



the Socialist

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On 20 October...

MARCH TOGETHER

and then we must...

STRIKE TOGETHER!

to end austerity

Rob Williams

National Shop Stewards Network (NSSN) chair

“Why did 80,000 people boo Osborne? Because that’s the maximum capacity of the Olympic stadium!” Tweets like this and the booing itself at the Paralympics reflect the colossal and rising anger against Chancellor George Osborne and the entire cuts coalition.

But working class people have the potential to not just heckle but remove this government of the super-rich.

The TUC holds its 2012 congress at a crucial time. So divided is the Con-Dem coalition that at times it seems a strong gust of wind could blow them over as they argue over a third runway at Heathrow or House of Lords reform.

Yet this is the government that has implemented billions of pounds worth of cuts, sacked 400,000 public sector workers, trebled tuition fees and much, much more. If they stagger on in office for the full term, the remaining 80% of the austerity measures they threaten could follow, further decimating working class people’s lives.

But they can be stopped! On 30 November last year (N30) over two million public sector workers took strike action to defend their pensions. If this had been

escalated, a total victory could have been won, probably terminally damaging Cameron’s coalition.

Since then, groups of workers in the private sector – the construction electricians, the bus drivers for example – have also shown a huge determination to fight back.

Scandalously, though, union leaders such as Unison’s Dave Prentis broke up that N30 strike alliance. They signed up to the outline of an agreement that still means most workers will pay more and work longer to get a lower pension.

N30, however, gave us a glimpse of the trade union movement’s power. This truth must come out in the debates at the TUC congress. The NSSN welcomes the demonstration that the TUC is calling against austerity on 20 October. We will do all we can to get a million on the streets of London, Glasgow and Belfast.

But we don’t think that this alone will be enough to stop this government of the rich. We have organised a lobby of the TUC to call on the unions to follow up this march with a 24-hour general strike of the public and the private sector.

We call on TUC delegates to support the motion from the PCS union calling for further coordinated strike action and from the POA union for the TUC to consider joint action up to and including a general strike.

This is the fight of our lives – let’s get organised to win!



Striking on 28 March 2012 photo Senan

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
www.shopstewards.net 07952 283 558

Speakers:

Bob Crow, RMT general secretary, **Mark Serwotka**, PCS general secretary



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London Paralympics 2012

Protests against disability cuts: "Atos kills, kill Atos!"

London

"Atos kills, kill Atos" could be heard up and down Victoria Street outside the Department for Works and Pensions (DWP) as campaigners occupied the building as part of a week of protest against cuts to disabled people's benefits.

Atos has been in the firing line for its central role in the Con-Dems' brutal treatment of disabled people. Atos, formerly an IT contracting company, won £3 billion of contracts to assess disabled people for receipt of state benefits.

The Tories have vowed to cut £18 billion from the welfare budget and have subcontracted the dirty work of pushing people off vital benefits to Atos at a cost of £100 million a year.

The impact of a negative assessment by Atos is devastating. Aggressive Atos assessments are driving some disabled people to suicide while over 1,000 people have died following the withdrawal of benefits. A final insult to disabled people was Atos' sponsorship of the Paralympic Games.

On Friday 31 August hundreds gathered in protest outside the Atos headquarters in Euston, London. At the same time activists from Disabled People Against the Cuts, supported by the Socialist Party, occupied the DWP head office and called for an end to Atos assessments of disabled people.

The occupation was led by disabled people, many in wheelchairs. These activists showed incredible bravery in the face of a brutal police response. While eight activists occupied the foyer of the DWP head office, roughly 200 people gathered outside. Without warning police from the Territorial Support Group waded into the protesters outside. One disabled person suffered a



Disabled people, family members and anti-cuts campaigners took a protest to the Atos assessment centre in Swansea against the flawed and hated 'work capability assessment' and disability cuts. On a main road with banners reading "Cuts are Disabling: Fight Every Cut" and "Atos: Not fit for purpose" we got lots of support from passers by photo Swansea Socialist Party

dislocated shoulder and had to be taken away in an ambulance.

The battle against Atos and disability cuts must be stepped up – especially in light of the latest threat which would mean any disabled person who the DWP decides isn't taking sufficient steps towards getting back to work will lose a devastating £71 a week.

Neil Cafferky

Sheffield

Disabled people in Sheffield put on a united front against the government's chosen Paralympics sponsor. Protesters from the city's

branch of UK Uncut, Disabled People Against Cuts and the Mental Health Action Group stormed the steps outside Hartshead Square's Jobcentre Plus, home to Atos healthcare offices, ahead of the start of the Paralympics.

David Kirkham, UK Uncut in Sheffield, delivered an impassioned speech to crowds of disabled people, carers, families and campaigners at the protest dubbed the 'Atos closing ceremony'. He said: "Atos is an unfit-for-work private sector company charged with stopping money and benefits for vulnerable and disabled people in this country."

"The Paralympics is about being

the best you can be but the government and Atos are using that to point the finger at disabled people. We have doctors who take a holistic approach to sickness and disability. Instead that is being replaced with a 15-minute box-checking test."

As if to prove the point of the protest, a woman came out of Atos' office and took the mike saying: "I've just walked out of my interview because they don't know what they're doing." Pointing to her files of papers she said: "I've got letters here from my doctor and consultant from the last two years, yet Atos is trying to say I'm fit for work."

Sheffield Socialist Party members

Volunteering at the Games

A Paralympic volunteer

Standing waiting for the first tube train at 6.30am on a Sunday morning I was surrounded by low-paid workers. These are the workers who keep London going – mostly surviving on the minimum wage, or worse if they've fallen foul of some workfare scheme.

They were in the uniforms of G4S and various cleaning and catering firms and clearly not looking forward to the day very much. I was in the slightly surprising purple and red of the Olympic volunteer. When I got to work I got thanked for turning up and made to feel that what I was doing was appreciated and worthwhile.

Standing on a gate waiting to check tickets with my fellow volunteers, all I could see was an army of enthusiastic spectators, many already covered in flags and wearing silly hats. I spoke to one group of people from Birmingham who had got up at 3am to get there. You could not help but be impressed by their enthusiasm, everyone was determined to have a good time.

There were big groups of people – families, sports clubs, youth groups and suchlike but also large numbers of people with disabilities. Parents were bringing their disabled children.

The Paralympics celebrates athletic achievement, irrespective of disability. But most people with disabilities live in a world which emphasises what they can't do and a government which demonises them as scroungers.

Working in the Olympic Park is like working in a bubble away from the Con-Dems' austerity Britain. People are having fun in pleasant, sometimes breathtaking surroundings. It shows what can be achieved with proper resources. It shows how urgent it is to change this world.

Fight begins against massive outsourcing by Knowsley's Labour council

Hugh Caffrey

North West Socialist Party

Knowsley's Labour council on Merseyside has announced shocking plans to outsource almost all its services and jobs.

The Unison local government union branch has launched a fight to defend its members and the services they provide.

The Unison branch's strategy of informing members, preparing a public campaign and a mass lobby of the next full council meeting, is winning strong support from the workforce. A fighting lead can entice workers, even when facing such an onslaught.

The plans are devastating. Almost every service and job, whether 'backroom' or 'frontline', will be outsourced, with funding cuts of up to 25% across the board.

Adult social care, employment and skills, and transport are earmarked for "fast track" privatisa-

tion, to be in place by Christmas. Other services are to follow by April next year.

The range and quality of services will be hugely reduced, based on cutting council funding and using the cheapest private providers.

Knowsley's claimants of council tax benefit will lose up to £3 million. Council tax bills will be raised by the maximum possible without triggering a referendum, which the council would be likely to lose.

In May the council for the first time became 100% Labour, with not a single councillor elected from another party.

In return, the council is carrying out policies on a par with the worst Tory-led councils and the Blairites' dream of American-style local government, in which councils exist only to award contracts to the private sector.

Clearly the council is taking advantage of its result in May, when this was never put to the electorate, and the fact that there are no elec-



photo Paul Mattsson

tions to the council next year.

Council reserves

The council claims it has no choice, with a £38 million deficit due to government cuts over the next three years. This does not add up even according to the council's own figures.

The council's projections show that for the 12 months from April, it will be £6.85-£12.368 million in the red.

Yet £45.5 million sits in council-

wide reserves, and over £10 million in a "portfolio reserve" for a variety of projects including PFI privatisation plans.

A further £8.6 million in "unallocated reserves" is available to spend right now! The council could use that plus 10% of the council-wide reserve and not have to borrow a single penny more, and have no financial need for cuts/outsourcing through to April 2014. The cut to council tax benefit is a tiny fraction

of the sums sitting in reserves.

Many workers were already facing the possibility of major cuts to pay and/or conditions of service through the implementation of the Single Status agreement.

Unison is fighting this. If the council gets away with this, it could mean large cuts to salaries for many, despite a £5 million pot set aside for Single Status!

The only conclusion which can be drawn from these facts is that the council wants to privatise services, wants to cut benefits, and wants to see local authority workers suffer massive pay cuts.

Unison members in Knowsley face the fight of their lives. Socialist Party members in the Unison branch, elsewhere in Knowsley and across Merseyside will be mobilising maximum support to defeat these plans.

Lobby Knowsley council - Wednesday 19 September, 6pm, Huyton municipal buildings

Hospitals lacking services? Save our NHS!

Dave Reid

It's Saturday morning in Caerphilly and again Socialist Party campaigners calling for a proper Accident and Emergency department at the newly opened Ysbyty Ystrad Fawr (hospital) are surrounded by an angry crowd.

"They said 'what did you come here for?' when I went to the A&E at the hospital" says a man who had been in a car accident and was feeling unwell the following day. "I said 'because it's my local hospital and this is the A&E department!'" shaking his head in disbelief. "They said I had to go to the Heath hospital in Cardiff. What's the point of building a new hospital and then refusing to treat people at the A&E? It was much better at the [closed] Caerphilly Miners' [hospital]"



photo Dave Carr

"Not a hospital"

Patients cannot even have stitches at Ystrad Fawr or breaks put in plaster. One man had a heart attack outside the hospital and was taken by ambulance straight to the Royal Gwent hospital in Newport 15 miles away. "It's not a hospital - it's a clinic" said one woman signing our petition repeating the complaint of hundreds before her.

We waited years for the new hospital and several local hospitals were closed to be replaced by Ystrad Fawr. Now local people feel they have been conned. And hospital workers are disgusted too. Nurses explain that they are run off their feet at the new hospital because instead of multi-occupancy wards there are single rooms so it is harder for them to keep an eye on elderly patients. They have to walk miles further every day with the same or less nurses on duty.

Many people in the Rhymney Valley believe that the hospital was built

with single rooms to allow work for private health to be done there.

£81 million over two years is being cut from the Aneurin Bevan local health board's budget by the Welsh government. The Con-Dem government is rightly getting the lion-share of the blame for the cut-backs but people are slowly realising

that the Welsh Labour government, with its plan for 'centralising' hospital services, is also to blame. Welsh Labour plans to cover an area of 2,500 square miles and with a population of two million with just four Accident and Emergency departments!

If health chiefs want to find out

what people think of that plan then let them come to Caerphilly!

The Socialist Party's demands include:

- No NHS cuts. For a publicly funded service, free at the point of use, to meet everyone's health needs
- End big business profiteering from the NHS. Scrap the costly and dangerous PFI schemes. Cancel all PFI debts
- Take all health services and buildings back from big business and place them under public ownership. Publicly fund and integrate them with the rest of the NHS
- End NHS job losses and low pay
- For a massive trade union-led struggle to defend the NHS, including a national demonstration and strike action

For upcoming NHS protests around the country see

socialistparty.org.uk

ing that the Welsh Labour government, with its plan for 'centralising' hospital services, is also to blame. Welsh Labour plans to cover an area of 2,500 square miles and with a population of two million with just four Accident and Emergency departments!

If health chiefs want to find out

Boris' workfare - no solution Fight for real job creation

London Tory mayor Boris Johnson recently announced a new workfare scheme for young people in the capital. Here is a letter sent by Youth Fight for Jobs to the Guardian newspaper in response:

It was with depressing inevitability that we read that Boris Johnson and the DWP are piloting yet another slave labour scheme (Unpaid work plan for Londoners, The Guardian, 29 August 2012).

Having seen one of their workfare schemes, the Work Experience Programme, left in tatters as a result of public outcry, the government is coming back for another crack of the whip. Their determination to save on labour costs for their big business mates really is something to be admired.

The scheme will mean that young Londoners will not be able to claim Jobseekers' Allowance without having done at least six months work beforehand. 6,000 placements will be 'created' as part of the scheme.

The DWP employs a nice bit of intellectual gymnastics when they claim that it "ties in directly" with Johnson's pledge to "create 200,000

jobs in the next four years". Actually not a single job will be created by this or any other workfare scheme. All the government is doing is making sure that the companies and organisations that take these people on don't actually have to pay wages.

It's a win-win situation... for big business and the government at least. The government can appear to be doing something about unemployment. And businesses can get work done on the cheap.

If Grayling and Co are serious about ending "a something for nothing culture that does no one any favours" why don't they take money off the bankers who caused the economic crisis in the first place and are still receiving huge bonuses?

Why don't they take the £800 billion that sits idle in the accounts of big corporations? Why don't they collect the uncollected £120 billion in taxes from the super-rich? All this money could be used to invest in public services and provide genuinely socially

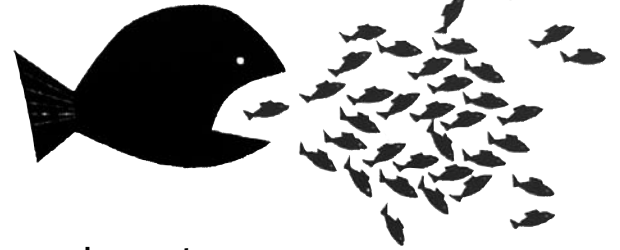
useful jobs and training.

Youth Fight for Jobs and Education will continue our efforts to build a mass campaign against slave labour schemes. We want to see a united movement of the unemployed, young people and trade unionists to beat back austerity and build a future for young people.

Paul Callanan, Youth Fight for Jobs and Education, national organiser
Chris Baugh, Public and Commercial Services union, assistant general secretary
Billy Hayes, Communication Workers Union, general secretary



Them...



Underemployment

It's well known that the official unemployment figures hide the true extent of the jobs crisis in many ways. Research by the TUC has shown that the number

42%

Increase since 2008 in number of people in work but wanting more hours

of people in work but who want more hours has risen by one million since 2008 - an increase of 42%. More than one in ten workers in the UK are now underemployed. The rate is higher for young people and women.

How to get rich

The world's richest woman, Australian mining heiress Gina Rinehart, has given the rest of us some not-so-helpful advice. "If you're jealous of those with more money, don't just sit there and complain, do something to make more money yourself - spend less time drinking or smoking and socialising, and more time working." You heard it here first folks! Never mind the fact there are seven jobseekers for every vacancy or that wages are lagging way behind prices. All you need to do is cut down on socialising!

Food, glorious food

World food prices increased by 10% in July alone. This has devastating consequences for the poor and working class internationally. But, as Them and Us reported last week after the Glencore chief's comments about profiting from the crisis, not everyone is suffering. It has been revealed that Barclays has made as much as half a billion pounds in just two years by speculating on food prices - directly profiting from price increases which are leading to starvation and suffering across the globe.

'Pay neutral'

Figures revealed by the CCCS debt charity have shown that many parents are effectively working for nothing. The combination of cuts to welfare, wage freezes and soaring childcare costs mean that for many low-paid workers, their entire salary goes straight on childcare - making having a job 'pay neutral'. Many would be financially better off not working. But despite this and counter to the lies told about single mothers, most choose to work anyway in the hope it will improve their career prospects in the future. The CCCS said that people in the £10,000-£20,000 income bracket have an average of £16 a month after living costs.

Blair and Tutu

Tony Blair, continuing his quest to push his way back into the limelight, spoke at a leadership conference in South Africa recently - for the modest fee of £150,000. In an admirably principled stand, Desmond Tutu refused to attend the event (which he had agreed to do without any fee) as a result. He also wrote a pull-no-punches article in the Observer which called for Blair and Bush to face trial in the Hague war crimes court. Go Desmond!

Where are they now?

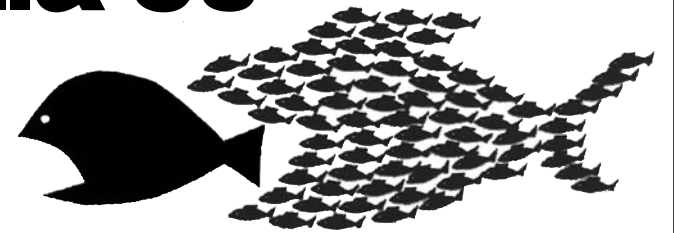
Peter Mandleson has learnt well from his former boss, Tony Blair. Mandleson's consultancy firm, Global Counsel, made £2 million in its first year. Not quite as much as Tony Blair As-

£7.6m

Cost of Peter Mandleson's London home

sociates' £12 million but not bad for someone forced to resign from the Labour cabinet in a scandal...twice! The profits have afforded Mandleson a £7.6 million four-storey house in London. If only we could all lie and cheat our way to his political contacts.

...& Us



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Southampton council pay dispute

Important lessons for the battles ahead

Southampton council workers, in dispute for over 18 months, are close to ending their fight against the previous Tory council's pay cuts. This struggle is of national significance, especially in local government, and the lessons should be discussed in preparation for the battles that lie ahead. Nick Chaffey, Southern region Socialist Party secretary explains.

The previous Southampton Tory council imposed pay cuts of £5 million from April 2011. In response council workers carried out months of selective strikes. Under pressure from this action, the Labour election manifesto promised to restore full pay.

Labour's recent offer, recommended by both Unison and Unite stewards, means council workers see pay restored over the next 18 months, returning £2.3 million to the pay pot. The Unite newsletter acknowledges that this is not a complete restoration but "with the backdrop of massive attacks on public spending, this offer represents a real breakthrough for our members."

Labour and its allies in the unions, especially the Prentis leadership in Unison, will like to present this as a sign of the positive difference between Labour and the Tories and a justification for their continued support for Labour.

If Labour had been a real ally of the unions, however, it would have settled in full immediately after the May 2012 elections and built on the election success to fight the Con-Dem government for the money needed to deliver its budget. This offer has taken almost four months to materialise and fails to meet the promises made before the elections. Labour has already announced cuts and come into collision with the unions.

During 2011, some of the largest union mass meetings, demonstrations and picket lines seen in Southampton for generations were organised. Significantly they coincided with the national strikes on 30 June and 30 November, boosting the resolve of the local dispute.

Undoubtedly the depth of the cuts and the anger it provoked were the drive that sustained the strikes. While the call for an all-out strike was never made, in favour of selective action particularly of the refuse workers, at its peak the strike action covered large sections of the council, including port authority workers who struck with solidarity from

Unite dock workers.

It was estimated that a million bin bags were lying in streets across the city but despite this a majority of the city supported the strike. This reflected the anti-cuts mood in society and the potential to defeat the Tory council. Throughout the strike Socialist Party members in Southampton gave their full support to the strike action, visiting picket lines, producing regular bulletins, and building solidarity, with campaign stalls across the city.

The Tories tried to ride out the dispute, falsely believing that public opinion would turn against the strike leaving the unions isolated. They hoped that Labour would be tainted by association with the unions and the Tories would maintain control of the council in the 2012 elections.

The effect was exactly the opposite, with Labour the electoral beneficiary, despite active opposition to strike action. In May 2012, the Tories lost over 5,000 votes, 23%, losing ten seats with Labour gaining an overall majority despite losing 1,943 votes themselves.

Labour opposed strikes

Reflecting its national attitude to strike action, Labour opposed the strikes and in the summer of 2011 drew strong hostility from wide sections of striking council workers following a public statement saying that if elected in 2012, it would be forced to make massive cuts with the loss of hundreds of jobs.

It was in the run up to the 2012 elections that the Unite and Unison leadership shifted strategy away from strike action to an electoral strategy in support of Labour. This was justified on the basis that Labour had made a commitment to restore pay if elected in 2012. The Socialist Party argued against this shift, warning that it was not in the interests of council workers to rely on a Labour council who would end up attacking its workforce.

Within weeks of the May elections it was clear that Labour was strug-



Southampton council workers on the march photo Paul Mattsson

gling to face up to the reality of the financial crisis it inherited and how to meet commitments to the unions and deliver on its wider election promises.

The reality has been drawn-out negotiations that have lasted almost four months with a first offer rejected because it included 90 redundancies. Union relations with Labour had been further soured by the first Labour mini-budget in July that proposed the closure of Oaklands swimming pool and cuts to 30 jobs.

Pressure was dramatically increased on the Labour group by the decision of two Labour councillors for Coxford ward, Keith Morrell and Don Thomas, to vote against the cuts budget. This was with the support of Unite and Unison, whose members were furious at the cuts and the failure to resolve the pay dispute.

There is no doubt that this also confirmed to many in Southampton, including council workers, the warnings of the Socialist Party and the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC) candidates who had stood in the elections in 2011 and 2012 that Labour would be no friend of the unions once elected.

It is clear that Labour and its supporters in the unions fear growing support for TUSC and failure to reach an agreement on the pay dispute would have exacerbated this.

Many council workers will un-

doubtedly be pleased by the latest offer. But there will be anger that a number will still be out of pocket as pay has not been back-dated to April 2011. Workers earning over £22,000 will not get their pay fully restored until 2014, and car allowances and leave entitlements will not be fully restored. It remains to be seen at union meetings over the next two weeks how members will respond to the offer or if they feel that, having forced the council to retreat once, it can be pushed further.

However the most important lesson of this drawn out dispute is the impact a determined struggle can have through mass strike action and demonstrations in building the unions, the confidence of members to fight back, and to defeat the cuts agenda.

In Southampton this will be as important now under Labour that is planning to make over £40 million cuts in the next two years. The development of the anti-cuts movement and strengthening support for a socialist alternative to austerity is an urgent local task.

Nationally many council worker activists will be asking - if strike action won concessions in Southampton - what more could have been won if national strike action across all local authorities had been taken last year? As the Con-Dem attacks continue the call for such action will grow.

In brief

Website

For more of the following reports, please see the Socialist Party's website: www.socialistparty.org.uk

HMRC jobs deal

In the current climate of cuts and attacks on working and living conditions, PCS members in HMRC (revenue and customs) have been able to secure significant agreement from their employer on jobs, privatisation and sickness absence policy. Strike action that was due to begin on Monday 3 September has been suspended for two months in order to implement the deal. PCS will monitor this and will not hesitate to resurrect the action if management reneges on the agreement.

A PCS member

DWP contact centres

A strike on 13 August by workers in the Department for Work and Pensions working in Contact Centre Services has resulted in significant progress in negotiations. The dispute is over privatisation and working conditions. The strike originally planned for 3 September was therefore called off for further negotiations to take place.

Remploy strikes

Workers at Remploy's two health-care factories - Chesterfield and Springburn, Glasgow - started a week's strike on 3 September. Chesterfield GMB steward, Antony North, Carl Chambers and other GMB pickets spoke to Jon Dale: "For a year we've been trying to get answers from Remploy about the future of the business but have kept being told that was all confidential..."

"Under our old terms, anyone with more than two years' service made redundant got a year's wages plus £5,000. That could be £19,000. But the new terms could see us lose our jobs and get just £1,800. 60-year olds with disabilities will have great difficulty ever finding any other work."

• Send solidarity messages to: GMB Chesterfield kevin.shand@remploy.co.uk GMB Springburn philip.brannan@remploy.co.uk. Donations can be made out to 'GMB' and sent to GMB, Grove Hall, 60 College Grove Rd, Wakefield, WF1 3RN.

Sheffield

Despite last minute attempts by Sova management to bully Sheffield's recycling workers into calling off their industrial action, the strike on 1-2 September went ahead as planned.

The 30-odd tip workers at Sheffield's five Dump-it sites took 28 days strike action earlier in summer against council cuts. Their indefinite strike won the re-instatement of three colleagues and the promise of "serious" negotiations over bonus and increasing hours.

But the Labour council and Veolia and Sova, the private operators and sub-contractors, have just stalled for the last eight weeks, so workers voted to strike again every weekend in September.

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

Unison higher education service group

Vote 'yes' in pay strike ballot

Shona McCulloch

Unison HE SGE, personal capacity

In this year's Unison Higher Education Service Group Executive (HESGE) elections, the left made gains. Members are angry over issues such as the failure to give a lead in saving final salary pensions, the shameful witch-hunting of activists and the cosiness of the union to the Labour Party. Calls for a new workers' party received enormous applause at Unison 2012 conference.

In July, higher education (HE) was the only SGE to recommend members reject the unfair and unnecessary changes to the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS).

In HE over the last three years, wages have plummeted in real terms, with rises of just 0.5%, 0.4% and £150 respectively, in the context

of soaring inflation. This was apart from vice-chancellors, who awarded themselves on average an extra £9,700 last year, with top university heads on outrageous average salaries of around £333,000.

The Con-Dems have slashed public funding of universities and transferred the financial burden of higher education on to students by raising the tuition fee cap to £9,000, which many institutions have chosen to charge.

Funding shortfalls have been made up through reducing staff numbers and massively increasing workload, through increasing student intake, especially of wealthy foreign students who can be charged even higher fees. Departments have been closed and services have been hived off to be run for private profit. Workers in HE are being asked to do more for ever-decreasing wages.

The HE unions put in a joint pay claim this year for 7% plus a number of measures to make pay fairer, such as the living wage and closing the gender pay gap. The employers' representatives, buoyed up by their gains in previous negotiations, responded with a "final" derisory offer of just 1%.

A consultation of members showed HE workers saying 'enough is enough' and the HESGE unanimously rejected the employers' offer. A ballot for strike action opens in September. If members return a 'yes' vote, action looks likely to begin before the national TUC demo on 20 October, with further action if necessary.

Further to the spectacle of Unison leader Dave Prentis smashing an ice sculpture of a pound sign at conference this year, Unison's bureaucracy appears to be supportive

of 'smashing the pay freeze' for now, no doubt in order to draw attention away from pensions. On the HESGE the left has made it clear that our campaign for fair pay must be more than a letting off steam exercise followed by a climbdown, like we saw over the LGPS.

•Vote 'yes' to action in the pay ballot

•Free, publicly run, good quality education, available to all at any age. Abolish university tuition fees now and introduce a living grant

•Maximum unity and coordination in strike action, not just in higher education but across the labour movement

•For a 24-hour general strike - Lobby the TUC, Brighton, 9 September

•Contest every seat in Unison elections, for a fighting, democratic leadership

London Met uni crisis

Staff and students unite to fight government's enforced deportations

Claire Laker-Mansfield
Socialist Students organiser

The UK Border Agency's decision to revoke London Metropolitan's licence to teach international students was cruel and calculated. It threatens to wreck thousands of lives. Over 2,000 students, currently midway through their courses, face the prospect of enforced deportation.

While a (recently extended) 120-day 'grace period' has been given in order for students to attempt to transfer to other universities, the reality is for many, if not most, that this will prove impossible.

As well as the horrendous effect on current London Met students, those expecting to come to London to begin courses in September are also going to be hit. They will be unable to begin their studies as planned.

The unprecedented move to revoke this licence has sent shockwaves throughout the UK's higher education system and has been met with fury and defiance by London Met's staff and students. A protest held on 30 August saw dozens of

Fighting this draconian decision is absolutely crucial. Not only does it threaten thousands of London Met students, it sets a grim precedent for the future

students angrily demonstrate outside Downing Street. For the government this is an opportunity to appear tough on immigration. For ordinary students, their futures are at stake.

This is not the first set of bad headlines to hit London Met. Just under a month ago the university's management announced plans to privatise all so-called back room services. Everything other than

teaching and the vice-chancellor's office could be handed over to the profiteers. These private companies put making money ahead of the interests of staff and students.

The impact of management's previous attempts to run London Met on the cheap can be seen. Without sufficient staffing levels, how can over-stretched and underpaid workers be expected to comply with the government's stringent requirements for 'student monitoring'?

While the university's management now pleads innocence, it is clear that their priorities have not been aligned with the needs of staff and students for some time. There is a strong possibility that London Met's partnership with the private college London School of Business and Finance was a contributing factor in the UKBA's recent decision.

Clearly the licence issue cannot be separated from that of privatisation. The university's management bears a substantial amount of responsibility for the dire situation the university now finds itself in. The revocation of this licence puts the entire future of the university in jeopardy.

Fighting this draconian decision is absolutely crucial. Not only does it threaten thousands of London Met students, it sets a grim precedent for the future. As this is the first publicly funded institution to have its licence revoked, it marks a new and changing attitude towards international students.

Universities management and the government have long seen those who come to study from outside the EU as lucrative 'cash cows' who they charge exorbitant fees.

This emphasises the need for those opposed to what the government is doing to argue for education that is fully funded, publicly owned and universally free at all levels - international students included. International students should not be treated as cash cows one day and marched home the next, all at the whim of politicians representing the 1%.

New government targets to drastically reduce the number of people entering the country mean international students are now seen as an



The unprecedented move by the UK Border Agency threatens to wreck the lives of over 2,000 students

irritating block on them lowering net immigration figures. If the government gets away with this move unchallenged, it is likely that London Met students will not be the last to face this outrageous treatment.

Fighting this is therefore given an added urgency. While we must demand an immediate reversal of the decision to ban international students from London Met, at the very least an amnesty for current students, to allow them to complete their studies, should be sought.

Campaign

This campaign should be a top priority for the National Union of Students. Writing in the Guardian, NUS president Liam Burns correctly expressed opposition to the decision, but failed to offer any leadership to students who want to fight for their right to study at London Met. Instead he pledged that NUS would help support students in transferring to other universities.

While Socialist Students does not oppose NUS offering this service, this should not be a substitute for fighting to stop students being forced to change university or face deportation.

Unfortunately Liam Burns' attitude has been mirrored in the way that the NUS officers have approached the campaign so far. In meetings discussing the course of the campaign they have argued for small scale actions involving only selected students rather than for mobilising maximum numbers to protests.

In order to push back the government a mass campaign must be organised. This will need to involve students, university lecturers and support staff and members of the wider public if it is to be successful.

The trade unions at London Met, alongside London Met students' union have taken the initiative by calling a lobby of the UKBA on 5 September. This should be the

beginning of a mass campaign, organised democratically, involving students, staff as well as the wider population.

A mass campaign can force the government back, protect international students and save London Met from the government, management and profiteers, all currently steering it on a course to destruction.

Socialist Students demand:

- An immediate amnesty for all current students
- No deportations
- No forced university transfers
- Re-instate London Met's international students licence
- Allow new international students to begin courses in September
- Stop all privatisation at London Met - support campus trade unions in their fight to defend all services
- For education that is fully funded, publicly owned and universally free at all levels

Con-Dems criminalise homeless people

Paul Heron
Solicitor, Hackney Community Law Centre (personal capacity)

A new criminal offence of 'squatting in a residential building' came into force on 1 September 2012 by way of section 144 of the Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act 2012.

This vindictive piece of Con-Dem legislation will raise concern across England and Wales. For some, it marks a long-awaited triumph for private landlords, but for many others it comes as a serious threat to their basic need for shelter and a home.

The 'consultation exercise' that preceded its introduction saw 96% of responses 'not wanting to see any action taken on squatting'. Out of 2,217 responses, 2,126 of those

were from members of the public concerned about the impact of criminalising squatting, and only ten people wrote in claiming to be victims of squatting.

Amazingly the Metropolitan police, the Law Society, the Criminal Bar Association and numerous homeless charities such as Crisis, all publicly opposed its introduction.

In the middle of one of the worst housing crises this country has ever seen, up to 50,000 squatters face becoming criminals because they are occupying empty residential properties in order to put a roof over their heads.

The number of private and public new homes has fallen to the lowest level since the 1920s. Consequently, homelessness rates are rising, a hidden army of 'sofa surfers' exist across the country, housing benefit caps are further tightening the

screws on tenants, and remember, many of those receiving housing benefit are working.

Not surprisingly when squatting is reported in the media it often cites an example of the homeowner who 'goes on holiday, and returns to find his home squatted.'

Protecting profits

While sympathy can be extended in such cases, they are very rare and are often overplayed in the right-wing press for political gain. The reality is that for most people who squat it is because they do not have access to affordable accommodation, and it is in properties that have been abandoned for many years.

With a stroke of a pen thousands of ordinary working class people will possibly be convicted, facing up to six months in jail and fines of

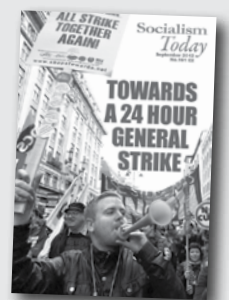
up to £5,000.

Serious questions need to be asked of this legislation. With 930,000 empty properties according to the Empty Homes Agency, who is this law protecting? As socialists we can only see that the new law protects profiteering landlords and property speculators. Properties are being kept empty to protect profits, and the new law does nothing but shore up this practice.

In fact it can be argued that the law is open to abuse by rogue landlords, which could even mean trouble for non-squatting tenants - who may have a tenancy agreement that the landlord will deny.

The attack against squatting is a marked shift not only in the campaign against people now facing homelessness, but one to defend private property rights over the human right to shelter.

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- Towards a 24-hour general strike by Peter Taaffe

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Osborne's cuts plans aren't working

The school and college students have returned but it was the angry and loud boogie of Cuts-Chancellor George Osborne at the Paralympics that really signals we are in a new season - which has all the potential to be an autumn of struggle. Peter Taaffe, Socialist Party general secretary, explains why it is crucial for the trade unions to develop a bold programme in the preparation of what could be a truly mass TUC demonstration on 20 October and the generalised strike action that must follow it.

The wheels are beginning to come off the coalition government's caravan. It is besieged on all sides. It faces not just rising discontent from the working class but huge swathes of the middle class are in open revolt, which threatens to engulf the government: "It's not just the poor. For the first time, even the once comfortable are experiencing the anxiety of how to pay the mortgage, fill the car, meet the supermarket bill." [Yvonne Roberts, Observer, 26 August 2012.]

Now, disaffection is expressed on their own side with the Confederation of British Industry (CBI) and the British Chamber of Commerce questioning the unremitting austerity of Osborne and Prime Minister David Cameron.

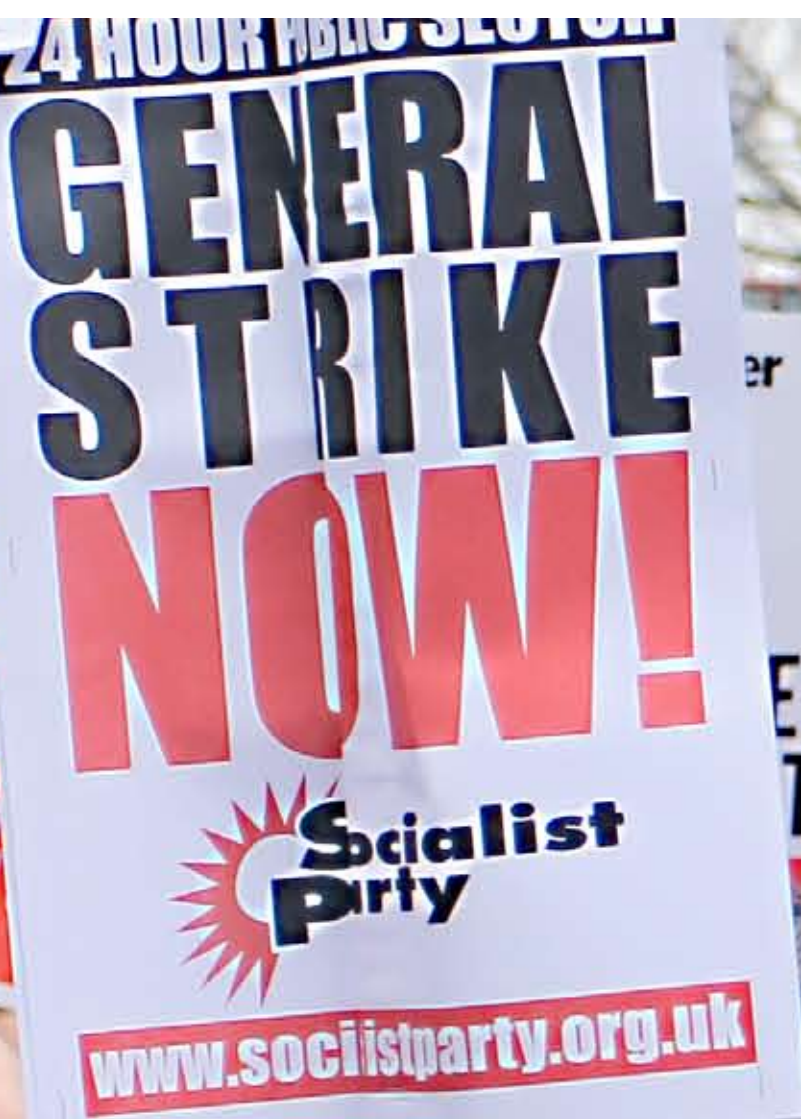
They have not gone as far as demanding a 'plan B' or even 'C' but in the words of the CBI, the bosses' 'trade union', what is needed at least is "a little bit of growth... wiggle room for a bit of extra borrowing". This semi-oppositional stance has been fuelled by a further plunge of the economy, which the CBI estimates will shrink by a further 0.3% this year on top of the 0.5% so far.

At the same time, Nick Clegg tries to burnish his 'radical' credentials with a proposal for a "time-limited wealth tax on Britain's wealthiest people" - after backing Osborne and Cameron to the hilt in the infamous recent 'rich man's budget'.

Lib Dems on death row

This is entirely unrelated, of course, to the upcoming Liberal Democrat conference, where Clegg is likely to get a kicking from his own people. Nor does it in any way arise from the collapse of the Lib Dems in the polls, which reveal that he can expect to drop from 57 MPs to just ten at the next election. The Liberal Democrats are on 'death row' and the party now "has fewer members than the British Psychological Society" [Independent].

Clegg has given up all hope of those voters who were duped into supporting the Liberal Democrats in the last election, and who have now deserted them in droves, ever returning to the fold. In a very revealing comment, he remarked: "What people [himself] once thought might have been a short sharp economic battle, a short, sharp recession, is clearly turning into a longer-term process." In other words, the illusion that cuts could be carried out easily and swiftly, laying the basis later



for a new sunny economic upswing and victory of the coalition parties in the next election, lies in ashes.

This, in turn, has led to sharp clashes within the Lib Dems. The business secretary, Vince Cable, is waiting in the wings - and is clearly the favourite of what is left of the rank-and-file Liberal Democrats - ready to unseat Clegg. His supporters have been dubbed as the 'Continuity SDP' - a comparison to the 'Continuity IRA', which is in opposition to the Provisional IRA.

The former Social Democratic Party merged with the Liberal Party in the 1980s. Cable clearly is preparing the way for the demise of this government and its replacement, he hopes, with a coalition with New Labour.

Incredibly, Peter Hain - himself once chair of the Young Liberals and probably acting as an outrider for Ed Miliband and the New Labour leadership - has actually urged New Labour to embrace such a coalition.

New Labour is afraid of taking office alone because of the daunting economic problems caused by the crisis of capitalism. It is prepared to link up with the traitors of the SDP who split from the Labour Party when, at bottom, Labour was still a workers' party.

The ex-SDP faction is now perfectly at ease with the prospect of sharing power with a right-wing, pro-capitalist 'Labour' Party that accepts cuts, etc. On the other hand, New Labour flirts with such a coalition because it could be used as an excuse for not acting in a radical fashion.

Nor has the major partner in the government coalition, the Tory party, escaped internal strife. Half of all voters want Osborne removed with less than a third believing that he's done a 'good job'. The right of the party has also been emboldened with their success in forcing Cameron to jettison

the Liberal Democrats' sacred cow of House of Lords reform.

The Lib Dems retaliated by threatening to block the changes to electoral boundaries, which would give advantages to the Tories over the other parties. This prompted the Tory chairman of the 1922 backbenchers committee to declare that the coalition government would break up before the next election.

More alarming from the government's point of view is the growing opposition to the austerity measures which is coming from the grassroots of the Tory party itself. For instance, Tory councillors in Oxfordshire opposed the recently announced changes to council tax benefits, which will hit the poorest hardest, and have even threatened to refuse to implement it.

The TUC is therefore presented with an exceptionally favourable opportunity to force an already shaky government into retreat and pave the way for an election and its downfall. However, to make this a reality - and much sooner than just before the next election - the TUC must mobilise in action for a 24-hour general strike as we spelt out in the previous issue of the Socialist.

Alternative to austerity

But also central to the campaign for the 20 October TUC demo and afterwards is the necessity for outlining a different road to that of the government's dead-end policies. What is the alternative to austerity, a zombie economy in which 440,000 people are condemned to unemployment for the last two years, with 100,000 more young people thrown on the scrapheap since the coalition government came to power? What new road is promised to the sick and disabled, to the users of the NHS, by the cuts pro-

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TIME FOR 'PLANS' FOR SOCIALISM

which involved burying pound notes in the ground, and leaving "it to the well-trained forces of self-interest to dig them up again!"

Programme of public works

These quack nostrums of capitalist economists indicate the seriousness of the crisis confronting them. They even favour a little bit of inflation - formerly heresy in capitalist economic circles - if this will get the economy moving.

Even George Osborne - without admitting it - has flirted with a little bit of a plan B with the promised injection of between £40 billion - £50 billion in 'UK guarantees' to be used to rebuild the infrastructure and help Britain's moribund economy. This is a trifle - a drop in the ocean - against the background of a calamitous economic situation. It would hardly make a dent in the crumbling infrastructure of Britain or alter the dire prospects of the construction industry.

Symptomatic of the collapse is the 70% drop in brick production since 2007. This in turn reflects the virtual collapse of house building. In the 50 square miles of Tory-run Welwyn Hatfield council, also the constituency of the Conservative housing minister Grant Shapps, only three social homes are being built in the next three years! In the 25 London boroughs only 4,000 social homes will be built between now and 2015.

What is required is a massive programme of public works to renovate housing - with the aim to build at least one million houses a year - repair and

rebuild schools and the infrastructure, massively increase spending on education, etc. The TUC must formulate such a programme and link it to the campaign to defeat the government's austerity. Such a programme is the minimum that is required for decent human existence.

Yet an effective and substantial public works programme - combined with an increase in wages, which it is suggested will increase demand and therefore lessen the effects of the crisis - will be implacably opposed by the capitalists. They and the Tories will shriek: 'How will you pay for it?' Increased public expenditure on vital economic and social projects, not backed up by extra production of goods and services, particularly in a period of recession, bordering on depression, will ultimately have to be paid for in a number of ways.

Increased taxes on the capitalists, which will have the effect of cutting their profits, and in turn could lead to them closing factories or seeking to move elsewhere, are one way. This is what is being threatened by the French capitalists in answer to the puny wealth tax proposals by the French president Hollande.

On the other hand, increased taxes on the working and middle classes will have the effect of cutting the market and cancelling out the effects of the boost from increased spending elsewhere.

Or it will lead the government to resort to the printing press, which will ultimately generate inflation and possibly introduce a new period of stagflation reminiscent of the 1970s. Keynes, whose ideas have once again become fashionable, is the economist most associated with the idea of boosting public expenditure to combat serious recessions or depression.

However, in the 1930s the US was the only country with plump savings from the past, which were partially able, for a period, to offset the effects of the depression through the New Deal policies of President Franklin Roosevelt.

This does not mean that a wealth tax or a programme of public works

should be scrapped as 'unworkable'. But it does mean that the TUC and the labour movement must face up to the contradictions which flow from all attempts to maintain and improve the living standards of the working class in the midst of a devastating crisis of capitalism.

Attempts to secure even minimal reforms, never mind a substantial reformist programme to change the lives of working people, come up against the inherent limits of capitalism, the system based upon production for profit and not social need.

It poses the need to go further with the demand for nationalisation, under democratic workers' control and management, of the banks and the summits of the financial system together with the big monopolies that dominate the great majority of the economy.

It will also require control of all foreign trade, through democratic nationalisation of all incomings and outgoings, in order to prevent sabotage as big business will attempt to move its resources abroad. In short, in place of Osborne's 'plan A' we do not need a minimalist 'plan B' as has been suggested, but a bold 'plan S' for socialism.

Every opportunity should now be taken - particularly in the run-up and the aftermath of the 20 October TUC demo - to discuss the real alternative to increasingly discredited capitalism. This is not the moth-eaten proposals of Miliband for a "good capitalism" in opposition to "predatory capitalism".

No 'good capitalism'

For all the victims of capitalism there is no "good capitalism" - those languishing on the dole queues, eking out an existence on poverty wages, young people threatened with working for nothing, unapologetic slavery, with Tory London mayor Boris Johnson acting as a boss overseer. It is crisis-ridden capitalism, a cold brutal capitalism, in the form of Osborne, denigrating, disparaging and persecuting the most vulnerable, that is the reality. This is the real face of the system.

This is just one indication of how far removed from the trade unions the tops of New Labour have become, particularly for the rank and file. Miliband is even trying to seduce 'business people' - who don't even have to be Labour Party members - to become Labour parliamentary candidates! And yet the trade union leaders continue to pour money into the treasure chest of New Labour to the tune of millions of pounds.

In fact, the trade unions now are the only 'benefactors' for New Labour with Blair's rich backers having jumped ship when Labour was ousted from office. But there is no possibility here of applying the maxim, "he who pays the piper calls the tune". The piper - the New Labour leadership - plays what ever discordant tune it likes! There is not even a demand for a New Labour government to completely eradicate from the statute books the brutal and vicious anti-union laws.

And yet in every serious industrial dispute the bosses go running to the courts to use these laws. If New Labour will not even promise to eradicate vicious class-biased legislation, they do not deserve a penny of support from ordinary trade unionists. A new party - a mass-based working class party - should stand for a new road, for plan S for socialism.

This should be an important part of the preparations for the mighty demonstration on 20 October, leading to a one-day national general strike - the date of which to be set by the congress of the TUC.

We welcome contributions to this debate in the pages of the Socialist. Email: editors@socialistparty.org.uk

Building TUSC in Manchester

Paul Gerrard
North West Socialist Party

A parliamentary byelection in Manchester Central is expected in November when Tony Lloyd, the sitting Labour MP, resigns his seat to fight for the £90,000-£100,000 a year police commissioner post.

Labour has selected Lucy Powell to fight the seat. Oxford-educated and until recently Ed Miliband's senior adviser, she is yet another New Labour clone.

Manchester Central is an inner city, working class area with the second highest unemployment rate, and two of the most deprived wards, in the country. It deserves to have the chance to vote for a real alternative to the austerity policies of the three main parties. Given this situation, Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC) supporters in the city have been discussing whether to stand to present a genuine socialist platform.

On Thursday 30 August we held a meeting to discuss the situation ahead of the TUSC national steering committee on 5 September. Thirty attended to hear Clive Heemskerck, TUSC nominations officer, and Alex Davidson, previous TUSC council candidate for Manchester Central's Ancoats and Clayton ward and vice chair of PCS north west region, make

the case for a TUSC campaign. Steve Leadbeater from the electricians' rank and file, in an impassioned speech, reminded the audience of the huge battles which are looming and of the Tories' intentions to give us 'workhouses and soup kitchens.' He praised TUSC for its exemplary democracy.



The Socialist Party is part of the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition, an electoral alliance which stands anti-cuts candidates. Find out more at www.tusc.org.uk

Other speakers pointed to the lack of a revolt among Labour councils against the cuts, with only three councillors in the whole country prepared to break ranks, and to the popularity of the idea of a trade unionist candidate on PCS



The three main pro-cuts, big business parties should be condemned to the dustbin of history photo Sheffield SP

picket lines.

The mood of the meeting was clear: there is a need for an electoral challenge which comes directly from the trade union movement and which can both mobilise in the workplaces and become the voice of workers moving into struggle this autumn. The city centre which is at the heart of the constituency contains railway stations, hospi-

tals, sorting offices, and job centres which will be subject to waves of strike action in the months to come.

Socialist Party members believe that Alex Davidson, as a PCS activist, would make an ideal candidate, and he was endorsed as a potential candidate at Thursday's meeting. We hope the TUSC steering committee can enthusiastically agree a TUSC candidate at their next meeting.

TUSC 2012 conference

Saturday 22 September
11am-5pm

Room B34
Birkbeck College
Malet Street
London WC1E

- Building working class political representation against the austerity consensus
Speakers include John McInally, PCS union vice-president, and Kingsley Abrams, Unite executive member and Lambeth councillor (personal capacity)

- TUSC local elections challenge - for councillors who stand up to the Con-Dems
Speakers include Walsall councillor Pete Smith, Preston councillor Michael Lavalette, and former 'Liverpool 47' councillor Tony Mulhearn

- Reviewing TUSC's structures

All welcome

Registration £5 waged/£2 unwaged, pooled fare capped at £10

See www.tusc.org.uk for more info

Socialist Party subs appeal

Can you give an extra 10%?

Naomi Byron
Socialist Party finance department

There has been a brilliant response to the Socialist Party's campaign to increase the membership subs, with hundreds of members increasing the regular payments they make to fund the party's work. As a result, the Socialist Party just has to raise a further £1,000 a month to reach our target this year.

We are asking every member to increase their subs by 10%, or more if they can. Some have increased their membership subs substantially, including low-paid young workers who have joined the '100 club' by donating £100 or more a month to the party. Many members

on benefits or similar low incomes have increased their subs by 50% or more.

We would like to say thank you to all the members who have already increased their subs, and those who have kept their subs the same or managed to minimise any reductions despite a loss in income. These efforts have enabled us to keep building and going forward despite the financial pressures we are all facing.

From the fight to stop the racist EDL marching through our towns and cities, to campaigning for the trade unions to call a 24-hour general strike against austerity, Socialist Party members are to the fore. The campaign to increase our membership subs is to make sure we have

the money to take on new organisers and maximise our potential to help build the fightback against austerity and explain the socialist alternative.

As our ideas reach a wider audience, new members are joining and increasing our financial base as well as the amount of campaigning work we can do. If you haven't yet increased your subs, please do so now to help us reach our target by the end of the year. If you are not yet a member of the Socialist Party, join us and help us build the socialist alternative to austerity.

If you don't want to join at this stage, you can also donate to our fighting fund at www.socialistparty.org.uk/donate to support our campaigning work.

Brighton Pride 2012: anti-cuts group blocked

Brighton and Hove Socialist Party members

Having been a commercial and increasingly de-politicised event for years, Brighton Pride 2012 was run privately after the Pride south east charity faced mounting debts.

A 'Queers Against the Cuts' bloc was organised by Brighton and Hove Socialist Party member Beth Granter. It aimed to include political slogans highlighting the impact of cuts and the need for a mass campaign against them.

As the parade was setting off a Pride steward aggressively ordered the bloc to leave if they did not move to the back, asking the police to kick them off the parade.

Beth explained: "Suddenly a row of police on horseback and foot ran into the middle of our group,

and I was told I had to identify who was 'officially' in the group to be left through. As it was mainly organised online I didn't know everybody's faces. I managed to get most people out of the kettle but around 15 people were left behind."

No reason seems to have motivated this attitude towards anti-cuts activists other than the fact we were displaying political slogans, including 'pride not profit' and 'cut rents not benefits'.

If Brighton Pride will not allow the space to defend lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and queer (LGBTQ) rights then we must organise with trade unions, anti-cuts campaigners, LGBTQ activists and others to build an alternative, politicised Brighton Pride. This would be a celebration, but a celebration aimed at campaigning for LGBTQ liberation - against cuts and privatisation.

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Please consider donating to the Socialist Party appeal to fund a replacement computer server. Every donation, no matter how big or small, will be welcome and take us nearer to our goal. Thanks to: Sarah Speller £20; Lottie Hann £500; Paul Hunt £8; Clive Walder £20; A Staples £7.50; Alicia

Blackett £25; Ken Smith £30; Rob Owen £10; John Fletcher £25; a reader of the Socialist from London £100 and from Cardiff £10. You can pay via the Socialist Party website www.socialistparty.org.uk/donate, marking your donation 'server appeal', or telephone 020 8988 8777.

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North West	1,200	1,151	█	█	█	█	
Wales	2,300	1,981	█	█	█	█	
South West	1,400	1,113	█	█	█	█	
East Midlands	1,550	1,197	█	█	█	█	
Northern	600	334	█	█	█	█	
South East	750	413	█	█	█	█	
West Midlands	2,100	1,153	█	█	█	█	
Southern	1,200	657	█	█	█	█	
Yorkshire	2,900	1,443	█	█	█	█	
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South Africa: Marikana massacre ignites a political volcano

Democratic Socialist Movement
(DSM - CWI in South Africa)
reporters

In the face of widespread anger, the National Prosecuting Authority (NPA) has been forced to provisionally withdraw the murder charges against the 270 Lonmin platinum miners arrested after the 16 August Marikana massacre and to release them.

After repeated bail hearing postponements, lawyers representing the arrested mineworkers had issued an ultimatum to president Jacob Zuma to release the mineworkers by Sunday 2 September or face high court action. 170 miners were released. The NPA had already decided to lay charges of public violence, possession of dangerous weapons, possession of arms and ammunition as well as for an illegal gathering.

The murder and attempted murder charges were the fuse that detonated a volcano of rage across the country producing splits within the ruling African National Congress (ANC) itself.

Apart from the legal absurdity of the charges, what has further inflamed anger is the fact that the doctrine of 'common purpose' is the same legal weapon the apartheid regime used against the anti-apartheid struggle.

So outrageous was this decision to charge the survivors with the murder of those mowed down by the police live on television that even the leadership of the Cosatu trade union federation (whose reaction to the massacre had hitherto been a cowardly adaptation to the pressure from the discredited National Union of Mineworkers' attempt to save face), was obliged to condemn the decision.

That such a decision could even have been contemplated is an indication of just how far to the right the ANC government has been driven under Zuma and his predecessors.

Collaboration

The NPA's action comes barely weeks after it removed a prosecutor who resisted pressure to drop corruption charges against two leading ANC figures in Kwa Zulu Natal - the heartland of Zuma support. The NPA in fact has no head - Zuma appointee, Menzi Simelane, having been removed after the Supreme Court of Appeals found that he was not "fit and proper" to lead the NPA and that therefore his appointment was unconstitutional.

In concert with a senior police official who stated that none of the arrested workers would ever be allowed to work at Lonmin again, the NPA action demonstrates the extent to which institutions of state

under the ANC have acted as the private security agencies of the mining bosses - exposing the role of the state machine under capitalism.

Even more shocking is the mounting evidence of what had been clear from the onset: that the massacre was premeditated. The poisonous propaganda that the police fired at the workers in self-defence is beginning to dissipate as reports indicate that many of the workers were shot in the back as they were fleeing.

Premeditated

Everything about the conduct of the Lonmin management, the government and the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM - whose leadership is part of the Zuma faction of the ANC), itself suggests that a decision to drown the strike in blood had been taken at the highest level of government, the police and Lonmin management.

The workers had armed themselves and retreated to Wonderkop, located several hundred metres away from the mine itself, not as an act of aggression but of self-defence following the killings in the mines that had already claimed ten lives as mine management security and the NUM collaborated in an attempt to break a strike which had been called independently by the workers.

Workers told the DSM that the strike had been led by an independent committee formed by the workers themselves following the NUM's refusal to support the workers' demands. This is confirmed by the stance taken by NUM general secretary Frans Baleni who earns R100,000 (£7,500) a month, denouncing the R12,500 a month demand by the workers as 'unreasonable'.

The workers told the DSM that when they approached the NUM office at the mine to discuss united action, the delegation was shot at, killing two members of the committee. The mine management has a long bloody history of brutality towards workers in the mines that have the impertinence to try and break the chains of their oppression and exploitation. This was the basis for the decision to occupy the Wonderkop Hill.

The fact that the state deployed the South African Police Service Tactical Response Team armed with automatic R1 rifles, several armoured vehicles and razor wire indicates clearly that the massacre was premeditated.

The ANC's reaction to these events is a study of incomprehension and callous indifference. It has yet to issue a statement condemning the massacre. Newly appointed Police Commissioner, general Riah Phiyega told the police after the massacre that the "safety of the public is non-negotiable. Don't be sorry



Marikana miners being taken to court prior to their release

over what happened.'

For a full 48 hours not a single ANC leader set foot in the area. Even when Zuma announced the setting up of the Commission of Inquiry, he made it clear he will not apportion blame - this from a president portrayed as the voice of the poor leading a party that claims rather clumsily to have a "working class bias" and that strives to be a "disciplined force of the left".

Imploding

The ANC is already bleeding, damaged by the deepening economic crisis, deep inequalities, the accumulating social problems of mass unemployment, crime, corruption, and the extreme embarrassment of not being able to deliver textbooks to state schools in several provinces more than three-quarters into the school year, and aggravated by faction fighting as the succession battle for the presidency leads to the ANC's implosion.

The insult of the 'common purpose' charges, in spite of being dropped, has added to the deep political injury the ANC has suffered at Marikana which claimed the real lives of the over 34 workers but resulted in the ANC dying just a little more as well.

Now into its fourth week, the Lonmin workers are standing firm in the face of enormous pressure to return to work. The Ministers of Labour, Minerals and Energy, the Commission for Conciliation Mediation and Arbitration and the SA Council of Churches are all involved in trying to persuade parties to sign a 'peace accord'. Amcu (the independent union that split from the NUM) has re-

jected this saying they are not at war with the NUM. They want negotiations on the workers' demands to be the focus of mediation efforts.

In the meantime, inspired by the resistance of the Marikana miners, the platinum mine revolt has shifted to the gold sector, with 12,500 mine workers at Gold Field's Kloof Driefontein complex downing tools illegally on Wednesday, 29 August. (Subsequent to this article security guards have wounded, with rubber bullets, four striking gold miners at Gold One's flagship Modder East mine.)

These events pose a challenge to the organised working class as well. Cosatu's silence before the Marikana massacre, induced by a reluctance to denounce the reactionary role played by its biggest affiliate, the NUM, merely served to embolden management.

Had Cosatu come out in support of the workers' demands before the event, and prepared to mobilise solidarity action, the Lonmin management and the police wouldn't have dared to act in the savage manner they did. Cosatu's weakness invited the aggression of the bosses, the government and the state.

A line in the sand has been drawn by the bloodied bones of the martyrs of Marikana. Beyond this lies the disintegration of the ANC and the tripartite alliance (ANC, Coasatu, South African Communist Party) on the one hand, and the enormous possibilities for the growth of socialist ideas and for support for the establishment of a mass workers' party on a socialist programme.

Full version of this article and previous articles from South Africa, on www.socialistworld.net

The Committee for a Workers' International

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

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

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

www.socialistworld.net

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



Quebec: Fighting the austerity driven tuition fees hike

Interview with student activist on the the perspectives for the movement.

Alternative Socialiste, (CWI in Quebec)



Netherlands: Socialist Party poised to make big electoral gains

People are turning away from traditional parties promoting austerity measures.

Pieter Brans, Socialist Alternative (CWI Netherlands)



Sri Lanka: Release kidnapped activists now!

Sign the online appeal.

CWI

Campaign Kazakhstan: Solidarity concert for those facing oppression

CELLORHYTHMICS

Tuesday 2 October, 7pm

Bloomsbury Central Baptist Church

235 Shaftesbury Avenue, London WC2H 8EP

Tickets £10/£6

cellorhythmics4kaz.eventbrite.co.uk

Cellorhythmics, the forerunner of the non-classical cello movement, was founded by renowned Kazakh cellist Alfia Nakipbekova and award winning composer James Hesford. Their music brings together the rhythmic elements of jazz, blues, world and funk, combined with exuberant virtuosity.

Cellorhythmics (three cellos, bass guitar and percussion) has

performed in numerous festivals throughout UK and Europe.

Kazakhstan is currently witnessing heroic events. Those who stand up for human rights are threatened, imprisoned or worse. The dictator president Nursultan Nazarbayev is desperate to cling on to power in the face of unrest from below. Campaign Kazakhstan works to offer international solidarity to those

in struggle against repression.

Recently, as a result of a massive international solidarity campaign, Vadim Kuramshin - human rights lawyer and political opponent of Nazarbayev - has been cleared of fabricated charges of extorting money from the district prosecutor. Vadim had faced up to 14 years imprisonment. See full account on campaignkazakhstan.org

the Socialist postbag

Do you have something to say?

Send your news, views and criticism in not more than 150 words to Socialist Postbag, PO Box 24697, London E11 1YD, or phone 020 8988 8771, email: editors@socialistparty.org.uk. We reserve the right to shorten letters. Don't forget to give your name, address and phone number. Confidentiality will be respected if requested.

Unprofessional conduct



I am in receipt of Incapacity Benefit (IB), I expect at some point, to be summoned to be assessed by Atos about my continuing eligibility for this benefit.

I understand that qualified doctors are conducting these assessments and declaring 'fit for work', many, who, on appeal, are deemed still eligible for IB. This is taking place under pressure from a government determined to make ordinary people suffer for the sins of the super-wealthy.

Doctors, however, are autonomous professionals and it is not their role to blindly do the bidding of government. In so doing, they are clearly in breach of their own professional code of conduct. This needs to be highlighted, and I believe there is a strong case for a legal challenge. The Socialist Party, with its strong record of organising successful campaigns in support of workers, could be the organisation to do this.

Barbara, Salford

Resist the cuts!

Clive Heemskerk is right to argue that Labour councils should refuse to implement the government's savage council tax benefit cuts, due next April (see issue 729, the Socialist).

Not least since Tory-run West Oxfordshire district council – Cameron's 'backyard' – has said it will maintain the existing benefit system after next April.

If Tory councillors can refuse to slash £420 a year in benefit from low-paid workers, then why can't Labour councillors who receive trade union backing?

Simon Carter

Support TUSC

The Tory chair of the Local Government Association, Sir Michael Cockell, said councils' reserves – totalling £17 billion – would be emptied in five years if they were used to "fill the gap" left by 28% cuts in central government funding.

But councils should use these reserves to stop – and reverse – the cuts so far, and mobilise workers and residents to demand the needed money back from government. The 1983-87 Liverpool council won £60 million out of Thatcher's government by doing this, after years of cuts to the City's funding under the previous Liberal council.

Thatcher's Tory government was far stronger than the Con-Dem coalition. So why aren't councils doing this today? Because the Tories, New Labour and Lib Dems all say they have 'no choice' but to make us pay for the bank bailouts while big business carries on tax-dodging. That means working class people have no choice but to fight these cuts and back council candidates that stand against all cuts – that's why I'm backing the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition.

Jeff Allen

'Robin Hood' Clegg?

"Clegg to tax the rich" claimed the headlines. When a BBC correspondent suggested that he was "light on details" she was corrected – "actually there are no details."

Any attempt to make the parasites pay for this crisis is welcome. However what Clegg is proposing to his millionaire cabinet chums is something they will laugh out of court. He will get his publicity – in time for the Lib Dem conference – and that will be that.

Alternatively he may persuade them that a token "temporary" tax on the rich will be an appropriate smokescreen for the government's permanent unremitting war on the poor. Tell the disabled "we cut your living allowance but the rich are suffering too." Tell the unemployed on slave labour schemes – "you work for nothing but Lord Snooty had to go without his foie gras today." Robin Hood didn't tax the rich, he expropriated them. Now there's a good old English custom for you.

Derek McMillan

Driven by profit



Few rail workers will shed a tear for Richard Branson losing another franchise, he has taken plenty of profit from the rail industry and he did not complain about the process when he won.

What gets obscured is that lack of investment and training along with short-sighted pursuit of profit mean that in the next ten years 40% of existing train drivers will reach the age of 65. Many will retire before that age if they can afford it. The government should be investing in a long-term plan to train enough staff for the growth in rail travel that even they predict.

Aslef union member

Watered down politics

I visited the people's history museum in Manchester recently. The first section from the English Civil War (revolution!) up until World War Two was educational and moving. I got a real sense of the power of working class people to fight for a better society against all the odds. Compare that to the history I was taught in school, bizarre and random facts such as how many wives Henry VIII had and what their names were.

The second section – 1945 to present(ish) was not as good. The politics was highly watered down and the section on the poll tax was very weak. I asked the staff if there was anything on the Militant Tendency – apparently it's locked away!

They feel under pressure to keep it that way from the Labour Party who appear to have an influence (through donations and/or running the local council?) on the museum. If our education establishments and museums won't tell it how it is then it's a good job we've got this paper!

Peter Anderson, Chester

Who, outside the super-rich 1%, is not suffering the impact of austerity – through job cuts, reduced pensions, cuts to benefits, and in a myriad other ways? So it's not surprising that some of this anger and frustration has finally filtered through to the media.

On this page, Wyllie Hume looks at some recent BBC television programmes. First is Russell Brand: From addiction to recovery. Much of what comes from Brand is objectionable to say the least but this programme gave some insight into the everyday struggle of people living with addiction. And below Wyllie comments on a new satirical comedy series, The Revolution will be Televised – Spitting Image for the 21st century?

From addiction to recovery

Cuts in services are coming hard and fast. Services for people recovering from addiction are taking a huge blow, hitting those who are worst-affected by capitalism.

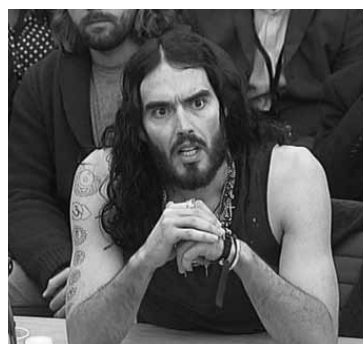
Brand shows the difficulties addicted people face and the lack of support given when recovering. He explains his experiences of getting over drug and alcohol addiction and gives his strong opinions on the methods of recovery and how addiction is viewed.

He is right when he says that addiction is a product of society and not of individual choice.

The addiction sufferers on the programme said that the reasons they turned to substances for support were largely down to stress, unemployment, social alienation, or being the victim of abuse or mental health problems. These are all social ills and by-products of capitalism.

The number of addictions will inevitably grow. People will be subject to greater stress and mental health problems due to working long hours, paying the ever-increasing cost of living, arranging childcare, rising unemployment, etc, as the cuts get deeper and working class and poor people's living standards drop.

Brand correctly points out that



Brand challenges MPs

there is a culture, especially among politicians and the media, of blaming the individual and not society. This is particularly rife in the right-wing media. Daily Mail journalist Peter Hitchens notoriously denies that addiction even exists and accuses people of being lazy and choosing to ruin their lives with substances. Anyone who watches this programme or has ever experienced addiction will realise that it is not a choice and it is not a pleasant experience.

Methadone useless

Brand explains his fervent opposition to the use of methadone to help people give up drugs, describing it

as nothing better than "rearranging the furniture on the Titanic". Most people who are given methadone as a substitute for heroin either find themselves addicted to the methadone after they've stopped using heroin or more often addicted to both!

Addressing the underlying problems that lead to addiction is more important than 'medicalising' the problem. But the truth is that 'the methadone method' is not used because of any evidence that it works. It's used because it's a cheaper way to deal with the problem than providing people with both the emotional and practical support they need to give up drugs.

There are not enough rehabilitation centres, 90% of sufferers don't have access to rehab. But helping people to beat addiction has other benefits to society; especially crime reduction.

The cost of police and crime reduction programmes far outweighs the cost of supporting people to give up substances.

However, this government is more concerned with bailing out banks, privatising public services and giving public money to pharmaceutical companies for methadone rather than helping people fight addiction.

The Revolution will be Televised – lol!

Big business and the rich are trying to make working class people pay for their crisis through massive cuts from a government that represents the 1%. Meanwhile the fat cats hide away their assets offshore to avoid taxes. This new BBC comedy highlights this corporate greed and tax evasion – in a very funny way.

It gives some facts and statistics about the disgraceful behaviour of the rich in the current crisis and even confronts the capitalists themselves.

In one episode the two comedians, Jolyson Rubinstein and Heydon Prowse, stand outside skyscrapers in the City of London shaking collection tins at bankers asking for our money back!

The show even confronts George Osborne, presenting him with a GCSE maths book and telling him to read up on economics.

Vince Cable is given a 'Thank You' card from the fictional Tory MP 'Twottingham-Burbage' telling him 'We couldn't have done it without you!'

Reflecting the betrayal that many who voted Liberal Democrat in the 2010 general election feel, one sketch involves a pretend Tory MP, overly posh and out of touch with the way ordinary people live, and his Lib Dem MP lackey.

Hilariously a campaign to make former Labour PM and war-monger Tony Blair a saint even involves measuring up his front door for a stained glass window!

Culture reflects the material conditions of society, and some of the greatest art, music, television, literature and media comes from times of mass working class struggle.

The Revolution will be Televised isn't a complete expression of the anger that exists in society, but it is informative and highlights the 'them and us' society humorously.



St Tony in stained glass - stomach churning!



Osborne embarrassed - again...

Anti-racists stop east London EDL rally

The racist, hooligan English Defence League (EDL) were blocked in Walthamstow, north east London, on Saturday 1 September by a great show of strength from local young people, workers and anti-racist campaigners.

Protected by a massive police operation, as few as 150 racists tried to march from Blackhorse Road station to rally by Waltham Forest town hall.

After speeches from a range of organisations, Waltham Forest Anti-Cuts Union convenor and Socialist Party member Nancy Taaffe gave a fighting send-off to the anti-EDL counter demo, calling for working class trade union action to fight racism and the austerity that breeds it.

Nancy referred to the RMT trade union's announcement the day before that they would try to stop the EDL leaving Kings Cross station.

3,000 marched on the counter-demonstration against the EDL in Walthamstow - local Asian, black and white youth and workers marched up Hoe Street to block the EDL's path.

The demonstration occupied Forest Road, which the EDL intended to march along. When we heard that the police were escorting them to their destination via a back street route, Socialist Party members and

Youth Fight for Jobs supporters worked with Daymer Turkish and Kurdish activists to help young protesters break the demo out of a police blockade to confront them by the town hall, where local youth had gathered.

The EDL never made it to their rally. Their speakers scuttled away from the angry protest in front of them, and the police were forced to escort the rest of them away.

Paula Mitchell
London Socialist Party secretary

Dundee says No to the SDL

The far-right racist Scottish Defence League were sent packing from Dundee on 1 September. After months of hype from the SDL that they were coming to Dundee in big numbers along with their cohorts of the English Defence League and North West Infidels, they totalled a sorry mob of around 40. They were seen off after about 45 minutes from their tiny static protest outside the back of a shopping centre.

Read more at www.socialistpartyscotland.org.uk



Anti-racist protesters opposite the town hall, where the EDL tried to hold a rally photo Walthamstow SP

Stopping the far-right – the need for democratic debate

Paula Mitchell

London Socialist Party secretary

The anti-EDL demonstration on 1 September was a victory. The Socialist Party hopes it will humiliate and demoralise the violent, racist organisation and make it much harder for them to mobilise in future.

But we would welcome a serious discussion in the anti-racist and labour movement about how to combat the threat of the far right in future.

Socialist Party members in Waltham Forest worked hard for the anti-EDL demonstration in Walthamstow. We attended the weekly organising meetings of 'We are Waltham Forest' (WAWF), a grouping set up to organise the counter-protest.

Along with Youth Fight for Jobs supporters, our members, for example, leafleted at colleges and workplaces, and visited youth clubs. We went door to door to discuss with local people. As well as building for the WAWF public rallies, Youth Fight for Jobs held a public meeting aimed at young people, and hosted informal neighbourhood discussions.

Once the EDL's route was known, our members visited shops, temples, and the fire station on the route. When the EDL announced they would muster at Kings Cross, our members alerted London RMT members.

But there were two main issues that Socialist Party members met opposition over from WAWF's main organisers, Unite Against Fascism (UAF) and the Socialist Workers Party (SWP).

Role of trade unions

The first was the political basis of the campaign. Deepening austerity means that there is the potential for the EDL, or a force like it, to grow, unless the campaign against them is united with the campaign to stop the cuts.

When fighting the EDL we need maximum unity. A massive, united

campaign of working class people has the power not only to marginalise and smash groupings like the EDL, but to hold out hope in a real future to those small layers of people who might be attracted by them.

The big events of last year - the 26 March TUC demo, 30 June and 30 November public sector strikes - and the 10 May strike this year, all show that the organised working class in the trade unions has the power to mobilise masses of people in decisive action. The trade unions should be at the heart of any fight against the EDL, making it clear that they stand firmly in the interests of defending all sections of our communities against austerity attacks.

Yet under the SWP leadership of 'We are Waltham Forest', which insisted throughout that the campaign could not take up class issues against cuts, the trade unions only played a peripheral role. It would take preparation, but the serious mobilisation of firefighters, bin workers and so on in the borough would have had an even greater impact on the ability of the EDL to march.

Labour Party support

The SWP argued that, for maximum unity, the campaign should not introduce issues that might alienate some people, and 'not everyone is against the cuts'. In particular, this referred to Labour councillors who implement cuts and Labour MPs who do not oppose cuts. They argued that Labour's involvement would draw more people into activity. But working class people who voted - and the few who have joined - Labour did so to seek protection against Con-Dem cuts.

We had no opposition to Labour Party members being involved in the campaign, but argued against having New Labour Walthamstow MP Stella Creasy and local Labour councillors as uncriticised campaign speakers and leaders.

It is the policies of the main political parties - the Tory-Lib Dem government and the Labour councillors who pass on their cuts - that create

the despair and division in which the EDL thrives.

It is Labour's betrayal of working class people that led to nearly 70% of the electorate not voting in the 2012 council elections. Labour politicians' uncriticised involvement in the campaign could put off many workers whose jobs and livelihoods have been torn away.

In fact, the Labour council discouraged people from taking part in the counter-demonstration. The council also failed to put up any real opposition to the EDL planning its rally in front of the town hall, claiming it had no powers to stop them - despite previously trying to stop anti-cuts campaigners holding stalls in the town square!

Stopping the EDL

The second main issue was the lack of discussion about what the 1 September mobilisation was intended to do.

The final leaflet correctly said "Stop the EDL" - a serious task - yet 1 September was also billed as a "celebration of our multi-cultural community". Of course it was not known what the EDL or police plans were, right up until the last minute. Even then, maximum flexibility would be needed on the day.

Nonetheless, a democratic campaign would at least discuss among the main organisers what the intentions were on the day in order to be prepared. This was refused on

the grounds that it was 'pointless to speculate'. When we tried to warn that the police may kettle or pen us, the WAWF leaders stated that the police would not be able to.

We also argued that, given that decisions would have to be made on the day, the organising group should be involved in those decisions. We were told that this was elitist! The contradictory responses ranged from "the demonstration will decide" to "the chief stewards will decide". In practice this meant that decisions were made behind closed doors by the SWP.

Unacceptable behaviour

Rather than have a proper discussion on the issues, a mood was generated in the meetings by SWP/UAF members that encouraged a bating, infantile approach to Socialist Party members, making it difficult for others who agreed with us on some points to speak up. We were met with heckles, sneers and derision, and sworn at.

But when flexibility was required on the day - once the occupation of Forest Road, which successfully blocked the EDL from their desired route, was being circumvented by the police - SWP members berated the Socialist Party and YFJ activists who worked with Daymer activists to help re-direct protesters to the town hall. At this point the EDL had set up their stage outside the town hall and were intimidating people. Over 200 angry local black and Asian youth had gathered and were being held back by the police. Helping the demo break out of its pen meant that protesters avoided this second police line and were able to directly confront the EDL.

We are accused, by the SWP and UAF, of trying to split the campaign because the Socialist Party and Youth Fight for Jobs produced leaflets and held public meetings. Yet it should be a standard of any united front campaign that the different participants, while working together, also have the freedom to elaborate their own views in material and meetings.

We are accused of telling people not to come on the demo. In fact we spent months vigorously campaigning for this demonstration.

We have also been attacked for not encouraging people to bring children on the demo! That this was shouted at our members while protesters were facing lines of riot police simply demonstrates the correctness of our view!

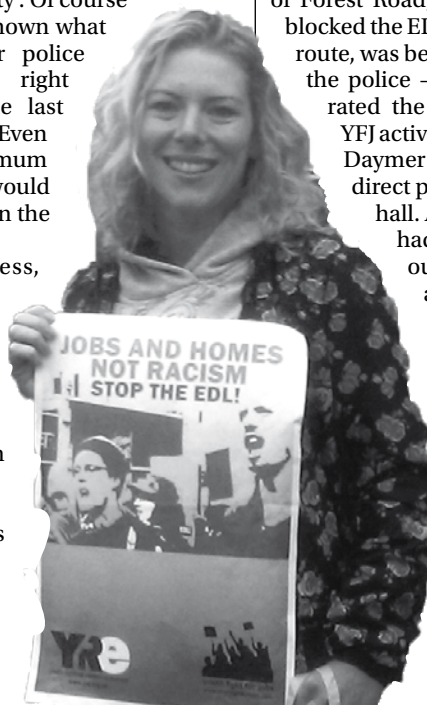
The far-right threat

1 September in Walthamstow was a success. Despite the efforts of a massive police operation to get them to their destination, the EDL were unable to hold their rally and were sent packing by a large demonstration.

But the growth of the far-right in some European countries is a clear warning as to what could develop in Britain. In Greece for example, where the lives of millions of working and middle class people have been shattered by austerity, the neo-fascist Golden Dawn achieved 7% of the general election vote in May and June. This is despite violent terror tactics: attacking left-wing MPs on television and attacking left-wing campaign stalls, and hospitalising and murdering immigrants in pogroms while the police stand by.

We think there is a need for an honest and democratic debate in the trade unions and anti-racist movement about the ideas and methods necessary, not just to defeat them one protest at a time, but to defeat them long term.

A longer version of this article can be read at www.socialistparty.org.uk



SOUTHAMPTON: SAVE OAKLANDS POOL

FIGHT ALL CUTS

For a 'needs budget' to provide jobs and services

Southampton Socialist Party members

Almost everyone comments on the irony that the government bathes in the glow of the Games while carrying out cuts to the very facilities athletes use and need.

Hundreds of people in Southampton have queued to sign the Save Oaklands Pool petition and register their anger against the recently elected Labour council.

A father whose son won an Olympic bronze medal, returned to the campaign stall for the second time, so determined was he to see young people have access to sport. The closure of the pool comes after the local youth centre was shut recently. The Olympic 'Inspire a Generation' slogan rings hollow if there's no facilities to exercise in!

Young people have supported the campaign, taking leaflets to give out. They don't want their community turned into a wasteland.

The pool is currently closed for minor repairs. The estimated cost is just £10,000. Scandalously the council actually sent in workers to undo some of the repair work that had already been carried out!

Local rebel councillors Keith

Morrell and Don Thomas, who have defied the Labour whips and voted to oppose the cuts, have called on people to support a demonstration at the full council meeting from 1pm on Wednesday 12 September. Southampton council unions, Unite and Unison, have given their full backing to this protest.

They will be joined by Jim and Lo-rayne Emery and their supporters, who are fighting the council's decision to evict them from their tied house having been made redundant after 42 years' service to the council. Last week hundreds of supporters marched on the council demanding their right to stay.

Having argued against the vicious Tory council cuts of the last few years at the May elections, the Labour Party is rapidly proving to the voters that it is no different.

The only way to avert these cuts is to use current council financial reserves, make use of prudential borrowing facilities and build on the stand of Keith, Don and the unions and fight the Con-Dems for the funding needed to provide decent services for the city.

Southampton Socialist Party and the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition, the electoral alliance we participate in, gives our full support



Keith Morrell and Don Thomas on an anti-pool closure protest photo Southampton SP

to this fight.

We call on those Labour councillors who are members of Unite and Unison

to vote with Keith and Don to reject the Con-Dem cuts or stand aside for those who are prepared to fight. If they were

to link up with the council workforce and local people we could build a campaign to defeat all the cuts.

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 un-recycled waste.
- Public ownership of the energy generating industries. No to nuclear power. No to Trident.
- A democratically planned, low fare, publicly owned transport system, as part of an overall plan against environmental pollution.

RIGHTS

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

NEW WORKERS' PARTY

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

SOCIALISM AND INTERNATIONALISM

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