



the Socialist

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Syria: Cameron defeated

NOW DEFEAT TORY CUTS!

TUC - Name the day for a 24-hour general strike

“get it.” Through gritted teeth Tory Prime Minister David Cameron acknowledged an historic defeat. MPs had just voted by a margin of 13 to oppose British participation in a military intervention in Syria after he recalled Parliament on 29 August.

The last time a British prime minister was defeated on a war motion was in 1782 when MPs voted to end Britain's involvement in the American war of independence.

US forces may still bomb Syria. The Socialist Party is against any attack on Syria, which would cause further suffering and exacerbate the conflict. We are also completely opposed to the murderous Assad regime and to the reactionary, sectarian forces who dominate the anti-Assad opposition.

We stand instead for the building of a united, non-sectarian mass movement of workers and the poor to establish independent trade unions and a mass workers' party. Such a party can play a key role in overthrowing the repressive regime and allowing the masses to democratically determine their future.

Blair's heir

Humiliated, Cameron was forced to 'get' the huge opposition to an attack and that the divisions in his party and his government have been exposed. Tempers frayed and the blame game ensued as realisation of the rout set in.

Cameron was caught in the long shadow of Iraq. This was the revenge of the anti-war movement of 2003 - as much a defeat for Tony Blair and New Labour's 'dodgy dossier' as it was for the Con-Dem government.

The entire legitimacy of the Con-Dem coalition has taken a battering. Their

weakness has been exposed. Now we have to ensure that Cameron 'gets' our opposition to austerity. The most effective way to do this is through the main potential opposition force in society, the organised trade union movement and the broader working class.

We call on the TUC to urgently name the day for a 24-hour general strike which would have huge support from workers. Already teachers, postal workers, firefighters, civil servants and other sections of the organised working class are planning action. Bringing these struggles together to strengthen them is widely seen as a logical step.

The deep well of anger against austerity would yield enormous support for bold action from young people, pensioners, the unemployed, etc.

In reality Labour fell into voting against action on Syria under mass public pressure - Miliband did not oppose an attack outright. He argued that more time should be given to the UN inspectors to allow evidence of a chemical weapons attack to be collected.

Nonetheless Miliband's stance on the vote revealed an important point - even a shred of opposition could force this Coalition back. They have been successful in their vicious austerity attacks because Labour has not provided any meaningful resistance. Very quickly a new party, based on working class struggle against cuts could become a mass force in society.

Fundamentally the planned attack on Syria is the logic of the capitalist system and imperialism's drive for profit, prestige and power. A socialist alternative is necessary.

See editorial on page 2 for more on Syria vote aftermath



Lobby the TUC

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Sunday 8 September
12.30pm Hardy Suite,
Hermitage Hotel, Exeter Road,
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(opposite the TUC conference
venue)

See shopstewards.net for info



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Revenge of 2003 anti-war movement

Pop! The bubble of Prime Minister Cameron's image as a strong leader burst. Crack! Any idea that the Con-Dems are a strong coalition exploded. Snap! went the British imperialists' illusion that Britain is a powerful force in the world. And bang! That was the distrust of the public towards capitalist politicians bearing down on the whole sorry story.

After months of softening up public opinion for an attack on Syria, should the 'red line' of a chemical weapons attack be crossed, President Obama and Cameron were committed to working together as the world's policemen in a strike on Syrian government forces. Given the strength of public opposition, the complications and clear risks for the future of the entire region posed by an attack, grumblings of opposition from within the Tories and the military were audible – but not to Cameron it seems.

But within days their plans were in tatters. And it has been revelatory. Processes and factors that have lurked beneath the surface were forced into the open as the law of unintended consequences took revenge.

Ten years ago an estimated 30 million people marched in cities across the world, two million in Britain, to oppose an attack on Iraq which was widely understood to be a war for oil, for prestige, and for imperialism's strategic interests. People knew that when capitalist politicians claimed their aims were to save lives and for democracy they lied. The bloody facts have borne this out.

Scepticism about so-called intelligence is widespread in the wake of Tony Blair and George Bush's 'dodgy dossiers' and claims that Saddam could mount an attack with WMDs within 45 minutes. Nonetheless there have been attempts to pedal documents that assert Assad carried out a chemical attack but also admissions that so far there is no 'slam dunk' or 'smoking' piece of intelligence to prove it decisively.

There is no doubt that Assad's is a brutal dictatorship capable of unspeakable horror and cruelty, but there are also few illusions that an intervention by imperialist forces would improve the situation.

Shadow of Vietnam and Iraq

Behind some of the indecisiveness among capitalist politicians and the military about a plunge into action have been the lack of clear stated aims for the action and a fear of what could ensue. Concerns no doubt include the potential for 'blowback' in terms of terrorist attacks in Britain and the US and the risk of attacks on British bases in Cyprus.

Obama is fearful of a major knock to US prestige. Having pledged to respond if Assad crossed the 'red line' of a chemical weapons attack he has now been weakened and forced, in no small part by Cameron's defeat, to go to the Congress for a vote on 9 September.

The more thinking sections of the US administration remember the military defeat in Vietnam, which combined with a mass anti-war movement, gave birth to the 'Vietnam Syndrome' and virtually ruled out US military interventions for a historical epoch.

The Vietnam war gave a huge push to the development of consciousness in the US and internationally, in a period of heightened struggle, with millions drawing socialist and revolutionary conclusions about the nature of



On the 15 February 2003 two-million strong anti-war demo photo the Socialist

capitalism and imperialism.

The Socialist has pointed out that there is no straightforward capitalist solution to this conflict. Evident from all previous imperialist interventions, is that the interests of the working class and poor in the region are far from a motivating force.

Asked in a poll for the Independent newspaper whether the experience of the Iraq war means that Britain should keep out of military conflict in the Middle East, 62% agree. The same poll found that a majority thought Cameron showed he is "out of touch with Britain" in his handling of the Syria crisis. A big majority in the US opposes military intervention and in France where an attack is also due to be debated.

The Iraq and Afghanistan effect has contributed to a crisis of legitimacy of establishment politicians and, to an extent, of democratic processes, which has been enormously exacerbated by the capitalist economic crisis and its accompanying boot of austerity.

Weak parties

Also revealed was the weak state of the three main parliamentary parties. Having managed to appear united and to defy gravity to an extent by seeming to deflect the true extent of anger over the cuts, the Tories were suddenly naked in their isolation and division.

The Tory front bench dissolved into a swearing, spitting mess as the result of the vote came through – and much of it was aimed internally. Gove allegedly shouted at Tory rebels outside the chamber: 'You're a disgrace'. Why hadn't the whips done their job? Why hadn't more Tories turned up? How dare some of them revolt!

Then the Tories turned their wrath on Lib Dem leader Nick Clegg. He was blamed for

not summing up the debate well enough. And finally they remembered Labour leader Ed Miliband who they accused of "stark raving hypocrisy", "dishonourable behaviour" and "putting his party before the national interest".

Since the vote there has been a desperate attempt to claim that this is the only issue there is division over in the Conservative party and that Cameron's position is not in danger. But this is far from true. All but three of the 39 Coalition dissidents had rebelled before. It's been reported that only 20 Tory MPs actually backed the motion while the others felt duty-bound to vote for it.

Two days before the reported chemical weapons attack Foreign Secretary William Hague told the BBC that events in the Middle East were "the most important event so far of the 21st century, even compared to the financial crisis we have been through and its impact on world affairs." It reveals the relative weakness and myopia of British imperialism that it is unable to assert itself on this situation.

In a flash Tory London Mayor Boris Johnson has stepped into the furore, arguing that there should be another vote if the US Congress votes for action, presenting himself as the strong hero and, presumably, the potential replacement for a much-damaged Cameron.

Cameron's humiliation can bolster Miliband's position in the short-term, despite his and Labour's tepid and partial opposition over Syria. A ComRes poll in the aftermath of the vote though puts Labour only six points ahead, a rather thin lead due to Labour's record of non-opposition to government cuts.

Miliband has been given little space to enjoy the glow of the Westminster victory. He now faces attacks from members of his front bench, and from Blair, and he has developed

his position to say he would support an attack if there was significant change in the situation – if al-Qaida got large stockpiles of weapons or if there is a direct threat to Britain's national security.

In reality both factors could be a consequence of the interventions in Syria by imperialism and reactionary powers within the Middle East. The growing presence of al-Qaida forces in Syria is well-documented, as is the enormous funding and arming of anti-government forces by the semi-feudal dictatorships of Saudi Arabia and Qatar. The potential for 'blowback' from British or US military intervention in the form of terror attacks is strong and a factor in public opposition.

International relations

In the days after the vote there was much hand-wringing at the damage done to the long-cherished 'special relationship' with the US. US Secretary of State John Kerry appeared to confirm this when he called France 'our oldest ally', referring to the war of independence against Britain.

But within days Obama had Cameron on the phone, reassuring him of Britain's 'BFF – best friends forever' status. No doubt the US regime had looked down the barrel of increased isolation in a world riven by tensions in the face of on-going capitalist crisis and reconsidered any breach.

Since then Kerry has been doing his hawkish utmost to campaign for an attack – citing the need to protect Israel and warning that the US reputation is on the line. Obama now appears to be committing to a fuller onslaught in the hope of winning Congress round and avoiding a Cameron-style humiliation.

Socialist opposition

The Socialist Party and the CWI stand in complete opposition to imperialist military attacks. Such attacks would worsen the situation in Syria and undoubtedly across the region. But we are not silent on what needs to be done either. We explain that to bring real democracy to Syria requires the building of, and encouraging the establishment of, independent working class forces that can unite workers, the poor, oppressed and suffering in their common interests against both the forces of imperialism and their semi-feudal and capitalist allies in the region.

Unlike capitalist politicians who fundamentally represent their own national capitalist classes we are socialist internationalists and support struggles against imperialism, oppression and capitalism across the world. We explain that fighting austerity and for a socialist alternative in Britain and across the world is a vital part of this.

The gap that has been opened up will not remain open indefinitely. The hesitation of the trade union leaders over mass determined action against austerity and to bring the government down must end. Trade union members must do all they can to apply pressure, to coordinate action where it's already on the cards, and in all unions to demand a 24-hour general strike.

Building new mass workers' parties and fighting for a socialist alternative would have big impacts across the world, inspiring millions to join the struggle, including in the Middle East.

London protest
against
attack
on Syria

People broke into spontaneous applause as anti-war protesters marched into Trafalgar Square on Saturday. Marchers felt vindicated, saying that it was the movement against war in Iraq ten years ago that was ringing in the heads of politicians and that stayed their hand this time.

The fact that 5,000 people came out even after the parliament vote indicates how big a movement

against war could get.

Socialist Party members joined the march to argue that now is the time to press home the advantage and up the fight to bring down the Con-Dems. We pointed out how powerful a movement could be if protest against war was linked to the fight against austerity, with generalised strike action. Unfortunately most speakers in Trafalgar Square

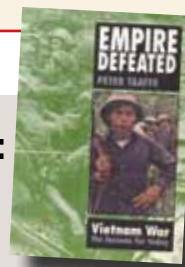
did not make this connection.

Some marchers were also interested in the idea of standing candidates against all the main parties, understanding that notwithstanding the vote in parliament, all the main parties are in favour of military intervention at some stage. Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition leaflets appealed for candidates.

Paula Mitchell

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Bedroom tax: Scottish campaign wins concession

Fight for unconditional scrapping of the tax

Richard Neville
Renfrewshire Bin the Bedroom Tax Campaign

North Lanarkshire, a Labour run council which sent out letters threatening to begin eviction proceedings any time after 2 September, has been forced into a big retreat as a result of the mass pressure from the anti-bedroom tax campaign.

Over 100 people came to a packed meeting to show solidarity with Lorraine Fraser, the woman who had been sent the first eviction notice in Scotland for bedroom tax arrears.

From the top table council leader Jim McCabe announced a 'no evictions policy' until the end of the financial year, hoping to buy himself some breathing space.

Tommy Sheridan spoke about the need to fight the bedroom tax, and of the human cost to people like Lorraine. He said: "This council has bent under the pressure brought to bear from this local campaign."

When the meeting opened up to the audience I made the point that councils up and down the country are bullying tenants into paying the bedroom tax. I said: "What do we all know about bullies? Well we know that they are cowards. These guys at the top table are too afraid to stand up to the Tories and their cuts, they would much rather bully and harass Lorraine Fraser for £248.

"The Tories introduced the bedroom tax with the full confidence that it would be passed on, like every other cut, by Labour councils and the SNP at Holyrood."

Meeting organiser John Park said: "The strength of the Scottish Anti-Bedroom Tax Federation is growing and the word is spreading throughout the schemes, villages, towns and cities."



photo Jim Halfpenny

Labour to scrap the tax?

The Sunday People reported that Labour Party leader Ed Miliband is planning to announce later this month that a future Labour government would scrap the bedroom tax. Dave Nellist, Socialist Party member and former Coventry city councillor, said:

"If Labour now finally agree that the bedroom tax should not exist they should immediately take measures to shield people from its consequences.

Firstly, where councils own housing stock, or where councillors sit on housing association boards, they should immediately

halt enforcement measures against tenants in arrears.

Secondly, councils should step up discretionary housing payments to all affected tenants so no one goes into arrears because of the tax.

And Labour nationally should announce a future Labour government would reimburse any council for spending, using reserves, or borrowing to protect tenants between now and the abolition of the tax.

Anything less than such a robust response and some might think the Labour leak is less a genuine proposal than a cynical attempt to shore up Labour's weak opinion

poll position in the run up to their conference.

Working class people need a political party that doesn't just oppose the bedroom tax but has an alternative to all the cuts. It's to tackle those wider issues, which Labour is still ignoring, that we need a new political party, one that will challenge all the pro austerity parties at the ballot box.

The Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition intends to stand 600 candidates at next May's elections highlighting all the attacks on working people and their families and offering a break from the austerity coalition which still unites all the big four parties."

Don't fall for the shares-for-rights scam

Ronnie Job

The Con-Dems' shares-for-rights scheme came into effect on 1 September. The TUC is warning that as well as taking away basic employment rights, the scheme could cost taxpayers £1 billion.

The government would like us to sign away rights to unfair dismissal, redundancy and flexible working, in exchange for shares. Any workers tempted by such a scheme should take a look at the fate of the first ever Employee Share Ownership Plan to be set up in the UK, in Roadchef.

A union member at work tipped me off about this scandal, which otherwise I probably wouldn't have

noticed as it's been hidden away in the financial pages. It concerns Tim Ingram Hill, one of Britain's wealthiest men and somebody who has regularly featured on the rich list.

Employees of Roadchef, who had been promised ownership of the company by former owner, Patrick Gee, have been involved in a court case that has now dragged on for a few years. When Gee died it was left to Ingram Hill to carry through the transfer of ownership to the company's staff.

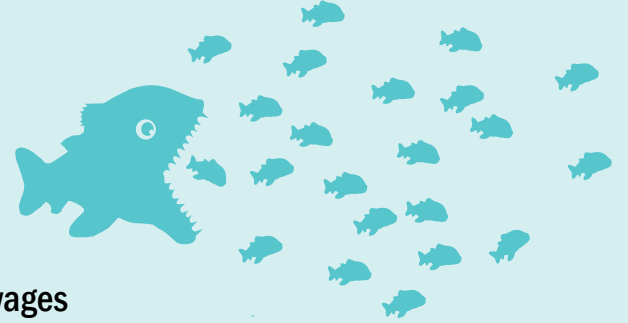
Workers at Roadchef are claiming that Ingram Hill fraudulently transferred over shares that were held in trust for them, to himself, before selling the company for £139 million. Workers who might have

expected to pocket around £90,000 each, instead received around £2,300.

Company share schemes are far from the means of securing our futures that the government would have us believe. With jobs, pay and terms and conditions all under constant attack as cuts rain down, it would be a huge mistake to give up any employment protection.

For as long as we have to work for the likes of Ingram Hill, our best day-to-day protection comes from building fighting trade unions to win and ensure permanent jobs, a living wage, decent pension packages, holiday entitlements and elected trade union representation.

Them...



Falling wages

A new report for the Resolution Foundation has found that a growing number of people getting their first job, and particularly women, quickly get stuck in part-time, low-paying roles. In 2013 more than a third of jobs for new employees were part time. This is partly to blame for the fact that more than two thirds of hotel and restaurant workers earn less than the living wage. Another method used to keep pay

Rising prices

- A recent report by the Child Poverty Action Group and Joseph Rowntree Foundation shows that the cost of raising children for those who pay for child-care has risen by 4% in the last year.
- House prices rose by 0.4% in August alone, and 0.9% in London.
- The amount that the average household has to spend on energy may double to more than £3,000 a year by 2020.

1/3

of jobs for new employees were part time in 2013

down is to keep workers self-employed - average income for the self-employed fell from £16,100 a year in 2002 to £11,900 in 2011. According to the Joseph Rowntree Foundation someone working full time on minimum wage would earn just over £12,000 a year whereas a single person needs to be earning at least £16,850 to reach an acceptable standard of living.

Unequal pay

The TUC is taking a complaint to the European Commission that the government has failed to implement European legislation designed to ensure agency workers receive equal pay with permanent staff doing the same job. The TUC claims that one in six agency workers are on contracts that avoid this legislation by being employed directly by the agency. The government's reaction has so far been to essentially say 'yes of course we've provided a way for companies to get around it'.

Wonga con

Payday lenders are pumping millions of pounds of extra money into advertising. The top five companies increased their advertising spending by 26% to £36.3 million in the year to June 2013.

The biggest of these, Wonga, is expected to announce soon that its annual profits are over £100 million for the first time. The record profits don't mainly reflect effective advertising of course, but are a sign of the increasing struggle facing low-paid people at the end of every month as wages are held down and prices continue to soar.

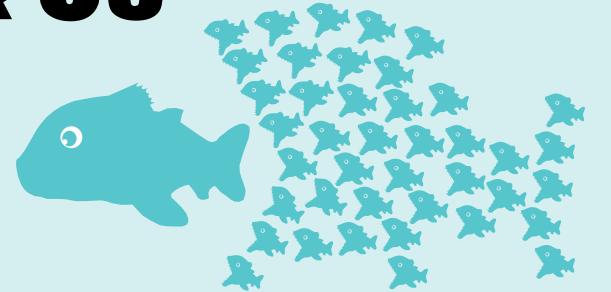
The thousands of percent interest charged on these pay day loans only serve to trap people further into a cycle of debt and poverty.

Upturn for who?

Four out of five adults in the Land of Dreams, the US, spend at least part of their lives in joblessness, near-poverty or reliant on welfare.

And the problem is getting worse rather than better. People aged 35-45 had a 17% risk of encountering poverty from 1969 to 1989; that risk increased to 23% in the period from 1989 to 2009. This while Obama talks of "rebuilding ladders of opportunity" and heralds an economic upturn.

...& Us



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Frank Morris reinstated Major victory against blacklisting

This is an extract from a press release from the Blacklist Support Group, explaining the very important victory where, after a lengthy campaign, blacklisted construction worker and Unite shop steward Frank Morris has won his job back.

Frank Morris is returning to work on the Crossrail project on 9 September. This is a massive victory, not just for Unite but the whole of the trade union movement.

The dismissal of Frank Morris in September 2012 took place soon after he took on the role of union steward and raised safety concerns about tunnelling operations on the largest publicly funded construction project in Western Europe.

Blacklist campaigners and Unite argued from the start that Frank's dismissal was due to the blacklist and have been fighting a bitter battle against the Bam-Ferrovial-Kier (BFK) consortium.

The 12 month dispute has rallied thousands of union members to new tactics unseen in industrial disputes including mass civil disobedience with Oxford Street, Earls Court and Park Lane being block-

aded during rush hour on over 20 occasions.

The dispute entered a new phase when Unite general secretary Len McCluskey addressed the AGM of the Blacklist Support Group and promised to use the full resources of the union to "blacklist the blacklists" until Frank got his job back.

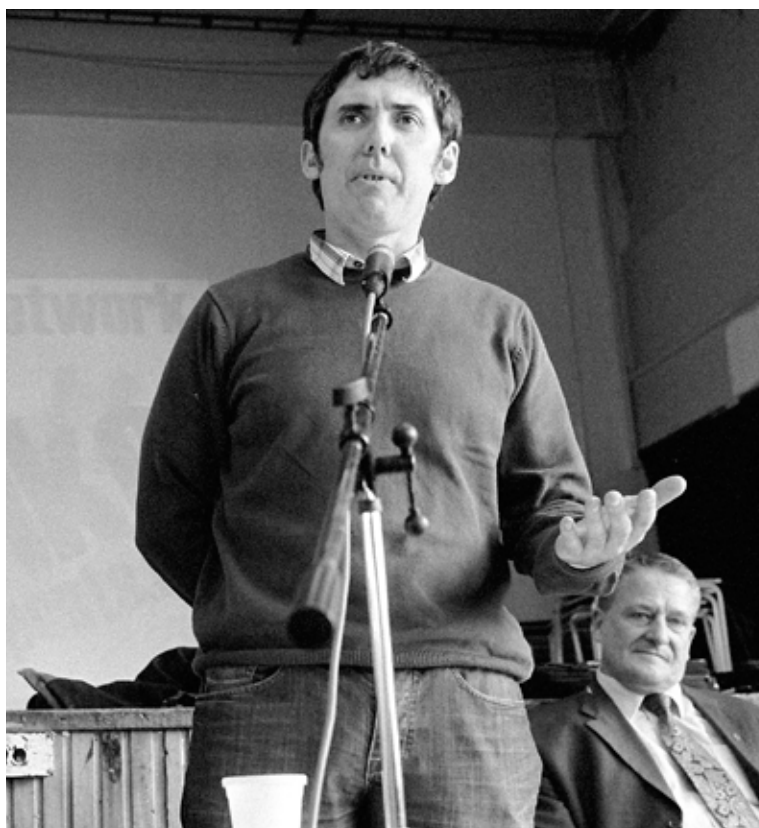
This leverage strategy included union protests in Holland, France, Spain, Canada and last month Chicago in an attempt to pressurise major clients to refuse contracts to firms that blacklisted union members.

Dave Smith, secretary of the Blacklist Support Group said: "For 12 months Frank Morris has stood outside Crossrail.

"He has suffered a year of unemployment, financial hardships and physical attacks. But Frank never gave up. The rank and file never gave up. Unite never gave up.

"We are no longer prepared to sit

The 12 month dispute has rallied thousands of union members to new tactics unseen in industrial disputes



Frank Morris speaks at an NSSN conference photo Paul Mattsson

back when our best activists are victimised and blacklisted.

"We have been calling for an industrial solution to end the blacklist

and Unite have delivered the goods."

• For more see the National Shop Stewards Network website: shopstewards.net

Coventry Unison protest



photo Coventry SP

On 28 August members of Coventry Unison handed in petitions containing hundreds of signatures against the City Council's decision to cut neighbourhood wardens, which will result in nearly 40 jobs being lost.

The wardens provide a vital service to many communities and their removal will hit the poorest areas hardest.

This is the latest in a series of cuts being implemented by the Labour council, who are dutifully carrying out the bidding of the Tory central government.

The consultation period ends soon - and unions need to discuss the next step.

Unison member

Swansea council: Job evaluation = pay cuts

Angry Unison members held a lobby of Swansea council on 27 August. The demonstration was against the Labour-led council's "Job Evaluation Exercise".

Although a councillor eventually emerged, she actually made a bad situation worse. These frontline workers, many of whom are nursery workers, and already poorly paid, are worried about swingeing pay cuts. One worker said she would be losing £5,000 a year and didn't know how her family would manage.

The councillor defended the policy as partly an equal pay exercise that should have been carried

out long ago, making a reference to Barbara Castle. So now we know who's to blame!

She also told those assembled that if they weren't happy they could appeal. But the workers suspect their appeals might fall on deaf ears.

At the end of the demo I bumped into a local Lib Dem Assembly Member, Peter Black. He appeared sympathetic, and told me his own partner was having to take a £3,000 pay cut. But in 2010 AMs earned in excess of £53,000, so I suspect his family will cope somehow.

**Jim Atkinson
Swansea Socialist Party**

Hovis workers fight zero-hours contracts and casualisation

Hugh Caffrey

Hundreds of bakers at the Hovis bakery in Wigan are on strike for seven days. They are demanding the company negotiate seriously, instead of ignoring existing agreements and imposing huge attacks on pay and conditions.

Members of the Bakers, Food and Allied Workers Union (BFAWU) walked out on 28 August and mounted strong pickets on all three site entrances. Further seven-day strikes will run from 11 to 18 September, and 25 September to 2 October.

Hovis is reducing hours, meaning pay cuts. They are using agency staff after making permanent staff redundant, meaning pay cuts. Agency staff are paid less anyway, with many on zero-hour "as and when" contracts, meaning even more pay cuts.

While many workers currently live nearby, use of agencies could mean loss of local jobs as desper-

ate low-paid agency workers are brought in from further afield.

The loss in earnings is huge. Hourly pay is being cut from £13 to £8.60. Workers are losing £10,000 a year, while Hovis bosses are on six-digit salaries!

Geoff Atkinson of the BFAWU told me: "This is about fighting for our members to keep local jobs local, a fair day's pay for a fair day's work - not zero-hour contracts and reducing the amount paying them."

Workers at the Wigan factory fought previous attempts by Hovis bosses to attack terms and conditions. Now they deserve full support from trade unionists and the wider public.

Strikers are asking for local supporters to visit their picket lines and for everyone to send messages of support.

Visit the pickets at 60 Cale Lane, Aspull, Wigan, WN2 1HD. Send messages of support via the BFAWU website www.bfawu.org or to geoff.atkinson@bfawu.org

Rochdale care workers battle for their future

Over 150 care workers on strike at Future Directions in Rochdale marched through the town centre on 29 August to mark the 19th day of strike action. Care workers are suffering pay cuts of £500 a month, while their terms and conditions of employment are being ripped up. Over 100 tribunal cases have been submitted by their union, Unison.

This private company is 100%-owned by Calderstones NHS trust, and was given the contract by the council to provide home-based care to disabled adults. A new scandal has just broken in Rochdale about abuse of those in Calderstones care. Future Direc-

tions is also attempting to win other contracts in the area so winning this dispute is important for all Unison members in the North West.

Unison is demanding that public services must be taken back in-house, away from the profit-driven motives of those grabbing privatised contracts.

Unison is urging union branches to send messages of support, send donations to the strike fund, and invite a striker to address their meeting. Contact the Unison branch secretary: Ms Helen Harrison, Unison Office, 46 Richard Street, Rochdale, OL11 1DU. 01706 925 952, Unison@rochdale.gov.uk

In brief

Firefighters' strike vote

Firefighters have voted overwhelmingly to strike over government attacks on their pension scheme. 78% of FBU members balloted have voted for national strike action. This is after two years of fruitless negotiations. If not opposed, the government is likely to attempt to impose the changes.

Under the proposals, firefighters over 50 who fail the fitness standards are likely to be sacked without a proper pension as the previously promised 'redeployment to less physically demanding posts' will not happen.

Firefighters already pay over 12% of their salary in pension contributions, which have steadily increased over the last few years. 25% of firefighters recruited last year have not signed up to the scheme, threatening its financial viability.

Strike dates have not been set.

Postal strike ballot

The Communication Workers Union (CWU) has announced a ballot for strike action against privatisation of the Royal Mail, jobs, pay and pensions.

Royal Mail and Parcelforce workers will start balloting on 20 September, with the result to be announced on 3 October.

There was a 96% vote to oppose Royal Mail privatisation in a consultative ballot in June.

One Housing

Workers at the One Housing Group will be on strike on the 5, 6 and 9 September in their battle against pay cuts. The workers, who provide support services to vulnerable people, are being hit with pay cuts as OHG try to make their frontline staff pay the price of competing for council care and support contracts. They even boast of undercutting the NHS by 80%. 200 workers are facing pay cuts of up to £8,000 a year.

• Please send messages of support to unite.le1111@gmail.com. Please send all donations c/o Nicky Marcus, Unite, 128 Theobalds Road, WC1X 8TN. Cheques made payable to LE/1111 or bank transfers to Unite Housing Workers LE/1111 Branch, sort code 08-60-01 Account number: 20040639

Join the picket line at One Housing, 100 Chalk Farm Road and come to a meeting at 10am on Saturday 7 September at Unite, Theobalds Road.

North Sea

The Blacklist Support Group have called upon the Scottish Affairs Select Committee to widen its investigation into blacklisting to cover the NRB system in the North Sea. Oil rig managers often put Not Required Back (NRB) on a workers' file if they have been raising questions about health and safety or have been trying to recruit to a trade union.

This has come to prominence after the Super Puma crash last week. Workers have been unable to speak publicly about it for fear of losing their livelihoods because of effective blacklisting through NRB.

Breaking news

The PCS civil service union has won its battle to keep the 'check off' system for union subs collection in DCLG government department. For more details see www.pcs.org.uk

United strike action against the Con-Dems

Rob Williams

Twelve months ago TUC Congress overwhelmingly passed the prison officers' union POA motion, calling on the TUC to consider "the practicalities of a general strike" to oppose the crushing Con-Dem austerity offensive.

Many will ask how it has been possible for this resolution and the mass coordinated action it called for to still be sitting on the table, particularly when if anything, the brutal cuts are biting deeper than ever.

Over 400,000 public sector workers have been sacked, with as many jobs again threatened and the pay freeze has effectively continued. We now find out that up to one million workers are on zero-hour contracts, which are used by one in four companies.

Given all this and the bedroom tax and further attacks on welfare, no wonder one million families are using the loan shark pay-day loan companies while 500,000 are forced to use food banks, the modern-day soup kitchens.

On top of this, the NHS is imploding before our eyes as a result of swingeing cuts brought on by the Con-Dems' Health and Social Care Act, plus the scandal of paying the Private Finance Initiative vultures, who have been courted by successive Tory and Labour governments.

But the mass mobilisations against NHS cuts show what can be achieved. Over 25,000 marched in South London in January to defend Lewisham Hospital while up to 50,000 - almost the whole population of Stafford - were on the streets in April to fight to



Lobbying the TUC in 2012 photo the Socialist

save their hospital!

The Socialist Party supports the TUC demonstration outside the Tory Party conference on 29 September and will help build a mass protest. But on its own, this demo won't be enough to force the government back.

The defeat of Cameron on Syria will give working class people confidence that any so-called invincibility of this government is an illusion.

A mass movement with mass coordinated strike action at its core

could defeat them. This is the message that must be delivered to the trade union leaders this week.

Civil service union PCS members have been involved in a campaign of strike action on pay, jobs and pensions which amounts to a five-month long war of attrition.

The NUT and NASUWT teachers' unions are about to re-start their rolling regional strike action that began in the North West at the end of June. They have stated that it will continue this autumn and culmi-

nate in national strike action, the first of which is likely to be at the end of November.

We continue to campaign alongside the National Shop Stewards Network (NSSN) for the TUC and the unions to organise a 24-hour general strike. But the teaching unions' decision also raises the idea of other unions coordinating any current or potential industrial action with them.

FBU members have voted by 78% to take strike action on pensions

and CWU are balloting over Royal Mail privatisation. RMT members have been on strike in London and the BFAWU bakers' union have members on strike in Wigan.

We call on TUC delegates to support all those motions and composites that support the type of mass action that is necessary to resist this fat cat government's cuts. But we also call on the union leaders to get in a room together this week to open their diaries and coordinate strikes this autumn.

Exactly two years ago, they did this and announced the N30 strike which saw two million public sector workers strike together to defend their pensions.

Unfortunately, that dispute was halted because Unison and the GMB caved in with the support of the newly knighted former TUC leader Sir Brendan Barber.

Now they argue that there isn't a mood for a 24-hour general strike - reflecting their own inaction, not the mood of workers.

It's true their delay has allowed the Con-Dems to implement austerity measures and have some success in whipping up divisions among those suffering from the cuts.

But straitened living conditions also mean national action could have an electrifying effect. If the TUC was to set a date for action, all of those unions involved in disputes against different aspects of austerity could coordinate their ballots.

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

TUC: name the day!

Build partnership in action against austerity

Alec McFadden
NW TUC JCC Rep

The TUC Congress of 2012 agreed to look seriously at the feasibility of the organisation of a one-day general strike, so Merseyside TUC started work mobilising and organising both within Merseyside and speaking out to our sister county TUCs across the North West.

The feedback was so strong that we were encouraged to organise a mobilising and feasibility planning conference which took place at the end of January 2013.

So by 26 January, Merseyside TUC was prepared to support the full implementation of TUC congress policy.

By May it became clear that the

general council were going for an "awareness raising" bus tour across Britain which would also discover the social and economic effect the Tory/Lib Dems' austerity policy was having on communities and the working class.

An emergency motion was drafted, agreed and submitted to the National Trades Union Council conference.

The motion called for a lobby of TUC Congress in 2013 to uphold the policy of 2012.

In spite of some bureaucratic initial objection, the motion was unanimously agreed by conference and therefore became Trades Union Council policy.

Before the Trades Union Council and the TUC Joint Consultative Committee (JCC) had introduced

an action plan to organise the lobby of the TUC 2013 congress, the National Shop Stewards Network took the initiative and publicised this event.

The majority of regional elected TUC JCC reps welcomed this and agreed to join and carry out our National Trades Union Council policy.

At Congress, the lobby will set the political tone.

The unions need to enter talks to not only support the teaching unions' national strike in November but they need to ensure that because of all the current disputes, the bulk of trade union members are on strike or taking part in a day of action on the day named by the two teaching unions, NUT and NASUWT.



Marching together on N30 photo Senan

Lift the ban on campaign stalls in Newham, east London

East London Socialist Party members

While some of Newham's Labour councillors claim to oppose the government's austerity measures such as the bedroom tax, community activists say Newham council has effectively banned them from publicly campaigning against such punitive attacks.

Instead of allowing campaign groups to have non-obstructive stalls in large pedestrian areas, such as Meridian Square, Stratford, campaigners accuse council

enforcement officers of misusing the Highways Act 1980 to ban such activities.

A Socialist Party member using a stall to petition against the bedroom tax has been issued a fixed penalty notice and is being taken to court by the council.

A number of different groups, such as Tamil Solidarity in East Ham, have also been harassed and threatened with fines for using a campaign stall.

Helen Pattison from No Bedroom Tax in Newham called this harassment: "an attack on democratic

rights to free speech and assembly across Newham".

In the neighbouring boroughs of Redbridge and Waltham Forest, it has been possible, after a campaign, to obtain permission for political parties and campaign groups to use public stalls.

United campaign

Now trade unionists, political parties and community campaigners from across the borough are coming together to demand Newham council ends this de-

plorable attack on democratic rights and allow campaign groups to enjoy reasonable use of the thoroughfares.

In May 2014 there will be local and mayoral elections across London.

If Newham council is allowed to proscribe public campaign stalls and curb campaigning activities it will put other parties at a disadvantage to the establishment parties and to Labour's monopoly of council seats.

It's time to stop these attacks on our democratic rights. It's time to

campaign for our right to campaign!

We demand:

- Democratic rights and freedom of speech and assembly for Newham residents
- Newham council withdraws legal action against the public campaigning activities of political parties, trade unions and community groups.
- End the use of police and law enforcement officers to harass and prevent political and community campaigning in Newham.
- Allow reasonable use of thoroughfares for campaigning purposes.



China's 'turbo-charged' economic growth is slowing, causing concern to its rulers and capitalists internationally



Female workers in Amritsar were to the fore in the all-India hartal or general strike



Honda workers in China striking for better pay

When the world economic crisis makes landfall in South Asia

Clare Doyle
Committee for a Workers' International (CWI)

Until recently, the 'emerging' economies of the BRICS - Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa - were growing at a steady rate. China, in particular, appeared to be defying the economic laws of boom and slump.

Many have argued that these countries could help keep the world economy afloat as deepening crises afflicted Southern Europe and the USA. The dramatic slump in Brazil and India's growth rates and the slowdown in China's economy, have put an end to that illusion.

China, whose 'turbo-charged' economy saw it overtake Japan to take second place to the US in GDP (total output), is now a cause of grave concern both to its ruling clique and capitalists internationally.

While China is heavily involved in major capital expenditure in some countries for strategic as well as economic reasons, the shrinking of its exports is already having an effect on economies to which it has out-sourced certain basic manufacturing and from who it draws its raw materials.

India - the third largest economy in Asia - has seen its growth rate fall from 10.5% in 2010 to 3.2% in 2012. Malaysia's economy, heavily dependent on trade with China, has slowed to a 4.1% increase this year.

Many Asian countries initially benefited from the downturn in productive (profitable) investment elsewhere in the world. Large amounts of 'idle' capital, earning little or no interest in the banks of countries involved in quantitative easing, flowed into Asia as speculative 'investment'.

Historical precedent

The Financial Times commented that Asia's local currency bond markets "have bloomed since the global financial collapse of 2008 unleashed easy money... spilling out of the US and Europe. What happens when interest rates eventually start to rise, particularly in the US? How much of that money will turn around and flee?"

Will there now be a new 'Asian crisis' as severe as, or even more severe than, that of 1997-98? Will South Asia's governments be able to weather the storms to come?

The 1997-98 Asian crisis saw the currencies of countries such as Thailand

plunge, and hundreds of thousands of jobs and livelihoods being massacred.

Revolutionary upheavals against International Monetary Fund (IMF)-imposed policies saw the overthrow of the hated dictator, Suharto, in Indonesia.

In Malaysia a mass movement for democratic reform threatened the decades-long rule of the BN (National Front), dominated by the United Malays National Organisation (UMNO). South Korea saw new general strikes similar to those against neoliberal attacks introduced at the end of 1997.

Then, the IMF doled out huge loans to beleaguered countries to prevent collapse and revolution. In the case of South Korea it was a massive \$57 billion.

None of these movements found a voice and political line that could complete the revolutionary processes that had begun. In Indonesia, some left groupings fostered illusions in the democratic credentials of Megawati Sukarnoputri, who would proceed to rule on behalf of big and international capital in alliance with generals of the old regime.

In Malaysia, the popular leader of the 'Reformasi' movement, Anwar Ibrahim, had been a part of UMNO in government with Mahathir Mohammed. As a US-trained neoliberal economist, he did not want (and still does not want) a movement which would organise to end capitalism.

The Committee for a Workers' International (CWI) - the socialist international organisation to which the Socialist Party is affiliated) at the time argued for the fullest support for, and involvement in, these movements, fighting for basic democratic rights and freedoms, but also, arguing - along the lines of Leon Trotsky's theory of 'Permanent Revolution' - for the need to rid these neocolonial economies of the domination of home-grown and multinational capitalism.

Clear socialist policies were needed, based on the understanding that only the working class, with the support of the urban and rural poor, could establish genuine democracy and transform the lives of the overwhelming majority of the population of the region.

As the cold winds of world recession 'hit landfall' in Asian countries, similarly tumultuous movements will develop. Given the further intertwining of the world's economies, India and Pakistan, which escaped the worst of 1997-98, could be engulfed this time.

The IMF is unlikely to step in

to the same extent as it did then to help governments faced with revolutionary upheavals.

Initial outbursts of anger and desperation could broaden into generalised movements in which impoverished youth and workers will seek revolutionary solutions. No Asian country at the present time can claim to have a viable, confident and stable government.

Neocolonialism

In most Asian societies, many other basic democratic rights have never been established. The emerging capitalist classes have not been strong enough to carry through thoroughgoing land reform or clear away the remnants of feudalism.

In China, it took the 'deformed workers' state' of Mao Tse Tung to preside over this task. What was done in earlier centuries by the emerging capitalist classes in the revolutions of England, France and elsewhere, still remains to be completed in most Asian countries.

As in other continents, many of Asia's nations were artificially created by colonial powers. People were left as oppressed minorities within

the borders of Burma, Thailand, Sri Lanka. Only workers' parties heading socialist governments will be able to satisfactorily resolve the issues of the rights of minority nationalities and the task of setting up mutually cooperative confederations of nations.

Direct rule by imperialism ended decades ago across the whole of Asia. It has been replaced by that of regional powers such as China and India who vie for strategically and economically advantageous concessions in Sri Lanka, Burma and elsewhere.

Giant multinational companies scour the region for markets, for cheap labour and for maximum rates of profit. In most of the world's poorest countries, multinational monopolies dominate the market for seeds, fertilisers, washing products and retailing. Unilever has 57% of its global sales in 'emerging markets', Colgate 53% and Procter and Gamble 40% (Financial Times 29/7/13).

Clothes and footwear giants like Primark, Gap, Reebok and Adidas make huge profits out of Asian labour. Outrage at working conditions in places such as the Rana Plaza complex in Dhaka, which collapsed killing more than 1,300 low-paid workers, has been expressed on the streets in

mass demonstrations and strikes.

At the expense of millions of poverty-stricken workers at home and abroad, local tycoons such as Tata, Mittal and Ambani have done so well over the decades since 'independence' from colonial rule, that their steel, car and mining conglomerates now straddle the world in their endless search for profits.

Democracy?

A glance at any South Asian country will confirm an enormous, unbridgeable 'democracy deficit'.

In India - 'the world's largest democracy' - votes at elections are bought and sold. Substantial election 'goodies' are handed out by state or national governments and even by opposition parties, at election time. State-wide fiefdoms are held by Chief Ministers along with their cronies.

The promise of many political leaders to eliminate the iniquitous caste system remains unfulfilled and tribal peoples have their precious land wrenched from them by governments and conglomerates working hand in hand (except where determined mass protests have been able to block their plans).

Sri Lanka is the most dangerous country in which to be a journalist, according to 'Reporters without Borders'. The country's military continues to seize and 'settle' Tamil land in the North and the president's brother, Defence Minister, Gotabaya Rajapakse, declares that 'human rights are not for us!'

Sri Lanka's civil war was drowned in the blood of tens of thousands of Tamils by the Sinhala chauvinist, nepotistic dictatorship of Mahinda Rajapaksa.

Neither of the main powers vying for profitable investment opportunities and political influence in Sri Lanka - China and India - is unduly bothered by the lack of democratic rights in the country. However, the first, at least partial, general strike in many years which took place in June this year is a warning to the apparently all-powerful regime.

'Second world'

Malaysia, a South East Asian country sometimes deemed to be part of the 'second' and not the 'third' world, encompasses three main ethnic groups. The ruling BN government, which bases itself on the Malay majority, claims to have won yet another general election in May.

Chinese voters, a quarter of the total in Malaysia, moved away from the BN in protest at its continuing pro-Malay policies. The majority of Malaysia's Indian voters have generally voted for the opposition Pakatan Rakyat (People's Alliance).

In the month or so before the general election there was a \$2.6 billion 'deluge' of social handouts to poor families. Other sweeteners were given to the whole electorate. In spite of this, the ruling BN alliance was almost certainly defeated; it claimed victory, in spite of widespread allegations of vote-rigging.

Angry, radicalised youth immediately came onto the streets to declare the government illegitimate; some of their leaders were arrested.

A new political force is needed in Malaysia, as elsewhere in the region to channel the anger of youth and workers into a struggle for the socialist alternative.

CWI Malaysia in its widely sold publication Workers' Solidarity has a thoroughgoing list of democratic demands and proposals on wages,

housing, jobs for young people, the nationalisation of banks and major industries with democratic workers' control and management.

When the economies of Asia are battered by the economic storms to come, all parties will be severely tested. Those who claim to represent workers but who are not prepared

Will there now be a new 'Asian crisis' as severe as, or even more severe than, that of 1997-98?

to take up an all-or-nothing struggle against capitalist and imperialist domination, will be found lacking.

The development of a new workers' force, based on a fighting, class programme, is the over-riding task of socialists in India, Pakistan, Malaysia and Sri Lanka but also in other parts of the region.

Momentous events impend throughout Southern Asia, not least in the smaller economies of Burma, Nepal, Vietnam and Cambodia. All the old 'certainties' will be challenged and the CWI will have a huge responsibility to develop the fighting capacity of the working class throughout the region.

A minority today who see the need for a thoroughgoing programme of socialist change have been 'swimming against the stream'. The wave of mass upheavals, in Asia and elsewhere in the world, against capitalism in all its guises, will 'lift them on its crest' as Trotsky wrote.

From the wavering Yudyohono in Indonesia, the unstable alliance in Pakistan and the effete government of Singh in India, to the illegitimate Najib Razvi government in Malaysia and the brittle dictatorship in Sri Lanka, none of these corrupt cliques presents a picture of stability in the region. Far from it; the coming storms will see them replaced by not one or two but many governments of crisis, until a party with a programme of socialist change can take the reins of power and inspire a revolutionary wave across Asia, and the rest of the world.

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

India

India is characterised as "the worst performing emerging market economy since the turn of the year" (Guardian, 7 August) with growth coming to a standstill in the second quarter.

Mass poverty and deprivation is synonymous with India. "Four hundred million Indians have no electricity... Immunisation rates for most diseases are lower than in sub-Saharan Africa. Twice as many Indian children (43%) as African ones go hungry... A pitiful \$39 per person per year [is spent on] public health compared with China's \$203 or Brazil's \$483" (Economist, 29 June 2013).

The gap between the mass of India's nearly 1.3 billion people and the tiny handful of super-rich grows ever wider. A few individuals from rich family dynasties have amassed vast fortunes. According to Forbes magazine, Mukesh Ambani is worth \$20 billion and steel magnate, Lakshmi Mittal, \$16 billion.

A new middle class has developed but they are already finding their expectations thwarted by the slowdown in the economy.

The overwhelming majority of India's population continues to eke out a squalid existence on miserly incomes in the face of rampant inflation.

The Congress-led government in Delhi is crippled by indecision and corruption. Its writ does not run across whole regions of the country, where Maoist (or Naxalite) guerrilla forces have made themselves more popular by at least fending off rapacious landowners and multinational companies.

Prime Minister Manmohan Singh is floundering between the pressures from abroad to introduce neoliberal 'reforms' and the pressure from below in the run-up to elections in 2014.

There is now even the possibility of the widely discredited right-wing nationalist BJP returning to power under the leadership of arch-reactionary Narendra Modi. Modi is still loathed by millions as the 'Butcher of Gujarat', responsible for the communal killings of more than 2,000 Muslims in 2002. In many states his party is also mired in corruption. But as the FT puts it: "If the sense of a government vacuum from the Congress continues, more and more people will just be willing to take a risk with him" (10/6/13).

In February the biggest-ever general strike in history took place - more than 100 million workers on strike for two days. The demands of the strikers included an end to crippling price rises and a living wage for all.

The mass 'Communist' parties retain a certain support

among workers and even poor farmers. The CPI(M), however, has been badly damaged by its loss of power in West Bengal, where it had ruled for decades. It suffered electoral support there and elsewhere as long as they adhere to the treacherous Stalinist policy of 'stages' - establishing capitalism, only later to fight for socialism

It will be hard - though not impossible, in the absence of other mass workers' parties - for the CPI(M) to regain support there and elsewhere as long as they adhere to the treacherous Stalinist policy of 'stages' - establishing capitalism, only later to fight for socialism



Prime Minister Singh's government is floundering

Pakistan

The almost permanent crisis that constitutes life in Pakistan illustrates starkly the need for workers to move directly against feudalism and capitalism at one and the same time. Political and personal life is plagued by power cuts, bomb attacks, collapsing services and paralysis in government.

The Nawaz Sharif government faces intractable problems - a failing state, a weakening economy, right-wing Islamic terrorism and the powerful centrifugal forces that threaten the break-up of the nation.

The Pakistani economy is dangerously unstable and unviable. A new loan from the IMF of \$5.3 billion comes with demands for "financial discipline" ie no subsidies for the poor.

The once mighty Pakistani People's Party (PPP) has entered a period of possibly terminal decline.

The military, which controls large parts of the economy and society from behind the scenes, has not taken direct control. This does not rule out such a development again in the future, as political and social crises develop.

Committee for a Workers' International (CWI)

The Committee for a Workers' International (CWI) is the socialist international organisation to which the Socialist Party is affiliated. The CWI is organised in 45 countries and works to unite the working class and oppressed peoples against global capitalism and to fight for a socialist world.

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



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As Spanish youth ask: 'Where's our Bale-out?' Help fund the anti-austerity fightback!

Ken Douglas
Socialist Party national treasurer

The sports pages have been full of the news of the transfer of footballer Gareth Bale to Real Madrid for £85 million and that he is set to earn £250,000 a week there, an obscene amount - especially given there is 50% unemployment in Spain among young people.

Just one tenth of one week of Gareth's wages represents the quarterly fighting fund target of £25,000 which our members are aiming to reach by the end of September. This will ensure that the Socialist Party continues to have the funds it needs to campaign for a 24-hour general strike against austerity and cuts.

With £9,180 raised so far that means that there is still over £15,000 to go.

Our efforts were boosted by the over £800 that was donated to the finance appeal at the main rally at summer camp over the August bank holiday weekend. As the rain hammered down on the marquee, campers strained to hear the appeal but that didn't affect the amount raised!

Over the holiday period, Socialist Party branches have been holding fundraising social events. Sheffield South branch raised £89 at a local community festival, selling plants, books and DVDs.

South Tyne and Wear branch raised £72 with a curry night - no less than seven different curries were on offer and there was even



Socialist Party members and Youth Fight for Jobs campaigners marching against the bedroom tax in Leeds photo Iain Dalton

a takeaway service for those who could not stay!

Continuing the curry theme, East London branch raised over £100 holding a clothes party and selling vegetarian curries and have a barbecue planned before the good weather changes.

Socialist Party branches have also been working hard campaigning in the town centres on the vital issues affecting working class people.

Andrew Smith reports that members in Grimsby raised over £30 campaigning against the bedroom tax and the attacks on disability benefits.

In Waltham Forest over £70 was raised campaigning against cuts to Whipps Cross Hospital and building for a local demo.

With four weeks to go, branches need to ensure that they are on course to reach their targets. The Socialist Party relies on the financial support of ordinary working class people via the fundraising of our branches.

You can help by making a donation or by raising some money with a social event, raffle or other fundraiser. You can donate at www.socialistparty.org.uk/donate or by telephoning 020 8988 8777.

Burston strike school celebrated



The strike school - still standing after 99 years photo Eastern region SP

Every year hundreds of trade unionists and socialists commemorate the longest strike in history at the Burston Strike School Rally.

In 1914 two teachers were dismissed at the school in Burston, a small village on the Suffolk-Norfolk boarder near Diss. Kitty and Tom Higdon were sacked for being socialists and trade unionists, organising agricultural workers and progressive education.

However the children decided the next day that they would not allow this to happen, and walked out of the village school.

Trade unionists and socialists from all over the country funded a new independent school on the village green, called the Burston Strike School. It stood as a bea-

con until 1939 when the Higdon died. The school still stands today as a memorial to defiance, and the strike, having never been called off, has lasted 99 years.

At this year's rally, on 1 September, Bob Crow called on the TUC to call a one-day general strike for us to fight today! This got a great reception - unlike the response to the Labour speaker who went down like a damp squib.

Ten Socialist Party members held a stall in the heart of the village green, selling 34 copies of the Socialist and over £40 of books, badges and mugs. Two people asked to join the party.

It is great day out, one which you should put in your diary for next year, the 100th anniversary.

Steve Glennon

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	£ target	£ received	July-September 2013
South West	1,400	1,433	████████████████████
North West	1,200	772	██████████████████
Northern	600	357	██████████████████
South East	750	412	██████████████████
West Midlands	2,100	1,129	██████████████████
Wales	2,300	1,079	██████████████████
East Midlands	1,600	694	██████████████████
Southern	1,200	518	██████████████████
Yorkshire	2,900	955	██████████████████
Eastern	1,200	332	██████████████████
London	6,100	1,272	██████████████████
England & Wales	3,650	221	██████████████████
TOTAL	25,000	9,180	██████████████████

Police spies and the workers' movement

Socialist Party deputy general secretary, Hannah Sell, examines the role and the background to police spy Peter Francis as revealed in the book *Undercover: The True Story of Britain's Secret Police*.

Police spies are nothing new in the workers' movement. Famously, prior to World War One, two of the six Russian Bolshevik deputies (members of the Duma parliament) were among numerous police spies that had infiltrated the party. This did not prevent the Bolshevik party leading the 1917 Russian revolution, in which the working class was able to take power for the first time.

Undercover: The True Story of Britain's Secret Police, by Guardian journalists Paul Lewis and Rob Evans, exposes more recent attempts by the state to infiltrate socialist and radical organisations. It does not concentrate on analysing what took place, but gives a vivid description of it.

It tells the story of the Special Demonstration Squad, a sub-division of Special Branch, formed in 1968 in response to the anti-Vietnam war movement. Funded directly from the Treasury with the 'enthusiastic' support of Labour Prime Minister Harold Wilson, its official role was to provide 'sufficient and accurate evidence to enable the police to maintain public order'.

Unlike other police squads, its task was not to collect evidence to be used in a police trial but to provide the state with information about potential 'civil unrest'; ie, any protest movement which the state considered a potential threat to capitalism, no matter how remote.

Its first target was the anti-Vietnam war movement, the second the anti-apartheid movement. It also targeted environmental and animal rights campaigns. The book reveals that at least one spy, 'Bob Lambert', was believed by animal rights activ-

ists to have planted a bomb in their name.

Throughout the book it is clear that the spies also act as agent provocateurs, encouraging activists towards violent actions. In addition, some formed relationships and even had children with activists, with devastating consequences for the women affected.

In the 1990s the SDS had moved on to the mass movement of predominantly young people against racism. The racist murder of black teenager Stephen Lawrence was one of four racist murders within two miles of the far-right British National Party (BNP) HQ.

Peter Francis (known to us as Pete Daley), one of the ten-strong SDS squad, infiltrated Youth Against Racism in Europe (YRE), a European-wide mass movement against racism. In October 1992 over 40,000 attended the biggest anti-racist, anti-fascist all-European demonstration ever, in Brussels, Belgium.

YRE also co-organised the 1993 50,000 strong demonstration to demand the closure of the far-right racist British National Party (BNP) HQ in Welling, south east London.

YRE was led by members of Militant Labour (now the Socialist Party) and Francis also infiltrated it, briefly becoming secretary of Hackney Militant Labour branch. Peter Francis is the only one of the SDS spies to have turned whistleblower, and the *Undercover* book therefore inevitably concentrates on his activities.

None of the activities organised by YRE or Militant Labour were secret, the police could just as easily have found out what we were planning by attending our public meetings! And police infiltration could



Victimised construction workers demand an end to blacklisting practices

not derail YRE. On the contrary, the anti-racist movement of the early 1990s succeeded in getting the BNP HQ shut down, and of reducing the BNP to a tiny rump organisation for the next decade.

However, it is interesting to read Francis's comments, and those of other spies from the time, which indirectly confirm the correct approach YRE took on a number of issues.

Police brutality

Clearly, the brutality of the police against anti-racist activists shocked Francis. He states: "I also witnessed numerous acts of appalling police brutality on protesters. I became genuinely anti-police." In addition, he was impressed by the bravery of young activists in the face of that brutality.

Of the YRE stewards on the massive October 1993 anti-racist demo, which was viciously attacked by the police, he says: "I was pleasantly surprised by the balls they had, considering that some of them were injured."

The YRE-led stewarding of that demonstration prevented the police's attempt to completely break it up, and potentially even prevented loss of life as thousands of people were crushed when they became trapped against a wall trying to escape police batons. Nonetheless, *Undercover* reports that 41 demonstrators were injured that day.

In the run-up to the demonstration there had been sharp disagreements on stewarding between YRE and the Socialist Workers Party-led Anti-Nazi League that co-organised the demonstration. YRE argued for mass stewarding, involving the trade union movement, with stewards linking arms to attempt to protect the demonstration from the police.

The ANL, by contrast, argued that stewarding was unnecessarily 'macho' and that protesters should sit down in front of the police lines.

On the day many ANL stewards joined with YRE and adopted our tactics, as it was clear that they were the only way to try and protect the demonstration.

This disagreement has now been lost in the mists of time, but is briefly reflected in *Undercover* when it is reported that on the demonstration: "...There is another SDS officer in the Anti-Nazi League running backwards, calling on the crowds to go with him away, trying to get

people to follow him... The ANL did not have the same reputation for street confrontations. It would have been out of character - and frowned upon - for Black's SDS colleague to do anything other than try to lead his friends away from the violence."

But while Francis's infiltration has led to an interesting book, and had no serious detrimental effect on the anti-racist movement, it did do serious damage to anti-racist activists.

It has already been revealed by the Guardian, to mass revulsion, that Francis tried to find 'dirt' on the Lawrence family. Francis himself is clearly, to his credit, guilt ridden about the effect of his infiltration, particularly as he feels it affected the black justice campaigns that YRE took part in.

In the first seven years of the 1990s a total of 484, mainly black and Asian people, died following actions by the police. There were therefore countless families campaigning for justice after the death

Its task was not to collect evidence to be used in a police trial but to provide the state with information about potential 'civil unrest'

of their loved ones. Francis says: "By targeting the [black justice] groups I was convinced I was robbing them of their chance to find that justice."

Francis estimates that Special Branch already had around 100 files on members of Militant Labour and YRE, and that he opened another 25. One of those was Frank Smith, a construction worker and anti-racist activist. The Guardian has now revealed that the police passed that information straight to the construction companies. So as a result of campaigning against racism Frank was blacklisted and unable to get work in the construction industry.

This highlights very clearly that the police are not a neutral force, but are part of a state machine, which has the role, ultimately, of maintaining and defending the dominant interests of the capitalists.

We live in a society where a tiny number of giant corporations - around 120 - dominate the economy. The state plays a vital role in defending the rule of this tiny

elite. This does not only apply to the police.

No one who has experienced Britain's vicious anti-democratic, anti-trade union laws could doubt that the courts are used to try to prevent workers fighting in defence of their interests. Unelected high court judges are overwhelmingly drawn from the '1%' with over two-thirds of them educated at public schools. Even the minority that come from other backgrounds are thoroughly inculcated with the attitudes of the capitalist class.

Class divide

Today, even more than in the 1990s, the most thinking section of the capitalist class is terrified of the potential for mass growth in support for socialist ideas, including of the Socialist Party. No wonder. Their system is in its worst crisis since the 1930s. The gap between rich and poor is at its highest level since World War Two.

In Britain the number of billionaires increased from 77 to 88 in the last year alone, while the average wage has fallen by over £3,000 a year in four years. Mass movements - like in Turkey and Brazil recently - will also erupt here.

Police infiltration is not a thing of the past. The SDS has been disbanded. However, it has been replaced by the National Public Order Intelligence Unit. According to *Undercover* each member of the Unit costs the taxpayer £250,000 a year.

It is essential that socialists campaign for a democratic workers' inquiry into police infiltration of protest groups, along with the abolition of the Special Branch, the riot police, and all other repressive police units, alongside other demands for democratic rights including abolition of the anti-trade union laws. Books like this assist in revealing the real role of the state to a wider audience.

However, no amount of police infiltration of left-wing organisations will prevent future mass movements - they will take place because of workers' and young people's own experience of austerity and the inability of capitalism to meet their aspirations.

Such movements may start by simply expressing anger at capitalism, rather than seeing the possibility of a socialist transformation of society, but on the basis of experience there will be opportunities to win millions to a socialist programme.



photo Richard Newton

YRE members protest outside New Scotland Yard metropolitan police HQ

the Socialist postbag

Do you have something to say?

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

Rail suicides

The sombre tone of the tannoy announcement or the less personal message on the electronic screen: "Due to a person hit by a train..." A person hit by a train is not always killed and some incidents are accidental. But rail workers experience attempts at suicide as a daily issue. About 4% of the 5,608 suicides in the UK in 2012 were on the railway, over 200. The Samaritans say "middle aged working class men" are the most vulnerable with the economic downturn likely to make their hopes of tackling the problem more difficult. Stickers are now attached to lamp-posts on station platforms giving the Samaritans number. Rail workers find suicides very traumatic, some have been unable to continue in their job due to nightmares and flashbacks and feelings of guilt. More and more stations are unstaffed so no one is present to intervene, offer support, or at least warn other rail staff. Suicides impact on family, friends and workmates of the suicide and on others. We should campaign in the rail trade unions for suicide prevention training bit also for a society based on human solidarity where the health and welfare of each individual is the concern of all. An injury to one is an injury to all.

Aslef union member

Sarin gas peril

Even assuming the Assad regime was responsible for a sarin gas attack on an opposition controlled suburb of Damascus, how would a US-led military strike on Syrian government's gas stockpiles actually protect the civilian population? During the 1991 Iraq Gulf War, air strikes on Saddam's chemical weapons factories failed to vaporise the deadly sarin gas. It simply sent a deadly plume into the atmosphere that subsequently caused lasting neurological damage to troops some 600 kilometres away. Therefore, short of a revolutionary overthrow of Assad's regime by the working and poor masses, possibly the best protection for the Syrian population is to supply gas masks and, as New Scientist suggests, the antidote drugs atropine and pralidoxime, and to advise civilians not to remain in cellars as sarin gas vapour is heavier than air.

Simon Carter, east London

Divide and rule

Edinburgh city council is the first local authority to decide that anyone who smokes or drinks will lose benefits. This SNP/Labour council feels free to punish these "undeserving poor." But will bankers who drink not get their bonuses? Will MPs who smoke have expenses withheld? Apparently not, only the poor are undeserving. Setting smokers against non-smokers, drinkers against non-drinkers, is 'divide and rule' where people struggling to make ends meet are encouraged to demonise people who receive benefits but have the temerity to drink and smoke. Some even watch TV and read books. Horror! Every opportunity is taken to humiliate unemployed, disabled or retired people. Horsham's Jobcentre expects people to attend meetings of up to an hour and a half but has no toilet facilities for the public. They do not even provide water - presumably because they don't provide toilets. It's tempting to say they're taking the piss. We could do

with a party of the working class, open to smokers and drinkers!

Derek McMillan

Permanent food banks?

The launch of three new food banks each week across Britain is a sign of our times.

Each of my three local towns now has its own food bank, staffed by well-intentioned church-goers. Each food



bank is one of 350 run nationwide by church-based charity the Trussell Trust. There are now more than eight million people whose income from benefits, self-employment and part-time jobs is precarious. The working week needs to be reduced to 30 hours with no loss of pay and the minimum wage raised to £10 an hour. This would create secure, full-time jobs for the 'precarariat' and the one million young people not in education, employment or training. It's the only way to avoid food banks becoming a permanent feature of Britain's social landscape.

John Smithee, Wisbech

Unions and politics

The annual report of the trade unions' Certification Officer found there has been an overall increase in the number of members contributing to their trade union political funds. The Labour Research Department Fact Service Bulletin, reporting this, also says that Unite, the largest union, spends more than any other on political activities (over £4 million). This includes its affiliation fees to the Labour Party. However, they also report that 34% of Unite's members choose not to pay the political levy and concluded that "around a third of Unite's members don't wish to have a political voice" Surely though this shows that many people choose to express their political voice outside the confines of the Labour Party, which no longer represents the working class movement. We should not see these people as non-political.

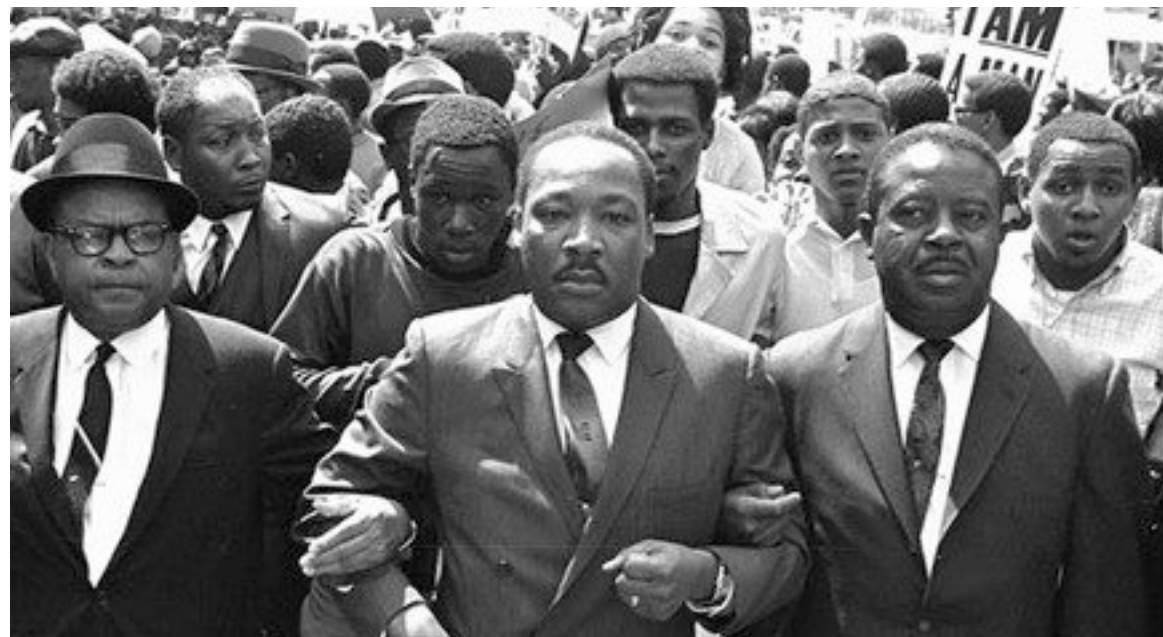
Lee Payne

Politics of horse manure

How times change.... as an 'underprivileged' young child in the 1960s I walked the streets collecting horse manure to sell from a wheelbarrow door to door. Never expected to grow old in a society where the overprivileged now shower all of us with bullshit from their media, and with their policies - and now I have to pay for it.

Teresa Stuart, Plymouth

TV review - MLK: The Assassination Tapes



Martin Luther King (centre) marching in support of striking Memphis sanitation workers in 1968

Dave Carr

There's been no shortage of material in the mass media commemorating US black civil rights leader Martin Luther King's (MLK) landmark 1963 'I have a dream' speech in Washington. Few of these articles touch on the more dramatic events surrounding MLK's assassination in Memphis in April 1968, a period of heightened class struggle and social upheaval in racially divided America.

BBC4's *MLK: The Assassination Tapes* illuminates these themes using rare archive newsreel footage and radio reports. The documentary, in a simple chronological narrative-less style, is a powerful historical account of the period.

The backdrop was the bloody Vietnam War and the hated draft, the dying days of the failed Johnson presidency, and the tinderbox social conditions in US cities especially affecting the oppressed black population.

MLK had gone to Memphis heading the moderate, reformist black civil rights movement to give political and financial support to 1,000, mostly black, striking refuse workers who demanded recognition of

their AFSCME union branch and better pay from the municipal authority. Baton-wielding cops sent by the city's reactionary mayor brutally attacked a march by strikers and their supporters

A further support demonstration, led by MLK's non-violent Southern Christian Leadership Conference and the National Association for the Advancement of Coloured People, began peacefully but more radicalised groups of black youth clashed with police.

The mayor then drafted in over 4,000 armed national guardsmen, who acted like an occupying army. But this only tightened the lid further on the pressure cooker situation developing in the city's black community.

In a powerful, prophetic last speech MLK, anticipated his own demise but refused to retreat from his campaign for racial equality and an end to poverty.

His gunning down at the Lorraine motel by white supremacist James Earl Ray was an incendiary act that provoked widespread rioting and an uprising of black people in cities across the USA.

The assassination terrified the Democrat leadership who feared

that radical black forces would fill the political vacuum.

13,000 troops surrounded the White House as president Johnson dithered, bereft of political solutions. The civil rights leaders and the trade union leaders, while urging political reform, lacked a clear strategy and programme to bring about lasting and fundamental change. Only a mass revolutionary socialist party overthrowing capitalism could have achieved that.

However Johnson, under pressure from the uprising and widespread social discontent, signed into law anti-racist and positive discrimination legislation that year. In Memphis, the mayor conceded union recognition and better pay to end the sanitation workers' strike.

When the rioting subsided, the Democrats could regain political control of the civil rights struggle and shunt it into a safe siding. But the documentary graphically shows how the workers' class struggle merged with the struggle for black liberation.

MLK, despite the limitations of his reformism, recognised through his anti-poverty campaign, the importance of championing class issues to achieve racial equality.

Bristol TUSC - we're fighting the cuts

Trade Unionists and Socialists Against Cuts (TUSC) aims to stand anti-cuts campaigners in every ward in Bristol to give a voice to ordinary people. We recently announced our first prospective candidates for next year's council elections - they will oppose the government's austerity plans and public service cuts imposed by the council.

Bristol has made £90 million of cuts in the last three years with a further £80 million planned. More jobs and services face being cut. Whole service areas could be lost

or handed over to private companies. These cuts are being willingly imposed by Bristol's mayor, with all council parties supporting him. None of these parties stand up for ordinary people.

Previous TUSC mayoral candidate Tom Baldwin says: "TUSC might not have the profile of the main parties but we do have something unique - a programme of resisting austerity. Our members don't just pop up days before an election, we're out campaigning in this city all year round."

"We will stand up for ordinary people, oppose the plunder of our resources to fund tax cuts for the rich and the sell-off of our services to profit-making private companies. People should join our campaign and stand for council themselves. Don't just get angry, fight back."

The Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition brings together trade union leaders and activists and members of political groups including the Socialist Party. It often stands in elections as Trade Unionists and Socialists Against Cuts.

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

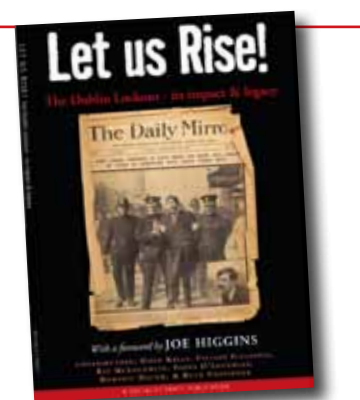
A hundred years ago, the most bitter industrial battle in Ireland's history - the Dublin lockout of 1913 - was under way. The Socialist Party in Ireland has produced a lively book commemorating this immortal struggle and the inspiring leadership of fighters such as Jim Larkin.

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

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1993: BNP racists forced off Brick Lane

Twenty years ago, on Sunday 19 September 1993, 1,000 people gathered on Brick Lane in Tower Hamlets, east London, to stop the racist, far-right British National Party (BNP) from having its regular paper sale. Hugo Pierre spoke to the Socialist about the history and lessons of the struggle against the far right in the borough.

What was the background to the campaign in Brick Lane?

I can remember there being a fascist-type paper sale going back to when I was a teenager – the National Front, the BNP – which had been disturbed on a few occasions but had always reappeared.

There'd been a rampage in the Brick Lane areas in the 1970s, and that was resisted – it was the beginning of resistance from the Bengali youth, who fought back and at one stage managed to stop the fascists from selling their paper.

A number of us had been to Belgium for the Youth against Racism in Europe (YRE) march in the autumn of '92. We decided to take that campaign and materials from that demonstration to some of the local youth clubs.

We were able to take young people with us on the coach to the first demonstration in May 1993 against the BNP headquarters after Stephen Lawrence had been murdered.

How was the campaign linked to the fight to remove Derek Beackon as the first BNP councillor in Tower Hamlets?

We started our campaign in the summer of 1993, before Beackon was elected.

BNP activity had led to racist incidents in the area. One young person – Quddus Ali – had been quite viciously beaten up. There was a lobby outside the hospital where he was being treated, of about 5-600 youth. That was attacked by the police, although the young people were able to prevent the worst excesses of the police brutality.

Then the BNP won this seat on the Isle of Dogs on 16 September, so we stepped up our campaign, but also our campaign became more popular as a result.

The workers for Tower Hamlets Council on the Isle of Dogs went on strike the day after Beackon was elected. That gave a big boost.

So who was involved in the campaign?

YRE had started to develop in a number of colleges and youth clubs around London, and also around the country.

There was also a black organisation called Panther that was also doing some work, especially after

the Stephen Lawrence murder. Militant Labour [now the Socialist Party] members were active in both.

A lot of the local youth gangs declared a truce around the BNP election, because they could see that the potential for racist backlash in the borough was quite high. Out of this the Youth Connection group was formed.

In September we launched a campaign for a joint demonstration, which then attracted 3,000 people in October. But we also decided to organise a static demonstration on the spot where the BNP had their paper sale.

So how did you organise this?

We organised a big public meeting at a local community centre in Whitechapel. 2-300 people came along to that meeting – young people, predominantly Bangladeshi youth.

Although there'd been a lot of Militant supporters, including myself, who'd been expelled from the Labour Party, we still had one or two points of contact in the Labour Party who were on the left. They agreed to speak at the meeting.

We followed up that meeting with a big campaign, particularly in the western part of the borough. Leafleting estates, leafleting youth clubs, going to speak to young people in youth clubs, on the street – wherever we could.

We agreed that on the Sunday morning, we were going to take over the spot where they stood.

We all met up at about 8 o'clock in the morning because the market that takes place on Sunday started early. We took over the spot. The word spread around. There ended up being around 1,000 people, mainly from the local community, on the corner.

The BNP were hemmed in and pushed off. We continued demonstrating in the following weeks to make sure they didn't return. It was a massive victory, because the far right have not been able to re-establish a regular public activity anywhere in Britain, since September 1993.

How much of a blow to the BNP did the victory represent?

The confidence of young people was really raised, to be able to go out on the streets and challenge



Tower Hamlets school students striking on 9 March 1994 against racist attacks photo Andy Walker

racism. School students organised a strike when there'd been a racist attack outside a school. The TUC organised a demonstration through the borough against racism in 1994 before the council elections. It fed into a big anti-BNP vote on the Isle of Dogs.

So although Beackon's vote actually rose from 1,480 to 2,000, he lost that particular election. Ever since then the BNP's Tower Hamlets vote decreased.

What were the lessons in the fight against the BNP?

I think one of the key lessons is to always give a key role in those campaigns to the youth – make sure that they're given the opportunity to organise, set tactics and direction.

Under capitalist society, there is going to be a level of racism that's being promoted at any one time or another by the ruling class. It doesn't always get an expression in an electoral way. But it did in 1993. That was primarily because the conditions of people were really driven down, but also as Labour had moved to the right quite substantially. None of the established political parties were offering any way forward whatsoever. In fact Labour, on the Isle of Dogs, echoed the anti-Asian feeling that was being promoted by the Liberals.

The involvement of the trade unions was absolutely key. We had political demands – jobs and homes, not racism. It wasn't just a strategy of bringing black and Asian young people, towards YRE. It was also a question of how did that link to the problems that white youth were also facing, in order to bring young people of all races together to fight on the issues that unite them.

What conclusions were drawn from the defeat of Derek Beackon?

After the campaign to get rid of Beackon was successful we also decided, through Militant Labour, to stand in elections. Some people on the left said we shouldn't stand, we would open the gate for the BNP if we split the Labour vote. But the Labour Party wasn't addressing the needs of young people in the borough. We had to stand so we could put forward such a programme.



Socialism TODAY

Looking back at the BNP's electoral breakthrough

Clive Heemskerck writes: "The Millwall ward, covering the Isle of Dogs, had been a solid Labour seat for decades. From not having stood in local elections there before, and with no active base, the BNP polled 657 votes in a council by-election in October 1992 (a 20% share of the vote), which they then more than doubled to 1,480 (33.8%) to win the September 1993 contest. But the victory didn't come from nowhere – it was rooted in the social conditions and recent history of the area. While the Isle of Dogs shared many characteristics with other deprived inner-city areas there were also distinctive factors that gave it an added volatility..."

The Socialist Party's magazine September 2013 issue also includes:

- Prospects for struggle**
Hannah Sell looks at potential outlets for mass anger
- US elections**
Socialist gains
- Dublin lockout 1913**
The rich lessons for today's fight against austerity, by Joe Higgins
- South Africa**
Workers' party gains new ground
- Tory fracking**
The Tory-led government's green lies exposed

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That had a significant impact. We stood in a couple of elections and got creditable votes.

There has to be now, especially with the economic crisis, a political alternative to the austerity programme. None of the establishment parties are putting that up. In Tower Hamlets we have an independent mayor. Some measures he's put forward, particularly around student EMA replacement, have had some small impact on young people. But in one of the most expensive boroughs to live for private rented accommodation, where levels of poverty are still high, youth unemployment is one of the highest in the country – this sticking plaster won't stop an explosion of anger that is going to come out at some stage, especially from the youth. We think there needs to be somewhere for an anti-austerity vote to go, especially at the next council elections in May. We're looking to put together a platform around TUSC to do that and

appeal to workers, trade unionists, anti-racist campaigners, young people and others to come forward as prospective candidates.

Public meeting: 20 years since the BNP were driven out

Come to this Socialist Party meeting to hear the lessons of the fight against the BNP in Tower Hamlets

Wednesday 17 September, 6pm
Queen Mary University
Mile End Road, E1 4NS
Near Mile End and Stepney
Green tube



Hugo Pierre speaking at Brick Lane photo Phil Maxwell

NHS: ACTION TO IMPROVE CARE

Becky Jackson
Staff nurse

Whipps Cross, east London, is one of many hospitals mired in crisis. Following a merger with three other hospital trusts, Whipps Cross is run by the Barts Health NHS Trust, which is crippled by Private Finance Initiative (PFI) debts.

Having announced a cuts programme of £77.5 million last month – the largest of any NHS trust – this financial crisis will inevitably damage services and compound the already impossible working conditions of staff caring for Whipps patients.

In a series of unannounced inspections, the Care Quality Commission (CQC), the care regulators, found that Whipps had “systemic failings”, breaching ten of the 16 national standards for quality and safety of care.

Political considerations

NHS campaigners want only the best care in our hospitals and should constantly take action against failings. But there is little doubt that the CQC reports are written with current political priorities in mind. The government and their stooges in NHS trusts across the country will stop at nothing to achieve their goal of stripping down, breaking up and privatising NHS services.

And in the wake of both the Francis Report, detailing the crisis at Mid Staffs and the Keogh Review, looking at the quality of care in 14 other hospitals with the highest death rates, the relationship between the board and the ward has never been clearer. Cuts in services, lack of staff, reductions in bed numbers: all have been highlighted as problems in so-called “failing hospitals”.

The drive to pay off the PFI loan sharks and keep up with government “efficiency savings” against a backdrop of an aging population with ever more complex health

needs is leaving hundreds of thousands of healthcare professionals and assistants unable to cope with the strain.

In the absence of any statutory staffing levels, ward sisters and charge nurses are left with only flimsy local guidelines to plan the workforce around.

In an attempt to keep costs down, a greater share of the work is being carried out by unregistered healthcare assistants. Many are not given adequate training and frequently feel unsupported in their jobs, according to a recent poll by the British Journal of Healthcare Assistants. On top of that, workplace stress, bullying and staff burn-out are becoming more commonplace.

Not fooled

Despite the best attempts of the bosses and media to turn the mood against Whipps Cross, most people can see what is happening. At Whipps there is a trade union leadership in the local Unison health branch which is prepared to fight and is appealing to the community and other campaigners to get behind it. The branch has called two protests which will be just the start of the campaign and are prepared to call strike action if necessary.

Further crises on the scale of Mid Staffs are not inevitable. However, the underlying problem – austerity policies – can only be fought with a head-on challenge from the trade unions. The NHS is under attack. Failures in care will serve as a stick for the Coalition to beat us with, in order to roll out further privatisations. Only through mass action can we secure a properly funded, publicly owned, high quality NHS for generations to come.

Protest to defend Whipps Cross:

- 5pm Monday 16 September at the hospital main gate
- 12 noon Saturday 21 September march from the Green near the hospital (by Whipps Cross roundabout)



DEMONSTRATE AT THE TORY PARTY CONFERENCE TO SAVE THE NHS!
Sunday 29 September 2013

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

photo Paul Mattsson

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!