

the Socialist

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STOP CUTS

DEMAND

UNITED ACTION

LOBBY THE TUC FOR A 24-HOUR GENERAL STRIKE

Lobby the TUC
All out together in November
 Sunday 8 September
 12.30 Hardy Suite, Hermitage Hotel, Exeter Road, Bournemouth, Lobby the TUC
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 Sunday 8 September
 12.30 Hardy Suite, Hermitage Hotel, Exeter Road, Bournemouth, BH2 5AH (opposite the TUC conference venue)

Martin Powell-Davies
 Member of the NUT teachers' union executive

I might be a physics teacher but it doesn't take rocket science to work out why the trade union movement needs to start taking united strike action. The Coalition is pushing ahead with vicious cuts, privatisation of services and attacks on our pay, pensions, rights and conditions. It's high time that they were stopped.

There is a force that can do this - trade unions taking united strike action, backed up with support from the communities whose jobs and services we are struggling to defend.

Trade unions are strongest when we act together. It's about time that we did so. That's the message that the lobby of the Trades Union Congress being organised by the National Shop Stewards Network (NSSN) will be taking to TUC delegates in Bournemouth on Sunday 8 September.

A number of trade unions are already battling in important local or national disputes. FBU members have been balloting on industrial action to defend firefighters' pensions.

The CWU have agreed to hold a national ballot of Royal Mail workers against privatisation. UCU members in higher education are considering action over pay. PCS is consulting members across the civil service on the next stage of its



United trade union action is more powerful than any austerity programme photo Senan

campaign of industrial action.

Teachers will be leading the way this autumn. A solid strike of both NUT and NASUWT members closed schools right across the North West region in June. Now members of both unions in the rest of England and Wales will take

part in one of two further days of regional strikes in September and October. That will be followed by a day's joint national strike action in November.

Teachers have no choice but to take action. From September, the government is imposing divisive

performance-pay arrangements that will allow school management to pick and choose who gets a pay-rise - and who doesn't. It's a scheme designed to cut the pay bill and to force teachers to work even longer hours. In the New Year, they're planning to an-

nounce more attacks on working conditions.

There are other important events for trade unionists to support in September - not least to build a mass demonstration in Manchester outside the Tory party conference on 29 September to call a halt to the destruction of the NHS by this government in the interests of their big business backers (see page 5).

However, demonstrations alone will not be enough. We need to call on the TUC to organise strike action coordinated right across our movement, a 24-hour general strike.

Some trade union leaders will continue to prevaricate but that makes it even more important that those who are up for the fight make plans for coordinated strike action.

The NUT and NASUWT have already pencilled in a date for national action in November. Let's make it a day of coordinated national strike action that can start to push this government back at last.

Syria
 No to imperialist military intervention
 See page 2



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No to imperialist intervention in Syria

Via social media, smart phones and traditional news channels a flood of bloody images, footage and reports of the unbearable suffering inflicted on the Syrian masses has been broadcast around the world.

Initially in 2011, following the revolutions in Tunisia and Egypt, there was a popular uprising against Assad's police state. But, as has been explained in the Socialist, interventions and enormous financial and military backing came from the semi-feudal monarchies of Saudi Arabia and Qatar and imperialist forces in the hope of derailing that movement.

The uprising against Assad's dictatorship 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 death toll of Syria's now years-long conflict is estimated to be over 100,000. Two million people have fled the country and around five million are internally displaced. This is horror piled upon horror.

For the overwhelming majority of people the news that chemical weapons have been used in Ghouta, a district of Damascus, appears to represent the opening of a new circle of hell for the suffering masses. The reports that the dead are numbered in their hundreds and the injured in their thousands are as heart-breaking as they are horrifying.

Given what has taken place, combined with the threat of regional instability looming, a desire for a solution to this horror is a human response. But to hope that the US and UK governments and their allies in France, Germany and Turkey could bring any solution, given history, both recent and long-term, is horribly mistaken.

Air strikes

Over the last months US President Obama has warned that the use of chemical weapons in Syria would be a 'red line' to trigger an international response no fewer than five times. Already there are three US warships in the Mediterranean with another on its way. Pilots in Cyprus have reported seeing warplanes on British airfields there.

Foreign Secretary William Hague has been preparing the ground here in Britain, indicating that the absence of a UN mandate will be no obstacle: "it's possible to take action based on great humanitarian distress." He's suggested that action, most likely intense aerial bombardment, could take place within

weeks, if not days. The UN security committee is split with Russia and China opposing intervention in the interests of their own capitalist classes.

Hague is also reported to have been liaising with the dictatorial and repressive Qatari and Saudi regimes who would welcome a defeat of Assad as a blow against Iran and Hezbollah. Iran has warned that western military intervention will destabilise the region.

Patrick Cockburn, Middle East commentator, has pointed out the difficulties of ascertaining who bears responsibility for the recent chemical attack. The UN inspectors were granted access and a ceasefire agreed

There is major domestic public opposition to US and UK involvement despite the desire for an end to the slaughter. Memories of the build-up to the invasion of Iraq and the 'dodgy dossier' claims that Saddam had weapons of mass destruction are evoked by the current rush to attack

but the inspectors came under fire and were ordered out within hours. However, that in itself does not yet prove who was responsible and the inspectors are only due to decide if there was a chemical attack.

Before UN inspectors have publicly reported, US Secretary of State, John Kerry said that the US would respond to the "undeniable" use of chemical weapons in Syria and that President Bashar al-Assad's forces had committed a "moral obscenity" against his own people.

'Moral obscenity' might also be a good word to describe the destruction of Iraq, including the alleged use of white phosphorous and depleted uranium tipped missiles, the open air prison that denies the Palestinians their democratic and national rights, silence in the face of genocidal slaughter in Sri Lanka, not to mention imperialist powers' record of employing chemical and nuclear weapons.

There is major domestic public opposition to US and UK involvement despite the desire for an end to the slaughter. Memories of the

build-up to the invasion of Iraq and the 'dodgy dossier' claims that Saddam had weapons of mass destruction are evoked by the current rush to attack. That is compounded by the failure of the British government to publish the results of the Chilcot inquiry.

Obama's election programme included pledges to bring an end to US involvement in Iraq and the years of Bush's warmongering. Instead he has been a war president with the murderous drones multiplying in Afghanistan and Pakistan, albeit largely replacing troops on the ground, and the maintenance of Guantanamo Bay. 60% of the US population oppose US military involvement in Syria.

But both the US and UK governments have an interest in appearing as heroes to the Syrian masses and as defenders of democracy, mired as they are in a profound crisis of capitalism, with no solution, and with anger against them mounting.

Iraq war

In the run-up to the invasion of Iraq the Lib Dems polished their thin anti-war credentials by opposing action without a UN mandate. The Socialist Party pointed out that the UN could not be relied on as an arbitrator in the interests of the Iraqi people, comprised and dominated as it is by representatives of the major imperialist and warmongering governments of the world. However, former Lib Dem leader Paddy Ashdown now argues that, in the case of Syria, unilateral action is preferable to inaction.

Shadow Foreign Secretary Douglas Alexander has demanded parliament be recalled. Cameron looks likely to do this, as he faces opposition from a small number of his own backbenchers, such as the complications and risks for the future of the entire region.

Labour has not indicated how it would vote. A genuine working people's party would massively oppose any form of military action in Syria. But Labour has a lustrous record as vicious warmongers in government, sending troops to Iraq for a war for oil in the interest of big business and for strategic aims.

In opposition Labour boasts an almost spotless record of kowtowing to the rotten Con-Dem austerity policies. Yet again the need to build a new political force to represent the anti-war, anti-austerity majority is glaring.

There can be no hope that any action on the part of this government or its international counterparts can bring relief to the popula-

tions of Syria or the Middle East. In fact it is guaranteed that increased bombing will bring increased suffering to the masses. And this is why it must be opposed.

'Regime change' is not a cited aim, because Assad's is a relatively strong regime, because of the fierce opposition of Russia, and because the question of who would replace it is so problematic. Given the significant funding and growth of Al-Qa'ida in Syria there are also serious dangers of a 'blowback' of increased terrorism, in the region and inside Britain and its allies in this adventure.

There is no real capitalist solution to this conflict, threatening as it does in the unstable arena of the region, to unravel into wider ethnic conflict which could last for years. What is clear from Iraq, from Libya, and from all imperialist military interventions, is that the interests of the working class and poor in the region are not a driving force.

There is no shortcut to the building of, and encouraging the establishment of, independent working class forces that can unite the poor and oppressed and suffering in their common interests against both the forces of imperialism and their semi-feudal and capitalist allies in the region.

We say:

- No to imperialist intervention! The withdrawal of all foreign forces from Syria and the region
- Against all oppression, the people must democratically decide their own fate
- For the building of united, non-sectarian defence committees to defend workers, the poor and others against sectarian attacks from all 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, with the recognition of the right of the Kurdish people to self-determination including, if they so wish, the right to their own state
- 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

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Lobbying bill: don't let this Tory dream come true

Sue Powell

The economy seems to be falling apart, yet nothing seems to have dented the upper-class arrogance and air of confidence that pervades the Tories.

It is easy to think of these aristocrats as stupid, but they are not. They will ruthlessly defend their class's power and privilege and this is proved by the Transparency of Lobbying, Non-party Campaigning and Trade Union Administration Bill hastily introduced in the final days of the last parliamentary session and due to be rushed through this year.

The bill's provisions involve the registration of all political campaigns, groups and bloggers and limits on campaign funding and donations. Electioneering is defined as anything directly or indirectly political. For breaching the new rules the penalty can be six to 12 months in prison. Political parties are excluded from this legislation. You can imagine the thinking behind it:

'The media is tame, parliamentary opposition a joke - if only the others would disappear. We certainly don't want any more DPAC people chaining themselves up in protest against attacks on disabled people. Activities like that just prove they are all fit for work.'

'Of course, it can't all be banned. We're a democracy - we even wage wars to prove it. Everyone hates corrupt politics and lobbyists. That's it! Put them all together. They are all trying to influence political decision-making! We'll label any form of political comment or activity electioneering.'

'It's such a nuisance having the NHS mentioned, especially in the run-up to an election. We can say the election period is 12 months and include referenda. Penalties for breaking the rules, force them to submit quarterly and weekly accounts, register as third-parties with the Electoral Commission, limit their expenditure and include all



The lobbying bill is due to be rushed through this year

running costs and staffing as campaign costs.

'Obviously our party, Ukip, the BNP and those bloody Lib Dems should be excluded. Not that there's much chance of Labour being a problem - but how can we get at them? Miliband attacking Unite over Falkirk is a golden opportunity to curtail union donations, break the link. And scupper any attempt at building a new union-backed party while we're at it.'

'A bill to rule out groups unfairly manipulating the system. Like lob-

bysts - everyone hates them. Obviously, we'll let the lobbyists off the hook. The only transparency in this bill will be the light through the loopholes, but at least we can contain the dissenters - anti-cuts, NHS, ecology campaigns etc, charities, the voluntary sector, bloggers and e-petitions.

'Might even shut up the Guardian. Brilliant - sell it as a bill to clean-up politics. Let's hope they all fall into line. After all the law is the law. Now, how would we deal with a mass movement?'

The trial of Chelsea Manning

Manus Lenihan

The final days of the trial revealed the disgusting new depths to which the US military is sinking in an effort to persecute Chelsea (formerly Bradley) Manning. In 2010 this brave young military intelligence analyst released hundreds of thousands of secret documents to show the world the true face of the US wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Finally going to trial after more than three years behind bars where she was tormented with solitary confinement, shackling and sleep deprivation, Manning was faced last month with charges adding up to 136 years in prison. Senior military and government figures openly admit that the final sentence of 35 years is intended to scare US soldiers into keeping their heads down and their mouths shut.

Last week the US military released photographs of Manning dressed in a wig and make-up. Coming so close

to the sentencing, this looks like a crude attempt to discredit Manning by drumming up and playing into trans-phobic prejudice.

More importantly, in an example both of trans-phobia as well as the stigmatising of those with mental health issues, a consensus emerged between the prosecution and the defence teams that Manning leaked the documents as an act of insanity resulting from gender identity problems.

Exposed

The attempt by the US military and government to write off Manning's great act of defiance as insanity is completely futile - vile acts of the US military have been exposed and nothing they do now can change that.

The truth is that Manning made her motives totally clear in statements and online conversations: to "show the true cost of the war", to spark "worldwide discussion, de-

bates, reforms". Manning realised that she was part of a machine that was inflicting carnage, oppression and torture on a huge scale, and tried to undermine it by releasing the truth.

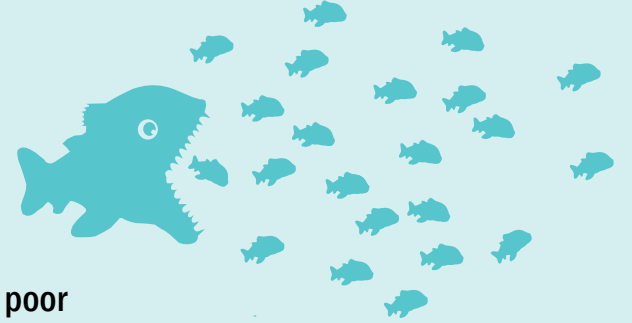
Decay of democracy

The amount of secrets a regime keeps and the amount of lies it tells are an indication of the deep contradictions and depravity in its politics.

The US government now classifies over 90 million documents a year. This number, as it climbs by tens of millions year-on-year, is like an index of the decay of democratic rights in the midst of a crisis of capitalism and barbaric imperialist wars.

In the drama around the sentencing of Chelsea Manning we have seen even more evidence of this, with the establishment trying to smear her through bigotry and neutralise her politically through Stalin-esque forced 'confessions'.

Them...



Working poor

The latest figures from the Department for Work and Pensions show that nearly one million (987,607) working people are now claiming housing benefit. Since 2010 more new claims have been started by people who are working than the total increase in the number of claimants - meaning a growing proportion of housing benefit is going to those who work.

This just shows the impact of the public sector pay freeze, low pay and zero-hour contracts combined with the rising cost of living - even with a job people can't afford their rent!

Far from needing a purge of socialists, Blair and Brown's wars, privatisation and attacks on democratic rights, purged the party of almost all remaining socialists. And the idea that Miliband is overseeing a 'union takeover' will seem astonishing to the trade unionists who've been criticised, attacked and even reported to the police by the party in recent months.

Wait for it

£1.7 billion worth of bonuses normally paid in March were delayed until April to take advantage of the reduction in the top tax rate from 50p to 45p. Bonuses in banking and finance were twice as much in April 2013 as in April 2012 as the fat cats couldn't bear to miss an opportunity to maximise their already bloated bonuses.

Cost of austerity

According to Labour, the government's harsh welfare programmes will cost an extra £1.4 billion to the public purse. Government estimates have been

£1.4bn
cost of Con-Dem's
welfare programmes

thrown off by the number of successful appeals against Atos decisions on disability benefits and low take-up of welfare schemes. The bedroom tax alone is costing £102 million to put in place. That's the end of the lie that these hated schemes are all about saving us money then! Disgracefully Labour's response is that it will take the Coalition's cuts as a 'starting point'.

Child poverty

A report by the National Children's Bureau has said that child poverty is a bigger problem in 2013 than it was in the 1960s. 3.6 million children now

3.6m
children living in
relative poverty in the
UK

live in relative poverty compared to two million 50 years ago. The report warns that rich and poor children are living completely separate lives. 63% of children living in poverty have at least one parent in work.

Jetsetter

12 holidays in four years - not a bad deal for the Cameron family. Seems like there's plenty of time to relax when you're prime minister. Cameron's trips since he became PM include Granada, Italy, Mallorca, Algarve, Jura, Ibiza (twice) and the annual trip to Cornwall. No amount of posing in shorts and loafers will convince us he's 'one of the people' with that kind of lifestyle.

Worse off

As the Socialist warned millions of people will be worse off under new pensions arrangements. Those with a long working history entitled to the second state pension will be up to £2,000 worse off according to the TUC.

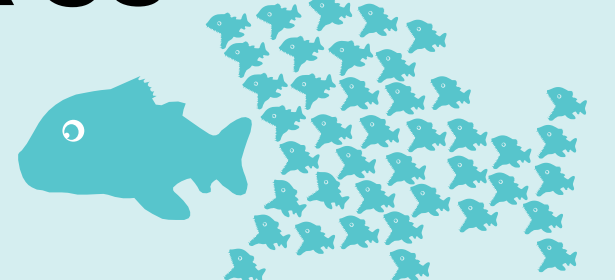
Witch hunt

Tory education secretary Michael Gove has criticised Labour leader Ed Miliband for not being as effective as his predecessor, Neil Kinnock, at purging the left from the Labour Party. Gove said: "While Kinnock moved bravely and remorselessly to eradicate Militant's [forerunner of the Socialist Party] influence, and Militant-sponsored MPs, from Labour, Miliband has done nothing to stop the takeover of his own party."

Still one million

Government ministers were quick to champion the latest statistics on the number of young people not in education, employment or training (NEETS), which showed a drop of 1,000. But the percentage of young people in this category remained unchanged at 15.1% and the total number is still over one million. Not much to cheer about then.

...& Us



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One Housing Group workers go into battle again

A One Housing Group striker

Unite members at One Housing Group (OHG) will strike for five days starting on 5 September. Following a four-year pay freeze, OHG management is slashing front-line workers' wages by up to 25%. Some of the most skilled and experienced staff will lose £8,000 a year.

Last month OHG announced record profits of £36 million, up from £13 million last year. Senior executives have posted YouTube clips of themselves boasting of their success at the same time that over 200 of their own employees are due to face severe financial hardship.

Opposition to the cuts has seen membership of Unite the Union increase from 35 to 180 since the decision to cut pay was announced in May last year. Collective action against management's plans to lower wages has already delayed the cuts by 22 months and they have also backed down on threats to dismiss workers who refused to sign new contracts at the lower pay rates.

A Unite representative in the workplace said: "OHG make cuts at the same time as making record profits. They refuse to negotiate, refuse all contact with Acas, it is just a race to the bottom."

OHG management admit that they make "a healthy surplus", but insist they need frontline staff to



A strike day in June photo Helen Pattison

take a pay cut to meet the group's plans to expand in the care and support market. They boast in the media of undercutting the NHS by 80%.

One mental health worker in Islington described how they do this: "They replace experienced staff with low-paid support assistants and replace night staff with sleepover staff earning £3.75 an hour, it's all lone working now and staff don't feel safe."

OHG claim that they have created 500 jobs in the support sector. But almost all of these jobs existed already and most of those transferred in are having their wages slashed.

In April 2012 OHG won £15 million worth of contracts over five

years to provide visiting support to vulnerable adults in Essex and former rough sleepers in the whole of South London. Before the contracts started, the 130 staff were assured by OHG managers that there were no plans to change pay rates.

But a month after becoming OHG employees, staff were told they would have their pay cut by £2,000 on average. One Essex Unite member said: "I feel lied to. I thought I was secure and now I don't know how I'll manage." A homelessness worker from South London said: "They said my job wouldn't change and my pay would stay the same. I was offered redeployment by my old employer, Thamesreach before

OHG took over but I wanted to continue supporting my clients and see their support through. Now I've had my pay cut, I feel cheated, I wish I had never trusted them."

Instead of negotiating, OHG tried to divide the workforce. Management imposed a £750 bonus without consultation but excluded all frontline care and support staff.

Their plans backfired, frontline staff including managers who didn't get the bonus, submitted dozens of grievances citing breach of contract, and several equality impact complaints have been lodged.

One housing officer decided to donate the whole of her £750 bonus to the strike fund stating that: "We should all be treated as one at OHG."

Other Unite data reveals that strike action was as well supported by those not affected by the pay cuts as those that were. One frontline worker from a youth service in Hackney, who would actually get a small rise if the changes happen said: "I don't agree with the way they're doing it, it's only a matter of time until it happens again and we are all on the minimum wage."

A manager of a mental health service in Camden said: "I'm not getting a salary decrease but the same thing could happen to managers as well!"

• **OHG strikers will be joining the NSSN lobby of the TUC on 8 September to demand a 24-hour general strike.**
See www.shopstewards.net

Unison: Tiny margin against Scottish local government strike

A Unison member

Unison members in Scottish local government have voted by a very narrow margin not to strike over pay. The ballot of 75,000 members saw 49.8% vote in favour of three days of strike action with 50.2% voting against. Members had voted by a margin of 3:2 in an earlier consultative ballot to reject the 1% pay offer, which is of course a pay cut in real terms.

The GMB trade union accepted the offer months ago. Unite members rejected the offer at the same time as Unison members however their trade union has not as yet run an official strike ballot.

Some Unison branches argued for acceptance of the offer from day one but the closeness of the ballot shows that it was correct to adopt the Glasgow branch's position of testing the mood of the members by campaigning for a 'yes' vote based on the principle of not recommending further cuts in their living standards. If this campaigning approach had been adopted by more branches, a 'yes' vote would have been won.

But the result is a set-back in the fight against the Con-Dems' attacks on working class peoples' living standards. These attacks are being implemented on behalf of the Con-Dems by the Labour and SNP dominated Scottish local councils employers' group.

Some Unison members may understandably remain to be convinced that individual trade unions striking in isolation can defeat the austerity measures of Westminster and Holyrood. They

may be affected by the idea that against the backdrop of 35,000 lost jobs in local government in Scotland since 2009, they are fortunate to have a permanent job.

Others may have accepted the council employers' argument that they don't have the money to make higher pay awards. Some low-paid workers may have been persuaded that the introduction of a "Scottish local government living wage" of £7.50 an hour was a decent concession by the employers.

It is also likely that the delay in the official strike ballot may have created a feeling among some members that it was too late to fight on an offer that was due from April 2013.

The offer was tabled in December 2012 and the official strike ballot did not begin until July this year. The fact that the ballot was conducted over the summer holidays was also an obstacle to mobilising members.

However, it is important to point out that Unison proposed an initial three-day strike programme, rather than the usual "one day and review" approach adopted in previous national ballots, and that nearly half of members voted to support that programme.

This setback may be shortlived. And it can be overcome by a movement over other issues, including an inevitable below-inflation offer from the employers for next year.

It is the job of left branches and activists to build the mood and morale of members for the struggles ahead and to continue to fight for effective industrial action, including the building of a 24-hour general strike to defeat the cuts.

Coventry postal workers fight bullying management

A postal worker

Postal workers at Royal Mail's Coventry North Delivery Office went on 24-hour strike on 27 August.

Over 80% of the 200+ workers (members of the Communication Workers' Union, CWU), voted to strike over bullying and workloads. For several months, local management have refused to follow national agreements. They make executive decisions to increase our workloads, regardless of the amount of mail coming into the office.

As a worker on the 'shop floor', it appears to me that the culture of management in Royal Mail today is to encourage managers to be confrontational, even intimidating. Some managers relish every opportunity to show the workforce 'who's boss'.

This is happening in offices up and down the country, as local office managers attempt to curry favour with the higher ups, by showing that they can highlight 'efficiency savings' in the local budget. I guess £400+ million profits this year just isn't enough for some people!

The people at the bottom, the postmen and women, pay the price through stress-related illnesses, physical injuries due to overwork and fatigue, worse terms and conditions and ultimately job cuts, as the privatisation of Royal Mail looms. We as a union need to stand up

now, not just locally but nationally, because things will only get worse if Royal Mail is privatised.

All the main parties support some form of privatisation of Royal Mail. But the public have shown, in survey after survey, that they oppose it. We Royal Mail workers need to take industrial action to stop the attacks locally.

And we also need to take national action against privatising this public service. A special national meeting

of CWU reps at the beginning of August agreed to hold a strike ballot against privatisation and to protect jobs and services. This needs to be implemented urgently.

We also need to link up with other workers in other unions who are in dispute, and coordinate any action with them.

We all own Royal Mail at the moment. And we workers are proud to provide a six-day delivery service to 29 million addresses throughout the UK. We can't let it fall into the hands of a few privateers looking to run the service down in pursuit of a fast buck.

• For a publicly owned postal service, not private profits.
• **4,000 workers in Crown Post Offices continued their strike action over the bank holiday weekend. They were striking over office closures, jobs and pay. There have been nine previous strikes.**
More action is likely to follow, including action short of a strike.



photo Coventry SP

In brief

Helicopter disaster

Four North Sea oil workers were killed on 23 August when a Super Puma helicopter ditched onto the sea off Shetland. The two main unions that organise in the offshore industry have demanded the grounding of these helicopters as they have been involved in a series of ditchings and deaths recently. All 33 helicopters have been grounded for investigations. Super Pumas transport thousands of workers every year to and from the rigs and platforms so the unions must draw up a concrete plan to force major improvements in safety. The oil unions in Norway fought for and won the introduction of a Sikorsky helicopter, widely seen to be safer.

Many workers will refuse to get in a Super Puma again, they must be protected from victimisation. Workers' reps must be able to scrutinise the maintenance and safety checks on all transport used in the North Sea. There must be a major programme of unionisation and preparation for industrial action to stop any more deaths. But this shows once again the need to nationalise the oil and gas sector under democratic workers' control.

For more see www.socialistparty.org.uk

Rail strike

London Overground guards, members of transport union RMT, were on strike on 25 and 26 August. This followed the announcement by Transport for London (TfL) of their plans to introduce Driver Only Operation (DOO) on the whole of the London Overground network. The government has cut 12.5% from the TfL budget so far and there are more cuts lined up over the next five years. All ticket offices are facing closure, among other things.

RMT general secretary Bob Crow said: "Closing ticket offices and hacking back the other station and on-train grades would turn the tube and rail in London into a death trap with kids in buggies jammed in gates and passengers who need assistance left to fend for themselves. The whole plan for £2 billion of London transport cuts must be met with industrial and community resistance to push it back."

• For picket line reports see: www.socialistparty.org.uk

Stop Coastguard Cuts

The Swansea and Gower coast is one of the most beautiful places in the country at this time of year and attracts huge numbers of visitors. But visiting this part of the country is a lot more hazardous this year. According to the PCS union, 13 rescue coordinators work out of the Swansea centre, instead of the 22 there should be.

Nine out of the 19 coordination centres around the country are earmarked for closure, including Swansea. These are cuts that threaten to kill. Fight all coastguard cuts.

Ronnie Job

Website

For more workplace and trade union news, see the Socialist Party's website: www.socialistparty.org.uk

Don't let them kill our NHS

Wales' Mid-Staffs crisis

Ross Saunders
Cardiff Socialist Party

Welsh NHS cuts have forced 13,000 operations to be cancelled in the last three years, a whopping 4,000 of which were at the University of Wales Hospital in the Heath, Cardiff.

The Royal College of Surgeons said services at the hospital were "dangerous" and of "poor quality". Patients, they said, were "dying regularly" while waiting for heart surgery. 152 patients have died because of heart surgery delays at the Heath and Morriston (Swansea) hospitals since the recession began.

Labour MP Ann Clwyd has called the Heath "the Welsh equivalent" of the Mid Staffs scandal, but Clwyd played a terrible role as the Con-Dems' "patients' tsar" in attacking health workers for falling standards instead of government cuts.

Opposition is growing but it must get organised immediately, because the pace of attacks is quickening. Over half of the operations cancelled at the Heath were scheduled for this year.

Despite a promise by Labour's First Minister, Carwyn Jones, to Wales TUC that cuts in the NHS would not mean redundancies, the Cardiff and Vale Health Board issued '188' notices to cut 384 staff. Labour-run Neath and Port Talbot and Rhondda Cynon Taff councils threaten to do similar.

The heroic efforts of most NHS

staff, many doing unpaid overtime every week in incredibly intense working environments, will not be able to prevent the cuts doing further damage to the service.

The revelations have blown apart Welsh Labour's claim that they are protecting Wales from Tory attacks. Wales doesn't have privatisation pushed to the same degree as in England, but the funding cuts are on an unprecedented scale.

According to the Audit Office, by 2014/15 spending per person on health in Wales will be lower than any other part of the UK. This will create more space for private healthcare companies to cater to those who can afford to jump the queue.

'Improvements'

Mark Drakeford AM, the health minister, has refused a public inquiry into the crisis at the Heath. Labour denounces cuts when demanded by Westminster, but pretends that they are 'improvements' when the Welsh Government obediently implements them.

For example, Labour claims the plan to downgrade Accident and Emergency Services in South Wales is driven by clinical priorities, not by cuts. Protests have forced a delay in the "South Wales Programme", which would leave just four or five fully equipped A&E and maternity departments for 2.1 million people.

Drakeford has declared ambulance targets "clinically irrelevant". Despite the Herculean efforts of



photo Becky Davis

understaffed ambulance workers, the Welsh Ambulance Service has missed its targets every month for over a year. Urgent cancer care targets have also been missed.

Wales needs an Assembly government that would demand the needed funding, not dress the cuts up as improvements or wring their hands and weep while they swing the Tory axe. Drakeford's first announcement as health minister was that health boards must stick to their spending limits.

The opposite policy should be pursued: health boards should spend what is required to maintain services. Other parts of the public

sector, like councils which can borrow or use reserves, can take up the slack, while a Wales-wide campaign against health cuts links up the vibrant local campaigns to demand the needed funding from Westminster.

Wales TUC, despite passing a motion at its conference, has not organised a demonstration against NHS cuts. Building a mass movement in Wales to defend the NHS, linking up with the rest of the UK, is essential: without it the NHS will be killed by privatisation in England and starvation in Wales.

Read more at socialistpartywales.org.uk

Protest at the Tory Conference

SAVE OUR NHS • Defend Jobs and Services • No to Austerity

Manchester March and Rally - Sunday 29 September

Assemble at Liverpool Road, M3 4FP, 11am
Marching to a rally in Whitworth Park

Fighting mood to defend Whipps Cross Hospital

Waltham Forest Socialist Party

There was standing room only as over 100 people attended a packed public meeting on 19 August, called by Waltham Forest Unison Health branch to discuss the fear that Whipps Cross Hospital is being offered up for cuts, privatisation and closures.

The meeting was chaired by Unison Health branch joint secretary and Socialist Party member Len Hockey, who outlined the debts that Bart's Health Trust (covering Whipps Cross and several other hospitals in east London) is trying to claw back with 'turnaround measures' to cut £77.5 million.

Len also reported that Unison members at the hospital are ready for a fight, including strike action if necessary, in defence of jobs and services. He appealed for support from the community to help build for upcoming events.

Speakers included victimised Whipps Cross Unison activist Charlotte Monroe, who had a disciplinary case initiated against her just a couple of weeks before the cuts were announced.

Glenn Kelly, Bromley Unison, explained his experience of being

victimised by his own employer and raised the need for the TUC to name the date for a 24-hour general strike against austerity.

Dr John Lister from London Health Emergency explained the poisonous role of PFI in the NHS. It is the £15 million-a-year PFI deal on the new London Hospital buildings that is the main factor behind Bart's current crisis.

Workers from Bart's Hospital and the Royal London Hospital as well as community campaigners and doctors from Newham and Tower Hamlets brought their solidarity and thanked the Waltham Forest Unison Health Branch for being the first to make a stand.

Shortly after the financial situation was revealed, the Care Quality Commission published a report that criticised care at Whipps Cross. It was pointed out at the meeting that this could be part of an attempt to soften up public opinion for savage cuts.

The meeting rejected the idea that individual staff are to blame for these failings. It was reiterated time and time again that while bad practice, where it does exist, should be stopped, the real issue is cuts over 30 years that have chipped away at the quality of care. If Whipps Cross has failings, what we need is invest-



photo N Cafferky

ment and improvement, not more cuts and privatisation.

Similarities were drawn with what happened at Stafford Hospital - while the people of Mid-Shropshire were appalled at sub-standard care, they did not see closure as a solution and 50,000 of them marched in April.

At the end of the meeting everyone took away piles of leaflets for the protests in September and Unison petitions to get support for the campaign.

Defend all Barts health services and staff

Protest: Monday 16 September, 5pm, Whipps Cross Hospital main gate

Demonstrate: Saturday 21 September, 12noon, The Green by Whipps Cross Hospital (near roundabout bus stops), marching to Walthamstow town square

Support the DPAC week of action

A disabled activist

Between 29 August and 4 September, Disabled People Against Cuts (DPAC) is organising a 'Reclaiming Our Futures' week of direct action to oppose Con-Dem austerity and attacks on benefits, public services and disability rights.

On Thursday 29 August, DPAC is calling on activists to support Transport for All's protest outside Crossrail's Canary Wharf office in London to demand inclusive access to all stations in this £16 billion project.

Crossrail's current plans will mean seven stations will be inaccessible to wheelchair users and others with mobility impairments.

On 29 August, DPAC is also encouraging its supporters to send letters and Twitter messages to MPs, disability charities and the media to raise the need to both oppose and stop the current attacks on disabled people.

While DPAC's week of action is largely centred on London, there will be a national day of action on Friday 30 August.

Last year DPAC's campaign focused on the role of hypocritical Paralympic sponsor Atos in



the administration of the brutal Work Capability Assessment, but this year activists are being encouraged to organise protests on a range of issues including welfare reform and the bedroom tax.

On Sunday 1 September, a 'Reclaiming the Social Model' event is being held in the Unite trade union's London headquarters.

And following further on-line action on Tuesday, DPAC's week of action will conclude on Wednesday 4 September with a 'Freedom Drive'.

This will involve four 'blocks' of activists meeting outside the London headquarters of the Departments of Health, Transport, Energy and Climate Change and Education to draw attention to the Con-Dems' attacks on specific rights.

These 'blocks' will then converge for a lobby of Parliament and the launch of a UK Disabled People's Manifesto.

"I HAVE A DREAM"

50th Anniversary of the march on Washington for jobs and freedom

"The size of the mobilization on that hot August day in 1963 was unprecedented; the upbeat, confident joyous spirit was pervasive. People from every part of the country were there, many of them activists from across the colorline, calling for Freedom Now!"

Jack O' Dell,
labour and civil rights activist

The 50th anniversary of the historic March on Washington for jobs and freedom falls on 28 August 2013. It was on this 250,000-strong march that Martin Luther King gave his famous 'I have a dream' speech from the steps of the Lincoln Memorial. Eljeer Hawkins, an activist in Socialist Alternative in the US, provides the history behind the event.

The mass movements for civil rights which came before and after the march won victories against the brutal racist system that existed in the US. However, the enormous courage and determination of the workers and the youth who participated were often let down by the tactics of their leaderships. King himself moved from a position of passive resistance and for a gradual reform of capitalism towards an understanding that more radical ideas were needed.

Even in 1964, following the successful passage of the Civil Rights Act Martin Luther King said: "Now our struggle is for genuine equality, which means economic equality. For now we know that it isn't enough to integrate lunch counters. What does it profit a man to be able to eat at an integrated lunch counter if he doesn't earn enough money to buy a hamburger and a cup of coffee?"

The commemoration of this landmark day is taking place in a period of unprecedented attacks by big business and its two parties, Democratic and Republican, on the rights fought for and won by militant social struggle of working people, youth, and particularly black workers and youth.

Jim Crow

'Jim Crow' became the common term to refer to the institutionalised segregation, oppression and political exclusion of blacks in the South. The Jim Crow laws lasted between 1876 and 1965.

After the American civil war (1861-65) the radical 'reconstruction', an experimental period of "multi-racial democracy", brought land reform and voting rights for blacks and poor whites. Northern capitalists backed the movement of poor whites and blacks that fought for this - to a point. However, once the Northern capitalists consolidated their victory over the Southern plantation owners and were confident of their power they allowed Southern big business a freer rein.

The end of 'reconstruction' coincided with the electoral crisis and great

compromise between the Democratic and Republican parties in 1877 which brought the return of the former slave owning planter class in the south. A tiny, rich, white elite in the south sought to re-establish its power over property, political, social and economic life. Working and poor people, particularly black workers, lost many education and voting rights, as well as access to jobs.

The Ku Klux Klan was unleashed to carry out a reign of terror on black people, as well as civil rights, labour movement and left activists. 'Lynch law', state sponsored and extra-judicial violence, inflicted the reality of no rights for black people.

Throughout the years of Jim Crow, the black freedom movement wasn't docile in the face of the violence, fervent racism and divide and conquer tactics used by big business. The black freedom movement fought tooth and nail through organisations which included the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters union, the Communist Party USA, the National Association for the Advance of Colored People (NAACP), which concentrated on legal change, and in the labour movement. These organisations laid the basis for the modern civil rights movement.

The precedents

The call to go to Washington DC has a long history, dating back to the Veterans' Bonus March of 1932 in the midst of the Great Depression. The World War One veterans' encampment demanded economic compensation for service during the war.

A large proportion of those who went

abroad to fight in World War Two were black. This had an effect as black soldiers were struck by the glaring hypocrisy of the war propaganda. The US capitalist class claimed it was sending men to Europe to fight against the racism of the Nazis - while at home vicious racism was the norm. Most military units were segregated.

The labour shortage resulting from the war meant black people got jobs in industry that were previously unavailable to them, as did women. During the war, in the period of economic growth that existed in the US, there was a big movement of black workers into the cities, also bringing changes to their ability and confidence to organise and struggle.

It also brought the poverty levels suffered by the black population into sharp relief. This, and the anti-colonial struggles of the masses in Africa and Asia at that time, brought greater confidence to resist the racist Jim Crow laws.

The 1941 March on Washington Movement, led by labour leader and socialist A Philip Randolph, demanded the end of racial discrimination within the war industry. There were 50,000 paid-up members of the movement but the march never took place. President Roosevelt capitulated to the rising pressure and issued Executive Order 8802, which banned racial discrimination in government employment, defence industries and training programmes.

This was an important victory that was preparation for the movement of the 1950s and 60s but it was a mistake to cancel the march - which could have had a greater impact. Further victories came in 1954 when the Brown v Board of Education decision ended the separa-

rate and unequal doctrine of Jim Crow within America's educational system.

On 28 August 1955, Emmett Till was lynched and brutally beaten for allegedly whistling at a white woman. The 14 year old black youth from Chicago was visiting family in Mississippi. Mamie Till made the heart-breaking and powerful decision to have an open casket so the world could see the violence of Jim Crow. Mamie's gut-wrenching statement became a rallying cry for workers and youth - particularly black workers, poor people and youth to challenge Jim Crow.

Three months later Rosa Parks, a garment worker in Alabama refused to give up her bus seat to a white man. She was arrested and the Montgomery Bus Boycott movement against Jim Crow and segregation followed. King, a local preacher, came to prominence in this movement. The bus boycott was 100% successful and after another year of struggle, again in the face of vicious violent attacks, the desegregation of the buses in Montgomery was achieved.

The march

Leading up to this historic day there were important and bloody battles in Albany, Georgia and Birmingham, Alabama; the heroic Freedom Riders struggled bravely for the desegregation of terminal facilities and buses on interstate highways; there were sit-in strikes and the killing of NAACP Mississippi leader Medgar Evers. The struggles of the 1950s culminated in the 1957 Civil Rights Act, which was, however, seen by the movement as a token gesture. In the midst of state sponsored and

The situation today

On 24 August up to 100,000 workers, youth and people colour gathered at the Lincoln memorial to commemorate the march on Washington. Unfortunately the organisers of the march attempted to contain and smother struggles against racial and class oppression. Attorney General Eric Holder and President Obama, corporatised black misleaders of the movement, gave keynote speeches but are the exact opposite of the powerful radical history of the black freedom movement and Dr King's legacy.

Socialist Alternative says: if we want to fight racism then we have to take on the whole system - capitalism! We draw inspiration from the tremendous "Moral Mondays" movement in North Carolina, the low wage workers' campaigns around the country for a \$15 living wage, the struggle of the teachers unions across the country, the Dream Defenders, and the protest rallies after the Zimmerman verdict.

But the past five years under President Obama has brought the deadly consequences of the neoliberal austerity agenda of Wall Street and attacks on rights such as the erosion of safeguards against voter discrimination and suppression.

Black workers, youth and the poor are also facing very grave conditions in healthcare, housing and education disparity.

- 26% of black people live below the poverty line
- 45% of children born in the black middle class will end up in poverty
- 74% of black children still attend segregated schools

Prison and police state

- There are 1.3 million black and brown women and men incarcerated out of 2.3 million prisoners, part of the over six million-strong under "correctional supervision" population in America
- The US accounts for 5% of the world's population, but 23% of the world's prisoners
- A black man is killed every 28 hours in the US by a cop or a vigilante
- Under Stop and Frisk 685,724 people were stopped in 2011, blacks and Latinos combined made up 78% of those stopped with 88% found innocent of any crime



white vigilante violence the church-led Southern Christian Leadership Council (SCLC), of which King was a member, and the college youth-led Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) were born. Although most of the SCLC leaders were preachers and pacifists it was based on mass action and supported direct acts of civil disobedience.

On a hot and humid day 250,000 people from around the country, predominantly black workers and youth, gathered in front of the Lincoln memorial to demand an end to Jim Crow apartheid in education, voting, healthcare, jobs and housing.

The earlier phase and character of the civil rights movement was linked to the Democratic Party and was dominated by reformist politics. The aim of the movement was to embarrass the US government during the post-World War Two economic upswing to win legal equality.

President John F Kennedy's administration was seen as a 'friend' to the movement. But it sought to control the leadership and organisations of the civil rights movement. In fact SNCC chairperson John Lewis was forced to change his fiery speech by march organisers, dropping his criticism of the Kennedy administration.

His original draft included the following: "We march today for jobs and freedom, but we have nothing to be proud of. For hundreds of thousands of our brothers are not here. They have no money for their transportation, for they are receiving starvation wages... or no wages at all..."

"Mr Kennedy is trying to take the revolution out of the street and put it in the courts. Listen Mr Kennedy... the black masses are on the march for jobs and freedom and we must say to the politicians that there won't be a cooling-off period."

Speech

It was Dr King's rhetorical benchmark 'I Have a Dream' speech that captured the sentiment and power of the day. King stated: "1963 is not an end, but a beginning. And those who hope that the Negro needed to blow off steam... There will be neither rest nor tranquility in America until the Negro is granted his citizenship rights. The whirlwinds of revolt will continue to shake the foundations of our nation until the bright day of justice emerges." The speech would energise and mobilise the black working class, poor and youth.

After that grand day, on Sunday 15 September 1963 the southern racists responded with a dynamite explosion at the Sixteenth Street Baptist Church in Birmingham, Alabama. Four girls' aged eleven to 14, Addie Mae Collins, Denise McNair, Carole Robertson, and Cynthia West, were pronounced dead.

1963

A great debate ensued within the black freedom movement led by figures such as Malcolm X, initially of the Nation of Islam (NOI), and the Detroit based Freedom Now Party over the weakness and strategy of the movement. This layer of militant leadership posed questions of political independence from the two-party system, internationalism, supporting the anti-colonial revolution and reaffirming African Americans' sense of self-worth.

The black nationalist and socialist activists would point out racial justice couldn't be secured as long as big business and white supremacy dominated the means of production and industry.

Following the death of President Kennedy in November, given the social power and pressure on US capitalism by the black freedom movement and

international events President Lyndon Baines Johnson introduced new laws. Segregation in Alabama was defeated and a new Civil Rights Act passed in 1964 and the Voting Rights Act in 1965.

One of King's greatest contributions as a civil rights leader was his argument against black separatism. He instead called for a coalition with poor and working class whites: "Within the white majority there exists a substantial group who cherish democratic principles above privilege and who have demonstrated a will to fight side by side with the Negro against injustice."

"Another and more substantial group is composed of those having common needs with the Negro and who will benefit equally with him in the achievement of social progress. There are, in fact, more poor white Americans than there are Negro. Their need for a war on poverty is no less desperate than the Negro's."

King understood the collective power of workers in workplaces. At the time of his assassination he was founding a movement against poverty. He was also becoming actively involved in supporting workers in struggle. For these reasons he was a major threat for US capitalism.

Black Power

The black power movement and its organisations such as the Black Panther Party for Self-Defence, Revolutionary Action Movement and a radicalised SNCC under Chairperson Stokely Carmichael grabbed the attention of a new militant section of black workers and youth around the country. The black power movement, inspired by the international revolutionary struggles, posed the questions of self-determination, self-defence, and political and economic power, drawing on political philosophies ranging from socialism, revolutionary nationalism, to Maoism and black capitalism.

Simultaneously, the black freedom movement would be met with governmental opposition under the auspices of the Counter Intelligence Program (Cointelpro), which sought to prevent the development of a unified radical movement and leadership. Cointelpro developed under the leadership of FBI chief J Edgar Hoover.

The militant leadership and organisations of the black freedom movement would be drowned in blood by the forces of big business. It is impossible to place the radical Dr King, 21 year-old Black Panther Party leader Fred Hampton or Malcolm X in the same political space as Wall Street funded corporate politicians such as President Barack Obama. In order to sanitise the radical and revolutionary movements of the 1960s, the black freedom movement had to be extinguished or co-opted by capitalism and its two parties.

The black freedom movement tore down the walls of legal segregation in the 1950s and 60s. The time is now to construct a new, sustaining, multi-ethnic mass movement that will fight back against racial and class oppression across the country. As Dr King said: "We are dealing with class issues. Something is wrong with capitalism... Maybe America must move towards democratic socialism."

Socialist Alternative in the US argues for the need to break from the two party system and build a mass party of the working class. Our city council election campaigns in Seattle, Minneapolis and Boston are examples of what must be done in this period of crisis to confront the agenda of Wall Street.

Find out about public meetings on the civil rights movement in your area: www.socialistparty.org.uk/whatson

See socialistalternative.org for US news and socialist analysis from Socialist Alternative, supporters of the Committee for a Workers' International to which the Socialist Party is affiliated

Carlisle Building the anti-bedroom tax fightback

Brent Kennedy
Carlisle Axe the Bedroom Tax

Carlisle Axe the Bedroom Tax campaigners have really got the message out in the last two months.

In July we had a city centre protest, which attracted up to 100 people over the course of two hours and good write-ups in the local press. But now we are concentrating on

the housing estates and have covered most parts of the city.

There was a public meeting with the local head of Riverside Housing Association - who were handed 6,000 council houses for £2,500 each ten years ago.

We offered our cooperation if they would guarantee not to evict tenants due to the tax, and to fight for the repeal of the tax and reimbursement of losses incurred by

public housing bodies after the next election.

We thought that this would go down well with the Riverside boss, seeing as he's a prominent Labour Party member, but somehow he declined. Funny, that.

After much detailed questioning, he finally admitted that severely disabled tenants in Carlisle who fall into arrears will be eventually forced out of their homes with no alternative accommodation and will then no longer qualify for social housing.

So we've adopted the Unite trade union's proposal to collect names and numbers for a phone chain of people willing to turn up to protect such tenants from the bailiffs, as well as mobilising their neighbours. This has found a positive response from tenants and we are now building networks on their estates.

They will be looking to us to coordinate this work and give a lead. We can't let them down now, having urged them publicly through protests, leaflets and the press to fight back.



A tower of resistance photo J O'Brien

Blame bankers not tenants!

Jimmy Haddow
Edinburgh, Socialist Party Scotland

Edinburgh Labour councillor Cammy Day, vice-convenor of the health, well-being and housing committee, considers that the council should deny emergency hardship payments to tenants affected by the bedroom tax if they spend too much on 'non-essential' items such as cigarettes and alcohol. Edinburgh's Evening News reported this with TV's fictional so-called undeserving poor of the Gallagher family from 'Shameless'. Rather than fight the bedroom tax, the Labour-SNP coalition council

would rather stigmatise tenants and force them into poverty.

Edinburgh faces the loss of £107 million in housing benefit over the next five years. The share of bedroom tax-affected council tenants in rent arrears has risen from 27% in April this year to 72% by the end of May.

Edinburgh council should challenge the SNP Scottish government to change Section 16 of the Housing Act Scotland to rule out evictions for the bedroom tax and write off all debt accrued due to the bedroom tax using the £179 million government underspend from last year.

Sixty 'sleep outs' took place in towns and cities across Britain on Saturday 24 August in protest against the bedroom tax.

In Dundee, Socialist Party Scotland member Philip Stott said: "There has been an excellent turnout of not only members of our campaign, but also people we had not met before who came along to offer solidarity and support. We organised this event to highlight the brutal impact this austerity tax is having on over 3,000 of the poorest households in Dundee, who have had housing benefit stolen from them for the crime of having 'spare' bedrooms."

Stopping evictions

This is not about having a punch-up with bailiffs. It's about making evictions as difficult and costly - financially and politically - as possible.

Last week we held a protest and street meeting - well-reported in the local paper and on the BBC and ITV regional news programmes - which visibly exposed the lie that this bedroom tax is about sharing out housing resources.

The backcloth was formed by piles of bricks and rubble, framed by arching JCBs, where a week earlier 16 post-war, single bedroomed flats had stood. 400 residents of the

Botcherby estate had petitioned to save and modernise the flats, but the two- and three-bedroomed houses which will now replace them will bring the "social" housing association more revenue.

Neighbours who want the option of downsizing to avoid the bedroom tax came to the meeting, asking "where can we go now?"

A Riverside spokesman later told the TV crews that they have "an abundance" of single-room flats - 1,700 out of 6,000 properties. We've sent out a search party but can't find

them - have they secretly ended the 30-year drought of building social houses and built two new estates of single flats without anyone noticing?

A national survey shows that councils can only rehouse fewer than 4% of those affected by the bedroom tax, meaning that over 96% are trapped and being fleeced.

As we told the media: "this isn't about housing, it's just another way of getting more money out of working class and vulnerable people to pay for big tax cuts to the wealthy and big business."

Arrest Cuadrilla bosses - not fracking protesters!

Kevin Dale
Brighton Socialist Party

Hundreds of protesters have set up camp in the small village of Balcombe, West Sussex, to stop unsafe, environmentally dangerous gas shale extraction - fracking - by Cuadrilla.

On Sunday 18 August, Socialist Party members joined a 1,000-strong demonstration called by 'No Dash For Gas' that marched from the station. Although a heavy

police presence meant the demonstration was unable to reach the drilling site, a human chain was formed around the site.

Police later admitted that policing the demonstrations has cost £2.3 million. The mood was carnival-like and peaceful, as Balcombe residents showed their support by joining in the demonstration.

Monday 19 August saw the beginning of direct action against Cuadrilla, who had been forced to suspend drilling due to the demonstrations. Hundreds of demon-

strators blocked the B2036 road between Balcombe and Cuckfield.

Earlier in the day, campaigners forced their way into the company's headquarters in Lichfield, Staffordshire, and six protesters glued themselves to the London HQ of Cuadrilla's PR company.

In Balcombe, police served a Public Order Act notice and arrested 30, saying the crowd might cause serious damage to property or disrupt the life of the community - despite the community largely supporting the action. The real damage and disruption is being done by Cuadrilla!

The idea that unsafe shale gas extraction is about cheaper energy for working class people is nonsense. It's about more profits for the greedy energy companies and never mind the consequences for the rest of us.

As socialists we need to link the protests to the wider movement against the capitalist system and its demand for profit at any cost.



Sixty people attended the Socialist Party (SP) summer camp in Ware, Hertfordshire, on the August bank holiday weekend, organised by Eastern region SP.

As well as the political discussions, including '100 years since the Dublin Lockout' (pictured), many campers took part in the activities such as the climbing wall, archery and even axe throwing! Over £800 was pledged to the fighting fund appeal at the Saturday night 'World in Turmoil' meeting, where SP general secretary Peter Taaffe introduced the discussion photo A Hill

Burston Strike School Rally 2013

Sunday 1 September, 10.55am to 3.45pm

Church Green, Burston, near Diss, Norfolk

The Burston Strike School was at the centre of the longest running strike in British history, between 1914 and 1939

Guest speakers and live entertainment - organised by Unite the Union

See burstonstrikeschool.wordpress.com/the-rally for more info

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SOCIALIST PARTY FIGHTING FUND

	£ target	£ received	July-September 2013	Deadline 27 September
South West	1,400	1,433	████████████████████	████████████████████
North West	1,200	730	████████████████	████████████████
South East	750	412	██████████████	██████████████
West Midlands	2,100	1,026	██████████████	██████████████
Wales	2,300	1,007	██████████████	██████████████
Northern	600	257	██████████	██████████
East Midlands	1,600	676	██████████	██████████
Southern	1,200	488	██████████	██████████
Yorkshire	2,900	627	██████████	██████████
London	6,100	1,272	██████████	██████████
Eastern	1,200	227	██████████	██████████
England & Wales	3,650	221	██████████	██████████
TOTAL	25,000	8,380	██████████	██████████

Egypt: Hundreds killed as al-Sisi's military tightens its grip on power

Robert Bechert
Committee for a Workers' International (CWI)

Millions across the world, and especially in the Middle East, have been shocked by the killing of hundreds of mainly unarmed people in the Egyptian military's brutal clearance of the two pro-Morsi camps in Cairo. Since then the military has made widespread arrests.

There are justified fears that this is an attempt to begin the re-establishment of Mubarak's 'security state' under a new leadership. Indeed, on 22 August Hosni Mubarak was released from prison.

The military's assault has enormously deepened the polarisation in society, but a polarisation not along class lines, but often increasingly on pro- or anti- the military tops' actions.

If there is no independent movement organised by the working class, and if the developing battle over Egypt's future is simply waged between the generals and conservative religious forces, these events threaten to seriously derail the revolution that began in 2011. Genuine trade union and workers' organisations are the only force capable of uniting all sections of society in a battle against dictatorship and capitalist exploitation.

While sizeable, the initial demonstrations of support for deposed President Morsi were not as large as the vast anti-Morsi protests a few months ago. In fact the two pro-Morsi camps, while an annoyance to the new, military-led regime posed no direct, immediate threat.

The timing and the brutality of their clearance was fundamentally a show of force by the generals to serve as a warning to intimidate any current or future opponents to the military.

Immediately after Morsi's removal as president, the CWI warned that the Egyptian generals' hijacking of June and July's huge, up to 17 million strong, anti-Morsi mobilisation was a basis for them to take power themselves.

It "opened the doors to the dangers of sectarianism, different varieties of counter-revolution and the possible ultimate defeat of the revolution." (Polarisation grows - No trust in the generals. 10 July 2013)

Workers attacked

Now it is pro-Morsi protesters who are being crushed, but just two days before the bloody 14 August attack on the pro-Morsi camps the regime moved against a workers' sit-in at Suez Steel, arresting two of the occupation's leaders.

While the attack at Suez Steel showed the generals' class character, it was not a new experience for workers in post-Mubarak Egypt. Previously Morsi's government had also shown its capitalist character when, last February, security forces attacked a Portland Cement workers' sit-in in Alexandria.

Since the 3 July ousting of Morsi, the military tops under General al-Sisi have worked to consolidate power in their own hands. Old Mubarak era security units have been re-activated.

Two-thirds of the new provincial governors announced on 13 August were either army or police generals, some with "glaring records of hostility to the 2011 revolution" (Econo-



The military hijacked June and July's millions-strong anti-Morsi mobilisations to take power

mist, London, 17 August 2013).

But the military did not simply stage a coup, they falsely claimed they were acting on behalf of the mighty movement against the Morsi-led government that unfolded in June.

The generals were able to take over because, unfortunately, this magnificent protest of millions did not have its own representative and

This policy of supporting the military tops is a road to disaster for the trade unions

independent leadership able and willing to show how that movement could take power itself. So the generals took the initiative and seized power while pretending to be acting on behalf of the protesters.

The fact that the military took over enabled the Muslim Brotherhood leaders to present themselves as defenders of democracy, even though increasingly authoritarian methods were being used during Morsi's brief presidency.

The mounting sectarianism, shown in the attacks on the Christian minority's churches because the Christian leaders are perceived to be supporting the military, can mean that the military will be seen by some as a protection against religious conflict and the development of jihadist violence. But this is not the case.

Actually the military's removal of Morsi, and the support it has got from many foreign governments, will itself fuel Islamic guerrilla and terrorist activity if supporters of right-wing Islamist parties draw the conclusion that the Muslim Brotherhood's strategy of gaining power through elections has failed. The impact of these events will be felt throughout the Middle East and beyond.

Since the start of the revolution in 2011 there has been a massive growth of the workers' movement in Egypt. Workers' struggles, already important before Mubarak's overthrow, have enormously developed. There has been a huge movement into independent unions from a membership of less than 50,000 when Mubarak fell to over 2.5 million, and there are also four million

in the formerly state controlled official unions.

Recently strikes have been running at the rate of 800 a month, compared with 160 a month last year, not just on pay and conditions but also against Mubarak-era management, victimisations and privatisation.

However, an independent voice from the workers' movement has been hardly heard since Morsi's overthrow. Indeed Kamal Abu-Eita, the president of the independent trade union federation, EFITU, has become minister of labour and begun calling for an end to strikes.

Not for the first time in history, a trade union leader has been brought into a capitalist government with the express purpose of holding back struggles and trying to make workers accept a fundamentally military government.

Officially three trade union federations supported General al-Sisi's call for a mass demonstration on 26 July to show support for the new government, although significantly in the EFITU executive this was only after a nine to five vote.

Programme

This policy of supporting the military tops is a road to disaster for the trade unions. Workers' organisations need to have their own, independent and class-based programme, to offer a way to prevent both the consolidation of a military regime and the threat of increasing sectarian division and violence.

Immediately the key question is organising democratically run, non-sectarian defence of communities and workplaces from state and sectarian attack across the country.

The workers' organisations have the potential to begin this task, combined with offering a political alternative to the military, Muslim Brotherhood and capitalist rule. With such a programme it would be possible for the workers' movement to begin to undermine both the generals and the Muslim Brotherhood leaderships.

The trade unions, especially the EFITU, should demand that Abu-Eita leaves the government and should launch their own campaign against repression, sectarianism and military rule, in defence of democratic rights and for immediate free elections to a revolutionary constituent assembly so that the Egyptian people can decide their own future.

General al-Sisi and his fellow military rulers will not find it easy to firmly re-establish a 'security state'. The revolution is not yet over. The rapid disillusionment and subsequent outburst of opposition to Morsi's rule showed how quickly opposition can develop.

While the recent bloody events may understandably produce hesitation due to fears of repression and the growth of sectarianism, this will not last forever. The combination of Egypt's deep economic and social crisis plus the emerging strength of the workers' movement will lead to renewed struggles.

Left or workers' organisations should have no thought of supporting this military regime in any way; it has never had a progressive character. This is why the regime has been supported by the western powers which, like Obama, have now only been very gently criticising the brutal suppression of opposition.

In tumultuous events like these, the workers' movement, and the revolution, needs clarity more than ever. From the moment of February 2011's euphoric overthrow of Mubarak, the CWI has been arguing that the revolution could only be successfully concluded in the interests of working people when: "the mass of the Egyptian people... assert their right to decide the country's future. No trust should be put in figures from the regime or their imperialist masters to run the country or run elections. There must be immediate, fully free elections, safeguarded by mass committees of the workers and poor, to a revolutionary constituent assembly that can decide the country's future."

"Now the steps already taken to form local committees and genuine independent workers' organisations should be speeded up, spread wider and linked up. A clear call for the formation of democratically elected and run committees in all workplaces, communities and among the military rank and file would get a wide response.

"These bodies should... be the basis for a government of workers' and poor representatives that would crush the remnants of the dictatorship, defend democratic rights and start to meet the economic and social needs of the mass of Egyptians." (Mubarak goes - clear out the entire regime! February 11, 2011)

This programme is even more relevant and urgent today.

The full version of this article can be read on www.socialistworld.net

The Committee for a Workers' International

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

The CWI is organised in 45 countries and works to unite the working class and oppressed peoples against global capitalism and to fight for a socialist world. For more details including CWI publications write to: CWI, PO Box 3688, London E11 1YE. email cwi@worldsoc.co.uk

www.socialistworld.net

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



South Africa: Marikana - workers remember the police massacre

Over 5,000 mineworkers gathered on 'the mountain' where their comrades had been shot down one year earlier.

Democratic Socialist Movement (CWI South Africa) reporters



Israel/Palestine: "Talks are a charade"

Actions of Israeli government reveal its real intention - mass movement needed.

Paul Murphy MEP Socialist Party (CWI Ireland) interview on RT



Tunisia: Mass protests to remove Ennahda regime

UGTT and Popular Front must organise for a government of workers and poor. No return of forces of old regime.

Serge Jordan (CWI)

Film review

Elysium - an 'allegory for class warfare'

Brettros
CWI Austria

Elysium is a dystopian sci-fi action film starring Matt Damon and Jodie Foster. It follows the story of Max da Costa, a factory worker living in the ruins of Los Angeles in the year 2154.

In this future, the rich and powerful have fled the poverty, disease, and environmental destruction they've wrought on the world, and moved to a space station called Elysium. There they live in an idyllic society, far removed from ordinary people's struggles on earth.

Like director Neill Blomkamp's critically acclaimed last film District 9, Elysium uses the sci-fi genre to explore social issues. The major difference is that instead of humans exploiting and oppressing aliens, it is the super-rich exploiting and oppressing the overwhelming majority.

Asked in an interview whether Elysium reveals how he sees Earth in 140 years, Blomkamp responded "No, no, no. This isn't science fiction. This is today. This is now." He sees this movie as "meant to be an allegory for class warfare."

In fact the film, representing



The film was shot in the modern-day slums of Mexico City

the future Los Angeles, a hell-hole of human misery, was shot in the modern-day slums of Mexico City. The massive divisions between rich and poor, while set in the future, reflect what already exists under capitalism today. The pay gap between

American CEOs and workers has grown by 1,000% in the last 63 years (data from Bloomberg, April 2013).

In the US McDonald's workers are told to get a second job and work over 70 hours a week to make ends meet on minimum wage; hundreds

of thousands of immigrants are deported each year, tearing families apart; the rich get the world's highest-quality healthcare, while the poor get by without health insurance or struggle to maintain low-quality coverage.

Unlike films which show the oppressors' "human" side, Elysium makes no attempt to humanise the rich and powerful. They are either seen as blithely ignorant of the inhuman system of inequality and exploitation that they benefit from, or are consciously fighting to protect that system.

When a group of gangsters try to hijack a rich executive making his way to Elysium, the audience feels no sympathy for him; it's the same executive that runs the factory that has effectively killed Max - his only chance of survival is making it to Elysium.

The film doesn't say it explicitly, but the root of the problem is capitalism. Socialists say that this system that puts short-term profits ahead of all things, from the environment to workers' living conditions, must be replaced to achieve equality and real change. The film shows Matt Damon fighting for humankind rather than the actual organising needed to establish a society that can meet the needs of all.

Nonetheless, this is a film worth watching.

This is an edited extract from a review that appears on socialistworld.net

Exhibition review

Lowry's one track vision



'The Fever Van' Lowry's work is shockingly relevant today

Amalia Loizidou

The exhibition "Lowry and the painting of Modern Life" at Tate Britain (until 20 October) has quite a rich collection of Lowry's work depicting industrialised Britain. This "painter of modern life" worked from the 1920s until a few decades later.

"I've a one-track mind. I only deal with poverty. Always with gloom," Lowry said. Lowry was a Conservative voter. But two things are almost always present in his work - factory chimneys and crowds. He was painting what he saw in his rounds as a rent collector.

As he started developing his art in the 1920s and 1930s, times of economic depression, crowds and factories would inevitably

...two things are almost always present in his work - factory chimneys and crowds. He was painting what he saw in his rounds as a rent collector

Life of Labour Britain', the paintings show scenes such as evictions ('The Removal', 1928), fatal diseases ('The Fever Van' 1935, where ill children were taken from their homes to hospitals, often never to return again) and auctioneers (pawn shops, 'Jackson's Auction and Saleroom', 1952).

These are easily comprehensible in today's austerity Britain of benefit cuts, bedroom tax, along with the dismantling of the NHS, pawn shops and pay day loan companies becoming part of working people's daily lives.

Lowry's work, painted during the Great Depression and the post-war recovery, is shockingly relevant today. There are more similarities between our lives and those of the crowds in his paintings than differences.

mean his focus would be on what those times meant for the working people and poor of the north of England (being a Northerner himself).

In one room entitled 'The Social

The role of a workers' rep

The excellent interview with Glynn Doherty (Socialist 776) showed a week of activity representing members, whether at employment tribunals, directly with the employer or running a "drop in centre" for members.

Things are different today for a trade union rep compared to my day back in the 1970s and 1980s. The balance of forces in the workplace was more on the workers' side then. The numbers in trade unions have halved but also the ordinary worker's confidence is much less than it was.

Union membership

Nupe, a founder union that merged with others to become Unison later on, grew from 60,000 in 1970 to 600,000 by the end of the decade. Nupe organised the lowest paid workers in the NHS, councils and the public sector in general.

The Thatcher government's main purpose in 1979 was to reduce the organised working class's power which she did through de-industrialisation, anti-union laws and right-wing Labour and union leaders who abdicated responsibility for what was happening.

As industry became far smaller, the number of big workplaces dramatically declined. In the past the big manufacturing workplaces set

the pace which other workers followed. Certainly low-paid unorganised sections of the working class got the confidence to organise and take strike action from what was happening in industry.

The role of a workplace rep then was different. Crucially, shop stewards in general in the bigger, well organised workplaces, such as the car industry, engineering, mines, the docks, etc, were elected and accountable to the shop floor, and subject to recall at any time. Their workmates looked to them to oppose the bosses' attacks. The reps knew they could call on their members to take action to defend their interests if needed.

The workplace was the centre of activity. Strong shop stewards committees meant there could be collective action if the bosses attacked workers, including individual workers. The involvement of full-time officials was seen as a last resort. It was by strike action, often "unofficial," that most gains were made.

The modern rep deals mainly with individual cases. Forward looking representatives, like Glynn, see the rep's real role as preparing their members for collective action. Workers themselves will gain the confidence to do so, as the bosses are sitting on dynamite and will be made to pay the cost.

Bill Mullins

A hundred years ago, the most bitter industrial battle in Ireland's history - the Dublin lockout of 1913 - was under way. The Socialist Party in Ireland has produced a lively book commemorating this immortal struggle and the inspiring leadership of fighters such as Jim Larkin.

Let us rise! The Dublin Lockout - its impact and legacy

Special offer for readers of the Socialist: £5 including postage and packing

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Nothing new at Sports Direct

Ex-Sports Soccer worker

As a former employee of Sports Soccer which was the predecessor of Sports Direct it came as little surprise to me to learn that this company is one of the worst culprits for using zero-hour contracts.

Sports Soccer's policy at the store I worked at was basically to sign as many people as it could onto zero-hour contracts, which put a lot of reserve labour at their disposal. The deal was if you step out of line once or we don't like the look of you we will give your hours to somebody else.

It was store policy that you had to be on the shop floor ten minutes before your shift (and pay) started. So for every six shifts they got a free hour out of you.

In fact, they got a lot more than that - it was also made clear to you at the interview that you were expected at the end of the day to tidy the store which, again, was unpaid and usually took between 30 and 45 minutes. Shop floor workers, I am sure you are shocked to learn, were on minimum wage.



photo Ian Pattison

Employees had to enter the store through the back door where there was a big sign saying that if you opened it without a supervisor present you would face immediate dismissal. Worst of all you were basically treated as a criminal and subject to a body and bag search at the end of every shift.

Tesco: unpaid hours and security issues

Declan Clune Hampshire Socialist Party

The attack on pay and conditions is continuing at a pace for workers in the retail industry. I spoke to a Tesco shop worker this week who told me of his joy at being promoted to team leader. However, after going to a new store to take on the role it became clear very quickly what this 'promotion' meant.

The store manager had no intention of providing sufficient staffing levels to cope with the workload expected. On more than one occasion the team leader was working with just one other staff member for the entire nine-hour shift. This meant one person on the till and the other sorting out deliveries, stock replenishment, finance security, baking of breads and rolls, and many other duties.



photo Suzanne Beishon

Once when the manager found that not all of these duties had been completed at the end of the shift he got annoyed. The team leader defended himself and was told that he was expected to work beyond the shift times for up to two hours to complete the work - without pay!

He quickly realised that the small increase in pay would be cancelled out after working free hours at the store.

There were security issues with thefts and aggressive customers. With only two staff members in the store they felt vulnerable and so asked Tesco for any possibility of security provision for the store. They were told this was not budgeted for but would be reassessed should anything serious occur.

After this clear case of exploitation and lack of security, the team leader left. He was told that to be successful in a career in management at Tesco he had to accept longer hours for no extra pay.

I told him about the campaigning being done by Sick Of Your Boss for decent contracts and working conditions and he was keen to get involved.

Sick Of Your Boss protest reports

Sports Direct HQ

Youth Fight for Jobs held a protest in Shirebrook, a village in North Derbyshire, which is home to Sports Direct's headquarters and distribution centre.

We were making a stand against the company's use of zero-hour contracts - which 90% of their staff are estimated to be on - and making a call to workers to get organised and fight for decent contracts.

Our protest got a lot of attention and support from passers-by and we spoke to current and ex-workers of Sports Direct.

They told us about working in a factory with a bullying management, walking miles with heavy cages to push, completely inadequate health and safety, including locked fire escapes, air conditioning switched off - all for minimum wage.

After finishing their shift it can take another hour before they can leave while they queue to be physically searched.

Mike Ashley, the owner of Sports Direct, is seen regularly in Shirebrook, sitting in the market place drinking coffee and eating a bacon

cob with the locals. However, someone who is worth £2.3 billion has nothing in common with any residents there.

And what's more, he's only made that money through super-exploitation of the people working for him. As we said at the protest: every pound he doesn't pay his workers, he knows is another pound in his pocket.

Workers are angry, but there is a huge amount of fear about what will happen to them if they take action.

Youth Fight for Jobs is working with the Unite trade union and others to build a campaign that can unite all workers to stop the race to the bottom by fighting for decent jobs, pay, hours and working conditions.

Becci Heagney, East Midlands Youth Fight for Jobs

Plymouth

On 3 and 7 August, Plymouth Youth Fight for Jobs supporters campaigned against zero-hour contracts with Sports Direct, along with other shops in the city centre including Subway, Primark, TK Maxx and Holland & Barretts,



On the Plymouth protest photo Plymouth Youth Fight for Jobs

targeted for leafleting.

Because of nationwide protesting, Sports Direct hired extra security. A few activists were kicked out of Sports Direct for disseminating information on the staff's rights.

This gives an indication of the extent to which the workers are bullied and why they may initially want to avoid confrontation with their employers. It is not surprising as if a

worker on a zero-hour contract protests then they could face a reduction in hours or simply be fired.

But organised workers who know their rights can fight for better jobs, pay and conditions. Youth Fight for Jobs Plymouth will be organising further events and protests to talk to workers and customers.

Samuel Taylor-Wickenden, Plymouth Youth Fight for Jobs

Enough is enough!

Youth Fight for Jobs demands:

- Give us proper contracts, guaranteed hours and full employment rights. No to zero-hour contracts and insecure employment. No more uncertainty and insecurity dressed up as 'flexibility'!
- Decent tea and lunch breaks and no being 'clocked off' when we take one. It's not possible to work long shifts without some time to breathe. We shouldn't be penalised for it
- Pay us enough to live - Companies which make the bosses millions are paying us (who make them all that money) pennies. We want a living wage which is enough to afford the basics in life. Right now, many of us have to top up our wages with tax credits and benefits. We shouldn't have to. A living wage of £10 an hour is not too much to ask.

- Stop the bosses' 'fire at will' attitude, backed up by the government. Making it easier to sack us will increase unemployment - not reduce it!

- We won't be used as cheap or free labour on apprenticeships, internships and work-for benefits schemes. A day's work is a day's work and it deserves a decent day's pay.

- We have the right to get organised at work - Trade unions are there to help give workers protection and fight to improve our conditions. In this country there is a legal right to join a trade union. Despite this, workers who try to get organised are sometimes penalised by their bosses. We say the right to organise is fundamental - full trade union rights now!

- Scrap the anti-trade union laws - We have a right to try and improve our conditions and stop the bosses that 'make us sick!' It's up to us to democratically decide how we do this. If we want to go on strike or take action then that's up to us, the courts should not stop us.

- Build democratic campaigning trade unions - We want trade unions that will fight our corner. That means representing us in the workplace, defending us if we're under attack and, crucially, helping us use our collective strength as workers to fight back. All workers, young and old, deserve democratic trade unions with fighting leaders!

- No to benefit cuts - Attacks like this affect all of us, not just the unemployed. For a start thousands of low paid workers rely on benefits. If unemployment benefits are lowered it means the bosses have even less incentive to pay a decent wage. Don't let their lies divide us!

Get in touch to get involved:
youthfightforjobs.com
 020 8558 7947
youthfightforjobs@gmail.com

UNIONISE TO FIGHT ZERO-HOUR CONTRACTS!

A KFC worker

I started working for the fast food restaurant Kentucky Fried Chicken nine months ago. I had left my job in a supermarket, where I was a workplace rep, to find a full-time job, not being able to get by on 16 hours a week and with no chance of finding a full-time contract there.

Eventually I found this job at KFC. At KFC a full-time contract is supposed to mean 20 hours a week minimum, which isn't great by any stretch but it was more than I was getting at the supermarket.

For a time there was not much to complain about, I was averaging 20 to 40 hours a week. If anything my complaint would have been about the irregular hours but, on a mere £6.19 an hour, at least I was earning just about enough to get by.

Everything changed when the store began to get less busy. Suddenly full-time workers found ourselves given 16 hours some weeks, and some were getting one shift a week or none! Some part-time workers were not even getting their contracted four hours a week.

I decided to challenge my manager on this issue. I knew full well that I had no back up - KFC is a non-unionised company, and unfortunately we aren't yet at the stage of some American fast food workers who have been

taking strike action for a \$15 an hour living wage and the right to unionise.

I received a mouthful of abuse from my manager and was told that if I had read my contract properly I would have noticed the fine print which allows the company to adjust its workers' hours to business needs. This is a way for KFC to use zero-hour contracts while putting their hands on their hearts and saying they don't.

Perhaps the most explicit confession came from another manager when I asked what was the difference between a full-time contract and a part-time contract if workers aren't guaranteed the minimum hours stated. The manager replied that there is no difference and "it's just a way in which they can use and abuse you".

What is needed in KFC and similar companies to defend workers and ensure real contracts with guaranteed hours, is a major campaign of unionisation. We need to build a fighting union that will campaign for solid contracts and a living wage of £10 an hour, using methods of industrial action if necessary. Strong workplace organisation would also be the best way to tackle unfair dismissals, bullying and harassment in the workplace.

Are we sick of our boss? You better believe it!

See page 11 for more on zero-hour contracts and Sick Of Your Boss



photo Nancy Taaffe

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

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

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

WORK AND INCOME

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

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

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

ENVIRONMENT

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

RIGHTS

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

NEW WORKERS' PARTY

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

SOCIALISM AND INTERNATIONALISM

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