 strong, wound its way through the streets of Madrid. Placards read: "There isn't a shortage of money - there are too many thieves," and "we will march until you resign".

This was one of more than 80 trade union-called demonstrations

that took place across Spain on 19 July, mobilising millions. In addition there was a 'long march' by hundreds of the unemployed that reached Madrid on the day of the demonstration, along with countless other protests.

Fightback

The revolt is spreading across many sections of Spanish society, with even the judges threatening to take strike action. Delegations of the police took part in the demonstrations, protesting against falling wages. Other groups of on-duty police removed their helmets and lowered their riot shields in solidarity with the protesters.

At the same time, terrified by the anger against all the capitalist parties, the buildings of parliament, the government party - the PP - and the opposition - PSOE - were all surrounded by armed police, who fired rubber bullets at demonstrators.

But repression will not prevent the revolt that is developing in Spain. The demonstrations on 19 July showed that a 48-hour general strike would receive massive support, as the next stage of the battle to bring down the Rajoy government.

At the same time an alternative is

needed to the pro-austerity capitalist parties. It is necessary to make preparations for a 48-hour general strike as part of a broad-based struggle to bring down the PP government. The current pro-austerity regime should be replaced by a government of workers and poor, which should introduce the following demands:

- No to the payment of the debt! Nationalise the banks under democratic working class control and implement capital controls to prevent a flight of capital. Introduce a state monopoly of foreign trade

- For a massive emergency programme of public investment to create jobs and massively expand public services

- Nationalise the commanding heights of the economy under democratic workers' control and management, to begin socialist planning of the economy

- For an international alternative starting from an international struggle! For a one-day general strike of the "bailed out" countries as a step towards a European-wide general strike!

- No to the capitalist euro and EU! Fight for an alternative European confederation of free and democratic socialist republics!

Miners light up Madrid and show the way to struggle!

John Hird

CWI Spain

Thousands of coal miners arrived in Madrid on 10 July, completing another march on the capital as part of the struggle to defend their jobs.

They were greeted by thousands of workers and youth from Madrid who poured onto the streets to express their solidarity. Firefighters escorted the miners through Madrid, stripping off in front of the parliament to show their solidarity!

On the same day that the miners arrived, president Rajoy and the right-wing PP government announced a revised vicious cuts budget.

The miners of Asturias and other regions brought the class struggle to Rajoy's door and cut short his Euro Cup feel-good factor. Indeed, David Villa, Barcelona and Spanish footballer is tweeting his support for the miners and their struggle.

The arrival of the miners in Madrid

has been like a catharsis for other groups of workers under attack, like firefighters, teachers and local government workers.

Even the mainstream newspaper El Pais admits that the idea of "lucha obrera" (workers' struggle) is taking hold. But generally the Spanish media continues to play a lamentable role.

Falsehoods

The government press publishes lies and misinformation about the miners. According to ABC, the miners have salaries of €2,100 a month and the mines are so safe that women miners can go to work in high heels! They have also wasted the millions in subsidies they have received and, of course, the old chestnut, the miners are violent.

In fact, miners receive an average salary of between €1,000 and €1,500 a month for what is still a very dangerous job. The police get about €1,900. All industry is subsidi-

dised in Spain, including transport and agriculture. Why single out the miners whose industry has only received about 1% of the total paid out in subsidies?

Spanish banks recently got a €100 billion bailout - where is that money now?

The subsidies paid to the mining industry have been misspent by the private mining companies and local and regional governments. They should have been investing in improved infrastructure and job creation. No one can really account for where the money has gone.

As far as violence is concerned, what is more violent than the destruction of 8,000 direct mining jobs, another 30,000 indirectly and whole communities destroyed?

The miners are precisely being singled out for what they represent, including their history and tradition, as many Spanish workers instinctively understand.

Rajoy's only response to the demands of the miners has been to

mobilise national police and the civil guard which is a provocation to the mining communities.

The politicians are living in denial. Esperanza Aguirre, the president of Madrid, denied the miners' march was large!

As the miners were demonstrating, Rajoy announced an increase in VAT of 3% and a reduction in unemployment pay to 50% of what unemployed workers have paid into the social security system. Rajoy said this should 'encourage' the unemployed to find work. But there are five million on the dole!

The battle lines are now clearer. The government is acting exclusively for big business.

Their only policy is to make the poor and working class pay for the capitalist crisis. But the Spanish miners have shone a light and shown the whole of the working class the way to struggle.

See www.socialistworld.net for the full version of this article

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:



CWI summer school: 'Ungovernable' Europe enters economic depression

Greece and Spain to fore in Europe's deepening political, economic and social crisis.

Kevin Parslow, Socialist Party, (CWI, England and Wales)



India: Maruti Suzuki workers' struggle

100 workers arrested, over 1,200 police deployed in area.

Anand Kumar, New Socialist Alternative, (CWI, India) Bangalore



China: Economic crunch adds to regime's woes

Overcapacity and rising debt burden limits government's policy options.

Vincent Kolo from the chinaworker.info website

Kick private profiteers out of the NHS

Exposed: the real threat of privatisation

A leaked letter to doctors from a Coventry hospital chief executive has exposed the reality of allowing the private sector into the NHS.

Outrageously BMI Meriden Hospital chief executive Bernie Creaven ordered the delaying of NHS services in the hope that patients would pay to have private treatment. The hospital charges £8,500 for a hip replacement while the NHS cost is around £5,500.

Creaven wrote: "the lack of differentiation [between NHS and private patients] has had a negative effect on our private patient referrals." She demands that delays of up to eight weeks be implemented for NHS treatments!

Dave Nellist, former Coventry Socialist Party councillor (1998 - 2012), with a record of opposing all privatisation, comments:

"BMI Meriden Hospital's chief executive is just following the logic of a private company - that making profits comes first, second and third!

Socialists in Coventry opposed privatisation through PFI in the 1990s when the new Walsgrave Hospital was being planned, and we opposed the incubus of a private, profit-making hospital (BMI Meri-



Lives are being put at risk through privatisation photo Paul Mattsson

den) being planted right at the heart of Walsgrave.

The only way to make sure that clinical need is what determines speed of treatment is to take the profit motive completely out of the NHS, by taking over firms such as BMI Meriden, who have 70 hospitals across the country like the one in Coventry, and cancelling all PFI deals. Walsgrave Hospital is now one of the most expensive PFI deals

in history; 15 years ago the capital cost of the rebuilt hospital was said to be £174 million - by the end of the 35-year contract the real cost will be over £3 billion!

Labour stopped opposing PFI 15 years ago. We need to build a new broad-based mass party, rooted in the organisations and communities of the working class, that can fight to return the NHS to the needs of ordinary people."

What we say

- Axe the Health and Social Care Act. For a publicly funded service, free at the point of use, to meet everyone's health needs
- End big business profiteering from the NHS. Scrap the costly and dangerous PFI schemes. Cancel all PFI debts
- Take all health services and buildings back from big business and place them under public ownership. Publicly fund and integrate them with the rest of the NHS
- Nationalise the pharmaceutical and medical supply industries and private health providers, with compensation only on the basis of proven need. Bring them under democratic working class control and management
- Abolish Foundation Trusts. For democratic control of local health services including by elected health workers and community representatives
- End NHS job losses and low pay
- For a massive trade union-led struggle to defend the NHS, including a national demonstration and strike action
- For a new mass workers' party to defend the NHS and fight cuts and privatisation
- For socialist policies and a democratic planned economy to end poverty, bad housing, unemployment, pollution and inequality - the biggest killers and causes of ill-health

Virgin vultures swoop on vulnerable people's services

Jim Thomson
Chair of Exeter Anti-Cuts Alliance

Richard Branson's Virgin multinational won the bid to deliver NHS and social care services to young people in Devon. This profit-seeking company will run frontline services in a deal worth up to £130 million.

Private companies delivering care to vulnerable people is abhorrent, but this move could open the floodgates to the further slicing up of the NHS, with private companies able to pick and choose which service they want to run.

These companies could have little or no experience in healthcare. Privatisation simply transfers wealth from the state to big business, as has been shown by the G4S Olympic security scandal - with the taxpayer picking up the bill. So not only is privatisation of NHS services, like that in Devon, dangerous and disgusting, it is also ideological and unfair.

The situation is made even worse by the 19-trust pay cartel, South West Pay Consortium, which wants to drive down health wages across south-west England. The Consortium plans to smash nationally nego-



Say no to Virgin Healthcare! A protest in Leeds photo the Socialist

tiated pay and conditions. Workers could face 15% pay cuts along with longer working hours and cuts to annual leave.

The coalition government is destroying all our public services and

attacking the working class. We need to fight every cut, through community-based anti-cuts organisations, trade union industrial action and through a socialist, political alternative.

Leicester: not one cut in the NHS

Andrew Walton
Unison rep (personal capacity)

"My daughter wouldn't be here if it wasn't for the heart unit at Glenfield Hospital," Leicester Socialist Party members were told while campaigning against the closure of the local children's heart unit.

The government wants to cut Britain's specialist heart units from eleven to seven. Acutely ill children would have to travel miles to their nearest surgical centre (in our case Birmingham - a 40 mile trip). They also want to get rid of a blood oxygenating treatment service for children.

Experts warned that lives will be lost as a result. A children's intensive care consultant warned we could also lose the surgery service for adults born with heart problems. These services are used by people across the East Midlands and beyond.

The charity, Heart Link, opposes this closure but its campaign has been based on saving Leicester's

unit at the cost of other centres. The Socialist Party opposes closure of any children's heart units. These vital services should be fully funded by the government, and should not have to rely on charitable donations.

Unison, the main trade union at Leicester's hospitals, has organised a protest but now needs to build support for action among health workers and in the wider community, if necessary, to save surgical centres under threat.

People are disgusted at these cuts. In an expression of support for the Socialist Party's position 40 copies of the Socialist were sold at a campaign stall.

Despite its limitations, the campaign to keep Leicester, Leeds and London Royal Brompton units open may possibly win a reprieve. Public pressure may force the government to refer the decision to an independent review body. Fighting for services can win concessions in the short term. But our longer-term message is that no cuts in the NHS are acceptable!

Kirkby campaigners get support

Karen Seymour

Kirkby Hospital in Nottinghamshire provides valuable care to, among others, dementia and stroke patients. Now it is proposed that these and other services are moved to other nearby hospitals.

A 'consultation' period runs until September. There were sharp exchanges of views at the well-attend-

ed meetings I went to.

People can see this as more about helping Kings Mill Hospital, near Mansfield (a PFI project, where some services will relocate) pay off its debts, than improving patient care.

Those wanting the changes dress them up as 'improvements', not considering, for example, how people can afford the extra bus fares or extortionate car parking charges at the

other sites.

Socialist Party campaigners in Kirkby met people who were very concerned that their well-regarded local hospital could have services cut. As one woman said to me: "There'll be nothing left in Kirkby soon!" Showing the support for the Socialist Party's programme campaigners sold 42 papers and got backing for a protest demonstration we are organising for 9 August.

Olympic protest as South London Healthcare trust forced into administration

Queen Elizabeth hospital (QEH) in Woolwich is one of three hospitals in the South London Healthcare Trust that has been sent into administration due to massive Private Finance Initiative (PFI) repayment charges.

But QEH is also in the middle of the Olympics - all around the hospital are temporary constructions ready for the shooting competitions.

While the eyes of the world are on the Games, local campaigners will be protesting at the threats to the hospital.

They are demanding that all the hospitals remain open with no cuts and that the PFI deals are cancelled.

• Demonstration Saturday 4 August 11am, Queen Elizabeth Hospital, Stadium Road, London, SE18 4QH.

1972: dockers face down the Tory government

“Britain came within inches of a general strike”

Roger Thomas

“**A**rise Ye Workers” read the banner as five London dockers were carried shoulder high from Pentonville Prison in London. The date was 26 July 1972. Five days earlier the “Pentonville Five”, Con Clancy, Tony Merrick, Bernie Steer, Vic Turner, and Derek Watkins, had been imprisoned for defying the Tory government’s anti-union laws.

Edward Heath’s Tory government suffered a crushing defeat brought about by strikes which swept the country. Britain came within inches of a general strike which might well have rivalled that of France in 1968. Heath’s government was humbled and its attempt to use the courts to control workers’ activity shattered by mass defiance.

Industrial Relations Act

The dockers’ fight revolved around the Industrial Relations Act, a key part of the Heath government’s plans to control not just wages but, through the National Industrial Relations Court (NIRC), the activity of the unions and individual workers. The NIRC had the power to fine workers and unions.

Dockers were locked in a fight for jobs and against the effects of containerisation, which transferred many dock jobs inland to be done by workers on lower pay. Between 1966 and 1972 20,000 dockers’ jobs had been lost.

This struggle and the government’s attempt to undermine the dock labour scheme led to the development of the National Port Shop Stewards Committee. Action consisted of unofficial strikes and picketing of the container depots.

On 26 January a one-day unofficial strike was supported by 25,000 and on 7 March 14,000 London dockers struck. The main dockers’ union, the TGWU, was on the front line against NIRC and its members’ actions brought the first fine.

The TUC policy was for non-registration with the NIRC court and non-attendance at hearings. But this policy was coming under strain especially when a union of the TGWU’s size risked fines or loss of its funds. The TUC felt that it could not continue to support the TGWU when faced with threats to its own funds and those of other member unions.

TGWU members expected the national leadership to launch a national strike but they continued to drag their heels.

Strikes

Meanwhile on 1 May, Southampton dockers struck against fines while Preston and Merseyside dockers struck to celebrate May Day.

The National Ports Shop Stewards extended the action to two transport firms in each port. In Hull this led to another court case which Walter Cunningham, chair of the Hull Stewards, refused to attend. A meeting in Hull saw him refuse to pay the fine, risking jail.

With the national unofficial campaign extended, London dock stewards had selected Dagenham Cold Storage and UK Cold Storage to picket. However few drivers were honouring the ban. It was therefore decided to picket the depots directly.

Picketing began at Chobham Farm in Stratford, east London, where lorries turned away from



Bernie Steer addresses the crowds on his release from prison photos TUC library collections

the port had been diverted. A mass picket of 1,000 started on 6 June.

Soon the number of lorries crossing the picket line were reduced and the company offered to do a deal with the union to take on registered dockers and gradually phase out non-dockers who were paid considerably less. The stewards insisted there should be no job losses among the existing workers.

The Chobham Farm drivers and

Between 1966 and 1972 20,000 dockers’ jobs had been lost

warehousemen - also in TGWU - didn’t believe this and went to the NIRC for an order to stop the dockers picketing. The court obliged, naming the port shop stewards and three dockers but not the TGWU.

Militant (the Socialist’s predecessor) at the time suggested a conference of dockers and Chobham Farm workers on the issue of containerisation to work out a common policy in opposition to the employers.

Unjust!

The Court of Appeal, anxious to try to uphold the legal system’s increasingly fragile claim to impartiality, overturned an earlier NIRC judgement and reversed the fines on the union saying that a union wasn’t responsible for its stewards’ actions and that it was unjust for the union to be penalised simply because it was not registered.

Government minister Robert Carr called the decision “a torpedo below the waterline and effectively destroyed government policy.” Redress could now only come against individual workers.

The NIRC now took out an order against the three pickets, threatening them with imprisonment for contempt of court if they failed to attend the court by 16 June. The national stewards met and called for indefinite strike action if any of the three were imprisoned.

Strikes broke out across the country involving 35,000 dockers. These were joined by car workers at Long-



The demo outside the prison the day before the dockers’ release

bridge. On the Friday the stewards joined the mass picket at Chobham Farm to await the court official who was to make the arrests. But no arrests took place.

A shadowy figure - the Official Solicitor - enters the scene. He instructed the TGWU to apply to the Court of Appeal to have the orders set aside on a technicality for lack of evidence to justify imprisonment.

Judge Denning explained “we were influenced by the state of the country, by the realisation that there would be a general strike, which would paralyse the whole nation”. This merely delayed the inevitable by a couple of weeks.

At Chobham Farm a deal was signed to take on registered dockers while the existing workforce were given alternative jobs.

On 4 July Midland Cold Storage applied to the NIRC for an order to stop picketing. The court summoned seven dockers to appear. They didn’t attend so a court order banned them from picketing or encouraging others to picket the company.

Arrests

They ignored the order and continued picketing. The dockers were convinced that the government was now on the road to confrontation. The company returned to court and on Friday 21 July Donaldson issued warrants for the arrest of five dockers for contempt

of court. One group descended on Fleet Street, home of the national press. Through a series of impromptu meetings the papers were brought to a halt.

Across the country around 90,000 workers were on indefinite strike by the time the five were released on 26 July. 250,000 had come out for one or two days and the South Wales miners’ executive had agreed to call its members out.

A demonstration to the prison attracted 30,000 workers.

In the light of this revolutionary wave the TUC, having argued against any solidarity action, was forced to call a one day national stoppage for the following Monday.

Across the country around 90,000 workers were on indefinite strike by the time the five were released on 26 July. 250,000 had come out for one or two days and the South Wales miners’ executive had agreed to call its members out

On 26 July the Law Lords overturned the Court of Appeal’s decision and ruled that the TGWU was after all responsible for the actions of its members.

Thus the case against the five dockers collapsed and they were released from prison. Ironically they were imprisoned for contempt and had never purged that contempt. The decision was rushed through at the start of the summer recess by a ruling class in terror at the prospect of a developing general strike.

The release was met by jubilant scenes. The next day the official national dock strike began.

The Industrial Relations Act had been defeated by mass action that forced a reluctant TUC to threaten a one-day general strike - though only when it became clear that the dockers’ militancy had won and the Pentonville Five would be released. There are many lessons that can be learned from this militant episode in the class war from 40 years ago.

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SAVE OUR JOBS: WE NEED A 24-HOUR GENERAL STRIKE



Lobby the TUC in Brighton on 9 September

Wyllie Hume
Sheffield Socialist Party

Since I finished my training as a social worker in Sheffield I have been out of work. But I am not alone, 40% of newly qualified social workers are unemployed and with the Con-Dems' cuts becoming harsher and harsher, the prospect of finding work looks bleak.

I took my first day of strike action ever on 30

November as a student member of Unison because I was angry at how the cuts were making helping people, as a student social worker, impossible. I was worried about finding work in the future as they were laying off social workers in Rotherham where I was working.

On that day there was a great sense of confidence among everyone on the picket lines and on the demonstrations. There was a feeling that we could beat the government. But then that was it! No more action was taken. Everyone knew it would take more than one day to

win but the right-wing trade union leaders had other ideas and were quick to sell out.

We need a general strike to bring down the government. We need to strike to defend public services, protect public sector workers' jobs and to demand job creation.

But it's not just the public sector that's under attack - private sector workers are also facing job cuts, pay cuts and pension cuts. We need to show this government that we will not be divided and a 24-hour general strike is needed to do this.

That's why I'm taking part in the National Shop Stewards Network lobby of the TUC conference in Brighton on 9 September - to demand the trade union leadership listens to its membership and calls a general strike that can bring down this rotten government.

Assemble Sunday 9 September 1pm at the Level, Union Road, Brighton. Speakers at the rally include Bob Crow, RMT, Steve Gillan, POA and Mark Serwotka, PCS. For updates and transport information see www.shopstewards.net

What we stand for

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

As capitalism dominates the globe, the struggle for genuine socialism must be international. The Socialist Party is part of the Committee for a Workers' International (CWI), a socialist international that organises in over 40 countries.

Our demands include:
PUBLIC SERVICES

- No to ALL cuts in jobs, public services and benefits. Defend our pensions.
- No to privatisation and the Private Finance Initiative (PFI). Renationalise all privatised utilities and services, with compensation paid only on the basis of proven need.
- Fully fund all services and run them under accountable, democratic committees that include representatives of service workers and users.
- Free, publicly run, good quality education,

available to all at any age. Abolish university tuition fees now and introduce a living grant. No to academies and 'Free schools'!

- A socialist NHS to provide for everyone's health needs - free at the point of use and under democratic control. Kick out private contractors!
- Keep council housing publicly owned. For a massive building programme of publicly owned housing, on an environmentally sustainable basis, to provide good quality homes with low rents.

WORK AND INCOME

- Trade union struggle to increase the minimum wage to £8 an hour without exemptions as an immediate step towards £10 an hour. For an annual increase in the minimum wage linked to average earnings.
- All workers, including part-timers, temps, casual and migrant workers to have trade union rates of pay, employment protection, and sickness and holiday rights from day one of employment.
- An immediate 50% increase in the state retirement pension, as a step towards a living pension.
- Reject 'Workfare'. For the right to decent benefits, education, training, or a job, without compulsion.
- Scrap the anti-trade union laws! For fighting

trade unions, democratically controlled by their members. Full-time union officials to be regularly elected and receive no more than a worker's wage. Support the National Shop Stewards Network.

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

ENVIRONMENT

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

RIGHTS

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

NEW WORKERS' PARTY

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

SOCIALISM AND INTERNATIONALISM

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