



STRIKE AGAINST AUSTERITY

Lobby the TUC to demand date for 24-hour general strike

Corporate tax dodging... pampered MPs scamming expenses... fat cat privatisers creaming a profit out of our NHS, public services and utilities... the 1% elite load up the lolly and laugh all the way to the bank. The rest of us are told our future is cuts, and yet more painful cuts, bringing hunger, homelessness and the curse of unemployment – unless, that is, we stop them. Hannah Sell, Socialist Party deputy general secretary sets out a strategy to end austerity.

Already millions are struggling to pay the bills and feed their families. In the last two years almost a million more people are failing to eat a balanced diet because they cannot afford adequate fruit and vegetables. As we go into winter, gas and electricity prices have jumped by up to 11%, further squeezing overstretched budgets.

In his 5 December spending review, Tory axe man Osborne will be forced to admit that Britain's economy is shrinking again. But the failure of the Con-Dem policies won't

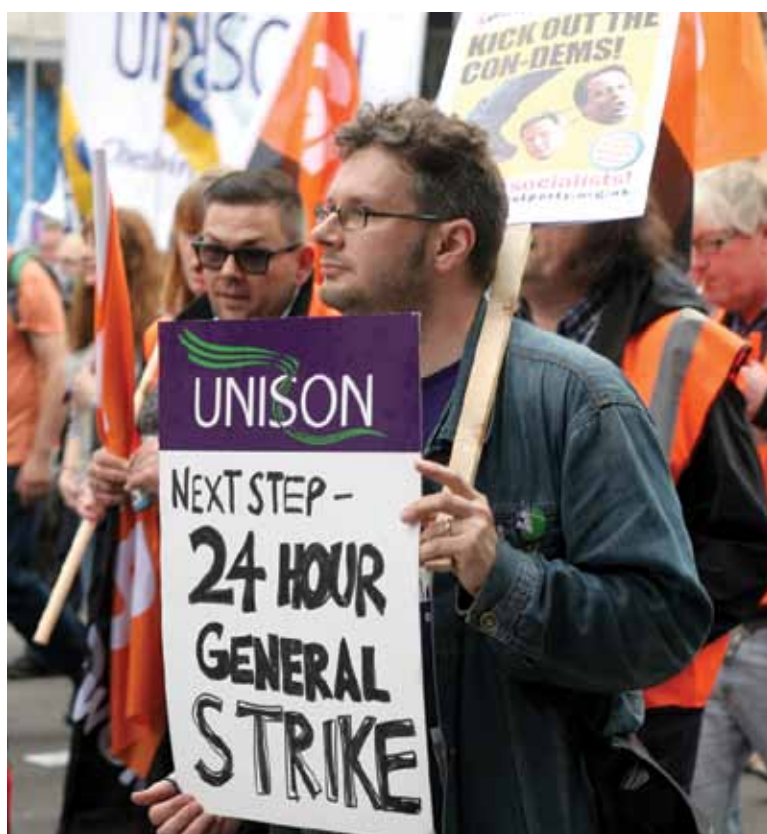


photo Becky Davis

stop Osborne announcing public spending cuts of billions of pounds, along with further attacks on workers' democratic rights to organise in trade unions. Added to that are

planned savage cuts in local services, effective from April 2013.

It is clear that this government of bankers and millionaires will keep on punishing us unless we organise

to stop them in their tracks. On 14 November workers in Southern Europe organised coordinated general strikes against austerity. Britain's trade unions need to do the same and to announce the date for a 24-hour general strike.

Polls have shown that more than 80% would support such a strike. We need the TUC to name the day so we can set about building for huge popular participation in a strike against all privatisation and cuts in public services, and against cuts in pay, working conditions, pensions and benefits.

Such a strike should also call clearly for the abolition of Britain's repressive anti-trade union laws.

At its September annual congress the TUC voted to 'consider the practicalities of a general strike'. At the magnificent 150,000 strong 20 October TUC demonstration three trade union general secretaries called for a general strike.

On 11 December the TUC general council will be meeting. Join the National Shop Stewards Network from 9.30am when it lobbies to demand that the TUC takes the next step – and names the day!

See pages 6 and 7 for more on this. The Socialist calls for support for this lobby and for preparations for a 24-hour general strike. See www.shopstewards.net for details and campaign material

FIGHT NHS CUTS!

A mass revolt is brewing against plans to close the accident and emergency, maternity and other departments in Lewisham hospital, south London. Tens of thousands have signed petitions against the plans already with many hundreds turning up to protest meetings.

Fury at this savage cutback will be increased by Matthew Kershaw, the government appointed administrator for the South London Healthcare Trust, which was bankrupted by huge Private Finance Initiative (PFI) debts. Kershaw thinks closing Lewisham A&E is 'key'.

Local people throughout South East London clearly think getting rid of the service-destroying, millionaire-enriching PFI should be the 'key' priority. At the local mass meetings, most people oppose all NHS cuts throughout the area and indeed throughout the country.

No to divide and rule tactics! Build a huge campaign in the community and in the trade unions against all attacks on our National Health Service.



● Demonstrate in Lewisham: Loampit Vale, Lewisham, SE13, 2pm Saturday 24 November

● Demonstrate your support for the Royal Bucks Hospital workers fighting for justice, pay and redundancy money owed. Kingsbury Square, Kingsbury Square, Aylesbury, HP20. 11am Saturday 24 November

See article page 5

Israel's leaders inflict carnage and terror to suit their own interests

"There's no country on Earth that would tolerate missiles raining down on its citizens from outside its borders", argued US president Obama, when supporting the Israeli military's bombing of Gaza.

These words deliberately and disgracefully distorted the reality, because Gaza is effectively under brutal occupation by the Israeli regime. The situation is worse in many ways than the word 'occupation' suggests, because the Israeli state isn't providing anything approaching a tolerable life to the Palestinians in Gaza.

Gaza has absolutely no control over its borders or outside trade; the entire strip has been condemned to terrible poverty by being blockaded by the Israeli army and navy for six years. It has been subjected to regular military incursions (see back page), with large numbers of Palestinians being killed, injured and imprisoned.

In the rest of the occupied territories the Israeli government has pursued a policy of bulldozing Palestinian homes and destroying their orchards to make way for Jewish settlers and Israeli state infrastructure, 'facts on the ground' against the creation of a Palestinian state.

While Palestinian militias in Gaza are estimated to encompass around 35,000 fighters with their smuggled-in guns and rockets, Israel has a conscript army numbering 175,000, reserves of 450,000, and highly sophisticated military jets, helicopters, drones, tanks, guns and bombs at its disposal.

The Israeli military also has 'Iron Dome' rocket-interceptors, which are identifying and destroying mid-air most of the Palestinian-fired rockets that could possibly do damage.

The Socialist doesn't condone the indiscriminate firing of rockets into Israel. They sometimes cause injuries and occasionally deaths of innocent people – a few have nearly reached the built-up areas of Tel Aviv and Jerusalem – and they do nothing to advance the Palestinians' cause. But for those rockets to be used to justify large-scale slaughter of Gazans using the latest high-tech weaponry, is an attempt to hide the real agenda of the Israeli leaders and their friends in the ruling classes internationally.

Ceasefire talks

At the time of writing, "operation pillar of defence" has been inflicting death and terror across Gaza for seven days and 75,000 Israeli army reservists have been called up in order to threaten a "significant expansion" of the onslaught. This is a much larger mobilisation of reserves than in 'operation cast lead' in 2008-09. Israeli foreign minister Avigdor Lieberman chillingly explained that 'this time' a ground invasion would have to be seen 'through to the very end', contrary to cast lead.

However there are attempts underway by the world and regional powers to apply pressure for a ceasefire to prevent a ground invasion, notwithstanding Obama feebly just saying that it would "preferable" if it's avoided. It is still possible that this even worse scenario will be carried out. If Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu decides not to though, it may be less a response to international pressure and more to do with an opinion poll in Israel indicating that while 84% support the air missiles, only 30% support a ground invasion.

The Israeli government argues that it has to stop the rocket attacks from Gaza. That was also the declared aim of the onslaught in 2008-09, but it failed to stop them, as will this offensive too.

No amount of force will prevent the



Protesting outside the Israeli embassy in London photo Neil Cafferky

masses in Gaza from resisting the occupation and struggling to make their lives more tolerable. As well as the military brutality failing to be any solution, if it continues, the Israeli death toll will increase which will lead to growing questioning and opposition to the war inside Israel. Also anger and condemnation of the slaughter from ordinary people across the Middle East and globally will escalate as the Palestinian death toll rises.

Some western strategists fear that another consequence could be that the Israeli leaders' desire to destroy Hamas will aid other Palestinian militias, such as Islamic Jihad, which is the Iranian regime's preferred partner in Gaza.

In fact, while Hamas periodically carries out phases of rocket attacks on Israel and is doing so now, it has at times tried to enforce a ceasefire on its own militias and others, to try to consolidate its control of the Gaza strip by negotiating with Israel some respite from the acute repression and deprivation.

Netanyahu's fears and aims

Shortly before the Israeli missiles started falling on 14 November, killing the Hamas military leader Ahmed Jabari in one of the initial strikes, a ceasefire deal had been agreed by Jabari. But Netanyahu and Co had other plans.

This is not to say that Netanyahu's strategy is welcomed by all at the top of Israeli society, there have been many warnings and differences. For instance Efraim Halevy, a former head of the Israeli intelligence agency Mossad, distanced himself from it and wrote: "It is imperative that Israel contributes to an Egyptian-crafted and American-supported formula for the region".

But Netanyahu has been long preparing the way for a possible military attack on Iran and has now deliberately ratcheted up the national conflict at home: seeming madness, but with his take on the cold-blooded interests of the Israeli capitalist class at heart.

They are alarmed about Hamas having new points of support in the region following the Muslim Brotherhood victories in Egypt

and Tunisia and also increased support from Turkey. A few weeks ago the emir of Qatar visited Gaza and pledged \$400 million of investment, which boosted Hamas. The elite in Qatar is trying to develop its own regional influence partly by leaning on the plight of the Palestinians.

This was helped by the leader of Hamas, Khaled Meshaal, removing himself from the patronage of Assad's Syrian regime where he was based, to install himself in Doha, Qatar.

Egypt's Brotherhood president Mohamed Morsi does not want to openly confront the Egyptian elite and wants to retain support from the US and EU and avoid conflict with Israel, so he has cooperated with Israeli security agencies over the blockade of Gaza and in Sinai. But he is coming under huge pressure to help the Gazans from an outraged Egyptian population.

The Israeli leaders are very alarmed about other events in the region as well, particularly the plight of Assad in Syria and how this will affect Lebanon. As well, there are presently strikes, demonstrations and riots against the Jordanian regime which is another neighbour of Israel; the Israeli capitalists don't want that rebellion and the previous uprisings across the Arab countries to inspire Palestinians in the occupied territories or inside Israel to fight back en masse, or the Israeli working class.

Moreover, the re-election of Obama in the US was not good news for Netanyahu, as he doesn't want any pressure from that direction towards resuming peace talks with the Palestinians. Furthermore, an irritant for the Israeli regime is the Palestinian Authority's revival of pursuing its bid for recognition by the United Nations.

The most likely key issue in relation to the timing of this attack on Gaza is that Israel has a general election in January – if it isn't postponed. The two right wing parties led by Netanyahu and Lieberman want to increase their number of seats in the Knesset (parliament). With this in mind the two parties have recently joined forces, but polls before the attack on Gaza were not showing the level of support they were hoping for.

So their attack on Gaza fits in with their electioneering, by distracting the attention of Israelis away from cuts in services and living standards and giving an impression of boosting defence. The Israeli population is subjected to a barrage of propaganda that it's the only way to improve security. However there is a significant minority who recognise that military force will not safeguard security, with some participating in anti-war demonstrations.

Workers' organisations

A ceasefire, while bringing relief to many, and any further 'peace' negotiations, will not lead to the Palestinians' aspirations being met. The pro-capitalist political leaders on both sides of the national divide have no programme for doing this and no solutions to end the cycles of bloodshed.

For the Palestinians, neither the right-wing Islamist Hamas nor the Fatah-led authority in the West Bank has a viable strategy for defeating the occupation or for providing decent living standards.

Instead, the Palestinian masses need to build their own organisations that can democratically organise defence and take offensive initiatives based on mass struggle – such as against the blockade and land seizures.

In Israel, following the unprecedented social movement involving hundreds of thousands of people in 2011, a new workers' party is needed to concretely advance the aspirations of that movement – for decent housing, services, pay etc.

It will be through the building of new mass workers' parties in the region that the pro-big business agendas of the capitalist parties can be challenged and thrown out, and socialist ideas can start to take hold.

That will be the route to building two socialist states – a socialist Palestine and a socialist Israel as part of a socialist confederation of the Middle East, to lay the basis for a future free of war, terror and poverty.

See www.socialistparty.org.uk for reports of protests and demonstrations against the slaughter in Gaza. An article explaining the Socialist Party's programme on a two-state solution will be published in early 2013

Save our schools!

The coalition government, in particular Tory education minister Michael Gove, has set out an almost military plan to break up our public education service. One way or another they want to chop up the service into academies and free schools, creating either individual enterprises or chains of private companies. Already over 40% of secondary schools have fallen. Cameron has announced recently that he has 400 primary schools in his sights.

In a recent report the bosses' organisation, CBI, said that UK schools are becoming nothing but 'exam factories'. The government will undoubtedly use this as another excuse to steamroll through their destructive plans for schools. But they have been met with huge opposition.

Socialist Party members report on two campaigns that show the potential to defeat Gove's attacks.

Stratford: parents support teachers' action

Lois Austin

Stratford Academy parent

"I don't know what democracy is", was the flippant reply by a deputy head at Stratford Academy in east London when parent Niall Mulholland asked why senior management had refused to meet parents to discuss an ongoing teachers' strike at the school.

Such management arrogance has fuelled the anger of teachers at Stratford, who began another three-day strike on Tuesday 20 November. Members of the NUT and NASUWT teaching unions had already taken six days of strike action.

The strikes began after the head teacher insisted teachers agree they would not take part in national action (short-of-strike) jointly launched by the two teaching unions. All teachers refusing to accept the demand started to have 15% docked from their pay.

Parents' campaign

A packed public meeting called by Stratford Academy Concerned Parents on 15 November discussed the teachers' action. Kevin Courtney, Deputy General Secretary of the NUT, the NASUWT Deputy General Secretary Dr Patrick Roche, and parent and Newham Socialist Party member, Niall Mulholland, addressed parents and people from the local community. The school governors contemptuously refused to send a speaker.

A motion condemning the head and governors for provoking a strike



Campaigning against academies in Haringey photo Paul Mattsson

by their "aggressive and irresponsible actions, causing classes to be cancelled and imposing great practical difficulties on parents and pupils" was unanimously agreed.

The meeting demanded the employers "immediately withdraw cuts to teachers' pay, to allow teachers to carry out their lawful trade union actions, and to ensure that Stratford Academy is free of management bullying or threats towards teachers and all staff, and pupils and parents."

In the run up to the meeting, parents held street stalls, successfully persuaded many local shop keepers to display meeting posters, lobbied an emergency meeting of the governors and joined teachers' picket lines.

The combined actions of the teachers' determined strike and the successful parents' meeting clearly shook management. The Head suddenly announced "a meeting for

parents" for 20 November.

Stratford Academy Concerned Parents will do all they can to ensure the facts of the dispute are put to the meeting and the teachers' just case.

Parents' anger with senior management, who they blame for forcing teachers to strike and for putting the welfare and safety of their children in danger, is intensifying. Two pupils were mugged on separate occasions while leaving school alone, following senior management demands that pupils must attend the rare classes that go ahead on strike days.

Stratford Academy teachers and parents have the opportunity to press home a victory, which will also be a warning to all other Academy heads who might like to emulate Stratford.

Please send messages of support to NUT rep, Steve Charles, on SteveC4151@aol.com

Waltham Forest: spread the strikes to stop the rot

Linda Taaffe

Waltham Forest NUT

In Waltham Forest, east London, one secondary school, Connaught School for Girls, is putting up one hell of a fight against academisation. Members of the National Union of Teachers (NUT) have so far been on strike for four days in the last month. They remain solid, and the NASUWT union at the school looks like it is balloting too.

The national union has given the go-ahead for strike action two days a week up to the Christmas holidays and beyond if necessary. Over 100 parents have expressed their opposition.

At a meeting on 19 November, parents affirmed their support for the action teachers are taking to

defend their children's education and expressed anger at the lack of communication and outright lies being told to them by school management.

Up to now campaigns against academies have largely had to centre around one school at a time - a tactic that is proving increasingly difficult to pursue successfully. In Waltham Forest there are already nearly 16 academies - many established 'under the radar'. Four or five schools are in immediate danger at the moment.

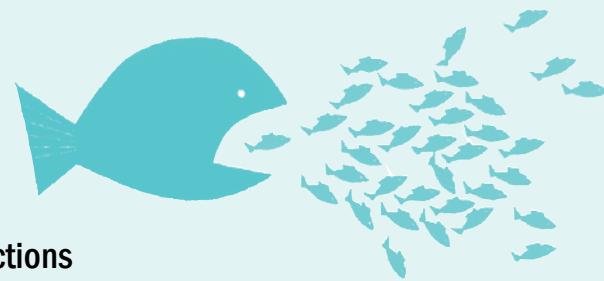
However, a recent general meeting of the Waltham Forest Association of the NUT agreed that we have to push the boundaries on this one and spread the campaign to mass action - a sentiment that was endorsed by the NUT's annual conference delegates earlier this year.

Teachers agreed to press the union to find ways of coordinating action in these schools. We also agreed to set up a strike committee of the NUT local executive, Connaught teachers and parents.

We proposed that on the strike days Connaught teachers and supporters fan out across the borough to publicise throughout the whole family of schools that, even though they have had no indication their school might be going academy, that does not mean they are safe. Any school could be next.

Full support for Connaught school is both a defence and attack measure. Such is the pace of the juggernaut - if we do not stop it now by the threat of mass action of teachers, backed up by support staff, parents and older students.

Them...



PCC elections

The average turnout in the police commissioner elections was 15%. The previous record low was 24% in the 1999 European elections. Let's not forget that next time the politicians try to say

15%

Average turnout in police commissioner's elections

a strike ballot is unsound because of a turnout of under 50%!

Even those who did go to the polling station didn't all vote. Many took the opportunity to spell out what they thought of the elections. One of our favourites from a Socialist Party member in Lincoln:

"Reasons why I'm spoiling my ballot paper

- 1) the £5,000 deposit needed to stand
- 2) none of the candidates will reverse cuts and privatisation
- 3) none of the candidates will reveal the full costs of the G4S contract, let alone cancel it

GENERAL STRIKE NOW!"

Nutrition recession

As part of its Breadline Britain series, the Guardian has analysed the grocery buying habits of people across the UK. Since 2010 consumption of fat, sugar and saturates has soared, particularly among the poorest households. This is undoubtedly because of food poverty - prices in the UK increased by 26% from June 2007 to 2011 while incomes have fallen in real terms.

Low income households are choosing things they think are cheaper and more filling - meaning high-fat, processed foods like instant noodles and tinned pies. In contrast, the number of people who regularly achieve "five-a-day" fruit and vegetables has declined by 900,000 over the two years to May 2012.

Budget cuts

A study by Newcastle city council showed that the poorest areas are facing the biggest cuts.

The most deprived borough in the country, Hackney, east London, is seeing council cuts of £266.17 per person from 2010 to 2013. Liverpool (deprivation ranking five) council's budget is being cut by £252 per head.

Forty three of the 50 highest cuts

budgets belong to Labour councils - so why don't they refuse to administer these cuts and set needs budgets, based on the needs of the people in the area and appeal to the trade unions and community to back up their campaign for government funding?

Bob Severn

Market madness

Even before the Health and Social Care Act was made law, private companies were making a killing from our NHS. For example, hospitals have to buy in all their equipment. Research by Ernst and Young has shown that a huge amount of money is wasted in this procurement process and many

An identical box of blankets was bought for between £47 and £120!

trusts are being hugely ripped off. Out of ten trusts examined, the prices paid for the same box of medical forceps varied from £13 to £23. An identical box of blankets was bought for between £47 and £120! So much for the private sector increasing efficiency and giving us the best price.

Ed Thatcher?

Ed Miliband, desperate to convince anyone who may still be clinging to the idea of 'Red Ed' that it's unjustified, has told us all who his real idol is - Margaret Thatcher. He thinks he has as much right to claim the mantle of Thatcher as Berlusconi has to that of Julius Caesar.

He particularly admires her "conviction". Yes, conviction to privatise public services like transport and council housing and attack workers' trade union rights. We can see the similarities.

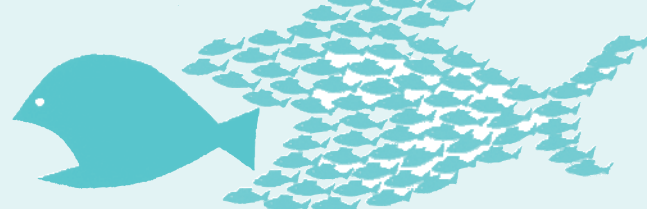
Maude's gravy train

Tory cabinet minister and chief union basher Francis Maude is once again on the expenses gravy train. In the face of widespread outrage at Maude's previous inflated expenses claims, David Cameron promised that Maude would "no longer claim any money for his second home".

As soon as the glare of publicity faded, however, Maude shoved his head back into the trough; claiming almost £20,000 in expenses for his second home since the new, supposedly strict, MP's expenses regime was introduced. Almost half of workers in Britain earn less per year than Maude has claimed!

Shelly Hand

...& Us



Have you got news for the 'fishes'? Email: editors@socialistparty.org.uk



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Historic victory for witch-hunted four

The white flag of surrender is currently flying over Unison HQ. For five and half years the union bureaucracy have sought to justify and defend the witch-hunt against four Unison activists and Socialist Party members. They have spent over £100,000 and have been prepared to lose thousands of defecting members and many good activists.

Despite losing in two courts - Employment Tribunal (ET) and Employment Appeals Tribunal (EAT) - they were still willing to spend another £100,000 in taking the case to the Court of Appeal, with the Orwellian argument that the lower courts had breached the union's human rights in not being allowed to ban the four!

The case was due to be heard at the Royal Courts of Justice in December. But on 20 November the union did a complete U-turn. They have written to the court to withdraw their appeal. In doing so the union has now accepted the previous courts' decision that they acted illegally. A hearing will now be called to determine the compensation that the union will have to pay to the four.

The four have now set legal history in defending the right of union members to defend themselves



The Four and supporters on one of the many lobbies photo Paul Mattsson

from being attacked by union bureaucracies seeking to silence them.

The four Socialist Party members were disciplined by Unison on trumped-up charges of racism, after producing a leaflet at the 2007 Unison conference, challenging the Standing Orders Committee about

ruling resolutions off the conference agenda. The ET completely exonerated the four on bogus allegations of racism.

Unison took disciplinary action in 2007 against Glenn Kelly, Onay Kasab, Brian Debus and Suzanne Muna and then took three of the activists'

branches away from democratic lay member control and into regional administration.

The Four challenged the union's actions in court and twice the courts ruled that they were unlawfully and unjustifiably disciplined.

The EAT further found that the disciplinary action violated Unison members' democratic rights.

Unbelievably, Unison filed an appeal in the Court of Appeal against the ET and EAT's decisions. Then on 17 July this year, Unison demanded the right to claim costs if they won the appeal. But the Unison leadership's demands were thrown out of court.

In a humiliating response to Unison's attempts to bully the four out of defending themselves in court due to lack of money, Lord Justice Elias called Unison "shabby".

This is a victory for the Socialist Party and the Four, who have refused to be bullied and intimidated. They have run a determined five-year campaign exposing the actions of the union.

The Socialist Party would also like to put on record its thanks to the lawyers who gave their support and time for free, showing that not all lawyers are just in it for the money, in particular, Nick De Marco.

Crown workers walk out at three sites

Workers at three can factories have walked out in immediate and angry response to an attack by Crown on the pension scheme. Crown's senior management informed trade union lay representatives on 19 November that all enhanced payments of early retirement in the final salary scheme finished at 9am. This was at 10am!

Two hours later a stewards' meeting at Sutton-in-Ashfield (Nottinghamshire) decided to call a plant meeting for 1pm. Management weren't told as stewards went around informing the 100 or so on site at the time.

Although half the Sutton workforce has started in the past two years and weren't allowed to join the final salary pension scheme, stewards explained that this was an attack by the US-owned company on their trade union. If the company got away with this, they could get away with anything and attack terms and conditions won in the past.

A steward told the meeting that these gains had not come from outer space but had been fought for in the past. The 35-hour week goes back to a strike in 1983. Decent pay, sick pay, free glasses and dental care would all be taken back if Crown thought they could get away with it.

Almost all workers are in Unite. They can see the benefits that being in a union have brought, with

pay and conditions better than most other places in the area.

Everyone at Sutton walked out, including apprentices. One lad was on his first day but he walked out too. Even some managers came out - they're also in the pension scheme and clearly hadn't been warned what was to happen.

After the meeting stewards told lorry drivers on site that the gates would be locked, so they left without loading up. As later shifts came in they also joined the strike.

Workers at Crown factories at Gateshead and Liverpool are also striking, while Neath workers held a canteen sit-in. Big customers, like Proctor and Gamble who buy the cans Crown makes, will be nervously watching for any impact on their supply chain.

Last week the company closed a plant in Slovakia, but after intervention by trade unions across Europe they were forced to apologise and concede better terms to the workforce. Stewards suspect that the company plans more plant closures and wants to make this cheaper by ending enhanced redundancy terms.

"If you show a lead and don't wait for management to get the upper hand, you get a momentum going and that's what we have now," said a Unite steward.

From the National Shop Stewards Network website, www.shopstewards.net

Three-day NHS strike



On the first strike day photo Iain Dalton

Adrian O'Malley
Branch Secretary, Unison Mid Yorkshire Health branch, personal capacity

Over 350 workers in the Mid Yorkshire NHS are facing pay cuts in a mass downbanding exercise. After a one-day strike on 1 November Unison members started a three-day strike on 20 November. The trust appears to be digging in by refusing to negotiate.

This strike will show whether the management of the Trust is prepared to see mass disruption in the hospitals in the hope that our members will be bullied into submission.

They at first tried to downplay the impact of the 1 November strike but senior management struggled to fill in for receptionists, medical secretaries, etc. One receptionist was told that three managers had struggled to cover her clinic!

This has raised the confidence of our members who have been calling into the union office and emailing us asking when the next strike is. 52 more staff have joined the union since the strike. 16 joined when we announced the three-day strike.

Please send messages of support to our branch via midyorksunison@aol.co.uk and make donations payable to Mid Yorkshire Health Unison 20671.

Devon and Cornwall bus workers fight for pay justice

Steve Merritt
Plymouth

First Group bus drivers and engineers staged another 24-hour strike on 15 November protesting about the company not giving their workers a back dated pay rise. Since the beginning of April management have refused to meet the demands of their drivers and engineers for an increase in their living wage.

Transport union RMT and management have agreed a deal but management are refusing to back-date the workers' pay from the time of the original grievance. A 24-hour strike on 26 October did not shift the management.

In the year ending on 31 March, First Group's pre-tax profits jumped from £126 million to £280 million. Shareholders and managers received their bonuses and payouts but the workers on the front line

were paid little.

Shop steward Phil Easby said: "There is overwhelming support for this industrial action, not only in Plymouth but across Devon and Cornwall. Although management and the union have agreed terms, the company has deferred and stalled for so long that they will only give us our pay rise from December. Our members do not accept this as we started fighting for this back in April. 90-95% of RMT members are on strike."

RMT general secretary Bob Crow on an earlier visit to Plymouth said: "After the magnificent support for the strike at the end of October we hoped that First Devon and Cornwall management would have come forward with an offer aimed at reaching a solution to this dispute over pay justice.

"The refusal to honour back pay deliberately watered down the value of the deal and that penny-pinching has led us back on strike this week."

In brief

Tube strike

RMT members working for Tubelines on London Underground are due to strike on 23 November. This is over pensions and travel facilities. The union is battling to allow the Tubelines staff to join the more favourable pension scheme enjoyed by Transport for London (TfL) staff and to get the same travel passes. Tubelines is now a subsidiary of TfL. Tubelines staff are responsible for maintenance and upgrade work on the Jubilee, Northern and Piccadilly lines and some other essential services including the Emergency Response Team.

Amnesty International

Workers at Amnesty International were on strike on 20 November in a dispute over job losses. 300 Unite members at Amnesty's International Secretariat and 145 at the UK HQ were on a 24-hour strike after management tried to impose new contracts with poor redundancy arrangements. They then proposed scores of redundancies. This is the third strike in two months for the UK staff. Management are attempting to restructure both the international and UK offices - at considerable costs to their staff, who have called on the secretary general, the senior leadership team and the UK director to stand down.

Crossrail

On 14 November in London there was an impressive protest outside the Oxford Street entrance to the Crossrail Tottenham Court Road site. Sacked Unite shop steward Frank Morris was joined by Sparks and supporters from London, North West, Wales, Yorkshire, Midlands and Scotland who stopped rush-hour traffic for a while before voting to continue the protest on the pavement. We encourage our supporters to continue to give support to Frank on his daily protests outside this site or the Westbourne Park Crossrail site 7am-12noon Monday-Friday.

Two months ago, 28 construction electricians working for EIS were sacked on the Crossrail site at Westbourne Park in West London. This was done by the consortium of contractors BFK. BFK have tried to argue that this decision was because of a reduction in work but we believe that it is a blatant act of trade union victimisation and blacklisting.

Rob Williams

NSSN

A very successful Midlands conference of the National Shop Stewards Network (NSSN) was held in Birmingham on 17 November. The conference opened with a speaker from each of the unions affiliated to the NSSN as well as national secretary Linda Taaffe. There was a detailed debate about the problems faced by trade unionists. The need to keep pressure on the TUC and individual union leaders to implement the POA motion passed at the TUC calling for coordinated strike action against government policy was prominent. People left with a renewed determination to deliver action that will knock the Con-Dem government's cuts roadshow off course.

Clive Walder
NSSN Steering Committee

See www.socialistparty.org.uk for more workplace news

NHS: Condition critical

Prescription: mass action to end all cuts and privatisation

Every area of the National Health Service faces crisis as the government financial squeeze threatens thousands of job losses and closures of hospital departments.

Private firms now treat one in five patients with certain conditions. As campaigns against cuts are launched in local areas, Jon Dale argues that a bold strategy is needed to see off these attacks.

NHS jobs are disappearing - 750 are now threatened in Rotherham. Over 1,000 nursing and other jobs are threatened by the closure of 24 out of 30 NHS Direct call centres. Increasing commercial competition from private healthcare companies, and takeovers of NHS services by private companies, are leading to fragmentation of healthcare. Patients will suffer as services are run by businesses, out to make profits for shareholders who don't see other areas ripe for profitable investment.

A recent Kings Fund report says: "It is not going to be a case of shaving a bit off how long patients stay in hospital to save a few pounds. Most hospitals have already reduced their agency nurses, put off repairs and immediate things that save money, so what is left?... Only the big things like large-scale reorganisations of A&E and maternity services across whole cities, which is clearly much more difficult to do."

Some trusts are already bankrupt or on the verge of bankruptcy. South London NHS Healthcare Trust has been spending over £1 million a week more than its income. Administrators have been sent in to replace top management and recommended that the trust be broken up and either run by neighbouring trusts or offered to private companies.

Both options would lead to big cuts, including closing at least one hospital. 39 organisations are interested in running parts of the trust, including Circle, Care UK, Serco and Virgin Care. Circle, recently given a contract to run Hinchbrook Hospital, identifies 32 other trusts as "a growth opportunity". These trusts' annual revenue is £8.2 billion.

Sherwood Forest Hospitals NHS Trust is threatened to 'run out' of money by January. Private Finance



A national campaign must be built to save the NHS photo Paul Mattsson

Initiative (PFI) costs for its £396 million hospital rebuilding project have leapt from an already massive £1.26 billion to £2.05 billion.

The Department of Health (DH) has had to bail out seven trusts such as Barking Havering and Redbridge, which needed £55 million last year to stay afloat. Peterborough and Stamford needed £41 million. The DH already faces a £1.5 billion bill to bail out trusts with PFI problems - equivalent to £60 million a year.

Some MPs now say what socialists have been arguing for over 15 years! "We are concerned that the financial viability of a number of trusts is being undermined by the fact

that they are locked into unaffordable PFI contracts," says the Public Accounts Committee. "It is unclear how the Department will continue to underwrite payments once most of the money moves to the NHS Commissioning Board." This is due to take place next year.

This national crisis demands emergency national action to save the NHS as a national service, available to everyone without charge. Strong local campaigns in every community threatened by cuts and closures must be built, but must not be left alone to fight for the scraps left on the plate. Arguing for the axe to fall elsewhere will not save the NHS.

Local campaigns should oppose all cuts and privatisation. Where medical advances are used to justify cuts, for example because new techniques avoid hospital stays, campaigners should demand any money saved is used to improve other local parts of the service.

'Patient safety' is also used to justify cuts, eg shortages of specialist doctors and other healthcare professionals leading to their concentration in fewer centres. This has been the case with the children's heart surgery centres and decisions to close local Accident and Emergency and maternity services. The safety argument must be taken se-

riously, but figures comparing one hospital with another do not measure the risks to ill or injured patients from travelling long distances.

Health trade unions should take the lead to organise local campaigns. The National Shop Stewards Network is campaigning to put pressure on the health unions' leadership. Health workers want to defend the services they provide. They are threatened by job losses, pay cuts and worsening work conditions, seen most clearly in the South West region.

All financial accounts should be open to trade union and community inspection. Let's see where our money is going, without 'commercial confidentiality' arguments being used to justify secret deals.

National campaign

All trade unions should link local campaigns together into a national campaign to save the NHS. Trade union members and their families (whether NHS workers or not) are threatened. In the absence of a national lead, health workers may lack confidence to take on the government alone.

The TUC must urgently organise and campaign to build a 24-hour general strike, which many health workers would join, while maintaining emergency services. Trade unions and health campaigners should call for full renationalisation of all privatised parts of the NHS and all PFIs. Debts to big corporations and banks should be cancelled, with compensation only in cases of genuine need.

The whole NHS should be democratically run by health workers' and community representatives, instead of appointed, highly-paid directors aiming to hand over more and more to profit-making corporations.

NHS doctors organise new political party

A 24-hour general strike, with more action planned to follow, could split the coalition government apart and lead to a general election. Then the question would be, who would rebuild the NHS as a national publicly owned service? Ed Miliband was booed at the 20 October TUC demo for saying a Labour government would continue with cuts.

His one real cheer was when he said Labour would "end the privatisation experiment." But why was the previous government that he was in carrying out this "experiment"? Why have some of his former colleagues in that government now got lucrative jobs in the private healthcare industry? Does 'One Nation Labour' include these parasitic companies?

There is no sign that Labour plans to renationalise already privatised parts of the NHS or the PFIs. Labour could have killed off Lansley's Health and Social Care Act by announcing that a future Labour government would renationalise, without compensation, all areas of the NHS taken over by private companies under this Act.



Miliband - no policy to defend the NHS photo Paul Mattsson

A group of doctors and academics recently announced the formation of a new political party, National Health Action (NHA). One leader is Dr. Richard Taylor, who twice won a seat to parliament as an independent opposing Kidderminster hospital's closure.

NHA say they will "give voters the opportunity to have the patient choice they have never been offered

- to reject the dismantling of the NHS." They rightly say: "The Labour Party's record on the NHS is also poor. It helped open the door to the exploitation of the health service by commercial providers.

"Privatisation and commercialisation waste vast amounts of public money by diverting into shareholder profits and fees and payments to lawyers, accountants and admin-

istrators. It will increase costs and transfer risk from the wealthiest in society to the poorest and most vulnerable."

They note "public money has been lavished on supporting the financial sector to the detriment of public services... money could be found to fund and sustain an excellent health service for all, if we had an economy that was not structured to serve the demands and greed of the top 1% wealthy."

NHA plans to stand against prominent coalition MPs but have not ruled out opposing one or two prominent Blairite privatisers. Hopefully it will coordinate with the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition to maximise opposition to destruction of the NHS.

A political alternative to the big business-backed parties would encourage workers and community activists that the fight to save the NHS can win. Socialists argue that the money for the NHS should come from the wealthiest, but also by rooting out private profit, including nationalisation of the pharmaceutical and medical supplies industries.

The Socialist says:

No cuts, closures or job losses in the NHS!

Kick big business out of the NHS. End PFI and cancel the debt

For a 24-hour general strike to defend the NHS

For a campaign of opposition centred on the trade unions

Local campaigns should work with health unions, patients' organisations, GPs opposed to the changes, and the public, to save the NHS

EUROPE: 14 NOVEMBER SHOWS WORKERS' POTENTIAL POWER TO DEFEAT AUSTERITY

On 14 November (N14), millions of workers across Europe went on strike and participated in mass protests against austerity. Called by the European Trade Union Confederation, it was the first internationally coordinated strike action in Europe since the current capitalist crisis began in 2008.

The N14 action was preceded by another 48-hour general strike in Greece on 6 and 7 November. Most of the strike action took place in southern Europe where the effects of austerity measures up to now have been more keenly felt. In Spain and Portugal in particular, where mass general strikes took place, the protests were enormous. Also, a common negative feature of the demos in Italy, Spain and Portugal was the unprecedented level of state repression meted out to strikers and protesters.

The following reports give a flavour of the scale of the protests but also comment on what further action is needed to roll back capitalist austerity.

More reports and analysis can be read on www.socialistworld.net

Spain: Name the date for a 48-hour general strike!

Socialismo Revolucionario (CWI, Spain) statement

The general strike of 14 November, like those on 29 March this year and 29 September 2010, shook society throughout the Spanish state.

The trade unions cite participation of 77%, a higher percentage than previous strikes. It was especially strong in manufacturing and transport.

Many more unemployed, young people, pensioners and 'precarious' workers in less well-organised sectors, unable to strike for fear of immediate sacking, showed their active support for the strike by participating in the enormous demonstrations which took place throughout the day. Five million people marched, with over one million demonstrating in both Barcelona and Madrid respectively.

Almost the only black spot was the refusal by the leaders of the Basque nationalist unions - ELA and LAB - to support the general strike call. This decision reflects an absurd sectarianism, especially when the international character of 14 November is taken into account.

Despite this, determined action was taken by many among the rank and file of those unions who in some important factories, including Volkswagen in Pamplona, walked out on strike despite their leaders.

Demobilisation?

The success of the strike and mobilisations clearly shows, once again, that the working class is not prepared to accept the imposition of austerity by the government and the dictatorship of the markets.

But 14 November must not become one more symbolic action called by the majority trade union leaders (of CCOO and UGT) in order to 'let off steam'. The lessons of the previous general strike must be learnt.

After the 29 March strike against the ruling People's Party labour 'reform', this strategy of demobilisation

- when, after the strike, union leaders Toxo and Mendez only pleaded with parliament to "improve" the reform - led to the passage of an even more anti-worker labour law!

We now find ourselves at a similar conjuncture. Last week the leaders of CCOO and UGT, after announcing the great success of the strike, called on the government to change its policies, or if not, to seek the "approval of the people" in a referendum.

It must be clearly understood that no change in the government's policies will be achieved without a sustained and escalating struggle by the working class and youth.

A glimpse of this has been seen in the latest developments in the struggle against home evictions. New measures, albeit insufficient, announced by the government after the strike (to impose a moratorium on evictions in a small number of exceptional cases), were the direct product of struggle over the last years, including direct actions to prevent evictions, demonstrations and the occupation of banks etc.

Before N14, local initiatives by various platforms of activists, often from 'M15' (social movements) assemblies, set up functioning 'strike committees' in neighbourhoods, to organise workers to build for the strike locally.

These committees must now be used to organise and fight for a combative strategy, to defeat the

demobilising strategy of the union leaders.

Some smaller unions (such as Cobas) have already come out in favour of calling a new general strike, as part of a strategy to defeat the austerity of the ruling PP and other autonomous governments.

Socialismo Revolucionario supports the call for a new general strike, this time of 48 hours, and an escalation of the action. The partial occupations by workers which are spreading through the hospitals of Madrid, could also add another element to the strategy of struggle, that of occupations of workplaces, town halls and ministries, to resist layoffs and privatisations.

Democratic committees and assemblies could also take on a key role in the setting of 'minimum services' in key essential services, such as hospitals etc.

The administration of prime minister Mariano Rajoy is in a much weaker position than at the time of the 29 March strike.

Although the PP will try to cling to power it will weaken, opening up the potential for a successful struggle to bring this government down and fight for a workers' government to represent our interests: a government armed with a genuinely socialist programme which rejects the 'debt', and instead implements the nationalisation of the banks and key sectors of the economy, under democratic control and management.

Committee for a Workers' International (CWI)

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



The CWI website contains news, reports and analysis from around the world. www.socialistworld.net



Italy: Cgil reluctantly mobilises, but workers and students fill the squares

Giuliano Brunetti
ControCorrente (CWI, Italy)

On 14 November, in 30 Italian cities, hundreds of thousands of workers and students demonstrated against the government - against the policies of cuts and austerity.

The Cgil - main union confederation - called a 'four-hour general strike'. Given the scale of the crisis and of the attacks, four hours was insufficient. However, some sectors, such as trade, telecommunications, schools and public employment extended the strike to eight hours.

In Milan, the strike brought together workers of the Cgil, students and the fighting workers of San Raffaele Hospital. Transport workers, including train workers, also took part. In Turin a demonstration of 20,000 people marched through the city.

Of particular note was the presence of the Fiom, the militant metal workers' section of the Cgil, which actively participated in strikes and demonstrations in

nearly 100 cities.

Unfortunately the Cgil decided only ten days before N14 to launch a symbolic strike, leaving little time for union delegates to explain to workers the reasons for the protest. Nor did the union organise any workplace meetings in advance. Moreover, the slogans used to prepare for N14 were vague and very general.

As far as the various 'Unions of the Base' are concerned, of note was the total absence of the USB, who chose in a sectarian manner to boycott the day of action in order "not to collaborate with the yellow unions".

However COBAS (The Confederation of Committees of the Base), took an active part in bringing the majority of its members onto the streets, especially in the education sector.

Police repression

In Rome, about 50,000 people, mostly students and many public sector workers, blocked the whole city and tried to reach the parliament building.

Portugal: Biggest ever general strike...

Now mobilise to oust the government

Anne Engelhardt, Gonçalo Romeiro and Francisco d'Oliveira Raposo
Socialismo Revolucionário (CWI, Portugal)

Down with the government, traitor to the nation", "The Troika cannot command here", "Hunger, misery and the IMF - get out!" "The street belongs to us, not the debt".

These chants reflected the anger of demonstrators against the government's savage cuts in jobs, services and living standards.

Despite attempts in the mass media to downplay it, the 14 November general strike was the biggest and most successful national strike action in Portugal since the 1974 revolution. Even the brutal state violence at the end of the day couldn't diminish the scale and impact of the general strike.

Militant spirit

Among firefighters, garbage collectors, metro and some other groups of workers, the strike was 100% solid.

At the main post distribution centre in Lisbon the picket line developed into a celebration of the strike. Students and workers were discussing and singing songs together.

Many shops, pharmacies and petrol stations closed down as the private sector and small businesses also joined the strike.

Unfortunately, the second largest union confederation (UGT - General Workers Union), did not support the general strike, alleging that it was "overtly political" and "sectarian" on the part of the General Confederation of Portuguese Workers (CGTP - the largest union federation).

However, as the strike approached many UGT-affiliated workers ignored their 'leaders' and joined in the action.

Even the union of the UGT's general secretary - who is also on the executive committee of the European Trade Union Congress which called the day of action on N14 - took part in the strike!

Unfortunately, despite the massive anger on the streets, neither the Portuguese Communist Party, the Left Bloc, nor the leadership of the CGTP have fulfilled their responsibility to develop the struggle.

The CGTP leadership at its rally at the end of the Lisbon demo refused to call for a 48-hour general strike before the end of the year, as the next step in a sustained plan of action to bring down the government.

Further action

Although during the day we witnessed several minor clashes between pickets and police the general mood of police was neutral. But the events in the evening showed an obvious attempt by the state and the police to intimidate and criminalise the protesters.

Arménio Carlos (general secretary of the CGTP) correctly blamed the government and the police's brutal attacks on workers for the escalation of violence.

The CGTP has called a further demonstration for 27 November, in front of the national assembly, on the day that the final vote on the government's budget will take place. This demonstration needs to become a massive event. It is an opportunity to call for a 48-hour general strike and further action to escalate the movement.

If such a plan of action, and a clear political alternative is fought for - starting from a united front of the left parties (Communist Party and Left Bloc) and the workers' and social movements and for a government to implement socialist policies - then this could decisively change the balance of forces in society and open up a new era for class struggle in Portugal and Europe.



N14 was the most successful strike action in Portugal since the 1974 revolution

Britain - make 24-hour general strike call a reality

...continued from page 1

Britain has not had a general strike since 1926, although the TUC did call one in 1972 after it had begun to develop from below. Victory was won, however, before it took place!

The relative rarity of general strikes in Britain means that even a 24-hour warning strike would have a massive effect - it would terrify the government and big business while giving a dramatic confidence boost to millions of workers. Particularly if it was made clear that this strike was a beginning not an end - and that further strikes would be called if the government did not retreat - it would be possible to win a victory.

But is a general strike possible in Britain? Some right-wing trade union leaders argue that it is ruled out because of the straitjacket of Britain's anti-trade union laws. We are not in favour of taking unnecessary risks with trade union funds.

However, workers are facing the biggest attack on their living standards since the 1930s. To fail to lead a serious struggle in defence of workers' rights would be far more damaging to the trade union movement than anything the law courts could deliver.

And it is possible to go a long way towards a general strike even within the straitjacket of the anti-union laws. Already key sections of workers are discussing the possibility of having to take strike action to defend their own pay and conditions in the first part of 2013. These include local government workers, rail workers, teachers and civil servants.

Whatever the leadership of the TUC decides at its next meeting, trade unions representing those workers should discuss coordinating their ballots - as was done for the N30 pensions' strike last year - so that they could all strike together on one day, in addition to whatever other industrial action they were taking. Each would be striking on their own specific issues but also participating in a coordinated strike against austerity.

However, coordinated action by some trade unions - while a step forward - is not enough. What is needed is a 24-hour general strike.

Beyond those unions already considering action there are millions - a majority - of workers in Britain who are facing attack over one or more aspect of their pay and conditions.

If the TUC names the day many would have their sights

lifted. They would see the possibility of waging a successful struggle and choose to register a trade dispute with their employer over the issues in their workplace.

This would then allow them to legally participate in the general strike. In addition, once a strike started to gain momentum, there is no doubt that millions more workers, many not yet trade union members, would choose to participate. Their protection would be the strength of the strike.

Anti-union laws

The ability of the government and employers to use the anti-union laws depends on the concrete balance of forces. When prison officers, who have no legal right to strike, organised action on 10 May this year, the government did not dare to use the law against their union, the POA, as they knew it would escalate the struggle.

The same is true of the construction strikes in 2009. Similarly, employers did not dare to use the law courts in the run up to the N30 public sector general strike, despite the thousands of individual ballots involved, because they knew to do so could lead to workers defying the anti-union laws on a huge scale, and thereby rendering them powerless.

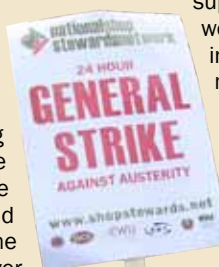
We appeal to all workers to join the National Shop Stewards Network (NSSN) in lobbying the TUC on 11 December, demanding that the TUC names the day for a 24-hour general strike.

Naming the day, however, would only be the first step. Next, a massive campaign in support of the strike would be needed, including mass meetings in every workplace and community to build support for the strike.

If this is done then workers who are not yet trade union members, alongside small business people, students, pensioners and the unemployed, could all be drawn into action.

In the last 18 months the working class in Britain has decisively re-entered the scene of history, with demonstrations and coordinated strikes on a scale not seen for many decades. A 24-hour general strike is the necessary next step.

See NSSN website for updates - www.shopstewards.net



SOCIALIST PARTY FIGHTING FUND										
	£ target	£ received	October-December 2012					Deadline 4 January 2013		
East Midlands	1,550	1,451								
Southern	1,200	1,056								
West Midlands	2,100	1,738								
Wales	2,300	1,676								
North West	1,200	753								
South West	1,400	796								
Yorkshire	2,900	1,567								
London	6,100	3,135								
Eastern	1,200	478								
Northern	600	218								
South East	750	219								
England & Wales	3,700	1,079								
TOTAL	25,000	14,172								

Rotherham TUSC election challenge

No snouts in the trough!

Alistair Tice

After Rotherham MP, Dennis 'MacShame' was caught with his fingers in the till, a byelection has been called for 29 November.

New Labour shot themselves in the foot by imposing a shortlist of two external candidates, to the exclusion of a local councillor.

This resulted in at least half the selection meeting walking out and the eventual candidate, who has only been a party member two years, being selected with the level of mandate you'd expect for a police commissioner!

The Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC), which is standing local National Union of Teachers (NUT) rep Ralph Dyson, immediately issued an 'Open letter to angry Rotherham Labour Party members' appealing for their support (see right).

Ralph's daughter has a pet pig called Kez. A photo of Kez features on the TUSC election leaflet with the caption: "Sick of the Fat Cats with their snouts in the trough?"

TUSC is also campaigning against the £50 million of health service



Protesting against hospital cuts photos TUSC

cuts being proposed by Rotherham NHS trust's chief executive that will result in a smaller hospital, fewer beds and 750 job losses. These cuts would turn our district general hospital into nothing more than a glorified cottage hospital.

Crossing the red line

We organised a protest against these cuts outside the hospital. First the security came and, pointing to a line

that had been tarmaced over, said: "You've crossed the red line" which we took as a compliment but refused to move. Then 'Communications' came to ask us to respect that it is a "working hospital". "Not for much longer," we replied, "if these cuts go through".

By coincidence, a Guardian newspaper reporter was in town that day so we managed to get them to the hospital protest and interview Ralph.

The day before, the Guardian had carried a pro-Labour piece about the Manchester Central byelection. This reporter commented on how impressed she had been with TUSC candidate Alex at the hustings. I asked: "But who wrote that cringing article in yesterday's paper?"

She replied: "It was me!" How to win friends and influence people! Needless to say, TUSC didn't get any coverage the next day.

Our first week's campaigning, of town centre stalls, leafleting the hospital, 500 council workers and two mosques, plus Sunday canvasses, has already had an impact and won new supporters.



Kez turned down the opportunity to stand for New Labour

Open letter from the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition

To angry Rotherham Labour Party members,

We in TUSC, including many ex-Labour Party members, welcome your angry reaction to the New Labour apparatus imposing another external candidate and possible MP on the town.

After the experience of Denis MacShane, who was also imposed on the local party from outside, you are justified in expressing your opposition to national party leadership diktat by walking out of the selection process. This experience only further confirms the complete lack of democracy now in New Labour, and the inability for ordinary local party members to hold any real say in decision making and accountability.

In the view of TUSC, this lack of democracy is part of the process undertaken by Blair, Brown and now Miliband to shift the Labour Party away from its working-class roots and to make the party acceptable to the rich, big business and the millionaires.

That is why TUSC is standing a candidate in the forthcoming byelection, Ralph Dyson, a local teacher and trade union representative who led the strike last year at Rawmarsh community school against compulsory redundancies.

We believe it is vital to counter the inevitable disillusionment and alienation of Rotherham working-class people with a left wing and socialist alternative. Ralph is standing against corruption, against cuts and against racism and fascism, and to be a workers' MP on a worker's wage.

We appeal to you to come and help us in our campaign, to support a local, working class, trade union fighter and socialist, the very things that the Labour Party was founded for and most of you will have joined because of. For more information about Ralph's and TUSC's campaign, look at: ralph-dyson.blogspot.com

Yours in solidarity,
Alistair Tice
Rotherham TUSC election agent

Middlesbrough byelection

Middlesbrough byelection TUSC candidate John Malcom says: "As an NHS community nurse I see first-hand the devastation brought about by the Con-Dem government's policy of cuts and privatisation within all public services but particularly in the NHS."

"In Middlesbrough working class communities are facing an onslaught as the mayor Ray Mallon continues the policy of savage cuts. He has earmarked 111 council services to be axed next year. Where is the fightback from Labour Councillors? Nowhere."

"I am a member of the Socialist Party which is part of TUSC, and as such, if elected as MP, I promise to only take the average wage of a skilled worker. I also promise to have only one job - as your MP."

- For a workers' MP on a worker's wage
- Fight austerity
- No to all cuts in jobs and services
- Save the NHS
- Build a 24-hour general strike



Building working-class political representation

With a £5,000 deposit required to get on to the ballot paper - but with no candidates' freepost mailshot available - TUSC did not field any candidates in the Police Commissioner elections held on 15 November, dubbed by the media as Britain's 'super Thursday' with 40 million people eligible to vote.

But TUSC did stand candidates in the Manchester Central parliamentary byelection, the Bristol mayoral election, and three council byelections, held on the same day.

In the council byelections, TUSC's vote ranged from 3.9% in Rugby's New Bilton ward to 2.2% in Manchester Ardwick ward - although in Liverpool's Knotty Ash ward Charley Cosgrove outpolled both the Conservatives and the Greens.

Ukip polled more votes than TUSC in four of the contests but not overwhelmingly so - despite Nigel Farage's Question Time season ticket (while TUSC faces a media blackout).

In reality not too much can be drawn from a handful of electoral contests, either 'writing off' TUSC or exaggerating the possibilities at this stage. The most important fact is still the absence of a vehicle for working class political representation, given Labour's broad acceptance of the capitalists' austerity agenda. Standing in elections is part of the struggle to build one.



The Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC) is an electoral alliance that stands candidates against all cuts and privatisation. Its backers include the RMT transport workers' union, leading members of other trade unions including the PCS, NUT and POA, the Socialist Party and the Socialist Workers Party. Find out more at www.tusc.org.uk

Manchester Central

The main losers in the Manchester Central byelection were the establishment parties. New Labour lost 10,000 votes. The Lib Dems and Tories lost about 85% of their 2010 election vote.

The turnout of 18.2%, the lowest in any byelection since World War Two, also squeezed the TUSC campaigns in Manchester Central for MP, vote 220, and Ardwick ward for council. Nonetheless, we believe we laid down the basis for TUSC to build in the future.

Manchester Central has the second-highest unemployment rate in England and Wales. 20,000 people are on the social housing waiting list. Yet a whole estate that could house 100 families is boarded up and standing empty after the council handed it over to developers.

Our campaign, focusing on workplaces and communities, was supported by trade unionists from across the city, especially from the RMT transport workers' union.

In the only husting, we comprehensively defeated the mainstream parties, including the Greens. Supporters of other candidates applauded our policies rather than the insipid positions put forward by the main parties.

The decimated turnout reflected widespread rejection of the Tory idea of police commissioners and the failure of the mainstream media to cover the byelection in any depth. We suffered a total blackout from the establishment media despite running one of the most visible campaigns.

Unfortunately, we also faced competition from George Galloway's Respect party, which put forward a candidate at the last minute. This was after Respect's initial candidate, Kate Hudson, stepped down following Galloway's comments on rape.

TUSC nationally had written to Respect to seek to coordinate electoral challenges but so far they have not been prepared to talk. Respect

finished below TUSC in this byelection, but a combined left vote could have outpolled the far-right, racist BNP.

In Ardwick ward, TUSC's candidate Shari Holden beat the BNP. This shows the potential for the working class, anti-cuts alternative put forward by TUSC to drive back the far right.

Supporters in our city will be now discussing what steps to take to build TUSC.

Alex Davidson
TUSC Manchester Central candidate

Bristol

Trade Unionists and Socialists Against Cuts (TUSC) gained 1,412 first preference votes in the election for mayor of Bristol. For comparison the Liberal Democrats, who lead the city council, polled just over 6,000 votes while the Greens, with two city councillors, managed 5,248 votes.

This was a creditable result given the large number of competitors and marks a step forward for TUSC in the city. Unfortunately, we were also up against a candidate from Respect - selected without an attempt to discuss with TUSC - although a combined vote of almost 3,000 shows a good growth in support for anti-cuts candidates.

Despite spending a tiny fraction of the £60,000 the top two candidates both sunk into the election,

we were able to bring an anti-austerity, socialist alternative to a wide audience. We got an unprecedented amount of coverage from the local paper, TV and radio - over 30 mentions in all.

Socialist Party members provided the backbone of the campaign with daily activity. Members of the Bristol rail branch of the RMT gave not only a donation but also actively helped to distribute material.

The winner of the election was the 'independent' George Ferguson, a former Lib Dem and millionaire businessman. Such is the disillusionment in the main parties that he was able to win despite a virtual silence about what he stands for.

Labour was the strong favourite up until the election itself. However, without offering a real alternative to the Con-Dem cuts, it was unable to gain enough votes.

Figures show a huge gulf in the turnout between wealthier parts of the city and working class wards, a gap of almost four to one at its widest.

With the new mayor pledging to announce over £25 million of cuts in the next six weeks the fight to defend jobs and services goes on. The TUSC campaign took the arguments against austerity to a wider audience and has put it in a strong position to play an important role in that fightback.

Tom Baldwin
Bristol TUSC mayoral candidate

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.

Responsible capitalism?

Will Hutton's forensic exposure of the mendacity, corruption and downright public deception by Thatcher's government of the mythical benefits of privatisation is a model of investigative journalism.

Will reveals German utility RWE and, since 2006, a group of private equity funds domiciled in Luxembourg, marshalled by the Australian bank Macquarie, the bank that makes Mitt Romney's bank look saintly.

The company has not delivered the cheap water promised, nor developed as a model system for the new millennium. In Will's words "it is a vehicle whose over-riding priority is incredible shareholder enrichment."

In other words, here is a privatised utility controlling essential means to life, a natural monopoly, not being operated for the public good, in the clutches of a dodgy amalgam of spivs and chancers. He recognises the regulator is wholly inadequate. He rightly makes the observation that "what has happened to the English water industry over the past 20 years is as disgraceful as what happened to our banks."

But the problem for me is Will's solution. To call for a 'responsible capitalism' is to advance a classical oxymoron up there with 'caring Tories.'

Will's analysis screams out for the public ownership of the water industry, accountable to our elected representatives.

Tony Mulhearn

The letter below was sent to The Observer in response to an 11 November article

Don't rock the boat

The NUS demo had the slogan "Educate, Employ, Empower". While this manages to be agreeable without rocking the boat (heaven forbid!), maybe



photo Senan

the student leaders should've taken a cue from the socialist movement and used three different words: "Educate, Agitate, Organise".

Nick Hart, Birmingham City Socialist Students

Chief executioner

£100 million cuts, over three years, are being forced through by Wirral's Labour council and chief executive Graham Burgess.

Burgess was a 1980s union official in Liverpool who took every opportunity to frustrate the excellent work undertaken by the then Militant-led council.

Now Burgess, on well over £100,000 a year, has shed any pretence of defending working people. After a reported £20,000 refurbishment of his office, he has threatened to sack all staff if they

don't accept reductions in terms, and has tried to set service users against staff as to where cuts will hit hardest.

Wirral Unison mobilised a lobby of 500 people at short notice, with further meetings of members arranged. It is vital that this momentum is kept up. Industrial action is a genuine prospect in the new year.

Wirral Unison member

Appy together?

photo Southampton SP

I downloaded the Unison smartphone app and one of the first things it told me was that the union "will be supporting the council's Stand Up for Southampton campaign calling for fair funding for the city".

The campaign protests against a cut of £23 million from central government but absolves the Labour council of any blame in its threats to sack over 300 workers.

Socialist Party members in Southampton have instead backed the courageous stance of rebel councillors, Keith Morrell and Don Thomas. For fighting to defend council jobs and services, including the jobs of Unison members, they have been expelled from the Labour Party.

Unison's support for Labour has become a barrier. We must fight all cuts, regardless of which party implements them and fight to make a 24-hour general strike a reality - the policy our delegates voted and spoke in favour of at the TUC congress.

As Labour continues to make Tory cuts, breaking the link with Labour and instead backing candidates that oppose all cuts is a vital question for Unison members.

Unison member, anonymous due to the climate of witch hunting activists

Use our power!

Our brothers and sisters in Spain, Portugal and Italy have shown us the way with days of general strike. Trade unionists and socialists in this country must take up the mantle and join the battle. Where were we? We were let down by right-wing union general secretaries. Join our comrades, sisters and brothers in organising a one-day general strike. These right-wing trade union leaders have betrayed the workers, the youth, the old, sick and disabled. We should tell them that enough is enough.

The revolutionary leader Lenin said that if the working class in Britain used their power the ruling class would not last for six weeks. We should organise a general strike, then while the bosses are down, let's kick them - out of power!

Dave Boyes, Hampshire Socialist Party

London Uni cleaners fight for basic rights

The mainly Latin American cleaners working at the University of London, one of the most prestigious universities in the world, have launched the 'three cosas' campaign over sick pay, pensions and holidays. Ana (not her real name), a Bolivian cleaner, and Jason, a cleaners' rep, spoke to the Socialist.

Ana

There's a lot of injustice at work. The cleaners aren't treated by the management like human beings.

It's true that the living wage campaign was a victory even if we haven't got to the place we need to be. I work three hours a day [for the university], that adds up to £539.50 a month.

Jason

Most of the cleaners have to work a number of jobs in order to make enough money. Ana works a job early in the morning, from 5.45am to 7.45am, then she works three hours at the University of London, then she cleans some private houses in the afternoon, and has another job for four hours at night.

Ana

I'm tired all the time, Monday to Friday, but that's what we have to do because otherwise you can't afford to live in this city.

I spend about £550 to £600 a month on food, rent, transportation - and that's squeezing it as much as I can. The majority of the cleaners are in a similar situation. A lot get up earlier and start their first shift at 1am.

I work nine hours a day and they take £52 for taxes, but no National Insurance.

I looked to the Association of Latin American Women to ask why I didn't have any contributions for National Insurance towards a pension. They said that, despite working nine hours, because I work in a bunch of different jobs for a small amount of hours, I have no pension contribution.

I was disappointed and angry. I get up very early and I do all this work. I asked my manager about my public pension contribution. The manager said that the tax you're paying goes towards that. I didn't understand if the manager was just trying to warn me off, or she just



Most of the cleaners have to do three or four different jobs a day

'In the 'three cosas' campaign we're asking for sick pay, holidays and pension. That we're working in this university, in the 21st century, and don't have these things, is a disgrace'

didn't care.

Jason's given us information, he's given us moral support. Unfortunately from the union, Unison, we've had no support. So in the 'three cosas' campaign we're asking for sick pay, holidays and pension. That we're working in this univer-

sity, in the 21st century, and don't have these things, is a disgrace.

We're going to the different residence halls where the cleaners work. We explain what we're asking for and why.

But the university issued a statement to tell all the security guards to not let Jason into the hall.

Jason

Every Friday we have meetings with workers from different halls. We discuss campaign strategy and tactics.

Also, a lot of students have done a substantial amount of work. We try to create as many opportunities to have contact between workers and campaign supporters.

University of London cleaners' protest to demand the 'three cosas'
Wednesday 28 November, 6pm
Senate House, Malet Street, London WC1E 7HU

Save our server!

Can you donate to our appeal? The Socialist Party is aiming to raise £12,000 to enable us to buy a new computer server and is asking all members and supporters to contribute. We are within touching distance - help us smash the target.

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

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

National Committee

The Socialist Party National Committee (NC) met on the 17 and 18 November. Socialist Party branches should get a full report from an NC member in their area.

**Socialism Today**

The Socialist Party's magazine November 2012 issue includes:

- **After October 20**

More militant action is required to fight back against and defeat the Con-Dem coalition's savage cut-backs argues Peter Taaffe.

- **Clay Cross**

When Labour councillors took on the Tory government, 40 years ago. By Dave Gorton

- **Post-Gaddafi Libya: still volatile and violent**

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Tragic death of Savita Halappanavar

Action needed to allow access to abortion in Ireland

Rita Harrold

Socialist Party (CWI in Ireland) and pro-choice activist

On Sunday 28 October Savita Halappanavar, a 31 year old woman from India, died in Galway University Hospital in Ireland. She had been admitted one week earlier with severe back pain. Savita was miscarrying and, with the neck of her womb open, doctors said there was no hope for the 17 week foetus. For three days

The mood on the Dublin march was phenomenal with the clear message being sent to the government that inaction would no longer be tolerated

Savita was in agony, she asked for a termination several times but this was denied due to the presence of a foetal heartbeat. Her husband Praveen says that they were told no, "this is a Catholic country."

When the foetal heartbeat did stop on 24 October, the foetus was removed. Unfortunately this was too late for Savita who had developed septicaemia. Her condition deteriorated rapidly and very tragically, she died.

A bill to improve access to abortion was put to the Dáil (Irish parliament) by the United Left Alliance and others earlier this year. But it was voted down by both government parties, including the Labour Party. Both the Prime Minister and Minister for Health have said that they will not be rushed to legislate in the wake of Savita's death.

Response

On Wednesday evening, less than 24 hours after the news of Savita's tragic death broke, 2,000 people assembled at a rally at the Dáil in Dublin. Smaller scale vigils and protests spontaneously occurred in cities around the country.

The tone of that rally was one of deep sadness at the unnecessary loss of life and decades old resentment and anger at the politicians who, because of their cowardice, lack of conviction and backward, outdated views, have let women in Ireland suffer.

Only three days later 20,000 took to the wet streets of the capital on Saturday 17 November, bearing banners saying "Never Again!" A further 1,500 attended a vigil in Galway and many more attended other events across the country and in London. The mood on the Dublin march was phenomenal with the clear message being sent to the government that inaction would no longer be tolerated.

It is not clear that legislating for the X case (see below) would have been enough to avoid this situation as the X case ruling only con-



Tens of thousands have demonstrated since the revelations about Savita's death

siders a woman's life to be grounds for termination, as opposed to her health. Savita suffered in agony for days. During this time it may not have been clear that her life was in danger.

The Socialist Party has demanded in the Dáil through our TD (MP) Joe Higgins, and at demonstrations, through our councillor Ruth Coppinger, a directive to be sent to all hospitals which would ensure that all requests for termination where a woman's life or health are at risk

be met.

We have also called for immediate legislation that goes beyond the X case that ensures that a woman's health as well as her life are paramount in the care received, including terminations in public hospitals if needed.

We have highlighted the need for a separation of church and state, an end to church control of schools and hospitals and for the right to choose abortion for women in Ireland - a service which should be

provided freely through the public health service.

Approximately eleven women a day are travelling from the south of Ireland to British abortion clinics. The absolute hypocrisy of denying the reality of Irish abortion is politically contemptible. Those with children and family commitments, migrant women without the right to travel and the young are punished for seeking an abortion while the wealthy have more options.

Irish abortion law - the history

Ireland has notoriously strict abortion laws. The Offences Against the Persons Act from 1861 is still on the books, charging those "intent to procure the miscarriage of any woman... to be kept in penal servitude." In 1983 a clause was inserted into the constitution to balance the right to life of the "unborn child" with the equal right to life of the mother.

In 1991 student unions and their activists, including members of the Socialist Party, were banned from distributing information about obtaining abortions abroad. Various hotlines and information sharing

services run by dedicated volunteers were constantly being shut down by police.

Case X

In 1992 the parents of a 14 year old rape victim contacted police about getting DNA evidence to help secure a conviction while she would obtain an abortion abroad. The attorney general got an injunction to prevent her from travelling abroad to access a termination.

There was an explosion of anger in society as people for the first time saw the real effect of restrictive

abortion laws and thought that this could be their child, their friend. From school students to older workers, people took to the streets with the demand "Let her go!"

The wave of protests that followed forced the Supreme Court to rule that if there was a real and substantial risk to the life of the mother, including the risk of suicide, as distinct from a risk to her health, a termination was lawful. This became known as the X case.

Two referenda followed to try to further restrict abortion law but both were defeated. In this way pressure from below and more open at-

titudes of ordinary people achieved the right to travel abroad to obtain an abortion and for information on foreign abortion services to be accessible in certain circumstances.

No legislation

In the 20 years that have followed, no legislation has been put in place to outline how the X case ruling should be applied by doctors. Since then the European court of human rights has made rulings against the state in cases where women's lives were at risk and abortions in Ireland were not available.

Build a movement

The Socialist Party is fighting for real choice for women - for access to free, safe and legal abortion and for the building of an anti-austerity, anti-capitalist movement that puts a socialist Ireland and Europe on the agenda. Only such a movement can ensure that the rights of women and the working class, the young, the poor, and all oppressed sections of society will no longer continue to be jeopardised by capitalism.

Socialist Party MEP for Dublin, Paul Murphy, has called an international day of action for Wednesday 21 November and led 53 MEPs to sign a letter to condemn the situation that allowed Savita to die. See socialist-party.net and socialistparty.org.uk for reports of the protests around the world, including in London.

London protests: solidarity with struggle for abortion rights in Ireland

On Saturday 17 November, in solidarity with those protesting in Ireland, 70 people gathered on the steps of the Irish embassy in London. They held a minute's silence for Savita.

Speakers included a woman from a charity which helps women pay for flights to England and has seen a trebling of calls since it was launched.

Socialist Party member Helen Pattison was also on the platform. She spoke about how disgraceful the Irish Labour Party had been in voting against the bill for abortion rights in April of this year, and the hypocrisy of the main parties who call themselves 'pro-life' but are cutting vital services for children and families.

This followed a protest of 200 at the embassy three days earlier.



photo Neil Cafferky

Women in Britain have access to abortion but this hard-won right must be extended and defended. Tory health minister Jeremy Hunt has expressed his desire to halve the legal time limit for abortions to 12 weeks. Notorious anti-choice activist and Tory MP Nadine Dorries has said she went on I'm a Celebrity in order to campaign to restrict the time limit. To give women real choice over when and whether to have children, the Socialist Party England and Wales calls for:

- Mass struggle, led by the trade unions, for action that will give women real control over their own bodies
- Solidarity with action in Ireland fighting for abortion rights
- End the Northern Ireland exception - bring laws there in line with Britain
- No to all cuts and privatisations; scrap the Health and Social Care Act
- Free abortion on request; end the need for two doctors' agreement
- A fully publicly funded, democratically controlled National Health Service - no privatisation
- Access to free fertility treatment on the NHS for all those who need it
- Access to free, safe contraception including emergency contraception; a reversal of the cuts in family planning services and a massive investment into sympathetic youth advisory centres. Reopen Connexions
- Improved Sex and Relationship Education in all schools and information campaigns on contraception
- A living minimum wage that reflects the real cost of living and investment in job creation
- A network of publicly funded, good quality, flexible childcare facilities
- Reinstate maternity and child benefit for all, and raise levels to reflect the real cost of pregnancy, childbirth and bringing up a child
- The right to adequate parental leave
- A democratically run socialist society, planned to meet social needs rather than the profits of a few

STOP ISRAELI STATE TERROR!



No more slaughter in Gaza

As the Socialist goes to press a ceasefire in Gaza was reported as imminent. While this will be a great relief to many, further outbreaks of bloodshed are, tragically, inevitable until there is fundamental system change, in the interests of working class people across the region.

Men, women and children from one end of the Gaza strip to the other have been subjected to abject terror as bombs hit this narrow piece of land from the air and sea. Over 1,350 "targets" have been struck, killing over 100,

injuring over 800 and traumatising the entire 1.7 million population.

Not just suspected militias and their equipment have been targeted, but also the Gazan government headquarters, police buildings and television stations. No matter if children are in the way; eleven members of one family – including four children – were horrifically blown apart in a single house.

Most Palestinians in Gaza have no bomb shelters; nowhere to feel safe. The main hospital has run out of many essential drugs and is desperately short of generator fuel, intensive care beds and basic equipment.

Much of the capitalist media in Britain and internationally blame

rockets fired by Palestinians into Israel for Israel's 'justifiable' action. They echo politicians like US President Barack Obama, and UK Prime Minister David Cameron – themselves responsible for atrocities in Afghanistan – who have blamed Gaza's Hamas leaders for the Israeli regime's slaughter and have barely criticised Israel's leaders.

What is rarely said and reported is that the Israeli military machine has been almost constantly inflicting brutal repression on Palestinians in the occupied territories over a long period of time.

In the few years in between its three-week 2008-09 "operation cast lead" onslaught on Gaza in

which 1,400 Palestinians died, and the start of the latest offensive, 319 Palestinians were killed. Although every loss of life is tragic, the numbers of Israeli Jews killed by Palestinians were far fewer: 13 during 'cast lead' and 20 in the period in between offensives.

Even during the week before Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu decided to escalate the brutality on 14 November, the Palestinians were bearing a heavy toll. Seven died at the hands of the Israeli forces that week and 52 civilians were injured.

Then a shockingly brutal offensive unfolded that has been a nightmare for the Gazans and will bring no peace and security for the Israeli people (see page 2).

It was partly fuelled by the power hungry desire of Netanyahu and his fellow ministers to do well in the forthcoming Israeli general election. The 2008-09 invasion was also prior to a general election.

The Socialist Struggle Movement in Israel/Palestine (part of the CWI - Committee for a Workers' International, to which the Socialist Party is also affiliated) has been participating in anti-war demonstrations

in Israel and has called for an immediate end to the bloodshed and for the removal of the present right-wing Israeli government "of big business and the settlements".

- No more slaughter in Gaza!
- End the blockade of Gaza. Open the Gaza-Egypt border
- For the immediate withdrawal of the Israeli army from the Palestinian territories
- For a mass struggle of the Palestinians, under their own democratic control, to fight for genuine national liberation
- For independent workers' organisations in Palestine and Israel
- For a struggle for governments of representatives of workers and the poor that will end oppression, defend democratic rights for all – including minorities, and break with capitalism and imperialism
- For democratic socialism in Palestine, Israel and throughout the Middle East

See page 2 for more and www.socialistworld.net for updates and further analysis

What we stand for

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

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

Our demands include:
PUBLIC SERVICES

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

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

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

WORK AND INCOME

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

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

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

ENVIRONMENT

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

RIGHTS

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

NEW WORKERS' PARTY

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

SOCIALISM AND INTERNATIONALISM

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