



NO TO G8 AUSTERITY

● End the rule of big business, poverty and war

Niall Mulholland
Committee for a Workers' International (CWI)

The leaders of the most powerful nations in the world will soon descend on Enniskillen, County Fermanagh, for the 17-18 June G8 Summit. We can expect much empty rhetoric from David Cameron, Barack Obama and other world leaders about how Northern Ireland is a model for 'peace, stability and growing prosperity', which the G8 wishes to emulate on an international level.

Nothing could be further from the truth. Northern Ireland has some of the highest rates of poverty and joblessness on these islands and society remains divided along sectarian lines.

The huge security operation surrounding the summit is like the worst of the 'Troubles'. Thousands of armed police and military equipment will flood Fermanagh. These repressive measures are an attempt to intimidate workers and young people from protesting against the G8's policies.

And there is a lot to protest! The G8 heads of state lead the way in making the working class pay for the crisis of their capitalist system. Austerity policies have caused Depression-era conditions in Greece, which will soon be repeated in Cyprus.

Mass unemployment stalks the EU, officially at nearly 20%. Youth joblessness

in Spain is over 60% and around 80% in Greece.

The G8's austerity policies are not working. Most of Europe is in deep recession or facing economic stagnation. The US has feeble growth but also falling wages and rising social inequality.

The G8 represents the opposite of 'prosperity, peace and stability'. Under the capitalist profit system, almost half of the world's population struggles to live on less than \$2.5 a day.

The G8 represents the super-rich 1%. The 'great philanthropist' Bill Gates, of Microsoft, has total wealth estimated at \$66 billion, which is enough to end world poverty and still leave him with change.

One of the G8's stated purposes is to "save" African people from starvation - by corporate land grabs and control of the continent's markets!

The G8 also represents a system that causes war and environmental destruction. Since the economic crisis began, a staggering \$1.75 trillion was spent by world powers on the highly lucrative arms industry.

Working class

The current Turkish uprising, which started in Taksim Square, is encouraging anti-G8 protesters in Belfast and Fermanagh, despite the security clampdown. The magnificent movement in Turkey has the potential to bring together working people across ethnic and national divisions, linking up with the organised working

class, to become an unstoppable force to change society.

The 'G8 Not Welcome' campaign, initiated by the Socialist Party in Northern Ireland, will hold a demonstration in Enniskillen on 17 June, the first day of the Summit. This protest, with trade union backing, will bring together Catholic and Protestant youth, socialists, trade unionists and others.

But marching together is not enough. A workers' alternative to the G8 and pro-big business parties is needed in Northern Ireland, Britain and everywhere.

The Socialist Party in Northern Ireland, like the Socialist Party in England and Wales, is an affiliate to the CWI. It calls for mass opposition to G8 policies and the local sectarian-based parties and their cuts.

The CWI campaigns for jobs, homes, a living wage and decent benefits. It fights for socialism - democratic public ownership and planning of the major industries and banks which would unleash colossal wealth and resources for the benefit of the '99%' - to end the rule of big business, poverty and war.

March against the G8

17 June assemble 6.30pm
at Enniskillen Library, County Fermanagh, N Ireland
g8notwelcome@gmail.com



Support in London for the protests in Turkey
photo Paul Mattsson



Labour crosses the Rubicon - again

In a series of speeches last week, the Labour leadership crossed the Rubicon and completely betrayed the poor and working class. Except Julius Caesar only crossed once - Labour have crossed several times!

Scandalously, shadow chancellor Ed Balls pledged to stick within the Con-Dems' spending plans, promising "iron discipline" and "big and painful choices" for "a tough deficit reduction plan" with "tough fiscal rules". In an abandonment of universalism, Labour made clear they would not reverse the cuts in child benefit to better off families and would end winter fuel payments to better off pensioners.

Then, in a speech in Newham, East London, one of the poorest boroughs in the country, Labour leader Ed Miliband pledged to cap social security spending.

Then came Balls' promise to cap spending on the state pension: "I actually think that it's important that you're looking across all welfare spending as far as you can."

This complete capitulation to the Tories and the right-wing hounds in the press was greeted with Hosannas. Balls and Co think that by this they will mollify their masters, but they will immediately demand more retreats.

Andrew Rawnsley in the Observer remarked: "They are far from complete as an answer to all the voter doubts about Labour's fiscal credibility. As one frontbencher puts it: 'This is only a first step.' At some point, which will come much closer to the next election, Mr Balls will have to tell us by when and by what means he would aim to reduce the deficit to zero."

The bosses want two capitalist parties, offering variants of the same austerity programme.

Why should workers turn out to vote? Instead of answering Tory lies and propaganda about 'scroungers' and offering hope to the masses of suffering working class people,

'One Nation Labour' means 'Austerity Labour', with a few philanthropic crumbs thrown from the table.

The Independent commented: "The issue now is how, with so much conceded, Mr Miliband can find a compelling reason to vote Labour rather than Tory or Liberal Democrat in 2015... a fuzzy sense that he will do much the same thing as his opponents, just more kindly, will not suffice."

The "kindly" points in Miliband's speech were the appeals to employers and private landlords to be a bit nicer. He urged employers to pay a living wage, and to private landlords to negotiate lower rents with councils so that some of the money that would have gone on housing benefit can be spent on building houses.

It is these ideas that Unite general secretary Len McCluskey has grasped when he says: "Ed Miliband's speech offers hope that there is an alternative to George Osborne's punishing experiment with the national economy... If Ed Miliband continues in this vein, then he will win working people back to Labour."

How can McCluskey make this statement? Instead of clutching at straws, he should be denouncing this attack on the working class and launching a fight against this capitulation to the Blairites.

The Institute for Fiscal Studies warns that, three years into the Con-Dems' vicious austerity programme: "we are still as far away from the (budget deficit) target as we were in 2010... It would not be surprising if not just 2015 but also 2020 was an 'austerity' election".

Councils' funds are being cut by over a quarter. The National Audit Office says one in eight councils is at risk of not balancing their budgets, and one in ten is in severe trouble.

Hundreds of thousands of people will lose

out as a result of the changes to disability benefits brought in this month. The benefits cap, implemented in July, could, for the 30,000-plus households affected, make the amount of money lost by the bedroom tax, disastrous though it is, look like peanuts.

An opposition worthy of the name ought to be hammering the Tories in the polls right now. But the Independent's 'poll of polls' puts Labour on 35%, with its lead over the Tories steadily falling since February, despite Tory divisions.

Anti-austerity

The most common response in elections at this stage is for the majority of working class people to stay at home. But in this year's county council elections a section of working class people voted for the right-wing nationalist Ukip in desperation.

The situation is crying out for an anti-austerity alternative. Ukip does not offer this. However it has been widely and wrongly presented as the anti-establishment alternative to the three parties of big business. In reality Ukip is as anti-working class as the main capitalist parties. For example it demands a single 'flat rate' of income tax which would mean a bin worker and a banker paying the same rate.

The horrifying killing in Woolwich and the vile attempts of racist organisations to whip up division in its wake, and the racist attacks that have taken place since, are all terrible warnings of what could happen if there is no alternative that can galvanize the fear and anger felt by millions and direct it in a mass campaign against the government and against austerity.

The Con-Dems and their media mates have conducted a concerted propaganda campaign

to convince people that there is no alternative to cuts, there is no money, and to demonise benefit claimants. The job of a working class opposition is to challenge these lies and put forward a bold anti-austerity alternative.

Labour could end council cuts tomorrow by telling its councillors not to implement cuts or the bedroom tax, to use their reserves and borrowing temporarily to fund 'needs budgets', and pledge that they will underwrite councils once in power.

They could halve the housing benefit bill by capping rents and launching a massive house building programme. Cancelling all PFI debts and a plan of useful public works would provide employment and the services people desperately need.

Because it is simply not true that there's no option. The 'tops' of society have enriched themselves from the economic crisis. The number of millionaires has doubled in two years. Thirteen new billionaires have been 'created'. The big companies sit on £850 billion worth of hoarded cash piles.

Make the rich pay. Instead of cutting the top rate of tax, tax the super-rich. Nationalise the banks, and the big profit-grabbing major corporations that dominate the economy.

These demands, if tied to a campaign for serious trade union action, a 24-hour general strike, would see off this government of millionaires and the austerity programme.

Labour has once again confirmed its transformation into a big business party. The Socialist Party is part of the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC), which we hope is a step towards a new mass workers' party. Such a party could fight for a democratically decided socialist plan to meet the needs of the vast majority of the population, instead of the enrichment of the scroungers at the top.

Falkirk West: Labour bureaucracy blocks left Unite union candidate

Kevin Parslow

Unite 1/1228 branch secretary (personal capacity)

New Labour has suspended its parliamentary selection process in Scottish constituency Falkirk West for the byelection to replace disgraced MP Eric Joyce.

An investigation into alleged 'irregularities' is being organised by party officials. This follows allegations against Unite the Union of recruiting members to the constituency.

Unite has the aim of getting more working class candidates selected and elected as MPs and councillors. For Falkirk West, Unite member Karie Murphy was touted as a candidate. While Murphy's record is open to criticism, Unite should have a say in the selection process.

Unite is New Labour's biggest affiliate, paying over £3 million a year in affiliation fees. Its political strategy is to try and transform New Labour back to its roots and strength-

en party democracy. The Socialist has always said that, for this strategy to stand any chance, Unite would have to go into New Labour with a full programme against all cuts and privatisation, and for socialist economic policies. It would be no good replacing Blairite right wingers with trade union backed ones.

Expulsions

However, the limits to this strategy have become apparent. A handful of Labour councillors, largely Unite members and including the two brave Southampton councillors, have voted against cuts and found themselves suspended or expelled from Labour groups. Right-wing leaders, locally and nationally, do not tolerate challenges to the pro-capitalist policies of New Labour.

Many years ago now, the Labour right wing brought in the 'one member one vote' (OMOV) selection processes for parliamentary candidates, replacing selection by the constitu-

ency parties' general committees (GC). This was because the right believed the GCs were dominated by the left and trade union delegates, so OMOV would make the selection of right-wing candidates more likely. The right wanted a party that was safe for big business.

Of course, the right have always feared a mass membership party that was based on fighting for socialist policies. They feared the influence of socialist and Marxist ideas in the 1970s and 1980s. They launched an offensive against the Socialist's predecessor, Militant, which led to expulsions from Labour, including of two Marxist MPs, Terry Fields and Dave Nellist. This was with the ambition of neutering Labour's fighting wing. Militant warned that this would lead to the defeat of the whole left in Labour.

The right allowed moribund parties to develop. What attraction was there for the failed policies of Labour governments? Where socialists ran local parties, mass membership campaigns were launched. There was something for working class people to join and fight alongside. And it was electorally popular too, as the success of the Liverpool council between 1983 and 1987 proved.

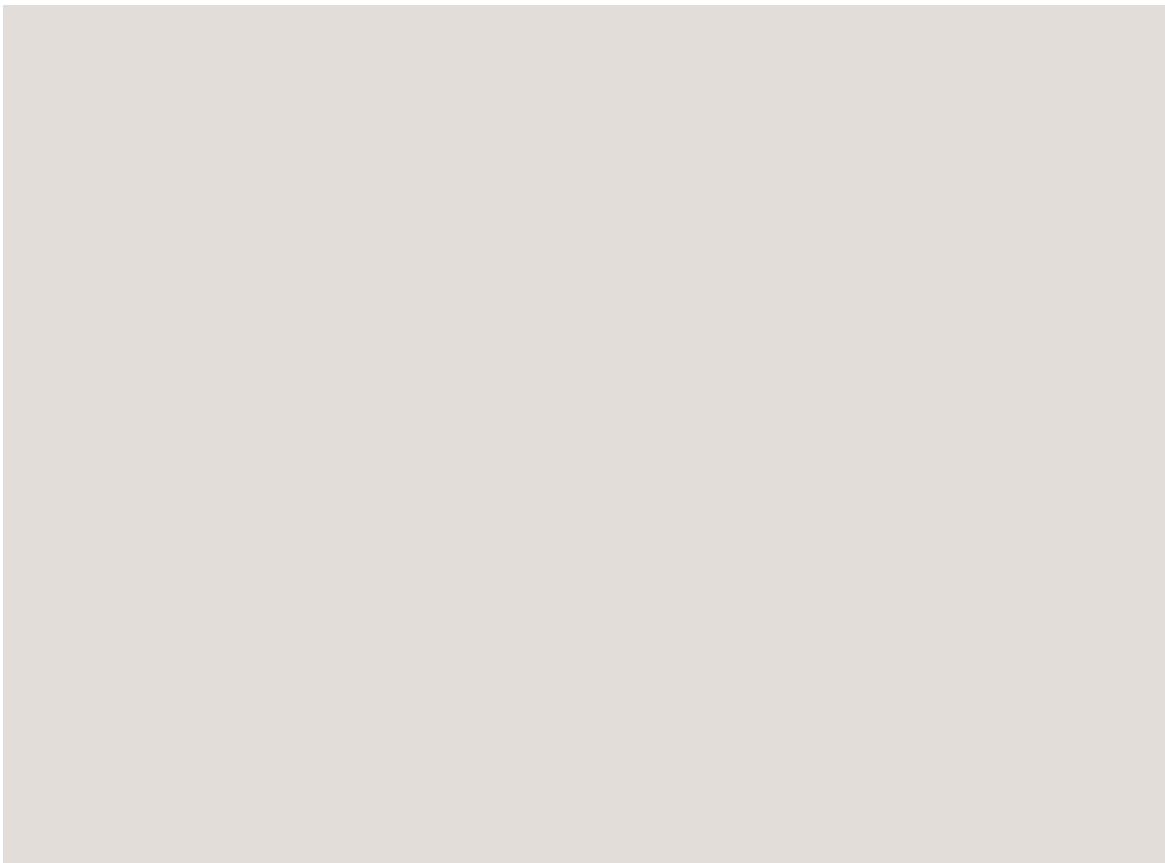
The irony now is that Unite has recruited to Labour in Falkirk West, and the Labour officials and Blairites are up in arms! The same arguments that were used against Militant 30 years ago are now deployed against the biggest trade union in the country!



Unite general secretary Len McCluskey photo Paul Mattsson

The outcome of Falkirk West is unclear but the conclusions for trade unionists are not. New Labour will protect its right-wing policies against the organised working class.

Trade unions will have to come to the conclusion that Labour is no longer the party it formed in 1900 and that a genuine mass working class party has to be built.



Dave Carr

When Tory Foreign Secretary William Hague says law abiding citizens have nothing to fear from government intelligence gathering, then be very afraid!

Hague's less than reassuring comments were prompted by revelations that information on individuals, including British citizens, using a secretive US electronic data gathering system called 'Prism' - operated by the Obama government's National Security Agency (NSA) - has been shared by UK government spooks at the GCHQ spy centre in Cheltenham. In the 1980s the Thatcher government banned trade unionists - who she described as the "enemy within" - from working at GCHQ.

The NSA has, for several years

now, been gathering detailed information from people's emails and other digital data, acquired from internet companies, on an industrial scale. It makes Home Secretary Theresa May's recently announced

Electronic data gathering on individuals by the US National Security Agency has been shared with UK spooks

intention to enact a 'snooper's charter' seem prosaic.

Electronic eavesdropping and surveillance on millions of Americans and others was ramped up by the Bush administration after 9/11 using the scope of the Patriot Act.

However, when the warmongering, scheming and skulduggery of US imperialism was revealed in 2010 after WikiLeaks released 250,000 classified diplomatic emails, state retribution quickly followed. Some US politicians demanded the prosecution (and even assassination!) of WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange as a 'terrorist' and 'enemy combatant'. And Bradley Manning, the US serviceman accused of forwarding the emails, is now undergoing a court martial. If found guilty, he faces a life in prison.

Secretive gathering of intelligence on citizens by governments is not new. Nonetheless, the vast scale and sophistication of Prism and its offshoots must serve as a warning to socialists, trade unionists and community campaigners that within every capitalist democracy there lurks a 'big brother'.

TV Review Panorama: Blacklist Britain

Neil Cafferky

"Unfortunately there are people in this life who do cause trouble. I can't say whether people on that list caused genuine trouble but certainly I know some of them would have."

This was the view of Anne Kerr who ran the day to day activities of the Consulting Association alongside her husband Ian. She seemed largely unrepentant about her activities.

The blacklisting operation of construction workers was run by the Consulting Association. This organisation, which succeeded the Economic League, was run at the behest of major firms in the industry like Skanska, Balfour Beatty and Sir Robert McAlpine.

The real impact of the blacklist was highlighted in the testimonies of workers such as Howard Nolan, an electrician and Roy Bentham, a joiner. Both men have had their employment prospects torpedoed as a result of their names appearing on the blacklist. Both have been out of

work for over a decade.

The direct involvement of top construction companies is undeniable. The Consulting Association was financed directly by them. To be a member a company had to be invited by a company that was already a member of the association.

Once a member, the company paid annual dues plus £2.50 per name checked. McAlpine spent £250,000 checking the background of workers on the Millennium Dome project. Paul Cochrane, head of Human Resources at McAlpine, was chair of the Consulting Association.

Despite this mountain of evidence not one construction firm or manager has been prosecuted for running this illegal blacklist that has blighted the lives of thousands of workers for years.

It was clear from the interview with the regulator, the Information Commissioner, that the penalties and enforcement procedures are inadequate to protect workers.

Although the Consulting Association is now defunct the case of union rep Frank Morris (sacked from

the Olympic site and then from the London Crossrail project) underlines the fact that blacklisting is still very much a reality in the industry.

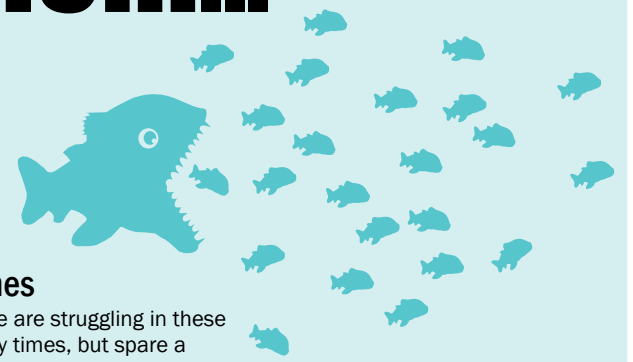
The chief function of the blacklist was to prevent union organisation on site that would lead to proper enforcement of health and safety.

Of course workers should demand the strongest legal protection against blacklisting but the employers are correct to fear trade union organisation. Even more than legal protection, be that against blacklisting or to enforce health and safety, strong union organisation is the best protection of workers' rights.

A complicating factor in an effective union-led fightback is evidence that there was collusion between some union officials and blacklisters.

Unite is in the process of taking action to rectify this as well as mounting a high profile campaign of support for Frank Morris and other blacklisted workers. This is to be welcomed but it underlines the need for rank and file control of union officials.

Them...



Hard times

Many people are struggling in these recessionary times, but spare a thought for our hard-pressed MPs. Unable to survive on a paltry back-bench salary of £66,396 a year plus tens of thousands of pounds in expenses, some of them have been reduced to asking parliamentary questions for cash!

Take for example Tory grandee Tim Yeo, the former minister, who has been paid over £400,000 by three 'green' companies since 2009. He also has shares and options worth about £583,000 in these firms, as well as being a paid director and shareholder of Eurotunnel. Nonetheless, down-on-his-luck Tim had to ask undercover reporters posing as reps from a green energy company for £7,000 a day salary for his services.

Tim's cash for questions offer follows last month's exposure of fellow Conservative MP Patrick Mercer who took £4,000 from undercover reporters posing as lobbyists for Fiji's dictatorial regime.

Misery without end

Will there be any public services left after mad axeman chancellor George Osborne is finished chopping? According to a joint study by the Institute for Government and the Institute for Fiscal Studies, Osborne's latest tranche of spending cuts could last until 2020. Such is the Coalition's deft handling of economic crisis the study reckons that the government is no further forward in tackling the deficit than it was when elected in 2010.

Mea Culpa

Speaking of tackling government spending deficits, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) chief Christine Lagarde was recently quizzed by French judges over a payout made to tycoon Bernard Tapie when she was finance minister under former President Sarkozy) says it got its sums wrong over the damaging effect its austerity bailouts had on the Greek economy. Such an admission will do nothing for the 27% of Greece's workforce who are officially unemployed, with eight out of ten young people jobless.

Eye-watering

Struggling to pay bedroom tax, Council Tax and water charges? Turn yourself into a company and avoid paying any tax! It seems every large corporation is doing so. The latest avoider is the UK's big-

gest water company, Thames Water. Despite making £549 million in pre-tax profits on revenues of £1.8 billion last year, as it raised customers' bills by nearly 7%, Thames paid no corporation tax. In fact it received £5 million credit from the Treasury.

That's enough to put a smile on Chief Executive Martin Baggs face, whose pay rose to £450,000 plus a handy bonus of £274,000. Mr 'money' Baggs is also expected to pocket a further £366,000 incentive payment next month.

Taxing concern

If customers wish to register a complaint over Thames Water's insatiable greed, they should avoid using Vodafone. The communications company also paid zero corporation tax, for a second consecutive year, notwithstanding sales of £5 billion in Britain and an operating profit of £294 million.

Gove failure

Education secretary Michael Gove's flagship policy of 'free schools' has taken a hit after the largest private sector provider of free schools in Sweden went belly up.

JB Education will sell 19 of its high schools and close down the remaining four, affecting around 10,000 pupils, after its private equity parent company decided to cut its losses.

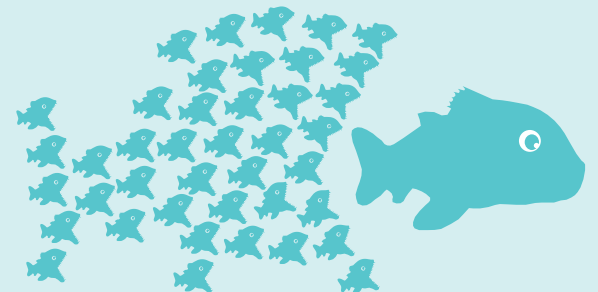
In Sweden, private companies can set up profit-making free schools paid for by the government but run independently. Although UK free schools are run along not-for-profit lines, undoubtedly Gove envisages moving quickly towards the Swedish model.

Housing nightmare

The housing crisis continues to deepen with the number of people forced to live in temporary bed and breakfast accommodation rocketing by 14% (4,500 households) in the last year, in England.

Over 53,500 households are now registered as homeless - a five year high. In addition, 9,000 households have been put into temporary accommodation in areas outside of their local authority. Government policies of discouraging social housing, cutting housing benefit, imposing a bedroom tax, and relying on private landlords, has led to a chronic housing shortage.

...& Us



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Mid Yorks health workers win important concessions

Adrian O'Malley

Unison branch secretary, Mid Yorkshire Health, personal capacity

The dispute between admin and clerical staff and the Mid Yorkshire Health Trust has ended with the Unison and Unite members accepting an improved pay protection deal.

This brings to an end a bitter dispute which resulted in over 400 workers taking nine days of strike action against compulsory redundancies and downbandings, ie pay cuts, in November and January.

The Unison branch/strike committee reluctantly decided to enter into negotiations with the Trust after the branch wide ballot resulted in a 76% yes vote for more strike action but in a turnout of just under 20%.

The stewards considered long and hard whether to go ahead with the strike action but with the turnout likely to be patchy in some wards and departments, they decided to negotiate the best deal possible.

The solidarity shown by the admin staff clearly had a big impact. This year's workforce reviews involve far fewer departments and staff. This influenced the turnout in the vote as most members were not facing pay cuts or job losses. Our members have seen that striking delivers results.

As well as downbanding staff the Trust imposed one year pay protection on all Trust staff, reduced from three years. Now the Trust has been forced through strike action to pay the admin staff the three years they were entitled to

under the old policy.

More importantly they have to agree new job descriptions for all the downbanded staff within six months, which opens the door for us to fight to get our members back on their original bands.

Any staff who face downbandings this financial year will get two years' protection and in future years 18 months. Although by no means an overwhelming victory this is an improvement for all staff within the Trust. Our action has also ensured there were no compulsory redundancies. The deal has been overwhelmingly accepted at meetings attended by over 100 of the strikers.

Our Unison branch has been strengthened by the dispute with over 250 joining the union and ten becoming new stewards.

With the Trust facing a continual financial crisis new disputes are inevitable. We are far stronger now than a year ago when the pay cuts were first proposed.

The Trust has embarked on an anti-union agenda by proposing to remove my full-time union post and the staff side secretary post held by Maria Thompson of Unite. Both unions have vowed to defend our posts and if necessary ballot for further industrial action.

If the Trust do not back down and stop the attacks on our trade union rights, strike action could well be back on the cards at Mid Yorkshire Trust.

Adrian will be a speaker at the NSSN national conference on 29 June. For details see page 12. shopstewards.net

In brief

Chesterfield

On 6 June lecturers at Chesterfield College were supported by students in their one-day strike against compulsory redundancies.



Campaigning for jobs

photo Asif Ali

College management want to sack 70 staff. 90 jobs have already gone in recent years.

Many pickets, members of UCU, covered every gate. A sit-down in the road blocked college buses. Lecturers were warmly supported by passing shoppers. A group of students held placards they'd made supporting their lecturers and one spoke at the rally.

Pickets told the Socialist that the college planned to replace experienced lecturers in subjects like hairdressing and painting and decorating with low-paid 'vocational coaches' and assessors, whose only qualification would be having completed the course that they were then expected to teach.

Permanent lecturers would also be replaced by hourly-paid staff, with no holiday pay, sickness pay or pension contributions. Students would not get support from committed staff that they get now. Most work over and above their contracted hours to make sure students get through their exams. "It's our education that's being threatened," said students. Further strike action is planned.

Leeds O2

Members of the Communication Workers Union (CWU) held a protest outside the Leeds O2 call centre on 5 June, opposing the company's plans to outsource four UK call centres to Capita. In the last week it had been leaked to the press that Capita plans to close two of the call centres and cut staffing at the remaining two.

This was the third of four protests at O2's call centres in Bury, Preston Brook, Glasgow as well as Leeds. On Friday, CWU served notice of a strike ballot opposing the changes and already this has brought results, with Capita and O2 management coming to the Leeds site for negotiations with union representatives.

The protest was predominantly made up of O2 employees on the site, many of whom came out during their breaks to join the protest, it was also supported by other reps from the West Yorkshire CWU branch and other local trade unionists came along to offer support.

Iain Dalton

School strike

A united picket line demonstrated the determination of teachers to win their dispute against the head and governors' plan to cut eight teaching assistant posts at Uplands Junior school in Leicester. A further strike is going ahead on 13 June.

For more on this see: www.socialistparty.org.uk

MoJ privatisation victory + rolling strikes across civil service

Following a successful campaign the post and stationery functions in the Ministry of Justice headquarters have been saved.

The PCS union campaign, supported by the local branch and the group executive committee and the national union, started a year ago when management announced plans to privatise these facilities.

Thanks to the huge support, management decided last autumn to revise their plans and undertook a thorough review of the post and stationery functions which PCS had been advocating for some time.

A rep said: "We are delighted that this privatisation has been defeated. We are currently fighting the privatisation of criminal enforcement and areas of information and communications technologies. It just shows the union can defeat plans with the support of its members."

Ministry of Justice members will be taking two half days of strike action on the afternoons of 7 and 17 June. This is part of rolling action across the civil service.

Peter Tinley, a PCS rep at the HMRC tax office in Leicester said: "We are out today [5 June], not only because of the cuts to terms and conditions and jobs and pensions, but it is also to emphasise the closure of 13 enquiry centres in the North East, which is a trial for the closure of all of them. The reasoning behind it is that people don't need face to face help any more.

These cuts will not only affect our members but will also hit the public hard. Those who need the help, especially the vulnerable, won't be able to get it."

On 6 June PCS members in the South West were on strike. Speaking at the strike rally Dee Leary, a

secretary of the Bristol Revenue and Customs branch emphasised the central role trade unions must have in the fight against austerity.

This unity in action would help prevent the divisions that groups like the EDL exploit. PCS vice-president and Socialist Party member John McNally also spoke, criticising Eds Balls and Miliband for their insistence that Labour would stick to Tory welfare cuts.

If they don't offer an alternative to austerity why should workers vote for them? Many of those in the meeting echoed those sentiments, saying a real alternative was needed.

PCS members were enthusiastic about the response to the action they're taking they also expressed the need to widen the struggle and coordinate with other unions.



5 June 2013: Maidstone PCS picket. They sent fraternal greetings to the NSSN: "We'll be sending delegates to the conference on 29 June. Solidarity!"

Scotland

Council workers strike ballot

Brian Smith

Glasgow Unison, personal capacity

During July and August, Scotland's council workers will be balloted by their trade unions on industrial action over the local government employers' (CoSLA) pay offer of 1% for 2013/14 and the introduction of the Scottish Living Wage (SLW) of £7.50.

Unison and Unite members rejected the offer in consultative ballots earlier in the year and the unions have at last moved up a gear and begun the official industrial action processes.

Both Unison (the largest union) and Unite recommended that their members reject the offer in their consultation ballots, with the GMB advising their members that it was the best which could be achieved through negotiation. At this stage it is unclear whether the GMB will participate in any action.

Council workers have not had a pay rise for two years, with minuscule rises in the years before. The introduction of the SLW is welcome, however the fact that it is to be implemented locally by the 32 councils rather than through a national scheme means that future uplifts are not guaranteed.

Also, some councils may not even

consolidate the new rate into basic pay or their grading structure but implement it as a supplement to current pay.

Council workers must now fight back and defend their living standards. The union leaderships must put a clear programme of action before the members to show that the unions are determined to conduct a serious dispute.

Many branch activists across the country know that this is the only way to push the employers into offering an acceptable pay rise.

An initial programme of action over a six-week period starting with a national one-day strike of all Unison local government workers on 5 September, should there be a majority for action, has been agreed. This will be followed by regional action and then another one-day strike.

Glasgow City Unison has proposed a programme of escalating action beginning with a one-day, two-day and then a three-day strike over the six weeks. The unions' claim is for at least £1,000 for each worker - let's fight for it!

Any action would begin in late August or early September and should be coordinated with strike action being taken by other trade unions in the public sector.

Teachers vote for action on workload and pensions

Jim Halfpenny

EIS member and conference delegate

The biggest Scottish teachers' union the EIS has voted at its conference to ballot its members for industrial action over Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) workload and to protect teachers' pensions.

The unanimous vote on workload was taken when speaker after speaker condemned the way the new courses were being introduced. Especially the unreasonable burden being placed upon teachers to make CfE work.

The Scottish government is not listening to classroom teachers who now regard CfE as a "speeding juggernaut" which is clearly out of control.

A similar unanimous vote was recorded over pensions.

Over 90% of EIS members have already voted in favour of strike action in a consultative ballot earlier

this year.

The mood of the conference was such that the right wing of the union offered no vocal opposition. Clearly, they understand that their treacherous role in recent years was unlikely to gain an echo among teachers.

While they have been forced into preparing for some form of industrial action they will seek a compromise (sell out) over wages and pensions.

It is therefore vital that the left and the many EIS members who want to seriously defend our terms and conditions and pensions push for not only a vote for strike action, but also demand a programme of effective industrial action, including coordinating strike action with other trade unions in dispute.

The one vote the right wing did win was the defeat of a motion calling for the voting record of each of our negotiators to be made known. Exactly who will try to sell us out is to remain secret.

Unison conference - time to reclaim the union

How socialists fought off the witch-hunt

After six years, Unison's national leadership has thrown in the towel over a vicious witch-hunt against four Unison activists, all Socialist Party members. This represents a significant victory in the battle against the Unison leadership's wider witch-hunt of left activists.

Six years ago four London branches sent motions to Unison conference. These called for a discussion on Labour Party funding, regular elections of senior paid officials of Unison and speeding up the process of balloting for strike action. The Standing Orders Committee (SOC) ruled over 50 of all the union branches' motions 'out of order', including these.

When the four branches protested, including producing a leaflet illustrated with a cartoon of the famous 'see no evil, hear no evil, speak no evil' monkeys, the leadership disgracefully sought to deflect criticism from its own undemocratic processes and attacked the four. Outrageously the Unison leadership made false charges of unintentional racism and challenging the integrity of the SOC.

Banning orders

In 2010 the four branch officers - Suzanne Muna from the Tenant Services Authority branch, Glenn Kelly from Bromley, Onay Kasab from Greenwich, and Brian Debus from Hackney, were barred from holding any office in Unison for between two and three years.

On the same day in March 2010 as the banning orders were imposed, three of the branches were taken out of the control of their members and into regional administration.

It is estimated that the union leadership spent over £200,000 on legal fees alone and lost 1,000 members and many good activists. The four were defended in court by Glenn Kelly and then by Nick De Marco, a barrister who agreed to do the high court work for free.

Every penny spent on lawyers was spent by Unison for themselves.



A lobby of one of the many hearings that the Unison leadership dragged the four through photo Suzanne Beishon

Members are now rightly demanding to know who will be held to account for this illegal action and waste of union members' money and resources.

In January 2011 an Employment Tribunal (ET) judgement forcefully rejected the allegations against the four, particularly the charge of racism.

Refusing to accept this decision, Unison then spent another £64,000 hiring a QC to appeal against the decision to an Employment Appeal Tribunal, again they lost. They then lodged an appeal to the Court of Appeal.

Using the methods of a bullying employer, they tried to force the four to back out of defending the case they had already won twice by demanding the right to claim costs against the four if the union won. These were estimated at over £100,000 for Unison's legal costs alone.

The four then won a significant victory when the Court of Appeal gave an order that Unison could not

claim against the four even if they won. This set a legal precedent for workers with no money to fight their employers.

Lord Justice Elias described the Unison leadership's actions as: "shabby" and asked them to: "imagine if an employer were doing this to one of your members".

Leadership u-turn

On 20 November 2012 the union leadership did a complete u-turn. They wrote to the court to withdraw their appeal. In doing so the union has accepted the previous courts' decision that they acted illegally.

Despite the two court cases finding against Unison, they refused to lift the bans and reinstate the four to the positions they previously held in the union.

In fact they even tried to take another disciplinary case against Glenn Kelly for supposedly break-

ing a ban that the courts had already ruled to be illegal!

It was not until the Unison leadership eventually withdrew from the Court of Appeal case that they dropped the second case against Glenn and lifted the last few weeks of the ban left on Brian Debus.

Not a word of apology has been forthcoming from the union for action they now accept as illegal. Incredibly, even at the remedy hearing in May, the union hired a QC and tried to argue that, as the four were socialists and therefore used to the 'rough and tumble of politics', they didn't really suffer during the last six years!

This shows the callous and arrogant approach of the union to some of the most dedicated and determined fighters in their ranks. Their attitude to the democratic rights of members was demonstrated in the treatment of the branches.

The Bromley and Greenwich mem-

bers were denied their rights to have an AGM for four years! These branches were run by unelected regional officials right up until March 2013. Consequently over 1,000 members left Unison and joined Unite.

But Glenn Kelly was recently elected branch secretary again in a branch ballot.

It is a disgrace that in a time of cruel austerity that the same commitment and energy was not devoted to a fighting strategy to defend our pensions, prevent the pay freeze and stop hundreds of thousands of job losses.

The two ET judgements and the costs hearing are a devastating indictment of the role of some of our union leaders and the undue influence of unelected and unaccountable paid officials.

It is a disgrace that in a time of cruel austerity that the same commitment and energy was not devoted to a fighting strategy to defend our pensions, prevent the pay freeze and stop hundreds of thousands of job losses.

Members must fight for a Unison leadership that will channel all its resources and power into action to stop all the cuts to our members' jobs and pensions. And defend the NHS and the public services the Con-Dems are determined to destroy.

What we need is a fighting Unison leadership prepared to carry out the policy of the TUC Congress to coordinate with other unions for a 24-hour general strike.

Unison NEC elections - Socialist Party position strengthened

Socialist Party members on Unison's National Executive Council (NEC) now number five, one more than was the case on the old NEC. This is despite the unfortunate loss of Jean Thorpe's East Midland Female Seat to a right-wing candidate.

Other existing members: April Ashley, (Black Members Female seat), Roger Bannister (North West Male seat) and Vicky Perrin (Yorkshire and Humberside Reserved seat) retained their seats, Roger again achieving the highest vote for a regional seat across all regions.

They will be joined by Dave Auger who defeated a sitting right winger in the West Midlands Male seat and Jacqui Berry who did the same, taking one of the South East Female seats.

Sixteen Socialist Party members contested these elections, and in Yorkshire and Humberside Mike Forster lost out on the Male seat by only 19 votes! In Cymru Wales Jamie Davis came within 294 votes of unseating the chair of Finance.

Many people will be disappointed that Glenn Kelly, one of the victims of the vicious witch-hunt was not able to regain the seat from which he was illegally thrown out.



Unison members need a fighting leadership photo Senan

The Socialist Party contested these elections in a bloc with the United Left and other individual lefts, under the banner Reclaim the Union.

These elections are held every two

years, and in 2011 all the contested seats in the North West went to left candidates, the only region where this is the case, and a matter of concern to the regional leadership.

In the North West all the sitting

left NEC members held their seats, the only exception to this trend being in the Reserved seat, taken by a right winger in an unopposed election. This clearly calls into question the credibility of the region's right-wing leadership, that clearly has little base of support among the rank and file members.

The right-wing slate of candidates circulated a leaflet with a photograph of them all standing together proclaiming themselves to be "A New Voice For The North West"! One Unison member likened this leaflet to something the Mormons produce, with the inevitable happy family shot!

Joking aside, the Wirral branch breached the election rules by displaying this leaflet on the branch website.

Given the record of politically biased application of sanctions in Unison, it is doubtful whether any action will be taken.

Overall the elections show a slight strengthening of the lefts on the NEC. Over the next year Socialist Party NEC members will work with other lefts to argue for action to defend members' jobs, pay and conditions of service, including arguing

for implementation of the general strike decision of the TUC, and for a national demonstration to defend the health service.

see: <http://covcouncilsocialists.wordpress.com> for an interview with Dave Auger

Unison conference
Socialist Party
meeting:
"Why we need a
24-hour general strike
against austerity"

Wednesday 19 June
7pm

Liverpool Hotel,
James street L2 7PQ
(opposite museum of
Liverpool)

Speakers include Peter
Taaffe, Socialist Party
general secretary

SYRIA THREATENS SECTARIAN MIDDLE EAST WAR

Urgent need for independent working class socialist organisations

Peter Taaffe
General Secretary Socialist Party

The capturing of the strategically important city of Qusair by pro-government forces, including Hezbollah and Iraqi Shias, marks a new stage in the bloody quagmire of Syria and is likely to have wide ramifications, both for the country itself and the region as a whole.

This war has lasted over two years, with no end in sight, having already cost the lives of 80,000 Syrians with at least half a million refugees driven into Lebanon – already with a population of four million – and further untold numbers scattered into Turkey and other neighbouring countries. In the wake of this ‘victory’, the government of Bashar al-Assad is reported to be now marshalling its forces for an assault on Syria’s biggest city, Aleppo, with the rebels claiming to hold half of the city.

Therefore, the war will go on, with reports of unspeakable atrocities on both sides: “Without a video of him doing so, who would have believed that a rebel commander had cut open a dead government soldier and eaten his heart?” [Patrick Cockburn – London Review of Books.] There have even been reports of the use of chemical weapons by both sides.

But as with Iraq and the dodgy dossier over mythical weapons of mass destruction, this is being used to justify increased Western capitalist intervention, led by Anglo-French imperialism.

Out of 27 EU countries just two, France and Britain, were in favour at this stage of increased military support, and particularly the supply of armaments, to the rebels. Cameron and Hague face opposition even within their own party, with a growing band of Tory MPs and ministers opposing the call for armed intervention.

Moreover, Nick Clegg and the Liberal Democrats have come out in opposition to Cameron, not because they are at all ‘Liberal’ but they can at least envisage the possibility of bloody retribution in Britain itself, if the government is associated with armed intervention, as the Woolwich stabbing demonstrated.

Based upon the cushion of a powerful empire, the strategists of British capitalism in the past carefully thought about the consequences of their actions abroad. They planned for decades and even centuries. Now Cameron and Hague just hope to sneak around the next corner!

Whirlwind

The lessons of Iraq and Afghanistan, with a huge ‘blowback’ in Britain and other advanced industrial countries in the form of increased terrorism, are lost on them. Britain’s intervention in the furnace of Syria and the Middle East today will surely reap a whirlwind. The supply of weapons will merely increase the body count in the country without in any way solving the problems of the peoples of Syria or the region as a whole.

Patrick Cockburn, in a penetrating analysis, shows that most reports – be-

cause they appear through slanted TV accounts and sometimes ‘illusory’ YouTube videos – tend to exaggerate the degree of damage inflicted in the conflict, particularly by the rebels.

The alleged weaknesses of the government’s position, leading to the ‘imminent’ overthrow of the Assad regime, have also been overplayed. As Cockburn points out, “the insurgents [have] succeeded in capturing just one of the 14 provincial capitals. (In Libya the insurgents held Benghazi and the whole of the east as well as Misrata and smaller towns in the west from the beginning of the revolt.)”

Nevertheless massive and terrible damage and suffering has undoubtedly been inflicted on the country. After the capture of Qusair, the devastation of the town evokes the famous words of the Roman historian Tacitus: “They create a desolation and call it peace.”

No side has scored a decisive victory. Nor are they likely to. Therefore a bloody drawn out conflict – the Lebanese civil war lasted 15 years – is a real possibility unless the working class and the poor take matters into their own hands through independent class and socialist action, and organise a movement to overthrow all the reactionary, sectarian and dictatorial forces through a change in society.

Sectarianism

The events in Syria confirm the analysis of the Socialist and the Committee for a Workers’ International (CWI), made at the outset of the conflict. Virtually all the international pro-rebel supporters, including the government of Cameron in Britain, the right and some even on the ‘left’, claimed that Assad would be rapidly evicted from power.

We argued that Syria would not be a re-run of Libya. Assad had greater reserves of support from the minorities within the country – who were driven into his camp by the more and more sectarian character of the rebels – and the Shias in the region.

Initially there was a popular uprising of “hundreds of communities” in Syria, inspired by the ‘Arab Spring’, against the monstrous police state of Assad. Previously, there had been movements of trade unions and workers against reductions in living standards and the privatisations carried out by Assad.

It appeared in the first instance that a genuine movement had developed against a dictatorial regime and, moreover, one striving to bridge the divide between the majority Sunni population and the country’s minorities, including the biggest minority, the Alawites (a branch of the Shias) to which Assad belongs.

But this changed with the outside intervention of the reactionary forces opposed to revolution in the region – notably the semi-feudal monarchies of Saudi Arabia and Qatar – backed up by imperialist forces. They hoped to repeat their success in Bahrain and particularly in the derailing of the Libyan revolution.

Unbelievably, the Libyan intervention was ‘critically’ supported by some on the left and even some ‘Marxists’.

The result has been – as we predicted – the descent of Libya into undemocratic fiefdoms of vicious ‘Islamic’ warlords with competing militias, including the presence of al-Qa’ida type organisations. The latter have now proliferated in Libya and North Africa, and so alarmed imperialism that they are now considering another intervention through Nato – a ‘training mission’ – to root them out.

The uprising against Assad has been skewed now into a sectarian conflict and has, moreover, unleashed a dangerous battle between the Sunnis and the Shias on a regional scale.

The Wall Street Journal reported at the end of May about the situation in Syria: “In parts of this battle torn country, a second civil war has begun. In the north and the east bordering Turkey and Iraq, a stretch of Syria in rebel hands is split into competing fiefs. In some places, Islamist extremists with agendas that extend far beyond Syria are pushing aside the rebel battalions that started the insurgency against Bashar al Assad’s regime in 2011.”

Al-Qa’ida has publicly stated that half its budget is devoted to building up experienced fighters and strengthening its armed wing, Al Nusra, in Syria which Cockburn says “militarily is the most effective rebel group”. This process has been furthered by the intervention of Saudi Arabia and Qatar, with the latter tending to support Islamists from the more ‘moderate’ Muslim Brotherhood, while the former seeks to arm and finance the fundamentalist Salafists.

Qatar, sitting on top of one-third of the world’s gas reserves and the colossal wealth that goes with this, has spent at least \$3 billion on support-

The uprising against Assad has been skewed now into a sectarian conflict and has, moreover, unleashed a dangerous battle between the Sunnis and the Shias on a regional scale

ing the rebels over the last two years. It has offered \$50,000 to every Syrian army defector and his family.

In coordination with the CIA, Saudi Arabia has organised at least 70 military flights from Turkey with arms and equipment for the insurgents. Therefore the claim that the rebels are under-armed and require urgent supplies from the West is completely bogus. It is just an excuse for further imperialist intervention.

And this in turn has unleashed regional and sectarian tendencies in neighbouring countries and throughout the region that could result in a wider war, even involving Israel, which has already intervened through a missile attack on Syria.



An opposition militia fighter in Aleppo ponders the bloodshed in what is becoming a vicious sectarian civil war

Russia has responded by supplying Assad with more rockets. Those supporting the rebels – particularly Saudi Arabia – made it clear from the outset that they saw the overthrow of the Assad regime as a direct blow against Iran and Hezbollah in Lebanon. Therefore Hezbollah – now fighting on the Syrian government’s side as well as Iran – see the defence of Syria and its present government, including supplying oil to prop up Assad, as virtually a life-or-death question.

It has led to the threat of increased Iranian intervention. These tit-for-tat moves could lead to an all-out attack on Iran by Israel, which it was itching to do before the outbreak of the conflict, with all the terrible consequences that could flow from that.

The outbreak of the war in Syria was seized on by predominantly Sunni Saudi Arabia, backed up by Qatar, as an opportunity to strike a blow against Shia Iran and its Hezbollah allies in Lebanon. The conflict between Saudi

Arabia and Iran was in turn fuelled by the outcome of the war in Iraq, which led to the overthrow of the Saddam Hussein Sunni regime. Despite a Shia majority, the Sunni leaders had held power in Iraq since its creation in 1921. Saddam was replaced by a Shia-dominated state, presently controlled by the Maliki government. This was followed by the sectarian civil war in Iraq in 2006-07 with tens of thousands killed.

We warned at the time that imperialist intervention in Iraq would result in the removal of Saddam Hussein but what would follow would not be the democratic Iraq promised by Bush and Blair but the eventual breakup of the country, and the establishment of a number of ‘mini-Saddam Hussein’s’.

The chain reaction which the Syrian conflict has unleashed now means that this could come into being accompanied by the possible separation of the Kurds in northern Iraq – with considerable oil reserves – with the

encouragement of the Turkish Erdogan regime, which is deficient in energy resources. To this end, it began to deal directly with the Kurdish minority in Turkey, represented by the PKK and its imprisoned leader, Öcalan, with Erdogan agreeing to some of the Kurdish demands.

The separation of northern Iraq will not be achieved without violent clashes, including the possibility of another civil war in Iraq itself. The Iraqi government enhanced the prospects of this in April with the suppression of the Sunnis through a military crackdown, backed up by the use of tanks in a town near Kirkuk.

At the same time, the Kurds in Syria – who account for 10% of the population – have taken advantage of the war to effectively carve out an autonomous enclave in the north of Syria. The Kurds are scattered among different states. But they now envisage that they could possibly first achieve autonomy within these states

and maybe later coming together in a common state. Ironically, the Syrian conflict, which is loosening the grip of centralised states, has fundamentally changed the prospects for the Kurds.

The 30 million Kurds – the largest nation in the world without a state of its own – could, as PKK leader Öcalan envisaged in calling an unofficial ceasefire with Turkey, now come together in a ‘stateless union’; in other words a loose federation, which may or may not develop as a unified state at a later stage.

On the other hand, the calculations of Turkey and particularly Erdogan could be upset by the insidious spread of the Syrian conflict. Already, violence has spread over the border from Syria to Turkey, who share a 510-mile (822km) frontier. Bomb attacks have taken place in Turkey which provoked angry anti-Syrian demonstrations. This in turn could provoke increased opposition to the government, which will be blamed for drawing Turkey into the Syrian conflict. The mass opposition, which is already evident in the demonstrations against the ‘democratic’ dictatorship of Erdogan, will be reinforced.

Lebanon itself could break apart in a new outbreak of civil war. Syria could be partitioned with a predominantly Alawite entity, alongside a Sunni state or statelet.

Cold war

Not least of the consequences of the conflict in Syria is what capitalist commentators have described as a new ‘Cold War’ between Russia and China on the one side, and European and American capitalism on the other.

The original Cold War was between different social systems: capitalism and Stalinism, the latter which rested on the planned economy, albeit bureaucratically controlled. This new ‘Cold War’ now indicates a ratcheting up of tensions between what are mainly different imperialist powers for influence and resources in the Middle East and beyond.

For the capitalists and their feudal and semi-feudal allies, the interests of the working class and the poor in the region are so much small change. These masses have struggled might and main in the revolutions in the Middle East and North Africa against

landlordism and capitalism to change their conditions.

In Egypt and Tunisia, they overthrew seemingly invincible dictatorships. In the process they smashed the idea – sedulously disseminated by Blair and his cronies in Iraq – that the dictatorships in the region were so powerful that only outside military intervention could overthrow them. Not only were Ben Ali and Mubarak overthrown by mass movements of the workers and the poor but the present movements are driving in the direction of a ‘second revolution’ to change their social conditions.

They have been disappointed in the initial results of the revolution, which brought to power governments and regimes that displayed the same dictatorial tendencies as the overthrown Mubarak and Ben Ali: “Morsi is Mubarak with a beard!” – is a typical refrain from secular opponents of Egypt’s president Morsi.

These governments assume the colouration of different Islamic-type parties. But underneath this, the masses are drawing conclusions from the stormy events which they have gone through. The process of creating independent parties of the working class, as well as trade unions, and uniting in a non-sectarian fashion is beginning to be displayed.

In Iraq the masses only recently marched in the major cities under the banner “not Shia and Sunni, but Iraqis together”. After the horrors which they have experienced since the US-British invasion the most advanced detachments of the working class see the need for a common front of all workers to fight against the landlords and capitalists that dominate the region.

So intractable is the conflict in Syria that even those who worked for and hoped for a quick victory over the Assad regime are now suggesting a Geneva ‘peace conference’. This is unlikely to get off the ground because of the insistence of the rebels’ spokespersons that a precondition for attendance at such a conference is that Assad should not attend. But what has not been achieved on the battlefield – the serious weakening or defeat and removal of Assad – cannot be carried through by ‘negotiations’.

There should be no illusions among the international labour movement that with or without Assad’s at-



tendance anything can be achieved through such a gathering. Would any class conscious worker place any trust in the bosses in a factory or within their own country to ‘mediate’ on crucial issues with benefits to the workers? No more can the bosses come to an agreement on an international level which will enhance the cause of the working class.

The socialist does not support Assad or the ‘rebel’ leadership. We would give all necessary political and active support to workers on the ground fighting for a common front on a class struggle programme.

The only conference worthwhile convening is one called by the organised trade union and labour movement throughout the region. The demands would be very simple: ●No to imperialist intervention! The withdrawal of all foreign forces from Syria and from other occupied countries.

●Let the Syrian people themselves decide their fate in open, fair and free elections, supervised by elected, democratic workers’ committees.

●For the building of united, non-sectarian defence committees to defend workers, the poor and others against sectarian attacks from both sides.

●Prepare a movement to fight for a government of representatives of workers and the poor.

●For a revolutionary constituent assembly in Syria.

●The implementation of the national and democratic rights of the masses, beginning with the recognition of the right of the Kurdish people to self-determination including, if they so wish, full autonomous democratic rights within the state they live in or the establishment of a common state of the Kurds themselves.

●Independent trade unions and the building of mass workers’ parties with a programme of land to the masses and the factories to the workers, implemented through a programme for a socialist democratic planned economy.

●A democratic socialist confederation of the Middle East and North Africa.

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



Syria’s president Assad is clinging on with support from Iran and Russia

Fightback continues in Turkey

Erdogan seeks trial of strength with mass protests

Kai Stein
Committee for a Workers' International

On Monday 10 June, Recep Tayyip Erdogan agreed to talk and listen to protesters. Early Tuesday morning, the same prime minister sent in riot police to brutally clear out protesters from Taksim Square in Istanbul, using tear gas and bulldozers. At least 15 people were taken into hospital, including one man taken into intensive care with a brain injury.

During two weeks of protest, hundreds of thousands have taken to the streets. The slogan, "Tayyip istifâr" - "Erdogan resign", unified the protests from public sector workers to people alienated by the government's clampdown on drinking alcohol and kissing in public. It reached out to Kurdish people, who continue to face repression. It included trade union activists and environmentalists who initiated the protests in Taksim Square. It also mobilised working class youth from the suburbs.

Erdogan is trying to mobilise support among more conservative and religious people. He described pro-

testers as just "a handful of looters" or "vandals." Erdogan has now announced mass demonstrations in support of his government for Saturday 15 June in Ankara and Sunday 16 June in Istanbul. The timing of this is no accident.

Exhausting police battles

Over two weeks, working people and youth defended their protests against the police daily. Apart from the main squares in the cities, there were hundreds of neighbourhoods where - without much media attention - thousands assembled at night. On almost each occasion they were attacked with police tear gas and clubs.

The public sector strike on 4 and 5 June was not followed up by further action of the organised working class. Activists from left-wing groups are organising the camps in the squares and in many ways leading the movement on a daily basis. However, none of the bigger organisations, parties or trade unions puts forward a strategy to advance the struggle and appeal to wider sections of society to support the protest movement.

Action and defence committees were formed, but mainly to deal with day-to-day questions and mainly composed of left-wing groups.

It is vital to build assemblies and committees on all levels, to defend the movement and bring down the government, but also to offer an alternative in the interests of workers, youth and poor people.

Such a movement could undermine Erdogan's conservative and Islamic supporters too, who also suffer from Erdogan's neoliberal policies.

Unfortunately, even on the left, demands are already being watered down. The last few days has focussed on defending Gezi-Park and democratic demands, to bring those responsible for the police brutality to justice, and for the right to protest. All of that is necessary, but a strategy is needed to fight for an alternative to Erdogan's government.

A majority of the protesters were young and alienated from all the main parties. This vacuum has to be filled by building a new, democratic mass party armed with a socialist programme. Left forces HDK and Halk Evleri can play a significant role in this.

In the absence of these factors, the number of demonstrators fell slightly on 10 June. Erdogan seeks to exploit this weakness to regain control, although this may provoke a new wave of struggle.

Sosyalist Alternatif, the Socialist Party's sister organisation in Turkey, argues for protest now against the police attacks, for mass demonstrations in all cities on Saturday and for a national joint demonstration on Sunday in Istanbul to give Erdogan a strong answer and to prepare the ground for a one day general strike as a further step to fight for an end of the AKP's government.

For more reports and analysis visit socialistworld.net/goto/turkey



Protests in support of the mass movement in Turkey have taken place in a number of European cities, such as in London (above). Turkish-Kurdish groups like Day-Mer have helped ensure that the demands of Turkish workers and youth are heard internationally. The Socialist Party was invited to speak on several occasions. Socialist Party member Helen Gadsby (below) spoke in Leicester on Saturday 8 June to give solidarity photos Paul Mattsson and Drew Walton



Socialist Turkish Kurd speaks in Leicester

A socialist Turkish Kurd, who came to Britain in the late 1990s as an asylum seeker, spoke at a recent Leicester Socialist Party branch meeting.

"Fans from opposing clubs frequently clash in hostile battles. In my city, Izmir, two teams called Karşıyaka and Göztepe are sworn enemies. This week fans from Karşıyaka and Göztepe joined together with their team scarves and banners.

They were standing shoulder to shoulder, shouting slogans against fascism and singing resistance songs. They were united in resisting the violence of the police.

This was very moving for me. Some of

the fans were in one of the squares where I was on May Day 1996. A clash took place with police.

I was trying to jump over a wall to get away from them but the police caught my leg and they cracked my head. I couldn't run away. I had to have 14 stitches in my head and three days off school. I was only 16 years old.

Seeing all this resistance, playing music, chanting and singing together, sharing food, lifted my spirits. I wished I could be there. I know our sacrifice was not wasted. It shows we were not idealists - we were realists. The ideas of socialism can triumph and make the world a better place for us all."

Historic event as Tamils and trade unions forge vital links

Tamil Solidarity members

A 'Solidarity Day' event organised by Tamil Solidarity and the British Tamils Forum (BTF) on 8 June brought together up to 150 people from the Tamil community, the trade unions, and a number of other campaigns. This potentially historic event has been widely reported in the Tamil media in Britain and in Sri Lanka.

All participants agreed to do all they could to get the decision to hold the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (Chogm) in Sri Lanka in November reversed. The event also launched a 'join a union' campaign.

Martin Powell-Davies, executive member of teachers' union NUT, said that if Tamils and trade unionists work together, building awareness of the struggle of Tamils and building the trade unions as fighting bodies against all repression, Cameron will live to regret his participation in the Chogm meeting.

Opening rally speakers included representatives of the Day-Mer Turkish and Kurdish community centre, Youth Fight for Jobs, Rape Is No Joke, the NUS, the Committee for a Workers' International and a political activist from Nepal. Fouz, a Tamil-speaking Muslim from Sri Lanka, explained that the state-sponsored anti-Muslim attacks

pose a threat to all Tamils in Lanka.

Vakeesan from BTF opened the second rally, illustrating graphically how the rights of Tamils are being trampled by the murderous Sri Lankan regime. He was followed by leading trade union activists, including from the RMT and Unite.

Trade unions

Hugo Pierre, Unison activist and convenor in Camden schools, drew from his knowledge of following the latest developments and of visiting Sri Lanka in the past. The previous government of Mrs Bandaranaike had prepared the state machine for a brutal war.

Chris Baugh, assistant general secretary of the Public and Commercial Services union (PCS), said that 'solidarity' was not just a nice idea but a most powerful weapon in the fight against the international neoliberal consensus that sees the likes of Cameron collaborating with the war criminal President Rajapaksa. "PCS needs to follow the example of other unions and build solidarity with Tamils against repressive regimes and complicit governments." Others echoed this.

Senan, international coordinator for Tamil Solidarity, closed the meeting. He explained that demands such as for the right to self-determination are not offensive against other sec-

tions of workers but a vital defence of Tamils' rights.

All workers

Tamil Solidarity is fighting for the rights of all workers of all ethnicities. He invited everyone there to participate in debates and discussions on all the ideas raised during the event, in actively opposing Chogm and in the 'join a union' campaign.

Especially among the young people there was a feeling that a big step had been taken in understanding how to fight back.

See www.tamilsolidarity.org for more on the campaign and for union affiliation information.

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SOCIALIST PARTY FIGHTING FUND

	£ target	£ received	April-June 2013				Deadline 28 June 2013			
South West	1,400	1,818								
Northern	600	699								
North West	1,200	1,233								
East Midlands	1,600	1,620								
West Midlands	2,100	1,782								
Wales	2,300	1,769								
London	6,100	4,615								
South East	750	421								
Yorkshire	2,900	1,509								
Southern	1,200	480								
Eastern	1,200	274								
England & Wales	3,650	1,527								
TOTAL	25,000	17,751								

Brighton: Green council continues to carry out Con-Dem cuts

Real anti-cuts opposition needs to be built

Jon Redford
Brighton Socialist Party

The Green Party won control of Brighton and Hove council as a minority administration in 2011, with voters looking for an alternative to the pro-cuts main parties.

The Socialist Party called for the council to set a 'no cuts' budget: opposing all cuts, not selecting some against others. This could only be achieved by building a movement, involving the council's workers and residents, to demand central government funding is returned to the city.

Without such an approach the Greens are forced to carry out the Con-Dems' cuts - but not without facing resistance. GMB union binworkers voted by 96% for strike action against cuts to take-home pay of up to £4,000. It has been reported that the council is planning to use agency workers to break this strike!

The Greens pledged not to evict victims of the bedroom tax. That promise has now crashed to the ground. Threats of eviction have been sent to tenants in arrears across the city. Non-payers of council tax face £100 fines while the Green council shrugs in sad resignation.

However, the binworkers' strike has further heightened divisions within the Greens. The Brighton Green MP Caroline Lucas has supported the two-day strike and visited picket lines - against her own party's cuts!

A Green councillor approached the Labour group leader for assistance in ousting Green council leader Jason Kitcat. But, instead, Labour published the communication and refused to get involved!

The tensions inside the Greens are

a reflection of the support it gained in Brighton by being seen as a vehicle to oppose austerity. Some Green members want to, or feel pressure to, seriously fight at least some of

The Green-led council has shown it won't fight for a needs-based budget, unlike the 1983-87 socialist Liverpool council that won £60 million from Thatcher's Tories

the cuts. But they are in the wrong organisation to fight that battle.

The Green-led council has shown it is not prepared to fight for a needs-based budget, unlike the 1983-87 socialist Liverpool council that linked up with the Liverpool working class and won £60 million from Thatcher's Tory government.

Where's our voice?

The working class needs a political voice - but the Greens cannot fulfil that role - neither in the party's programme nor social base.

Though the Green Party is a broad church with a radical wing, its programme does not go beyond the confines of the capitalist system. Yet challenging the capitalist system, which prioritises profits for big business, is key to opposing austerity.

Fundamentally the Greens are not based on the trade unions, key



Say no to #kitkatcuts: PCS and RMT members share solidarity with Brighton binworkers

photo Serena Cheung

organisations of the working class. The trade unions do not have any role in determining policy. The Greens have appealed to trade unionists for support, but do not see the workers' movement as central to changing society.

Its 2010 election programme even spoke of the "corrupting effects of big private and trade union donations" - as if a donation from a millionaire is the same as being backed by money from millions of workers.

On 11 July, Brighton's Hanover and Elm Grove ward faces a byelection following a Green councillor's resignation.

Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC) candidate Phil Clarke

will be contesting the election.

Phil is a secondary school teacher who has lived locally to Elm Grove for many years. He is the secretary of Lewes, Eastbourne and Wealden National Union of Teachers and also Brighton, Hove and District Trades Union Council.

He is a longstanding member of the Socialist Party and helped win the campaign in 2006 against the transfer of council housing management to a private company.

Phil has been a key anti-cuts activist in the Stop the Cuts Coalition and organised many events against the cuts locally, including coordinating the 10,000-strong pensions strike day demonstration

on 30 November 2011.

TUSC has a 'no-cuts' platform, and calls for councils to use their reserves and borrowing powers to prevent any immediate cuts while fighting for the needed money from central government.

A Brighton binworker, as well as a member of the Pop-Up Union that is taking anti-cuts industrial action at the University of Sussex, will be speaking at the NSSN conference on 29 June. See page 12 for details.

Southampton byelection On the TUSC Against-Cuts campaign trail

It's not every day a Labour council leader gets up, says he's quitting and walks out of the council chamber, handing anti-cuts campaigners an unexpected byelection. Yet in under five weeks the Woolston ward

in Southampton has been leafleted twice and canvassed by an enthusiastic team of campaign stalwarts and welcome new faces in support of TUSC candidate Sue Atkins. Nick Chaffey records a week of campaigning.



The Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC) is an electoral alliance that stands candidates against all cuts and privatisation. It involves the RMT transport workers' union, leading members of other trade unions including the PCS, NUT and POA, and socialists including the Socialist Party. www.tusc.org.uk

Monday... Boxes of our four-page colour leaflet arrive. Mike, who we met canvassing, says he will take some. "I'll do all the tower blocks." That's 600 gone. He came to our local meeting last week: "I resigned from the Labour Party yesterday, what's the plan?"

Tuesday... Ex-Labour voters are dismayed at the council's willingness to wield the Tory axe. Story after story of benefit sanctions, bedroom tax, cuts to Sure Start and the youth centre closure: "I'll camp outside if they try to shut it down, it's all we have left on the estate." Anti-cuts councillors Keith Morrell and Don Thomas turn up to join the team for an evening's leafleting. Someone has Sue's poster in their window: "Thanks for standing, I'll be voting TUSC."

Wednesday... "My daughter's been fighting the cuts to youth services, she's lost her job. I always voted Labour, it's hard to change but what choice have we got? I was shocked at how they bullied her for fighting back." Jane, a firm campaign stalwart, has been impressed at the response we are getting. "It's always difficult to change what people think. But we've had amazing success."

Thursday... New Socialist Party member Phil comes to the meeting. "I was going to give you my subs form tonight, I'd filled it in but decided I wanted to give more. There's nothing else worth giving your money too, is there!" Phil left the Green Party recently and as a young council worker and Unison member has been out as often as anyone, leafleting and canvassing.

Friday... Jared is down from Aylesbury to see how it's going. Three hours later another 300 leaflets out and more positive responses on the door. "People are angry and want an alternative. Though there is a danger some of that vote will go to Ukip. Not because people are right wing or racist, it's seen as the biggest stick to beat the establishment parties. People are willing to listen to what we have to say."

Saturday... With the local shipyard closed, Woolston is a quieter place now but we have a steady stream of support coming to our stalls. "I've put so much of my time into

Salford

In our TUSC campaign to elect Terry Simmons as councillor for the Waste and Seedley ward in Salford, we have received a great response from voters who are sick of the three cuts parties.

But it was a chance encounter with the Labour Party candidate, while out canvassing, that should convince readers of the desperate need to stand against them at every opportunity. The Labour candidate is high up in a multinational pharmaceutical company and told us that, if elected, he would not vote against cuts. You see the council, so he told us, "is a business that needs sustainable budget solutions".

He seemed very confident that he will win the 20 June byelection. But we think that he will lose a good number of votes by featuring the reviled Blairite MP Hazel Blears on his leaflet.

The election campaign provides us with a springboard to launch a TUSC anti-cuts electoral challenge in every council ward in Salford in next year's local elections.

Matt Kilsby, Salford TUSC

Labour. I thought Blair would reverse all Thatcher's cuts. I want you to nationalise everything they took, and don't give them a penny. You've got my vote."

Sunday... And we have a magnificent dozen out canvassing. Candidate Sue comments: "I've been really impressed with all the help we have had. It's given my confidence a real boost to see that people are taking an interest in what's going on. People know about Keith and Don, can see Labour are carrying out the cuts and are keen to support what we are doing."

Roll on election day - Thursday 13 June.

University of East London

How students beat unfair attendance policy

A year of opposition organised by the Socialist Students-initiated 'Scrap the Unfair Attendance Policy' campaign has forced the University of East London (UEL) to ditch its draconian

attendance policy. For an academic year, UEL students have been subject to automatic de-registration from their module if they were more than ten minutes late

(later extended to 15 minutes) more than twice! But under intense pressure, UEL management gave in! Kyle Williamson shows how the campaign won.

The first petition on our stall demanding the policy's immediate scrapping was filled within minutes. We held a Socialist Students meeting and then formed a joint campaign including non-members on the steering committee. We formed an alternative attendance policy calling for 'Three Strikes and You're Out' and the ten minute tap-in limit to be abolished.

We also called for an end to automatic withdrawal of students and for lecturers to be given greater control over student withdrawals. Then we set a target of 1,000 signatures on our petition.

When we found out the date of the board of governors meeting, Socialist Students called a lobby of it to hand the vice-chancellor our petition.

This was the biggest protest since the 2010 occupation of the university.

The vice-chancellor avoided the lobby, so we sent an email demanding a meeting. They refused so we decided to hit the university where



Socialist Students on the march (Kyle centre) photo Paul Mattsson

it hurt. We leafleted an open day telling students what UEL was really like. The management (and the

student union!) threw us out of the main building four times, showing they were embarrassed over their

unfair and unworkable policy. And our determination!

The vice-chancellor then resigned, mainly because he had lost £1.27 million of university money to a newly built campus in Nicosia in Cyprus, which is now closed due to students not enrolling.

The next semester, we demanded to meet the new management.

They responded very quickly this time. The meeting showed how angry students were. After discussing our demands, management said: "we will take your views into consideration".

Later they came back with a comprehensive proposal scrapping 'three strikes and you're out' and stopping automatic appeals.

Many students had already felt the pain of module deregistration. Many had to try to get themselves reinstated just because they had to take their children to school.



From now on, students whose attendance drops below 75% will be subject to an investigation, but the final decision will be with the student's school and academic staff.

The student union's role in the campaign was minimal. But Socialist Students involved students who have never campaigned before and led the struggle against UEL's policy.

A weekly steering committee met to plan action and what our next steps were. We raised students' hopes that an alternative could be fought for, and won.

Far-right EDL march in Sheffield: class-based response needed

Sam Morecroft and Chaz Lockett

On 8 June as many as 2,000 local people turned out to oppose the far-right English Defence League (EDL) marching in Sheffield. In a national mobilisation 5-600 EDL supporters were desperate to expunge their humiliation the week before, when anti-racists stopped them entering Barkers Pool in Sheffield city centre.

The EDL were cynically exploiting the death of Lee Rigby, killed in Woolwich in May, to stir up racism and division. But their mobilisation was vastly outnumbered by trade unionists, students and young people in a strong display of unity against racism.

The most visible street force, however, was the police. 1,000 officers were there from eight counties and police refused to allow counter-protesters to enter Barkers Pool and confront the racists.

Disrupt the EDL's plans

The police could not clear a route through protesters for the EDL the previous Saturday, and were determined to obstruct any attempts to confront the far right. But with the huge number opposing the EDL, it would still have been possible to disrupt the EDL's plans.

However, Unite Against Fascism (UAF) and One Sheffield Many Cultures made it far easier for the police to protect the EDL march. Less than 24 hours before the march, they ditched demonstration plans, calling instead for a street party some way away. This dashed any possibility of a serious, organised opposition to the EDL.

Most activists were dismayed at the change and many tried to gain access to the square. But these alterations meant they entered Bark-



Confronting the EDL requires a working class-based political alternative photo Paul Mattsson

ers Pool at different times and from different directions. The police could stop them getting through, and the anti-racist mobilisation became divided around the city.

Under the SWP leadership the UAF fails to raise the need for a positive, class-based alternative to the far-right. It insists on giving a platform to councillors carrying out draconian cutbacks to working class communities without any opportunity for anti-cuts activists to raise criticism. This approach will not provide a lead for militant,

working class anti-racism.

Socialist Party members had many positive discussions with people keen to confront the EDL, and remain determined to argue for building genuine class-based anti-racist organisations.

Nazi-style salutes

As EDL marchers entered a fenced-off area around the War Memorial to lay their wreath, the EDL raised a Nazi-style salute, with outstretched arm and Churchill's 'V' sign, to the

memorial dedicated to those who died fighting in World War Two.

After they had been allowed to lay their wreath and were ushered back to the starting point of their route, some running battles between police, pockets of EDL and anti-racists broke out across the city.

Anti-racists and local youth prevented EDL members from entering Broomhall, an area with a significant Somali population. Outnumbered, the EDL were eventually driven away or kettled by police.

If the UAF had not bowed to

pressure to turn the protest into a 'celebration of multiculturalism', another humiliation could have been inflicted on the EDL, further shattering their ridiculous claims to represent Britain's 'forgotten working class'.

Instead, chants of 'Whose streets? Our streets!' rang hollow.

Anti-racist activity must expose the EDL's lies and show a way to fight austerity. Working people are disgusted at their current situation with living standards under attack in Foodbank Britain.

We must show that the cause of this misery is not immigrants or Muslims, mostly in similar or worse situations to ourselves.

Our enemies are the bankers, tax-avoiding fat cats, the Tories who are gutting public services and Labour councils smashing local libraries, children's centres and youth services. Confronting the EDL also requires building a mass, fighting, class-based political alternative to austerity and the system that breeds it.

Muswell Hill, London

Socialist Party members attended an emergency protest called less than 24 hours after the EDL-linked arson attack on the community centre in Muswell Hill, north London. Hundreds, many from the local area, attended this vigil.

The centre mainly serves the Somali population in the area, including hosting Islamic religious events. John Reid, RMT union transport regional secretary, spoke about the need for working class opposition to racism and to austerity, which can lay the basis for division. John got a great response. Socialist Party leaflets and placards went down very well.

Ben Robinson

After Woolwich killing: Time for unions to lead anti-racist fight

In the aftermath of the Woolwich killing, a minority has been involved in an increased number of racist attacks.

These have risen from between two and three attacks a day to at one point 140-150 a day. The English Defence League (EDL) and the British National Party (BNP) have tried to exploit the killing for their own far-right, racist political ends. Anti-racist activist Hugo Pierre looks at the background to these events and explains the urgent tasks before the labour movement.

The shocking scenes of the killing of Lee Rigby in Woolwich on 22 May have made an impact around the country: a young man screamed across the media that, "you people will never be safe... by almighty Allah we will never stop fighting you", while his hands were covered in his victim's blood. His words 'you people', echoing similar sentiments by the London 7/7 tube bombers, lay the blame for the Iraq and Afghanistan wars with the mass of the British population.

The Socialist Party has condemned these attacks. We deplore the loss of life these mistaken attacks have led to and, in the case of the 7/7 bombings, the maiming and suffering caused. The intention may have been to destabilise the British war machine, but this will not be successful.

Even if they knew beforehand that Lee Rigby was a serving soldier, he could not be held responsible for the wars in Afghanistan or Iraq. These decisions were taken by a Labour government with almost full support of the Tory opposition at that time.

Terrorism

It must be remembered that these wars were deeply unpopular. Up to two million marched on the streets against the Iraq war and the state was forced to hold several inquiries in an attempt to pin the blame on Blair or justify that war.

But terrorist acts will neither change the minds of workers or politicians, nor develop greater opposition to the wars or military interventions. The Socialist Party calls for mass working class action as the most effective means to stop war.

During the anti-Iraq war movement, the Socialist Party called for mass participation, including strike action and the building of a mass anti-war, working class political party, which could potentially have forced MPs to stop British involvement in the invasion.

The Socialist Party completely condemns acts of terrorism and the death and destruction they cause to working class people and communities. Terrorism is carried out by individuals, without democratic involvement or a mandate from the movement as a whole.

The revulsion terrorist attacks create can be used by capitalist, pro-war, pro-austerity politicians to boost their support and, as the Con-Dems are doing, to attack democratic rights, including for activists and often particularly affecting black and Asian people. With attempts to promote national unity, capitalist politicians hope to cut across the unity of the working class against racism and austerity.



Young people challenge police racism photo Senan



Far-right racist groups have sought to exploit the situation since the Woolwich killing. The EDL organised a march on Downing Street, attended by up to 1,000. Their members even chanted, "We hate Cameron!" in an attempt to pit themselves as the opposition to the mainstream parties. The BNP attempted a similar march on 1 June but this was blocked by anti-racist protesters.

At this moment there are limits to the development of these organisations. Both were facing in-fighting, splits and a loss of their previous limited numbers. However the death of Lee Rigby has allowed them to raise their racist slogans, particularly against Muslims, and their anti-immigration demands.

Racist attacks

The vile attempts to create division by these far-right groups give confidence to racists to attack. On 5 June an Islamic community centre in Muswell Hill, north London, was burnt down and graffiti reading "EDL" was scrawled on a wall. On the night of 8 June an Islamist school in Bromley, south London, was set alight with the children inside.

This follows the limited success of Ukip, a pro-austerity and anti-working class party, in the county council elections. The media, particularly the right-wing press, have hailed Ukip's election surge as a success for anti-immigration and anti-foreigner poli-

cies in an attempt to push the Con-Dem government further to the right.

In reality, where working class people have voted for Ukip it has been out of despair and frustration in the face of unending austerity and three main parties who offer nothing else. This mood is likely to have been added to by Labour's recent push to show they would escalate rather than reverse the Con-Dems' cuts if elected. The continued slaughter of jobs, the further impoverishment of a section of workers and poor, and one million young people unemployed are making a whole generation angry.

This rage could take many forms and is a warning to the trade unions, which could be a powerful attraction to young people if they took action on pay, jobs and apprenticeships. The call for a 24-hour general strike against austerity would give an immediate authority to the trade unions among young people who at this stage can see no hope for their future. It is still not too late for the trade unions to act, but the longer they delay the greater will be the pull of right-wing ideas among some alienated white youth.

Blame game

Incredibly Labour MPs are now claiming they will not be 'held to ransom'. David Lammy, Labour MP for Tottenham who voted for the war in Iraq, claimed in an article he wrote for the Guardian that no government should have its "foreign policy dictated by the actions of a violent minority". But what was Blair's government if not a pro-war minority?

Some people have mistakenly drawn the conclusion that violent actions are the only option precisely because Blair's government did not listen to the mass movement that developed to stop the war even though their key backers in the trade unions did not support the war either.

Many of the far-right Islamist groups did not support the mass movement against the war. Hizb ut-Tahrir and al-Muhajiroun actively campaigned in mosques and among Muslims against participation in the demonstrations against the war.

This undoubtedly had a limited effect in some areas. When the anti-war movement failed, these groups proclaimed this as a victory for their ideas of further separation of Muslims into their own small movement.

Alienation

These groups remain small and on the periphery of Muslim communities. Lammy raised the question of why some young men are drawn to these groups. Undoubtedly the atrocities in Iraq and Afghanistan, including torture and the bombing of wedding parties, civilian homes and the mass casualties, have repulsed most workers and made them commit further to oppose these wars. But Lammy believes young British men have become isolated and vulnerable to 'extremist' ideas.

The conditions for young people in Britain today have provoked anger and an alienation from mainstream society. A TUC study found that unemployment among black men under the age of 26 stands at 50%. Among some 'communities' this figure is undoubtedly higher. Among Asian young men it is 30%, but much higher for those from Bangladeshi or Pakistani communities.

The 2011 riots gave a glimpse of the anger that exists among young people. But Lammy and others blame black families for this radicalisation. Outrageously Lee Jasper, the former parliamentary byelection candidate for anti-war party Respect, has argued that the high number of single parent families is responsible for young black men being drawn to right-wing Islamic groups and terrorist methods. But how does he explain a similar process that is taking place in Bangladeshi and Pakistani communities where the proportion of single parent families is a small fraction of the national average?

The common thread of poverty and joblessness has caused this alienation from mainstream society. The particular pressures on black families - institutional racism, partly a historical product of slavery and the continued pressures of capitalism on the family, as well as the disproportionate poverty suffered by

Links to useful reading

No to terrorism, racism, war!
www.socialistparty.org.uk/issue/767/16759

The politics of fighting the racist EDL
www.socialistparty.org.uk/articles/14856

Stopping the far-right: The need for democratic debate
www.socialistparty.org.uk/articles/15149

Under siege: Muslims in Britain
www.socialismtoday.org/95/muslims.html

black and Asian families - are not explained by Jasper or Lammy. The rise in black youth unemployment started before the recession began in 2008 as the number of jobs started to dry up. This worsened the levels of poverty that already existed.

Jasper has further identified the brutal recruiting methods that some of the right-wing Islamist gangs are using - with threats of violence and death if young people don't convert. Unfortunately neither Lammy nor Jasper has a programme to address the desperate need to find opportunities for young people.

There are clearly specific circumstances that led the two suspects to act in the way they did. Both have been brutalised by what they have witnessed in their short lives - torture, murder and violence. It has been reported that both were from Nigerian backgrounds. They would be aware of the brutal repression by the Nigerian regime of ordinary people in the Nigerian government's own version of the 'war on terror'.

It is still only a tiny minority of young black or Asian men who have turned to these right-wing Islamists. But the failure of most trade unions to vigorously fight to change working conditions, fight poverty pay and the defence of jobs, means that as yet the trade unions do not appear an attractive option.

The threat of right-wing Islamist ideas and the increased threat of racism and racist attacks make it urgent for the trade unions to take action. A fight for apprenticeships with trade union rates of pay and a proper job at the end would galvanise many youth, including both those who may be drawn towards right-wing Islamist groups and far-right racist groups. A strong trade union-led movement against austerity, war and racism, is the best way to unite the mass of working class people and cut across division.

Poll of attraction

The trade unions must lead a high-profile campaign against racism that places trade union action at its heart. They must actively involve themselves and their members in defending communities against racist attacks. This is what makes the response of Lewisham NUT and Greenwich Unite to the Woolwich killing, Camden RMT to the Muswell Hill attack, and Bromley Union to the school attack, so important.

Most importantly, the trade unions have a responsibility to put the full strength of their millions of members into a movement to stop all cuts. That means agreeing a date for a 24-hour strike against austerity as well as ceasing to fund the war-mongering Labour Party and beginning to build a new, mass, working class political party.

Wage cuts... bedroom tax... racist attacks...

BUILD FOR MASS ANTI-CUTS ACTION

The National Shop Stewards Network (NSSN) annual conference is only two weeks away! On Saturday 29 June, trade unionists and anti-cuts campaigners will come together in a vital meeting which will discuss and plan for action against cuts and austerity attacks. This event will provide a focus for the campaign for a 24-hour general strike.

Workers in struggle will be key delegates to the conference. A Unison steward from the East Midlands who is involved in a dispute with support organisation Thera told us: "I was transferred over under the Tupe scheme from the NHS to the Thera Trust charity. This year, they started attacking care and support staff's conditions, including cutting wages drastically.

"We have been building a united fight of transferred workers and the existing workers. Our strikes have already forced some concessions. We want national action by the unions to safeguard their members' rights. Coming to NSSN conference and meeting other workers, many in similar struggles, is a vital step in building that process."

Other battles against austerity will be represented. Helen Patison from the 'No Bedroom Tax in Newham' (NBTN) campaign explains: "Campaigning against the bedroom tax brought together local trade unionists with those affected, students and others angered by cuts.



The NSSN in action - protesting against blacklisting at a Crossrail site in London photo Paul Mattsson

Come to the National Shop Stewards Network conference 29 June

"NBTN members will be attending NSSN conference, to organise with those in other areas fighting cuts to jobs and taking strike action against austerity and the government. Many workers facing cuts at work will also be hit by the bedroom tax. At NSSN conference we

can carry on the fight together." Glenn Kelly, Unison branch secretary in Bromley, condemned the atrocious arson attack on the Islamic school in Chislehurst in Bromley at the weekend that threatened the lives of staff and pupils: "It is hard not to link this attack with other

anti-Muslim attacks after the terrible attack in Woolwich." "Unison condemns the killing of Lee Rigby. However the BNP and EDL are trying to exploit the killing for their own ends. The trade unions cannot afford to ignore attempts to whip up racism.

"The trade unions have a key role to play... When our communities, our jobs and our services are under attack, we need the maximum unity of working people. We need to offer an alternative to the politics of racial hatred by building a mass campaign against the politics of austerity.

"Working class people need to be brought together by the trade unions, not ripped apart by the racists. We should unite the local community in protests, marches and where necessary strike action and even occupations to ensure that our hospitals, schools and fire stations are not allowed to be closed with the resultant loss of jobs."

The NSSN conference will be a chance to build that alternative. Don't miss out, book now!

The 7th annual conference of the NSSN will take place on 29 June, 11am - 5pm in the Camden Centre, Judd Street, London WC1H 9JE

Speakers include union general secretaries: Mark Serwotka, PCS, Billy Hayes, CWU and Steve Gillan, POA and Tommy Sheridan, Scottish Anti-Bedroom Tax Federation chair

For more information contact: info@shopstewards.net or send your fee of £6 per person to: PO Box 54498, London E10 9DE. www.shopstewards.net

What we stand for

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

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

Our demands include:

PUBLIC SERVICES

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

- Free, publicly run, good quality education, available to all at any age. Abolish university tuition fees now and introduce a living grant. No to academies and 'Free schools'!

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

WORK AND INCOME

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

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

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

ENVIRONMENT

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

RIGHTS

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

NEW WORKERS' PARTY

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

SOCIALISM AND INTERNATIONALISM

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