

## Paralympics, Atos scandal, Remploy closures...

# CON-DEMS WIN GOLD FOR

# HYPOCRISY!

**Les Woodward**

National convenor, Remploy trade union consortium

Millions are watching the 2012 Paralympics. The Games aim to inspire young disabled people to take up sport, compete at the highest level and illustrate to the world that having a disability doesn't mean that a full, active and challenging life cannot be lived.

The ethos that despite being disabled, a person should be able to fulfil their own potential, through holding down a job and being a productive member of society, was also the ethos that eventually led to the setting up of the first Remploy factory in 1946.

The forerunner of the Paralympics started in 1948 in Stoke Mandeville Hospital as a way of using sporting competition as a form of healing and therapy for disabled ex-service personnel, many of whom were recovering from injuries suffered in World War Two.

2012 will be a memorable year for disabled people who will be part of the Paralympics, either as spectators or participants. It will also be a memorable year for the disabled workers of Remploy, but the memories will be poles apart.

The disabled athletes, their families and fans, will have joy and excitement. They will look back on 2012 as the year they came to the Games, and left with souve-

nirs and full photograph albums to record every joyous second.

The disabled Remploy workers and their able-bodied comrades, however, will have bad memories. Their factories, which have provided good quality employment for the best part of 70 years, will shut their gates for the last time. They will head, not for gold but for the dole and a life of poverty and deprivation as they get dumped on the scrapheap.

This will be then vastly exacerbated by the Con-Dems' cold cruelty: with benefits slashed and denied financial and other support to live independently, disabled people are also being demonised as "scroungers", and abuse towards them is rocketing.

In the Con-Dems' arrogance, brought about by the 'Born to Rule' attitude that they have all grown up with, they have ignored the big questions that will be on every working class disabled person's lips, especially if they are ex-Remploy workers or victims of Atos, sickeningly one of the prime sponsors of the Olympics and Paralympics.

Why is it that disabled people are en-

couraged to compete on the field of sport, partake as competitors in activities from which able bodied athletes are segregated, while being employed in a workplace alongside other disabled people in a supported environment is not acceptable? The government, some charities and, to their shame, some trade unions seem to find having fun together acceptable, but not working together.

Why should disabled people have to suffer the stress of the 'work capability' assessment administered by Atos? The sole aim of this cruel process seems to be to push as many people as possible off sickness benefits, as part of the £18 billion welfare cuts.

- No Remploy closures. The factories should be run for disabled people, by disabled people, where people with all forms of disability can fulfil their employment potential in the short, medium and long term.
- Fight all welfare cuts. Kick Atos out of the system. End the work capability assessment. A living wage and fulfilling work opportunities for all without compulsion.

## FIGHT ALL CUTS!



photo Paul Mattsson

"The TUC march on 20 October will be a massive display of unity. We need to ensure we use this to continue to build the fight against the cuts, and not only march together but strike together as well."

**Mark Serwotka,**  
general secretary  
of the Public and  
Commercial Services  
union

Hear Mark speak at the National Shop Stewards Network lobby of the TUC on 9 September. Demand the TUC uses the 20 October demonstration to build for a 24-hour general strike against the government's austerity measures. See pages 2, 6 & 7

# the Socialist

The paper of the Socialist Party. Issue 731.

The Socialist, PO Box 24697, London E11 1YD Registered as a newspaper at the Post Office. Published by Socialist Publications, printed by Newsfax International. ISSN 1366-9621

## Lobby the TUC for a 24-hour general strike

### Time to rise up!

Committee member of  
'Shafted by AEI'

Britain's self-appointed 'elite' has declared war on the ordinary people of this country. From self-serving politicians seeking office for their own gain, to greedy bankers wrecking homes, jobs and lives in pursuit of the almighty pound, to smug media bosses flouting the law and casting aside every shred of decency in order to swell their own coffers. We are being lied to, ripped off and viewed with utter contempt by these people who have come to believe that this is their nation, to be run for their benefit. You and me are mere beasts of burden to be worked to death then cast aside.

I did not always think like this. I was in steady employment with the same company for over 30 years

until that company chose to invoke a little-known piece of legislation called a Company Voluntary Arrangement in order to sack half the workforce without notice, consultation, appeal or payment.

125 of us, most with decades of loyal service, were cast on the scrapheap. We were replaced by recruits on short-term contracts, lower wages and poorer conditions.

This government condones every attack on working people while itself continuing to wantonly hack at every aspect of the lives of 'ordinary' people. No sane person sits idly by while everything he or she holds dear is torn apart by the enemy. The time has come to rise up.

Lobby the TUC for a 24-hour general strike. Support every action against these brutal cuts and show our attackers that we will take no more!

### United we stand, divided we fall

Amalia

The National Shop Stewards Network (NSSN) is calling a lobby of the TUC conference on 9 September, to advocate the need for a 24-hour strike for both public and private sector workers.

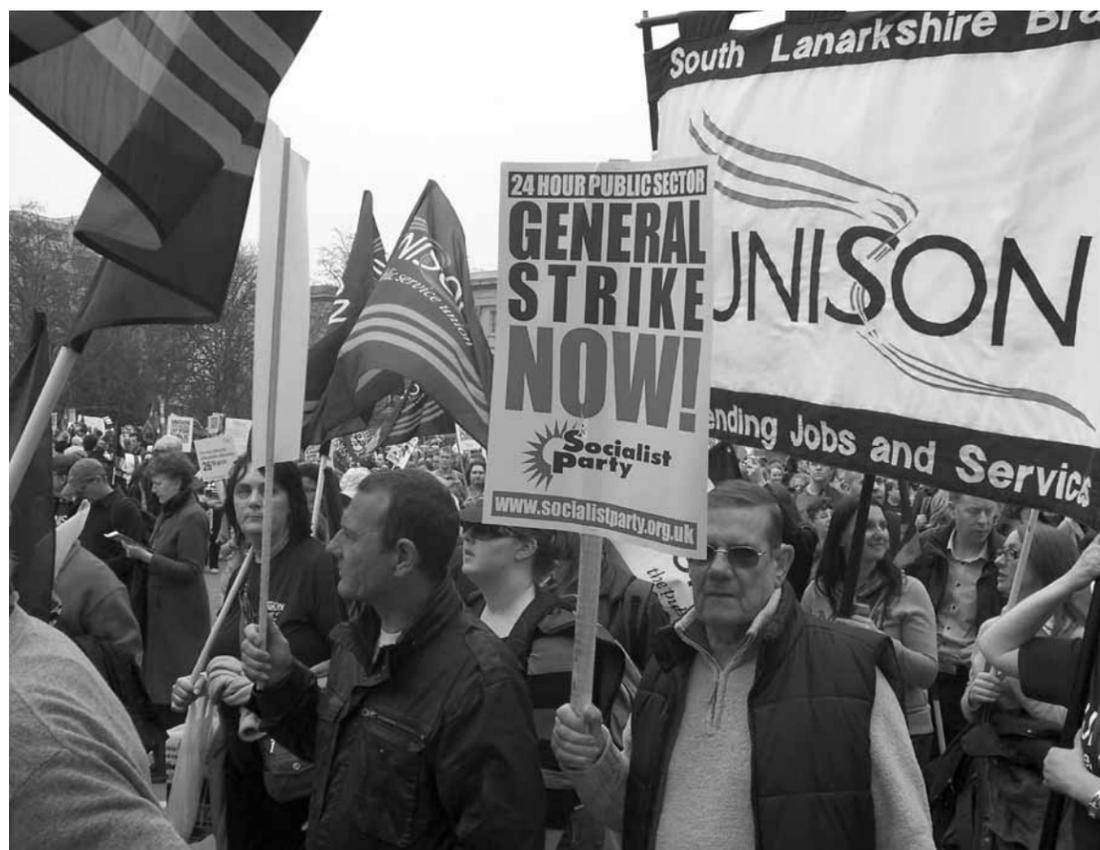
This initiative is crucial for the building of a labour movement that will be strong enough to fight back against the government's austerity measures. The organisation of such a fight back doesn't only concern the workers in Britain - these measures are more or less "copied and pasted" and implemented by governments all over Europe.

Similar policies like the ones in Britain are being carried out in countries such as Spain, Italy, Portugal, Ireland, Greece, but also my own country, Cyprus. Even before the implementation of any memo-

randum by the Troika [the international financial taskmasters: IMF, ECB and EU] workers had enormous attacks on their wages and the right to strike.

I think that the NSSN's initiative is absolutely correct and necessary. If a unity of public and private sector workers is achieved it would be a huge step forward. But it is also crucial to link up all struggles with those of the other workers in Europe. Not only is a 24-hour strike necessary in Britain, but the TUC should also call the whole European trade union movement to join a coordinated day of strike against austerity and cutbacks.

The bosses and governments have joined forces to attack our rights. We too should unite, fight back and write a victorious page in the history of the labour movement in defence of our jobs, wages, pensions and public services.



The demo on 26 March showed the possibilities but we need to build for a 24-hour general strike photo Alison Hill

## Why I am going to Brighton

Alec Price

I was doing a gardening job at a finance high-flyer's 'house' a little while ago. Beautiful grounds, outdoor heated swimming pool (never used), expensive cars on the drive. I reckon we are talking in excess of a million pounds to buy it. One of the workers at the house explained that the property was bought with the owner's annual bonus. Not sure what the salary was.

A self-employed gardener can earn around £10,000 - £20,000 a year if they work hard and get the jobs. If I didn't pay tax, buy food, tools and have to live somewhere I could buy that place in less than a century.

Being self-employed wasn't a

choice I wanted to make. I'd been to uni and got the debt to prove it. I was applying for jobs.

Getting a job used to be easy. I'd walk down the high street giving out my CVs and before you knew it I'd have a job. Minimum wage, bad hours etc. But a job. That doesn't seem to happen anymore.

So I went self-employed and found my own work - where I could. I'm off the unemployment stats but I don't feel much better off. I can't go on strike but I support workers when they do.

The TUC needs to realise something though; it's not just their members that they are defending. It's the whole of the working class, including those who can't go on strike. The youth, the elderly, the

disabled and those like me who have ended up self-employed through lack of work.

I'll be at the lobby of the TUC on 9 September to demand a 24-hour general strike, which I will support and campaign for. It's the only way to make ourselves heard and stop a bleak future.

#### Lobby the TUC for a 24-hour general strike

Assemble 1pm at The Level park - Union Road, Brighton BN2 for march at 1.30pm to Brighton (conference) Centre for rally

For details of travel arrangements see [www.shopstewards.net](http://www.shopstewards.net)

## East Midlands: Save our ambulance service

Charlie Taylor, Derby

East Midlands Ambulance Service (EMAS) is in a period of consultation over proposals that would mean the closure of around 60 stations. They are to be replaced with 13 super stations and 'standby points'. These will probably be portable cabins or shared premises with the police or fire service.

The chief executive says this plan will improve response time performance, provide better welfare for staff and allow EMAS to operate within the budget.

The reality is this is a cost cutting exercise. The current stations require repairs estimated to cost

£12 million. Also, if EMAS does not achieve its target to reach 75% of life-threatening emergency calls within eight minutes then the Trust faces a potential fine of £2.5 million and it risks not achieving Foundation Trust status.

When EMAS lost the contracts for patient transport services, a third of the ambulance service was privatised. This was done under Labour but it was in the spirit of the Con-Dems' vision for as much privatisation as possible and as many cuts as they can get away with.

The hub and spoke approach will mean hubs in high density areas. For Derbyshire the plan is for one in Chesterfield and one in Derby. This means some staff will have to travel further to work. Considering

some staff do 12-hour shifts this increases the risk of fatigue.

Crews working in the rural areas will have to travel much further to collect and return their ambulance. For example, New Mills crews will have to travel to Chesterfield to pick up the ambulance. Staff that live in New Mills will spend up to an hour travelling to pick up their ambulance. This puts patients at risk.

It is also likely that when the crew pick up their ambulance in Chesterfield, they will end up responding to an emergency in that area. That is because the super stations are in high density areas.

This is how the Trust is probably calculating the 5% improvement in response times. They are putting

more crews where there are more calls at the expense of the rural and smaller urban areas.

OK for the people of Chesterfield and Derby and bad for everyone else in Derbyshire.

The same goes for Nottinghamshire, Lincolnshire, Northamptonshire and Leicestershire/Rutland. What EMAS desperately needs is more crews on the road but there is no mention of this in the proposals.

Communities who are not in the close vicinity of a hub will campaign to save their station. This is already happening in areas like Bassetlaw, Ripley and Hinckley.

In Ripley, Derbyshire, Socialist Party members have been campaigning against the closure of our

local station. Reflecting support for this we sold 23 copies of the Socialist in one hour and collected several names of people who were interested in setting up a broad campaign to save the station.

As well as local campaigns there is a need for a region-wide coordination to say no to all the cuts. We must resist any attempt to pit town against town.

An east midlands demonstration against all attacks on the ambulance service, linking up with other campaigns in defence of the health service must be called by the trade unions.

• Ripley campaign meeting, Wednesday 5 September 7.30pm at the Pear Tree Pub, High Street Ripley. (opposite the co-op).

# Gove stole our exam grades!

## GCSE changes to prepare for more academies

**Derek McMillan**  
Mid Sussex Socialist Party

Newspaper headlines about GCSE results are predictable. If the results show improvement it is "proof" that standards are slipping. It is nothing of the sort. This year's results give the lie to that assertion.

The results are worse this year because Gove has moved the goalposts. Raising the GCSE A\* - C benchmark from 35% to 40% is a dirty political manoeuvre.

English results have been hit particularly hard by the last-minute shifting of the goalposts leaving teachers who had reliably been able to predict 'C'-grades for their students having to console Year 11s who have instead been awarded a 'D'-grade. Pupils who would have passed are now labelled as 'failures' on the whim of a Tory minister. If he raises the benchmark high enough nobody will pass. No doubt he would be delighted because then every school would be a 'failure' and could be forced to become an academy!

And who does Gove blame for this manufactured 'failure'? The teachers of course. Perversely he claims that this is further evidence for his educational policy of removing the requirement for Qualified Teacher Status from academies so any Tom, Dick or Harriet can teach.

The policy is clearly aimed at undermining teaching unions by flooding schools with underpaid, unqualified teachers. The Department for Education and Skills (DfES) dishonestly claims that this will enable "brilliant" people to come into schools to replace all the teachers. And presumably they would stop being "brilliant" if they trained as teachers and were paid a teacher's wage.

Apparently that is how things work on planet Gove. The unions need to introduce him to the real world.

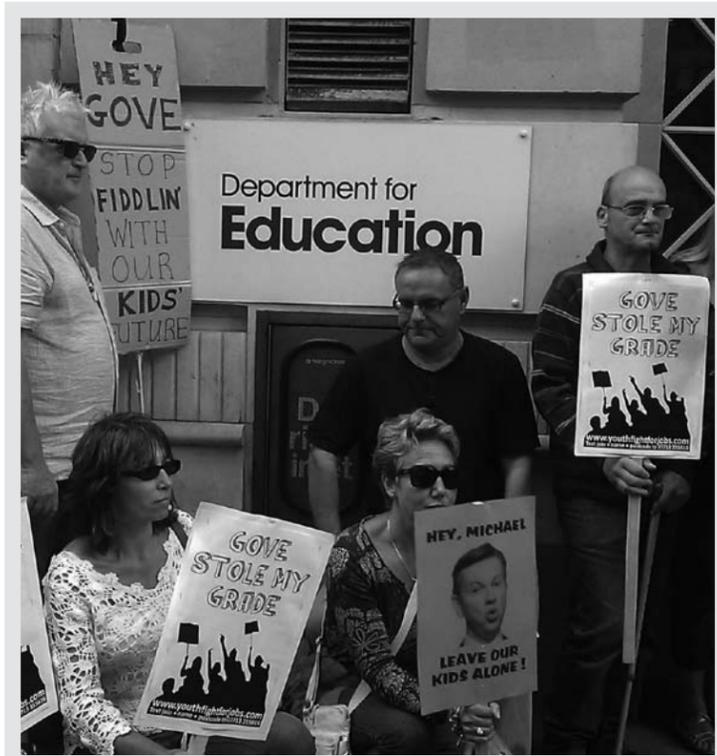


photo Neil Cafferky

### Protest

At a rapidly organised protest outside DfES 50 teachers and parents loudly opposed the GCSE regrading. The protest was called by London National Union of Teachers (NUT) NEC and Socialist Party member Martin Powell-Davies on the initiative of Lewisham NUT members.

In the tube station after the protest one worker from the DfES approached Socialist Party members who were holding "Gove stole my grades" placards. Nodding to the placards he said; "We have an even lower opinion of him than you. We have to see him everyday!"

Martin said: "Many students' hopes have been dashed. Many

schools also now face the threat of forced privatisation as they struggle to meet Gove's imposed 40% GCSE benchmark. Many teachers will also fear the threat of 'capability' proceedings and loss of performance-pay awards as a result of this scandal.

"Behind this disgraceful gerrymandering of the GCSE results stands Michael Gove. This unfair downgrading of students fits his dangerous agenda perfectly - to blame teachers for 'failing' students, to dissuade young people from pursuing further education and, above all, to provide an excuse for turning even more schools into unaccountable academies while dismantling elected local authorities."

# Crisis services handed over to charity food banks

Many councils are preparing to invest in charity-run food banks because of expected demand for crisis services as a result of devastating welfare cuts. The Socialist has previously reported on the rapidly rising number of food banks in Britain - feeding people struggling to get by with rocketing food and energy prices along with pay freezes, job losses and benefit cuts. 128,697 families were given emergency food supplies by charity organisations last year.

It is an indictment of local councils that they are willing to simply direct more and more of their residents to these limited services rather

than stand up and fight for the council to be able to not cut jobs and services and instead provide basic support. This is a letter sent to the Guardian newspaper on the issue:

Once again The Guardian repeats the line that 'councils will no longer be able to' fund another vital service, this time to maintain emergency crisis loans (Councils set to invest in charity-run food banks to help families in crisis, 22 August). It's not a case of can't, but won't.

Referring to Labour-controlled Lambeth you say that "it will not be able to afford cash loans - as happens now - because its social fund budget is being cut" when such spending is devolved to councils from next April. Instead, like other councils, they will fund food banks and other charities offering what your article acknowledges will be inadequate, stigmatising and un-

reliable US-style "low cost help in kind".

But why don't Labour councils declare now that they will spend what is needed on emergency crisis loans - and maintain existing levels of council tax benefit support for that matter - and present the bill for meeting the funding gap back to the government? That's what Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC) councillors would do.

Labour in Westminster could help by pledging that an incoming government would reimburse councils if, for example, they were to use their reserves, or their prudential borrowing powers, to avoid these devastating cuts.

These are choices - and Labour is making the wrong one in not resisting the Con-Dems' rolling back of the welfare state.

**Clive Heemskerck, Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition national nominating officer**

# Them...



### One person's tragedy...

In issue 730 of the Socialist, Iain Dalton reported on the world food crisis. But evidently, crops failing and the resulting unaffordable food prices and potential starvation isn't such a tragedy for everyone. The director of agriculture at commodity trading company Glencore, Chris Mahoney, said: "The environment is a good one. High prices, lots of volatility, a lot of dislocation, tightness, a lot of arbitrage opportunities [taking advantage of differences in prices in different markets]. We will be able to provide the world with solutions... and that should also be good for Glencore." As Iain said in his article "While the food industry is controlled by private companies for profit and speculators control prices, millions will continue to starve or suffer malnutrition."

shouldn't criticise too much - their councils are only planning to build an average of 100 - less than 34 a year. Considering there are millions of people waiting on council house waiting lists and millions of others desperately struggling to survive in the private rented sector, all three parties' plans are vastly insufficient. We need investment in a mass building programme of good quality, publicly owned, affordable homes in every area of the country.

### A Laws unto himself

David Laws has been welcomed back into the fold of the Liberal Democrat front benchers. You may have been surprised to see him back after only a little over two years. Laws infamously held his post as chief secretary to the treasury for only 17 days in 2010 when it was revealed that he had over-claimed £40,000 in parliamentary expenses for second home costs when he was renting from his partner. But all that is forgotten now. Not like the benefit claimants caught living with a partner without declaring it who face huge fines or even jail.

### Top up

£65,738 a year just isn't enough for some MPs - dozens are subsidising their parliamentary salary with money from consultancy, legal work, public speaking or company directorships. For some this means they end up with 13 times their official pay packet! 68 MPs get more than £100,000 a year from outside earnings. The top earners in the last year were Gordon Brown (£900,286 from speeches, academia and charity) and David Miliband (£410,171 from consultancy and public speaking). Not so hard to see why they seem so disconnected from the 99% and the problems we're facing!

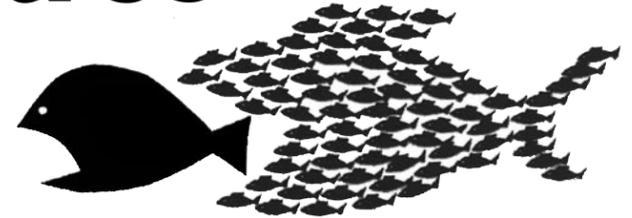
### Snail's pace

The Labour Party attacked the Tories recently for their plans (or lack thereof) for building social housing for the poorest. Disgracefully Tory councils only plan to build an average of 20 each over the next three years! But Labour

### Dirty money

You can tell a lot about a person by who their friends are. And the same is true of parties. The Tories received £440,000 from business interests of crook Asil Nadir between 1985 and 1990. Nadir then left Britain in 1993 to avoid being charged with theft but has now been jailed for ten years for stealing nearly £29 million from his company Polly Peck. Even Lord McAlpine, former Tory treasurer, recognised that the money should be returned. In fact he correctly said it should have been given back in 1993! As yet nobody seems to have acted on his suggestions...

# ...& Us



## Fight council tax benefit cuts

Becci Heagney's article in issue 729 of the Socialist accurately described the current situation regarding the changes to council tax benefit. Different councils seem to be taking different approaches, but the key thing is they are all passing on the cuts in one way or another.

Our local newspaper, the Coventry Telegraph, ran the headline 'Needy Coventry families escape council tax benefit cut.' However you did not have to read much further to see that what it actually means is that the Labour-controlled council will be cutting other services, with potentially dozens of jobs under threat. This is

not fighting the cuts, this is robbing Peter to pay Paul! So they are 'protecting' the vulnerable, by attacking slightly less vulnerable people!

Once again they have surrendered to the Tories without a fight. Socialists will campaign during the consultation period for a no cuts policy - that the cuts should be fought against, not by taking money from other services provided by the council or cutting jobs, but by organising benefit claimants, trade unions, the communities and service users in a mass campaign to demand more money from central government.

**Lance Wilkins, Coventry**



Join the fightback! Join the Socialists!

www.socialistparty.org.uk • Phone 020 8988 8777 • Text 07761 818206

# NHS: Unions must defend national pay bargaining

**Unison and Unite NHS workers**  
Poole Dorset

Poole Hospital NHS Trust is one of the 20 trusts in the South West that have signed up to the South West Pay, Terms and Conditions Consortium, the real purpose of which is to reduce the wage bill.

The Trust management aims to do this through reviewing pay bands, introducing performance related pay (except for themselves no doubt!), increasing hours worked with no extra pay, reducing sick pay and cutting holiday pay.

Newly qualified staff will also not

be allowed to progress up their pay bands through the removal of section 1.8 of the Agenda for Change pay and grading scheme.

This is based on the 'need' to reduce costs, which is driven by government demands to slash the NHS budget by a further £20 billion.

The aim of the consortium is to "reduce costs over the next three to four years and probably beyond" as stated in management's discussion document and its implementation will mean the breaking up of the Agenda for Change national pay bargaining scheme.

As a discussion document produced by Unison points out, the

break-up of Agenda for Change will create workforce instability and increase costs by hospitals who adopt the cartel's proposals. Also there will be a loss of control over the pay system at national level, with NHS Trusts in the South West devising local agreements on pay and conditions.

National pay bargaining will be seriously weakened as a result, with regional pay levels becoming the norm.

Socialist Party members armed with leaflets and petitions have spoken to staff in several hospitals and have leafleted the nurses' home at Poole Hospital. We have

had a very favourable reception, with workers taking supplies of our leaflets to deliver themselves. This has helped to back up the local union campaign.

But what has been the response of the unions nationally? Unison has taken the approach that the Agenda for Change should be defended, but has not clearly put forward a strategy for opposing the NHS bosses' proposals.

We've seen plenty of glossy leaflets, but you'll search forever to find any actual demands to protect pay and conditions. All the leaflets call for is for staff to join Unison and get involved in our campaign. But what

campaign?

There have so far been no mass meetings organised and no calls for industrial action. These should be ABCs for trade unions seriously preparing to organise resistance against this crude offensive.

We are demanding the urgent calling of mass meetings of as many staff as possible to be organised on every site with a clear commitment made that if the bosses go ahead with their plans they will face industrial action.

Socialist Party members who work for the NHS will do everything possible to build the unity that can bring this about.

## Building workers fight pay cut threat



Taking the battle to Cardiff photo Sarah Mayo

Dozens gathered at Cardiff's Royal Infirmary on 24 August to support electricians taking action against "Besna 2". This is a bosses' scheme which, if successfully forced on the sparks, would cut their pay by a third.

Rank-and-file electrician and recent Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition election candidate Andrew Wilkes led construction workers and socialists in distributing leaflets to passers-by and other

workers.

Construction company Balfour Beatty's banners with the ironic claim of "improving the image of construction" hung from site buildings.

## Local government pension scheme How did we end up worse off?

**A Coventry council worker**

All three local authority trade unions have now accepted the new-look pension scheme - LGPS 2014, with ballots in GMB, Unite and Unison all returning large majorities in favour of accepting. Council workers will have a worse pension - paying more, working longer and getting less.

Many members and activists will ask how we went from a huge day of industrial action on 30 November 2011 (N30) to where we have now accepted a deal that will see members worse off.

The union leaderships signed up to a 'Heads of Agreement' after N30 which accepted many of the very issues that we had fought against. Months and months then dragged by with little or nothing coming out about what was being negotiated.

Little wonder that members started to question whether the union leaderships were up for the fight. In Unison, branches and activists who wanted to campaign for a no vote were effectively stopped from putting their case to the members.

It was not just Unison who recommended acceptance. GMB campaigned for the deal, as did Unite. The Unite recommendation was especially disappointing given that when GMB and Unison signed up for the Heads of Agreement, Unite initially refused to do so.

The fight to reclaim our unions for the members has to be stepped up. This could be a drawn-out process. But we must take heart from what took place in the civil service union, PCS. PCS and its forerunner unions were controlled by the right wing for many years, but the Left waged a long term battle for democracy and for a fighting programme and now the PCS is one of the most active and prominent unions in the fight against austerity.

We need to defend union democracy against unelected officials who see their role as 'policing' the membership. We need genuine lay democracy. Imagine what a powerful weapon Unison and other unions could be if they had a combative approach. These are our unions, and we want them back!

Branches who think on the same lines need to coordinate. Elected

positions in the union need to be fought for and won. Our industrial strategy can't be limited to a big march and then a big day of strike action, with months or years in between!

We need to link up with all public and private sector unions for coordinated action. A 24-hour general strike would be a huge step forward to building the necessary unity - and would send a serious warning shot across the Con-Dems' bows.

Let us also remember that there are unions across the public sector that are still in the pensions battle - some of which took action on 10 May and could look to further action in the autumn.

There needs to be a discussion among Unison, Unite and GMB members about the link with the Labour Party and the way forward in terms of political representation.

Around 80% of the cuts are still to be implemented so we also need a political strategy, one which goes beyond the Labour-inspired: "cuts but a bit less severe than the Tories". The unions need to discuss the policies of nationalisation, public ownership and a socialist alternative.

## Sheffield recycling workers to resume strike action

**Alistair Tice**

Recycling workers at Sheffield council's five privatised Dump-it sites will strike again on 1-2 September.

Eight weeks after suspending their indefinite strike action against cuts in jobs, opening hours and pay, the promised talks to resolve outstanding issues have failed to deliver any more concessions.

Workers, members of the GMB union, feel that the Labour council, Veolia and Sova Recycling Ltd have been stringing them along to get through the busy summer period. In a month's time they face their working hours (and pay) being cut to only 22-23 a week throughout winter. As one worker said: "How can we live on £130 a week?"

The previous strike action did win the re-instatement of up to six workers made compulsorily redundant, but even more workers have left since and not been replaced. Promises that a bonus scheme would mean an extra £2 an hour on top of the minimum wage basic have not materialised, the bonus has only paid out 75p an hour.

And the council, committed to



On the picket line photo A. Tice

their £500,000 cuts to the recycling budget have refused to increase opening days and hours at the tips. This is despite the long queues of cars that have blocked main roads - so much as to be reported on local radio travel bulletins.

Having threatened to resume the strike action a few weeks ago, now the workers feel that they have nothing to lose. If they show the same determination as during their earlier 28 days of strike action, then with the support of Sheffield trade unions and anti-cuts campaigners, they can win an important victory.

## Sparks protest at London Crown House site

6.30am on 24 August saw the second protest outside the Crown House site opposite St Pancras station in London. Crown House want to tear up the national agreement so that they can cut wages.

We spoke to some of the sparks who were urging Crown House workers to join the union. These workers were fed up with how they were treated in the construction in-

dustry. One said he was fed-up with managers who did not understand the work that the sparks did.

• See more on the NSSN website: [www.shopstewards.net](http://www.shopstewards.net).

Read the pamphlet: How the Sparks Beat the Besna: Construction electricians and the Joint Industrial Board. £2.50 including postage from [www.socialistbooks.co.uk](http://www.socialistbooks.co.uk) or ring 020 8988 8789



Socialist Party members also gave support to a building worker who is taking his blacklisting case to an employment tribunal. photo Rob Williams

**Prison work**

# '£3 a day is exploitation for profit'

Dozens of inmates at Prescoed prison in Monmouthshire are being bussed out to a call centre to work for just £3 a day – 6% of the minimum wage.

The Socialist spoke to PJ McParlin, national chair of the POA, about the prison officer union's attitude to this and Tory justice secretary Ken Clarke's aim of having 20,000 prisoners working within ten years.

**A company is bussing out inmates to work in a call centre. What is the POA's response?**

I know some people don't have much sympathy for prisoners but they're not all mass murderers or people who have committed horrendous crimes – they're mostly people who've made a mistake. A lot of them have had appalling up-brings and now the state is exploiting them.

It would be bad enough if it was £3 an hour but £3 a day can be nothing else but exploitation to make profit.

At £3 a day, you're going to impinge on outside work. For that reason the POA, NAPO, the lecturers' union and the TUC have rejected

the government's protocol because we don't believe that it gives the safeguards that are necessary.

**What does the POA think about Ken Clarke's aim to double the number of prison workers within ten years?**

We think right idea, wrong route. They should be concentrating on education and addiction therapy. If you can't read the safety notice then there's an immediate problem. If you're addicted to drugs, alcohol, or whatever, there's a problem in being safe in work.

They've paid a lot of lip-service to diverting people with mental health issues, because prison's not the place for them. Last year they trumpeted that they'd spent £600,000 on training prison officers in mental health issues. That might be a lot of money to you and me, but in the reality of the system it's absolutely nothing. They need to be diverting people away from prison who shouldn't be in prison.

Within these prison factories, they're talking about replicating outside work. A lot of prisoners have medical issues so they need to see the doctor or a nurse on a daily basis. That has to be moved to the evening. You've got to have recreation for any worker – that has to be moved to the evening. The evening is when the number of prison staff – prison officers, probation offic-



Wormwood Scrubs on 10 May 2012 photo Keith Dickinson



PJ McParlin photo S Beishon

ers, nurses and so on – is at its minimum. Turning all that round has a cost and I don't think they've got the money to do it.

**Do you think there's a case for some training and other rehabilitation to limit reoffending?**

To a great extent that work happens now. But the problem that prevents proper rehabilitation in prisons is the cost. They're closing prisons – it's a government policy. Ken Clarke uses the word 'superfluous' which we wouldn't recognise. Of the 135 prisons in England and Wales, at the end of April 85 of them were

overcrowded. If they really believe in rehabilitation, Clarke would end overcrowding, which would allow staff to interact and work with offenders.

Last year they closed HMP Latchmere House in London. They closed it because the land value in Richmond was, I imagine, very high. That was the best performing prison in the United Kingdom in terms of rehabilitation.

**How is the POA working with other trade unions?**

We took action on 10 May alongside other trade unions who are still op-

posing the pension proposals. That was a brave step – my members haven't got the right to take industrial action. But if the issue is right we have to take action. The retirement age of 68 is wrong for a schoolteacher, it's wrong for somebody digging a road and it's certainly wrong for prison officers in the charged atmosphere of the prisons.

We were pleased last year to take to the TUC a motion about the 40-hour work in prisons initiative of the government. We've worked closely with other unions in the criminal justice system, and also support the National Shop Stewards Network.

**Women's prisons**

# Con-Dems' 'reforms' mean cuts and privatisation

The Prison Reform Trust has said that prisons in England and Wales are over capacity by 7,300 inmates. This overcrowding, says the trust, is limiting prison staff's efforts to reduce reoffending. A women's prison health worker comments.

England and Wales has the highest rate of imprisonment in Europe. The prison population has doubled since 1993, from 40,000 to over 80,000. During this time the male population of prisoners rose by 52% and the female population by 196%. However, women still account for only 6% of total prisoners.

The increased prison population is largely a result of harsher sentencing, not increased offending. In 1995, 129 people were in prison for shoplifting; in 2005, it was 1,400. In 2001, 3,000 people were sent to prison for petty theft as a first time offence.

33% of women prisoners are there because of theft. Women prisoners are likely to have no qualifications and be unemployed at the point of their arrest.

A lack of safe bail hostels for women has increased their time spent in prison. Women are also more likely to receive a custodial sentence for less serious offences.

Two-thirds of women in prison are mothers. Only 5% of children whose mother is in prison will remain in the family home. Women who are pregnant while in prison are more likely to be physically attacked by other prisoners.

Around 20,000 cases of self harm by prisoners are reported each year – 50% are by women, 25% of which are by women aged 18-20. Women also account for 15% of suicides in prison.

50% of women in prisons are survivors of domestic violence. Conditions associated with domestic violence include post traumatic stress disorder, depression, anxiety, suicide attempts, alcohol and drug abuse and worsening of psychotic symptoms. Childhood abuse survivors are more likely to abuse drugs and alcohol as well as self harm. The most common reason women are imprisoned for drug offences.

**Styal prison**

In 2007 the Corston report was published following six deaths at Styal women's prison in Cheshire. It recommended that all the women's prisons in England and Wales be shut down and replaced with smaller units closer to women's homes and only be for women who were of risk to the public.

In February, Clive Chatterton, former governor of Styal, ended a 37-year career with a letter to Ken Clarke, justice secretary, calling for the immediate reform of women's

prisons. Chatterton, who was at Styal for three years, said that 50% of the women he saw should not have been sent to prison.

Chatterton's examples included one woman jailed for 12 days for stealing a £3 sandwich. One woman, convicted of shoplifting, lived in a forest where she scavenged food to survive. Another took a £12 bottle of champagne and spent her ten-day sentence ill in hospital guarded by two prison officers.

**'For your own good'**

But women are still being sent to prison for petty crimes. Judges are sending women to prison for their 'own good', feeling that they would not be given the right amount of care if they remained in the community.

And instead of worthwhile re-

Source: Prison Reform Trust/ Social Exclusion Unit	General population (%)	Prisoners (%)
Ran away from home as a child	11 (all)	47 50 (male) (female)
Excluded from school	2 (all)	49 33 (male) (female)
No qualifications	15 (all)	52 71 (male) (female)
Suffer from two or more mental disorders	5 2 (male) (female)	72 70 (male) (female)
Psychotic disorder	0.5 0.6 (male) (female)	7 14 (male) (female)
Drug use in previous year	13 8 (male) (female)	66 55 (male) (female)
Hazardous drinking	38 15 (male) (female)	63 39 (male) (female)

form, prisons are being privatised. The needs of the prisoners, staff and public will be put below companies' need to make profit. In 2009 it was revealed that there are twice as many complaints from prisoners in private prisons. 40% of private prisons received the second lowest

inspection grade inspection; none received the top grade.

Most women prisoners are themselves victims of poverty, domestic violence, sexual abuse, drug and alcohol abuse, or mental health problems. The Con-Dem cuts will only worsen all of these.

"For nine months she had been in a cell with no sheets in case she used the linen to hang herself, no books, no TV, no radio, because she would use any item to kill herself. The walls were spattered with blood where she had stood and banged her head repeatedly to try and commit suicide.

"She'd been failed by the education system, the

health system and in her mind she had no option but to die. Her parents had visited her just once because she was so far away. She clearly needed to be in hospital, but there were no available beds. In nine months there had been no psychiatric assessment."

**A Styal prison worker's description of a young woman on remand**

# BUILD FOR A 24-HOUR GENERAL STRIKE!

Less than 6% of the government's cuts programme has so far been carried out. Cameron has said that pain and austerity will continue until the end of the decade – another eight years!

**Hannah Sell**  
Deputy general secretary Socialist Party

Across the country millions of people are starting to suffer the consequences of Austerity Britain. Over two and a half million are unemployed, with millions only able to get part time work. Many have suffered pay cuts, with an average pay cut of 10% for the under 30s. Local councils are turning in desperation to charity food banks as central government cuts, implemented at local level, leave growing numbers of people without enough money to buy even basic foodstuffs.

As we predicted all of this misery has not led to a cut in the national debt, but an increase of over £11 billion in the course of the last year as the economy has nose-dived further. Austerity is hurting but it isn't working. Yet, unless the working class leads a serious fight to end austerity, the pain we have seen so far will only be the beginning.

According to the Centre for Policy Studies, less than 6% of the government's cuts programme has so far been carried out. Prime minister Cameron has said that pain and austerity will continue until the end of the decade – another eight years!

## Fighting austerity

For the young people who cannot get a job, for the workers thrown on the scrapheap of unemployment, for those suffering benefit cuts, for students and their parents who are having to pay £9,000 a year in fees, for the workers facing a pay freeze, for the communities that are facing cuts and closure to local hospitals, libraries, sports facilities and youth clubs, one question is urgently posed: how can we defend our living conditions and stop austerity?

The struggle to stop austerity began in earnest in 2011. On 26 March we saw the magnificent 750,000-strong trade union demonstration. This was followed by a number of public sector unions taking coordinated strike action in defence of pensions on 30 June, which in turn created the pressure which led to virtually every public sector union – a massive 30 union-strong coalition – striking together on 30 November 2011 (N30).

This was the biggest single day of strike action in at least 30 years, possibly since the 1926 general strike. It had massive public support. Even the online poll of the arch right-wing Daily Mail showed 84% of people supporting the strike. The Daily Mail, in its normal unbiased way, responded by quickly deleting the poll! Instinctively millions of people understood that the strike was on pensions – but it was about more than just pensions. The trade union movement – involving more than six million workers and capable of bringing the country to a halt – represented potentially the most powerful opposition to the government, capable of stopping austerity in its tracks.

We faced a weak government, a coalition fracturing under the impact of events. The Con-Dems are much weaker than Thatcher's Tory government, and yet she was brought down by the mass movement against the poll tax. Victory for the workers' movement in 2011 was clearly possible.

Yet that isn't what happened. On the contrary the government and the capitalists won the first round; forcing through huge cuts in the living

standards of millions. Inevitably this has led to a lowering of the confidence of many workers. Many have also understood that defeat in 2011 was not inevitable, but was a result of the perfidious role of right-wing trade union leaders.

On the very day of the 30 November strike the government announced an extra £30 billion of cuts and threatened an assault on trade union rights, calling the bluff of the trade union leaders. Tragically, the leadership of the TUC and of Unison, the biggest public sector trade union, responded by immediately retreating. Although local government workers were offered some concessions on pensions, these were incomparable to what could have been won if the battle had continued.

For workers in other sectors the deal on offer was virtually identical to the insult that had been on the table before N30. Brendan Barber and the leadership of the TUC, however, have strained every nerve in their efforts to convince workers to accept this rotten deal.

In reality, this position was an indication of their faint-hearted belief that the government could not be defeated and that the best that the trade unions could do was act to try to limit the attacks on working class people. This approach, known as 'concession bargaining' – where trade unions agree to give up some of their members' rights in return for retaining others – never worked.

When, as now, war has been declared on workers' rights and living conditions it is a disaster. The only way to combat the unprecedented attacks raining down on us is with a strategy of determined mass coordinated action, alongside individual unions vigorously campaigning on the issues that affect them.

Only on this basis can the government be forced to take part in real negotiations. At every stage the trade union movement needs to build for effective action and make it clear that this will be followed up with more if the government does not retreat. This approach would win the support of workers who are not currently organised in the trade unions, as well as young people, the unemployed, pensioners and so on. Millions would rally to a force capable of defeating austerity.

## Letting off steam

At this year's TUC Congress the National Shop Stewards Network (NSSN) will be organising a lobby to demand such a strategy. Under pressure the TUC has called a national demonstration on 20 October under the bland heading 'for a future that works'. We welcome the demonstration, and will work to make it even bigger than 26 March last year, demanding that the TUC leadership mobilise under a clear slogan like 'No to austerity'. It is also crucial that workers can see that – unlike last year – this year's demonstration is part of a serious strategy to defeat the government rather than just a one off 'parade'.

The NSSN is demanding that this year's TUC should discuss urgently setting a date for a 24-hour general strike against austerity to take place. Drawing in private sector workers would really strike a blow against the government.

It is true that levels of unionisation are lower in the private sector than in the public, but the private sector includes the most powerful sections of the organised working class. Just look at the effect of the tanker drivers discussing the possibility of taking industrial action to get a



Last year's TUC anti-cuts national demo on 26 March should have been used as a springboard for the unions to mobilise for a 24-hour general strike photo Paul Mattsson

glimpse of the potential strength of key groups of workers! What is more there is no doubt that, if a clear call for a 24-hour general strike against austerity was made by the leadership of the TUC, it would draw in millions of workers who are not currently trade union members, enormously strengthening the movement.

In Britain, unlike many other European countries, there has never been a 24-hour general strike, and the last general strike took place in 1926. Even a partial 24-hour general strike would electrify the country – giving enormous confidence to the working class. Particularly if the leadership of the trade union movement stood firm, making it clear that they would call a further 24- or 48-hour general strike if the government did not retreat, even a one-day strike would terrify the government and the capitalists.

The prospect would be raised of the government being forced to call, and then lose, a general election. Labour has made it clear that they would continue with austerity in government, albeit at a slower pace. Nonetheless, the working class would be in a far stronger position if the Con-Dems were defeated by a mass movement of the working class. At the same time, the need to build a mass political voice for the working class is urgently posed by the situation.

There are resolutions on the TUC Congress agenda – from unions with militant, fighting leaderships – that move in the direction of a 24-hour general strike. The PCS civil service union correctly calls on the General Council to:

"prioritise building for the 20 October demonstration – to make it the largest anti-cuts protest

in history" and for it to "support coordinated strike action against cuts in pensions, pay and jobs this autumn". The POA calls for "taking coordinated action where possible with far reaching campaigning including the consideration and practicalities of a general strike." The NSSN lobby will demand support for these motions, or any composite that includes these points.

Undoubtedly the right-wing trade union leaders will raise the problem of Britain's vicious anti-trade union laws as a reason that a 24-hour general strike is not possible. These laws, the most repressive in the advanced capitalist countries, were introduced by previous Tory governments and left intact by New Labour. We do not lightly support breaking the anti-union laws and thereby risking trade union funds, but this struggle is too important to allow individual trade unions to fight alone. Coordinated action is vital, even if it means confronting the anti-union laws.

## Role of left unions

The heroic protest action by the POA – which has no legal right to strike – on 10 May this year has not resulted in action being taken against the union because the government is correctly afraid that to do so would create outrage throughout the trade union movement, and result in an escalation of the struggle.

It would be wrong to take a light-minded approach to the anti-trade union laws and the danger of trade unions' finances – built up by members over decades – being sequestered by the

government. However, the working class is facing the worst attack on its living conditions and rights to organise in 80 years, and cannot allow the anti-trade union laws to prevent a serious struggle now.

The public sector strike on 30 November indicated how major steps towards a 24-hour general strike could be taken, even within the straitjacket of the anti-trade union laws.

If the TUC was to set a date for action all of those unions involved in disputes against different aspects of austerity: from those still fighting on pensions, to Unison threatening action on pay, to the RMT fighting against the consequences of the McNulty report, could coordinate their ballots in order to be able to strike on the day set by the TUC.

Without doubt other groups of workers – alongside students, pensioners and the unemployed – would then also take the decision to join in the action on the date that had been set.

The TUC could make it clear to the government that if any unions or workers were threatened for participating in the strike the TUC would immediately call another 24-hour general strike. If such a strategy were adopted the anti-trade union laws would be pushed aside, losing their power to hobble the trade union movement.

The NSSN will be vigorously campaigning for such a strategy to be adopted

at the TUC congress. However, the events of 2011 demonstrate clearly that it is not sufficient to call on the leadership of the TUC to take action. In 1972 the TUC did call a 24-hour general strike (knowing that it would not go ahead as the government was about to retreat) but only after the strike had begun to develop from below. Similarly, the 30 November 2011 public sector strike was only called as a result of the popularity of the strike called by the PCS and NUT, ATL and UCU teaching unions earlier in the year.

The most important task at the TUC congress is for the militant trade unions to discuss how they can again act as a lever to force action. Left trade unions are already involved in discussing how to coordinate their strike action.

If militant trade unions are able to use the platform of the TUC to make clear that, even if a 24-hour general strike is not called from the Congress, they intend to coordinate a day of strike action between their unions, and call on others to join them; this will raise the hopes of millions.

Activists in other unions would campaign for their union to join the action. This should be combined with mass meetings in workplaces up and down the country calling for a 24-hour general strike. In this way an unstoppable groundswell towards a 24-hour general strike could be built.

**SOCIALISM 2012**

**LONDON 3-4 NOVEMBER**

[WWW.SOCIALISM2012.ORG.UK](http://WWW.SOCIALISM2012.ORG.UK)

HOSTED BY THE SOCIALIST PARTY

**RALLY: FIGHT AUSTERITY**

**KICK OUT THE CON-DEMS**

**BUILD A 24 HOUR GENERAL STRIKE**

**8-30PM SATURDAY 3 NOV**

SPEAKERS INCLUDE:

**BOB CROW**  
RMT TRANSPORT UNION  
GENERAL SECRETARY

**PETER TAAFFE**  
SOCIALIST PARTY  
GENERAL SECRETARY  
AND MORE

**WEEKEND £30/£15**

**ONE DAY £15/£8**

**RALLY ONLY £5**

Saturday night accommodation available. See the website for details. There will be a full crèche. Please phone to book a place.

**BUY NOW!**

**20% DISCOUNT ON PURCHASES BEFORE 7TH SEPTEMBER**

Buy tickets online at [www.socialism2012.org.uk](http://www.socialism2012.org.uk), call 020 8988 8777

or email [socialism@socialistparty.org.uk](mailto:socialism@socialistparty.org.uk)

Send cheque or postal order payable to 'Socialism' to: **Socialism, PO Box 24697, London, E11 1YD** with your name, address, phone number and details of your purchase.

**GETTING TO SOCIALISM 2012:**

NEAREST TUBES TO ULU AND FMH: EUSTON, WARREN STREET, GOUDGE STREET AND EUSTON SQUARE.

CLOSE TO: KINGS CROSS AND EUSTON TRAIN STATIONS.

SEE THE WEBSITE FOR MORE DETAILS

**0208 988 8777**

**WWW.SOCIALISM2012.ORG.UK**

@SOCIALISM12 #SOCIALISM2012



## Socialism Today

The Socialist Party's magazine

September 2012 issue includes:

- **Towards a 24-hour general strike**  
Peter Taaffe looks at the build-up to the 20 October TUC demonstration and what should come next.
- **The Syrian cauldron**  
Where armed struggle, ethnic tensions and foreign powers meet. Niall Mulholland reports

£2.50 including postage from:  
**Socialism Today** PO Box 24697,  
London E11 1YD.

[socialismtoday.org.uk](http://socialismtoday.org.uk)  
[socialistparty.org.uk](mailto:socialistparty.org.uk)  
[www.socialismtoday.org](http://www.socialismtoday.org)  
020 8988 8773

# TUSC councillor rejects Walsall cuts 'consultation'

Walsall council has begun a public consultation on 'spending priorities for 2013-14', speaking of further cuts of around £67 million over the next four years. The consultation questionnaire asks people to say which council services 'were most important to them' and which were 'less important'. Unsurprisingly, it did not include

the option of saying no to all the cuts. Below is an extract from Walsall councillor Pete Smith's reply to Walsall Voluntary Action about the consultation. Councillor Smith is a member of the Walsall Democratic Labour Party, part of the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC).

Those who care about public services would be well advised to keep out of this exercise in my opinion... Are we seriously asking the people to legitimise a process whereby they and their fellow citizens will pay more and receive less services, year by year? With respect, count me out... The citizens and workers of Walsall borough, led by their councillors, should:

- Oppose all cuts
- Reject increases in council tax and increases in service charges

- Campaign and vote against the privatisation of council jobs and services
- Call on councillors to refuse to implement the cuts
- Argue that the best way to mobilise the mass public campaign that is necessary to defeat the cuts is to set a budget that meets the needs of the local community and demand that the government makes up the shortfall
- Mobilise as many sections of the community as possible to join a mass peaceful and lawful campaign to demand that their elected repre-

sentatives stand up to the massive and hugely unfair cuts rather than aid and abet their implementation. Fifty-seven of the present 60 Walsall councillors belong to one of the three main party groups and therefore will behave and vote as directed by their party bosses. Only a mass popular, public, legal and peaceful campaign engaging hundreds, even thousands, of local citizens might bring a change of mind.

**Councillor Pete Smith**

Go to [www.tusc.org.uk](http://www.tusc.org.uk) to see the complete letter and more

# The 'madness' of building homes

On 28 August, the Guardian carried a Polly Toynbee article about the role of "great speeches" at Tory, Labour and Lib Dem conferences. "No one forgets [1983-1992 Labour leader] Neil Kinnock castigating the Liverpool council's Militant madness," Toynbee stated - before going on to say how Kinnock never won a general election! A former 'Liverpool 47' councillor (1984-87) and 2012 TUSC Liverpool mayoral candidate Tony Mulhearn wrote the following response.

Polly Toynbee reveals the continuing love affair of ex-SDA [Social Democratic Alliance - a 1975-81 right-wing group in the Labour Party that is now part of the Liberal Democrats] supporters with Neil Kinnock by bracketing with history's 'great speeches' his treacherous attack on Liverpool city council in 1985 for its mythical 'Militant madness'. Is this the same Kinnock who remained silent when councils in his own constituency sacked firefighters, and who described public ownership as 'nonsense'? Is this the same Kinnock who started the process of transforming Labour into the toothless mongrel that Polly herself appears to be so disaffected with? The reality is that Polly Toynbee is part of that set who rightly are appalled at the savagery of Con-Dem policy, but who balk at supporting workers who take direct action, as Liverpool did, to defend the working people who elected them and gave that council magnificent support. If Liverpool's 'madness' in building houses, creating jobs, opening nursery schools and campaigning against the 'madness' of Thatcherism had been emulated by other councils and supported by Kinnock and Co, Labour may well have dispatched the Tories into the dustbin of history.

**Tony Mulhearn, 'Liverpool 47' councillor and ex-president of Liverpool District Labour Party expelled by Neil Kinnock**

**Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition 2012 conference**  
Saturday 22 September, 11am-5pm  
See [www.tusc.org.uk](http://www.tusc.org.uk)



Speakers include Walsall councillor Pete Smith and former 'Liverpool 47' councillor Tony Mulhearn  
Room B34, Birkbeck College  
Malet Street, London WC1E  
All welcome  
Registration £5 waged/£2 unwaged

## Why I joined the Socialist Party

I am 22 years old and a new member of the Socialist Party. I'm sure there are many others who could join with us in our struggle for a fairer world. This is why I joined the Socialist Party: Socialism offers something different, and is a change from the capitalist system that fails us all time and time again Organised opposition is what we need, and we know it has potential... Capitalism quite frankly just doesn't work, we need an alternative which caters for everybody; young, old, dis-

advantaged; not the privileged few! In the future the destruction a capitalist society brings will only get worse, which is why we need the youth of today to rise up now before it is too late Abandonment of our generation; it happened in the 80s and it is happening now. Why should we settle for exploitation and a life of no aspirations and poverty? Labour do not represent the ordinary working class, we need a proper opposition to the neoliberal bloodsuck-

ers at the top! If we don't protect our rights and values now, how can we complain when they are stripped from us? Showing apathy will never change things, politics is fundamental in how we live our lives, down to the very last detail. Do we want to live in a fair and free society or not? Then we have to fight for it and get involved! Make a change, because we all collectively have the power to transform society for the better! **Daniel Lewis**

## Get involved

**Donate** I'd like to donate £ to the Socialist Party  I'd like more information about the Socialist Party

**Subscribe** 12 issues £15  6 months £26  1 year £50  please make cheques payable to Socialist Publications Ltd

Western Europe: 12 issues £16, half year £32, year £50 Rest of world: 12 issues £25, half year £50, year £90

Return slip or pay at [www.socialistparty.org.uk/subscribe](http://www.socialistparty.org.uk/subscribe)

Name  
Address and postcode  
tel/email

Return to: Socialist Party, PO Box 24697, London E11 1YD or phone 020 8988 8777 to pay by card, to arrange a direct debit, or to join.

Credit card No: Name: Start Date: Expiry Date: Security Code: Issue No:

# Notting Hill carnival-goers support Lonmin miners



photo Neil Cafferky

Socialist Party members joined thousands of Londoners at the Notting Hill carnival on Bank Holiday Monday, campaigning for solidarity with South African Lonmin mineworkers.

The excitement of the carnival didn't prevent a steady flow of people, particularly from Caribbean and southern African countries, from approaching the stall.

Clearly the memory of the anti-apartheid struggle and the role the miners played in that period still resonates with people who became politically aware in the 70s and 80s. Many people we spoke to on the stall were quick to point out the similarities between the behaviour of the old regime towards workers' struggle and the massacre at the Lonmin mine where at least 34 miners were shot by police.

Two South African workers de-

scribed how little the African National Congress (ANC), the ruling party in South Africa since 1994, had done to change the day-to-day lives for the majority of people there.

Although some people we discussed with saw the struggle as a battle between white mine owners and black workers, other carnival goers were well aware of ex-trade union leaders and ANC apparatchiks being on the board of the mine company.

There was wide support for the Socialist Party's call to nationalise the mines and use the enormous mineral wealth of the country to raise the living standards for South African workers.

**Neil Cafferky**

• See [www.socialistworld.net](http://www.socialistworld.net) for more on the Lonmin dispute

# Socialist Party summer camp

Over the August bank holiday weekend, the Socialist Party's summer camp took place near the beautiful Epping Forest. Campers were treated to a variety of political discussions on Marxist economics, philosophy and historical materialism, as well as a discussion on the food industry.

Two evening rallies were held. A packed marquee on Saturday, including comrades from Belgium

and the Sri Lankan Frontline Socialist Party, heard Peter Taaffe make the case for a 24-hour general strike. On Sunday night Hannah Sell spoke on economic crisis and struggles throughout Europe.

As well as a roaring campfire on both evenings, we also had local bluegrass band The One Tree Hillbillies play a lively set on the Sunday evening.

**Iain Dalton**

# Save our computer server!

£574.26 was raised for the server appeal at the Saturday night rally at the annual Socialist Party summer camp, including £100 from Rob Simmons, £100 from Helen and Mark Kerr; £40 from Linda Taaffe, £25 from Ken Douglas, £25 from Paula Mitchell and £80 from Jon Dale.

Thanks also to: Natara Hunter for £10; Seth Cruse £50; Pete Watson £40; Alan Coote £20; Ronnie and Claire Job £100 and £7.50 from a

reader of the Socialist. Please consider donating to the appeal to fund a replacement computer server. 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 [www.socialistparty.org.uk/donate](http://www.socialistparty.org.uk/donate) and mark your donation 'server appeal' or telephone 020 8988 8777.**

# SOCIALIST PARTY FIGHTING FUND

	£ target	£ received	July-September 2012	Deadline 28 September
Eastern	1,200	1,268	██████████	██████████
South West	1,400	1,113	██████████	██████████
Wales	2,300	1,775	██████████	██████████
East Midlands	1,550	1,167	██████████	██████████
North West	1,200	860	██████████	██████████
Northern	600	334	██████████	██████████
South East	750	406	██████████	██████████
Southern	1,200	598	██████████	██████████
West Midlands	2,100	921	██████████	██████████
Yorkshire	2,900	999	██████████	██████████
London	6,100	1,753	██████████	██████████
England & Wales	3,700	431	██████████	██████████
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>25,000</b>	<b>11,632</b>	██████████	██████████

# Kazakhstan: Human rights campaigner Vadim Kuramshin freed

The well-known Kazakhstan human rights activist, Vadim Kuramshin, was released from custody on 28 August. The judge announced this surprise result after the months-long ordeal that Vadim has undergone. Instead of the threatened 14 years imprisonment under a specially harsh regime, he was freed with just one year of conditional bail.

## Statement from Vadim's supporters in Kazakhstan

Taraz city court today (28 August) pronounced sentence on Vadim, who had been facing trumped-up charges of extorting money from the Kordai district prosecutor Mukhtar Uderbaev, who Vadim himself wanted to take legal action against.

At the end of the protracted trial lasting the whole of the summer, the state prosecutor had asked the court to condemn Vadim to 14 years imprisonment in a special regime colony, but the judge, Samat Tolesbay, decided differently.

Vadim Kuramshin was arrested on 23 January this year. The whole trial clearly violated the Criminal Procedure Code and was constantly postponed, causing Vadim to declare a hunger strike in order to get the court to reconvene.

The judge, Tolesbay, still delayed a final decision several times. This aroused great fears about the outcome, but also some hopes that the international outcry about the treatment of this human rights lawyer might be having an effect.

The worst fears were not con-



Campaign Kazakhstan protest against UK business links with the Kazakhstan regime in London

firmed. Vadim was convicted only of one incriminating act (under Article 327 of the Criminal Code) - "arbitrariness" - receiving one year of conditional freedom. He was immediately released.

Vadim could not hide his joy. This is what he said over the phone immediately after the announcement: "First of all, I want to thank all my friends and colleagues who have conducted an energetic campaign to support me; it helped me enormously.

"Indeed, there has never been a result like this on previous occasions when I have been convicted for clearly political reasons.

"This time my lawyers have literally carried out a miracle! I myself began to tease my counsel, Razia Nurmasheva, that she had become a sumo wrestler. That's how the lawyer looked when she went into battle over this crazy, unfounded accusation against me.

"Of course, the active campaigning of my friends and comrades, their constant support and the wide media coverage they were able to get, have also played a very big role in the outcome of this case, for which there was clearly no basis in the law."

From his words it is clear that he has not yet fully taken in the fact that

he is free, with just the one year of conditions.

"For now, I am just amazed that I am standing here giving interviews to journalists, to whom I would also like to express my gratitude. I have special thanks to express to [CWI members] Ainur Kurmanov, Esenbek Ukteshbaev and their comrades. And, of course, to my guardian angel, Jhan Baytelova.

"Now, most of all, I want to take into my arms my son Damir, who was born while I have been in jail in Taraz."

**For updates and more on political repression in Kazakhstan, see [campaignkazakhstan.org](http://campaignkazakhstan.org)**

## Norway: Mass murderer Anders Breivik gets life sentence

'Massacres caused by right-wing extremism and Islamophobia'



Far-right terrorist Anders Behring Breivik was found guilty of mass murders which he committed on 22 July 2011 in Oslo and at a youth camp of the governing Labour Party on the small island of Utøya. Electoral support for far-right racist parties has been on the rise in a number of countries across Europe. This has been fuelled by the imperialist wars and occupations in Iraq and Afghanistan and the propaganda campaigns used to justify them. Far-right groups have also fed off the economic insecurities caused by the capitalist world recession. During the Breivik trial evidence emerged of his links with other far-right and racist groups in Europe including in Britain. Trond Sverre and Elise Kolltveit in Oslo comment on some of the trial's findings.

The court judgment says that Breivik is not "psychotic". The massacres did not happen because of mental illness, but because of his right-wing extremism and Islamophobia.

He was sentenced to Norway's toughest punishment - 21 years plus. This means that theoretically he could be imprisoned for life if still considered dangerous. Neither party will appeal, which is a great relief for the families involved. The trial has been a huge burden on them.

A few days before sentencing, the 22 July Commission presented its report about the actions of the state authorities one year ago. It criticised the police for how they handled 22 July, but also for not stopping Breivik earlier.

Security Service Police (POT) had received a list of those who had bought suspected chemicals online, but it was put aside, not taken seriously. There was also very poor communication and management on 22 July, with many errors committed. Among other criticisms; the police overburdened their own little inflatable boat instead of using one of the boats that were offered by locals. The report says that police took too long to reach the island. Many could have been saved when every minute counted.

The report forced the resignation of the national commissioner for police, Oystein Maeland. He is a

close friend of prime minister Jens Stoltenberg and was hand-picked for the job. Many high-ranking people serving in the police force are career bureaucrats with no police training. The media has asked if Stoltenberg and other ministers will take responsibility and resign, but that has not happened.

The former head of POT, Janne Kristiansen, said, among other things, that not even the Stasi (former East German secret police) could have stopped Breivik because he had an "Aryan" appearance.

POT has long been criticised for being 'blind in its right eye' and traditionally has only monitored the left. POT was reorganised in 2000 after it was disclosed that it had illegally monitored socialists and communists, and collaborated with the Labour Party on this. About 400 people got financial compensation, with many more cases pending. After 22 July, POT was criticised for not taking right-wing extremism seriously, but only focussing on Islamic groups.

Although the Breivik trial has ended, the fight against right-wing extremism, racism and Islamophobia must continue. This summer, Roma people from Romania have been exposed to strong attacks in the media, opinion articles and on line in Norway. They have been subjected to harassment on the streets and in their camp, and by the police.

## The Committee for a Workers' International

The Committee for a Workers' International (CWI) is the socialist international organisation to which the Socialist Party is affiliated.

The CWI is organised in 45 countries and works to unite the working class and oppressed peoples against global capitalism and to fight for a socialist world.

For more details including CWI publications write to: CWI, PO Box 3688, London E11 1YE. email [cwi@worldsoc.co.uk](mailto:cwi@worldsoc.co.uk)

## www.socialistworld.net

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



## Spain: Towards an autumn of reckoning

New phase of crisis in country which could decide the fate of Europe.

Danny Byrne, (CWI)



## USA: Socialist to challenge House speaker in general election

Kshama Sawant groundbreaking campaign.

Socialist Alternative (CWI in USA)



## What's behind the trial of Gu Kailai?

Sensational murder trial of princeling wife hides more than it reveals.

Vincent Kolo, [chinaworker.info](http://chinaworker.info)

# The Julian Assange case

Editorial comment from Offensiv, weekly paper of Rättvisepartiet Socialisterna (CWI Sweden)

The furore over the case of Julian Assange, the founder of WikiLeaks, whose exposés of American foreign policy angered US imperialism, rumbles on. Internationally, the case centres around US imperialism's need to punish WikiLeaks and no doubt the Swedish state and government would happily assist the US in getting Assange extradited. However, the case is also about serious allegations of rape, which must be investigated.

Julian Assange was received as a hero when he came to Sweden, invited by the Christian organisation of Social Democrats in August 2010. Four months earlier, WikiLeaks released the video "Collateral Murder", showing US soldiers in a helicopter killing civilians in Iraq, including children. And in June 2010 came revelations about the US war in Afghanistan, published by WikiLeaks together with leading newspapers such as the New York Times and Le Monde.

## Sweden

When Assange left Sweden on 27 September 2010, however, he was suspected of rape. First, he was arrested in absentia on 20 August though next day the arrest was lifted. However, on 1 September the investigation resumed.

In November, he was arrested in his absence and Interpol sought a warrant, for one case of rape, two counts of sexual molestation and one case of duress. Weeks later, he reported to the police in London.

Then, a long process of extradition to Sweden began. The Swedish prosecutor, Marianne Ny, requested his extradition. Assange fought this, fearing that the next step would be extradition to the US. In June 2012, Assange went into the Ecuadorian Embassy in London and asked for asylum, which he was granted.

Julian Assange has every reason to fear US retaliation. Since May 2010, the US has detained Breanna



Julian Assange speaking at an anti-war demo in London photo Paul Mattsson

(formerly known as Bradley) Manning, a 24 year old who worked in the military intelligence in Iraq and was pointed out as one of the main sources of WikiLeaks.

Manning could face life imprisonment, accused of "support for terrorists." Several leading right-wing US politicians said that Assange should be treated in the same way.

"In the US, the Justice Department is considering prosecuting the founder of WikiLeaks for espionage, and according to the British Independent, there have been unofficial talks between officials from the US and Sweden on the prospects for the extradition of Assange. This story is rejected, however, by Foreign Minister Carl Bildt," wrote the Swedish newspaper, Svenska Dagbladet, in December 2010.

Criticism of US imperialism is

also what unites those who provide support for Assange. Ecuador's President Rafael Correa's decision to grant Assange asylum has been supported by governments in Cuba, Venezuela, Bolivia, Nicaragua and Argentina. All South American governments condemned the possibility that Britain would plan an assault of Ecuador's embassy.

## United States

Assange also turned directly to the United States in his ten-minute speech from the Ecuador Embassy balcony on 19 August. To audience applause, he requested that the FBI investigation and the witch-hunt against WikiLeaks cease.

But US imperialism's hunt for Assange does not necessarily mean he is innocent of the accusations by the

two women in Sweden. "However, some of the activists associated with Occupy who have turned up outside the embassy have stressed their presence is about showing solidarity with WikiLeaks rather than necessarily endorsing Assange," the Guardian reported.

That the allegations made against Assange - intercourse with a sleeping woman and deliberately destroying a condom during intercourse - are classed as rape is used in debates to argue that Swedish legislation is "feminist" or exaggerated. But Sweden does not distinguish itself by its harshness against rapists.

This tougher law is a result of women's struggles, which in turn were supported by the labour movement and the rest of society. This means that "no means no." Forced

sex is a crime, which even those who believe that Assange is innocent should realise is progress.

Despite the tougher laws, very few accused men are convicted or even investigated. About 200 men are convicted of rape annually in Sweden compared to over 6,000 filings. Even in cases which are prosecuted, a third are acquitted. In this context, to speak of "state feminism", as some Assange supporters do, is absurd.

The Swedish prosecution acted very clumsily and slowly in 2010. When the investigation was resumed, they had three weeks to interview Assange before he left the country, which they allowed him to do. Since then, prosecutors refused to interrogate Assange in London, which would be a natural step for those who want to pursue the investigation.

## Promises

Similarly, the Swedish government refused to promise that Assange would not be extradited to the United States. Such a promise would, according to Kristinn Hrafnsson from WikiLeaks in a comment after Assange's speech, be "a way to break the current impasse."

Socialists stand for the rape allegations being investigated without the threat of deportation to the United States or other repressive measures against WikiLeaks. WikiLeaks' revelations about Iraq and Afghanistan played an important positive role in the struggle against war and imperialism. In Sweden, it confirmed Foreign Minister Carl Bildt's warmongering role, as well as the government's pressure on Iraq to stop refugees coming to Sweden.

Socialists stand for Breanna Manning's release and defend the democratic rights of WikiLeaks and its sources. A democratic socialist mass movement must stand up for free speech, against violence against women, against war and imperialism.

# Galloway's ignorant comments

Eleanor Donne

George Galloway, Respect Party MP for Bradford West, revealed disturbing ignorance and misogyny in his recent podcast about the rape allegations against Julian Assange, founder of the WikiLeaks website and scourge of the political and military establishment.

Galloway says that: "even if the allegations made by these two women... were 100% true... they don't constitute rape." He describes the allegations as no more than "bad sexual etiquette." If you "go to bed" with someone then you are in "the sex game" with them and he says that you should not need "to be asked prior to each insertion".

Does he want to turn the clock back to the days when marriage gave men conjugal rights and husbands could therefore rape their wives with impunity?

His comments have done a huge disservice, not only to the women he is supposed to represent in parliament, but to all women. He added to the confusion and guilt which many women feel when they are assaulted by their partner or someone they know and to the trivialising of so-called 'date rape'.

It is entirely consistent to applaud Assange's role in exposing the hy-

pocrisy and corruption of governments and the ruling class through WikiLeaks while recognising that he could also be capable of rape or sexual assault. Clearly it is also possible, as Assange's lawyer maintains, that the allegations against him are contrived for political purposes.

Women Against Rape (WAR), a pressure group supporting rape victims, commenting on the Assange case, recognises this, pointing to a long tradition of using rape and sexual assault allegations for political agendas.

## Speed of arrest

WAR further commented on Interpol's unusual speed and determination in getting Assange arrested, when in their experience even hardened sex traffickers are able to evade the authorities time after time. But quite rightly they also do not condone the condemnation of the women who reported Assange.

However, this level of understanding has been difficult for some supposedly on the left, who like Galloway weighed in disgracefully in a personal attack against the women, dismissing and belittling their claims. Writer and journalist Naomi Wolf, who describes herself as a feminist, indulged in speculation that the women making the allega-



Galloway has done a disservice to all women photo Paul Mattsson

tions were not rape victims but jealous, spurned women taking their revenge on Assange because he had sex with both of them.

She refers to Interpol as the 'dating police', trivialising the rape and sexual assault allegations. Michael Moore initially dismissed the women's claims as 'hokey' although later

accepted there should be a full investigation. Even Tony Benn entered the 'debate', reportedly stating in the context of a speech about Assange, that a non-consensual relationship is not the same as rape.

Salma Yaqoob, leader of Respect, condemned Galloway's remarks as "deeply disappointing and wrong".

Galloway should be held to account as a workers' representative by his party - he should not air personal prejudices in his public role. He should be asked to retract his damaging comments which cannot be said to promote the "Peace, Justice and Equality" which are the watchwords of the Respect party.

## Book review

# Leon Trotsky: A revolutionary's life

The 72<sup>nd</sup> anniversary of the assassination of the great Russian revolutionary Leon Trotsky was commemorated even within Britain's capitalist press. An interview with Trotsky's grandson Esteban Volkov, in the Guardian recalls his last months and the assassination attempts that ended his life in August 1940. Trotsky's life and ideas still provoke interest and controversy. The Socialist Party and the Committee for a Workers' International (the world socialist organisation to which we are affiliated) bases itself on the ideas of Trotsky as well as those of Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels, Vladimir Lenin and fellow leaders of the Russian Revolution. Here Niall Mulholland reviews a new biography 'Leon Trotsky: A Revolutionary's Life', by Joshua Rubenstein, published by Yale University Press.

In this compact biography, Joshua Rubenstein makes it clear from the outset that he is not an "admirer or a follower" of the historic socialist revolutionary. Neither does the author "seek to savage" Trotsky for his "personal failing, real or alleged", as "Robert Service sought to do in his recent biography" (see the review by Socialist Party general secretary Peter Taaffe of Service's vicious attack in the Socialist 15-21 October 2009).

Rubenstein does not indulge in a Service-style hatchet job. He acknowledges Trotsky's "outspoken criticism of Stalin, the fate of his four children, and his own assassination deserve more than grudging sympathy". He credits Trotsky, the "brilliant journalist" and "outstanding eloquent historian and pamphleteer" for explaining "that Stalin was creating a regime that used the veneer of socialism to camouflage its brutal intentions".

Trotsky is also praised for correctly predicting that failure by the German communists and social democrats to unite against Hitler in the 1930s would see the triumph of Nazism.

### Old chestnuts

But Rubenstein also repeats many of the old allegations and myths of the political opponents of Lenin, Trotsky and Bolshevism, the ideas and methods that the Russian Revolution was based on.

The author's over-arching theme is that the course of the Revolution betrayed Trotsky's own ideals of justice and democracy but that Trotsky "refused to renounce the revolution that first betrayed and, then destroyed him."

Rubenstein also attempts to introduce a novel angle into his biography: Trotsky's ethnic Jewish origins (the book is part of a series on 'Jewish Lives').

But Rubenstein's claims are contradictory. "Trotsky could assert he was a Marxist and Russian revolutionary, then deny his identity as a Jew" yet a few lines later, Rubenstein writes: "Trotsky

was neither ashamed of his Jewish origin nor ashamed to deny them."

In fact, in his autobiography 'My Life', Trotsky writes openly about his ethnic and religious background. Anti-semitism was exploited by the ruling class in Russia as a way of fostering divide and rule policies among the Russian working class and peasantry, which were increasingly attracted to socialist ideas. It is no accident that so many socialist revolutionaries, like Trotsky, came from the super-oppressed Jews in Tsarist Russia.

Rubenstein makes the ridiculous assertion that as Trotsky "spurned one messianic religion, he adopted an alternative utopian faith - one

The failure of socialist revolutions in advanced capitalist countries left the Russian working class isolated. It was these conditions that primarily led to a bureaucratic, nationalist reaction in Russia not, as Rubenstein asserts, Trotsky being "out of his depth" in his struggle with Stalin

that was secular and far more dangerous". But the revolutionary Marxism of Trotsky, Lenin and the Bolsheviks was not about unthinking obedience and tablets of stone - unlike the crude official 'Marxism' under Stalinism - but a living science of free discussion and debate that was tested in practice by events.

Despite himself, Rubenstein relates the polemics between Trotsky and other wings of the Russian social democratic movement, including Lenin and his supporters, in Tsarist Russia and in exile in Europe. These included sharp debates over how a revolutionary party should organise in oppressive Russia and perspectives for how the coming revolution would unfold.

Rubenstein also acknowledges that the 1905 Russian Revolution, in which Trotsky played a leading role, saw Trotsky's "theoretical claims and intuitions as a Marxist confirmed", ie the theory of the Permanent Revolution. "It would be the proletariat that would have to seize power; it would be the workers who would take over the destiny of Russia".

Trotsky is condemned by Rubenstein for rejecting the social democratic Mensheviks' supposedly "more cautious, more tolerant, more liberal understanding of what a socialist revolution must mean".

But having studied the tragic



Trotsky (podium, left) takes the salute at a Red Army parade in Kiev

lessons of the failed 1871 Paris Commune and 1905 Russian revolution, Trotsky and Lenin understood that the only alternative to the working class, led by the Bolsheviks, overthrowing Czarism and landlordism in 1917 would have been bloody counter-revolution and the likely imposition of a brutal military regime.

### Contradictions

Rubenstein asserts that it was the "Bolsheviks' insistence on a monopoly of power that provoked the civil war" in Russia. Yet he again contradicts himself, admitting later that the "civil war, after all, was initiated by right-wing and pro-monarchist groups".

Trotsky's role as leader of the Red Army, contesting 21 invading capitalist armies, is condemned by Rubenstein for its "severe discipline". But all civil wars are violent, bloody affairs. The American Civil War left a huge death toll and extreme measures were used on both sides.

Yet historians and biographers usually applaud Abraham Lincoln for his role and they certainly do not heap anything like the same moral opprobrium on him as they do on Trotsky. Why? We can only conclude this is due to their political hostility towards Bolshevism.

Between 1918 and 1921, Trotsky and the Red Army successfully defended the Soviet regime against the forces of capitalist counter-revolution. This was primarily on the basis of inspiring workers and peasants to fight for a new socialist society and by making a class appeal to the rank and file of the Western armies.

According to Rubenstein, Trotsky, was "very much helping" Lenin and the Bolsheviks, to "lay the foundations for decades of rule by a ruthless, one party dictatorship".

But what was the basis of the rise of Stalinist totalitarianism?

While the working class triumphed in 1917, Russia was economically and culturally underdeveloped and the devastating civil war resulted in famine, economic collapse and the loss of many of the most politically advanced workers.

The failure of socialist revolutions

in advanced capitalist countries left the Russian working class isolated. It was these conditions that primarily led to a bureaucratic, nationalist reaction in Russia not, as Rubenstein asserts, Trotsky being "out of his depth" in his struggle with Stalin, the "master of political intrigue".

The coming to power of the bureaucracy, led by Stalin, drowned in blood the revolution and snuffed out any semblance of workers' democracy.

While the historical gains of the state-owned planned economy remained and resulted in stunning achievements, in the absence of democratic workers' management and control this came at a huge human cost and caused enormous material waste.

Eventually the increasingly bureaucratized Soviet economy stagnated and finally collapsed in the early 1990s, ushering in capitalist restoration - a catastrophe for the living standards of millions - which Trotsky had predicted decades previously.

A Revolutionary's Life concludes with Trotsky's hounding by the forc-

es of Stalinism and his murder at the hands of a Stalinist agent, in Mexico, in 1940.

Crucial debates during the 1930s took place among Trotsky's followers in the International Left Opposition and later the Fourth International.

These debates, including the class characterisation of the Soviet Union and Trotsky's call for a political revolution to restore real workers' democracy, the position of revolutionaries on the impending world war - as well as Trotsky's rich analysis of fascism, the Spanish Revolution and other vital issues in the 1930s - are treated swiftly, and unfortunately often too lightly, by Rubenstein.

Trotsky's writings are, of course, the best place to go to for an in-depth examination of these important debates, which have great relevance today. And Trotsky's autobiography, as well as Isaac Deutscher's magisterial, three-volume Trotsky biography, despite its political flaws, remain essential reading to understand the great revolutionary's politics and times.



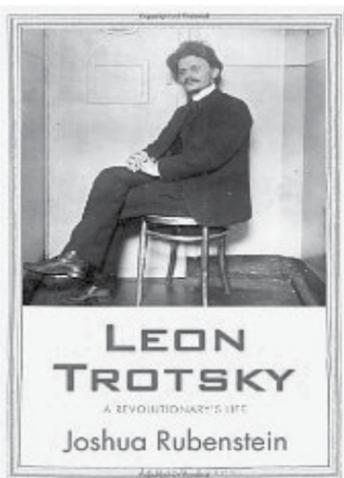
For these books by Trotsky add 10% postage and packing

**Leon Trotsky - My life** £19.99  
**The revolution betrayed** £13.99  
**Permanent revolution - Results and prospects** £10  
**History of the Russian Revolution** £22.99  
**The transitional programme** £4  
**Fascism - what it is and how to fight it** £4.50

These Trotsky pamphlets are 50p each:

*In defence of October*  
*I stake my life*  
*Stalinism and Bolshevism*  
*Marxism opposes individual terrorism*  
*The General Strike*

Available from Socialist Books  
 020 8988 8789  
 email: bookshop@socialistparty.org.uk  
 www.socialistbooks.org.uk  
 PO Box 24697, London E11 1YD



## Jobs and homes, not racism

# FIGHT THEIR SYSTEM, DEMAND OUR FUTURE!

**Sarah Wrack**

Waltham Forest Youth Fight for Jobs

Hidden away behind headlines of a lion roaming Essex and Prince Harry getting naked, you might have missed the latest figures for the number of young people not in education, employment or training (Neets). 16% of 16-24 year olds are stuck in this group, not able to use or develop their skills - what a waste of potential talent!

The government claims it's spending millions on training young people. But really what it calls 'training' just means subsidising companies to use us as slave labour and then throwing us back on the dole before they have to pay a proper wage.

The government says its 'education reforms' will lead to a world-class education system. But it's trebled tuition fees and scrapped EMA student payments so what working class young person will have access to it?

In reality, pro-big business parties offer no real future to young people. They will keep cutting the jobs that could be ours, attacking our right to an education, closing our youth centres and making it impossible to afford somewhere to live - because they're not willing to challenge big business.

Meanwhile £750 billion is sitting idle in the banks of big business in Britain alone because they can't see a way to make profit from investing it. A 50% levy on this could transform our lives if it were invested into jobs, infrastructure, research and developing technology.

Some people, like the far-right, racist English Defence League (EDL), want to see us turn on each other - to blame immigrants or other groups in society for the problems we face. They must be stopped. We see past the EDL's lies and know who the real enemy is. The rich, and their friends in government, are the only ones not suffering as a result of the crisis they caused.

We have to be as united as possible to stop them in their tracks. The government won't stand up for the 99% because they're too busy

defending the 1% - and what's good for them is bad for us.

Young people all over the world are fighting back and demanding an end to austerity. In Athens, New York, Cairo and London, workers and young people are shouting 'we won't pay for their crisis.' And we can win. Youth Fight for Jobs rejects racism and division. United we are stronger to fight their system and demand our future!

**Protest to stop the racist EDL marching through Waltham Forest: 11am Saturday 1 September, Walthamstow town centre. Meet at the Youth Fight for Jobs stall opposite 99p stores on High Street. See [www.youthfightforjobs.com](http://www.youthfightforjobs.com)**



### 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!