



# TORIES ROB NHS WORKERS

- **No cuts to our health service**
- **Unions must fight job and pay cuts - ballot for action now!**

**A mental health nurse**  
London

Nurses and other health workers are furious at Health Minister Jeremy Hunt's announcement that he will stop the measly, below inflation 1% pay rise next year. He is blocking incremental pay too and sending out a message that experienced NHS staff and, by extension, a quality health service, are not valued by this government.

This is happening in a climate where the 1,000 richest people in the UK have increased their wealth by £150 billion over the last three years! NHS workers have lost, on average, 10% of our pay over the same time period.

Tremendous campaigns are springing up to defend the NHS but a robust, nationally coordinated industrial response is lacking. There has been a successful strike at Mid Yorkshire Trust against cuts, but the bosses sack and downband staff on a national scale while health budgets are drained through the rip-off Private Finance Initiative (PFI).

What we need now is an urgent organising drive among NHS workers. NHS rank and file trade unionists need a programme of action to pressure their branch leaderships from below to act.

Emergency branch meetings need to be convened to plan action over the attack on NHS pay. Unison members need to demand that Unison ballots health workers over pay. We must also demand that Unison works with other unions across the public sector to build joint coordinated action.

"NHS staff are angry and this may well be the match that lights the fire. The health unions, and Unison as the largest one, need to say 'enough is enough', concession bargaining has not worked. We need to coordinate our collective strength to fight for a pay rise that at least makes up for what we have lost. The money is there to pay all NHS staff - cancel all the PFI debts that are draining the NHS dry."

**A Unison member and health worker**

"A strike over pay would inevitably become about more than just pay. In the face of a barrage of cuts, privatisation, woeful staffing levels and the bed crisis, a strike would represent an outpouring of generalised anger from NHS staff.

Morale is at an all-time low, not least because of the failure of the health unions to seriously fight the numerous attacks on staff and services in recent years. Strike action over pay could give confidence to NHS workers to stand up to the government and their austerity agenda for the NHS."

**A staff nurse**

"There is a general feeling of disgust and outrage from Unison members I have spoken to as well as the view that we don't expect any better from this government. The point is what are we going to do about it?  
Unison should make its position clear now that we will be balloting our members for strike action if the government does not give us a pay rise and we will not enter into any more concession bargaining in order to get a pathetic 1%."  
**Adrian O'Malley**  
Unison branch secretary,  
Mid Yorkshire Health,  
personal capacity

## Socialism weekend

A discussion on the strategy to save the NHS and fight the pay freeze will be held at the Socialist Party's Socialism 2013 event on 2-3 November. All NHS trade unionists are urged to attend this event and the NHS discussion, which will be at 10am on 3 November at the University of London Union, Malet Street, London WC1E 7HY.

For more information see page 5

photo Paul Mattsson



# TORIES CONDEMN US TO THE BREADLINE

"Our economy, our society, welfare, schools all reformed, all rebuilt with one aim, one mission in mind - to make this country at long last, and for the first time ever, a land of opportunity for all."

Cameron's speech to Conservative Party conference confirms that he and the Tory Party faithful live in a parallel universe to the vast majority in society. Britain may be a 'land of opportunity' for the super-rich but it has been on the basis of making an increasing number of people endure a living hell. In reality the Tory conference was an attempt to whip up division and to escalate the impoverishment of working class people. Under-25s are threatened with having their access to housing benefit and Jobseeker's

Allowance completely removed. People who've been unemployed for three years will have to do full time volunteer work, turn up daily to the jobcentre, or take part in a programme that 'tackles' the reason for their inability to work.

These vicious attacks ignore the fact that hundreds of thousands of jobs have been cut by the Con-Dem government of millionaires. No amount of volunteer work, schemes or benefit sanctions will help people find jobs that just aren't there.

Here Socialist Party members look at the real situation facing working class people in Breadline Britain and what we do about it.

## Government ignores hungry children

Nicki Downes

I have been teaching in the same primary school for 19 years. It is in one of the poorest wards in Britain, St Michaels in Coventry. Over time, I have seen the growing effect of child poverty on our school community.

My union, the NUT, in conjunction with the Daily Mirror and the Child Poverty Action Group, asked me to complete a survey on the issue. The results should shame any government, but particularly one of a country that remains one of the richest in the world.

### Teachers' views

1,700 teachers were surveyed and 85.5% have seen children coming to school hungry; 77% have seen parents unable to afford the school uniform and a shocking 91.7% believe benefit cuts will have a negative impact on children at their school.

You can tell when a child is hungry - their head drops onto the table by morning break and again shortly after lunch. Hunger directly affects concentration and attainment. I've looked in children's lunch boxes on occasion and found one slice of buttered bread.

These are often children whose families are not entitled to free school meals. We regularly, as a

school, refer families to the CAB and we know that a number of our families are regular users of food banks.

If a child goes without breakfast and we know about it, we will provide them with one. If they have no or little lunch, we provide them with one but who knows what they get for dinner. Providing all Key Stage 1 children with a free school meal is a start but children do not stop being hungry at the age of seven. And what happens to them in the holidays?

We've just started a new school year. Most of our parents will have gone and bought new school jumpers, trousers and shoes, etc. This year, more than any other, I have seen children arrive back in September in the same ripped and stained jumper which is now further up their arms. It's incredibly sad to see.

### Whose fault?

None of this is because the parents lack parental skills or are poor managers of their household budget as Gove would have you think. Their housing benefit is cut because they are hit by the bedroom tax, or their entitlement to benefits is non-existent or reduced, or they are working in incredibly low-paid jobs.

We make days at school happy. We take our students on subsidised trips and have a 'forest school' that enhances their outdoor learning but



Hunger affects children's concentration and mood

the expectation is for accelerated learning and rigorous target setting. They are, in effect, expected to make more progress than kids eating regular meals with home access to the

internet and support from tutors paid for by their parents.

Fundamentally, however, the government has and continues to make a choice to ignore hungry, un-

dernourished children. They choose to blame the poorest parents for the crisis instead of ensuring that every family has a roof over their head, food and warmth in the winter.

## Link up the struggles to stop the government

Rob Williams

Socialist Party executive committee

On 29 September, the 60,000 who marched on the TUC demonstration at Tory conference - a massive turnout for Manchester - showed a small indication of the seething anger that exists. It was wilfully ignored by the mainstream media but it should be the platform for the type of mass strike action that can rock this government.

The Socialist Party with the National Shop Stewards Network (NSSN) and others has tirelessly campaigned for the TUC to call a 24-hour general strike as the most potent form of civil disobedience

- to mobilise millions of workers which we believe will enjoy huge support from all those suffering from the brutal Con-Dem cuts.

If those unions already in dispute and planning action were to strike together on one day this autumn, it would be a huge step towards this, while building confidence in our ability to resist and shaking Cameron and Co.

There was huge support for the firefighters on their recent strike and the new phase of rolling regional teachers' strikes has been a great success so far. The Napo probation workers are starting their ballot against privatisation this Friday; Royal Mail workers are in the middle of theirs and higher

education workers in UCU, Unison and Unite are voting to strike at the same time that PCS has been consulting branches on the next steps of their action.

There is a huge appetite among members in these unions and the wider labour movement to strike together in order to maximise our strength. The teachers' unions have already announced that they intend to follow the regional action with a one-day national strike this autumn.

The trade union leaders must get around a table together, open the diaries and fix the date. They must also keep the pressure on the TUC to name the day for a 24-hour general strike. We marched together in Manchester, it's now time to strike together.



photo Senan

Agree with what you read here?

## Join the Socialist Party!

Get in touch at [socialistparty.org.uk](http://socialistparty.org.uk) or call 020 8988 8777

During the week starting 19 October, there will be public meetings around the country explaining why you should join. See [socialistparty.org.uk/whatson](http://socialistparty.org.uk/whatson)



**Breadline Britain**

# Grim reality behind benefit headlines

Mary Jackson

I am an adviser in a charity and want to put some reality into the headlines by citing just a few cases I have seen in recent weeks.

I met a 41 year old very vulnerable woman, frightened to face the world some days, didn't open her post for weeks, had been through a tribunal to prove she was too ill to work.

Some months later her Employment and Support Allowance had stopped. Her mother telephoned and was told she had missed an appointment (she hadn't opened the letter). She appealed against the decision.



photo Paul Mattsson

## Constant battle

A month later and still no money, her mother phoned again. The woman was sent a form to complete. A month later, still no money, sent the same form again. A month later, phoned and was told she couldn't be paid unless she had a medical examination. Three months later she got a date for a medical. Two hours before the appointed time she got a phone call cancelling the medical.

A month later, she finally attended a medical. The assessor was so appalled, she got permission to contact her GP to ask for her to be seen immediately. The assessor said she would file the report as soon as possible meaning the woman would finally be paid.

Three weeks later, still no money, so the mother made another phone call to the DWP and found the report had not been sent from Atos. A call to Atos revealed that the report had been ready for three weeks but had not been forwarded to the right department. Finally a decision was made and given in a phone call - she was not fit for work.

This woman had been eight and a half months without a penny. She is one of the lucky ones with parents willing and able to help a bit so she did not starve, a very understanding landlord so she was not made homeless.

## Traumatised

But she was very traumatised by the whole experience. She lived without heat or hot water because she knew her pensioner parents could not really afford to keep paying for her electric as well as her food. She was distraught every time her moth-

er had to phone on her behalf. She sobbed: "I'm a human being, how can they treat me like this?"

That should be the end of this sad story, but no! The day her money went into her bank was the day she got her next 'fitness for work' form to fill in to start on the treadmill again.

12,000 people have died within three months of being found fit for work by Atos. This woman could have been one of these - she threw herself in front of a car, but luckily only suffered bruises and grazes.

## Children suffer

Another woman who had allowed her children to live with their father because she was ill had the children suddenly returned to her because he had changed his mind. The system allows the father to keep child benefit for three months if he doesn't voluntarily give it up.

Within a short time she had no money to feed them or even soap powder to wash their clothes. Social services arranged a food parcel and allowed her £5 - but insisted on spending the money for her so it didn't go very far. She was living on

tiny amounts of food herself but still struggled to feed her children until the benefit system caught up with her new circumstances.

## Jobseeker

A single man, very capable, claiming Jobseeker's Allowance in between agency work when he could get it, was sanctioned so many times that he was in danger of losing his home. He was sanctioned once after a period of agency work for not attending a 'job-search interview' even though he went in and cancelled it because he was starting work that day.

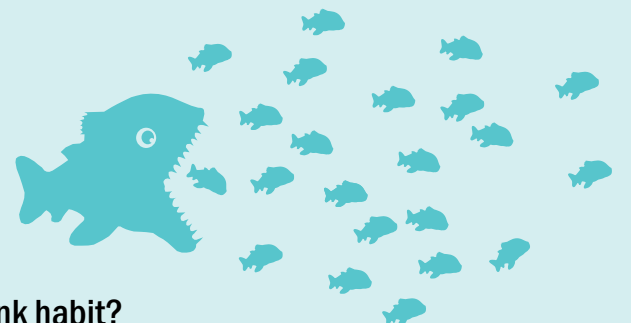
He was sanctioned once for being ten minutes late for an appointment because his bus had been held up because of a major accident. Another time it was for missing an appointment despite phoning an hour before to tell them his gran had died and his mum needed him at home. Each sanction lasted longer than the last.

These are real people. But in uncaring 21st century Britain they are simply statistics. Maybe the plan is to reduce the benefit bill one death at a time. Enough is enough!



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

# Them...



## Food bank habit?

Tory MP Paul Maynard is concerned people might get a 'food bank habit'. He said: "I do not believe that immediate food relief should be the role of the government. We can't make food banks part of the welfare state. What I don't want to do is normalise food poverty." Unfortunately he and his party are already 'normalising' food poverty by slashing jobs, benefits and pay, forcing people to turn to food banks to feed themselves and their families.

**93%**

of new housing benefit claimants from 2010-2011 were in work

**0.7%**

of all benefit expenditure is thought to have been overpaid due to fraud in 2011-2012

## Subsidy habit!

Despite the tax payer subsidising their grub by £5.8 million a year, MPs are still not happy.

One was "horrified" when the restaurant he was dining in ran out of the vintage of wine he was after. Another felt there were "not enough English dishes". And one was "sorry to say the courgette and potato rosti cake with beetroot wedges and cream cheese was disgusting". It's a hard life.

**£16bn**

of benefits people are entitled to go unclaimed every year

**£120bn**

is evaded or avoided in tax every year, largely by the super-rich

**£850bn**

is sitting idle in the bank accounts of big business in Britain

**3.5%**

of people taking part in the Work Programme have found jobs

**£12.8bn**

expected cost of introducing Universal Credit

## 3p expenses

Ex-defence secretary Liam Fox claimed 3p in expenses for a 100m car journey. This is just one of 16 claims for less than £1 car expenses made by Fox in 2012-2013.

Every penny counts - even when you're 'struggling' to get by on at least the MP's minimum salary of £66,396 a year, apparently.

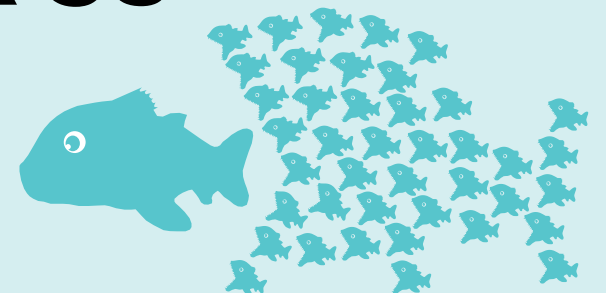
## Welfare facts

The minimum wage increased to £6.31 for over-21s recently. But adjusted for inflation this is £1,010 less than the minimum wage in 2008.

**390%**

increase in long-term unemployment since the Con-Dems came to power in 2010

# ...& Us



Have you got news for the 'fishes'? Email: [editors@socialistparty.org.uk](mailto:editors@socialistparty.org.uk)

# Stop blaming victims of austerity

Versions of the following letter were published by the Guardian and the Metro:

David Cameron's announcement detailing Tory plans to remove housing benefit and Jobseeker's Allowance from young people is a chilling reminder of his party's cruelty. Despite the bombastic rhetoric about "a land of opportunity", punitive and callous policies like these will not alter the fact that more than five jobseekers are chasing every vacancy. Threatening us with homelessness and destitution will not create the two million jobs needed to deal with mass unemployment. The Youth Fight for Jobs campaign was set up in 2009 to take up the issue of mass youth unemployment - to help or-

ganise the 'lost generation'. Since then, our unemployment figures have continued to rise. We've had crackpot workfare scheme after workfare scheme, but no progress has been made as a result. Our challenge to politicians is for them to stop blaming those who fall victim to an economic system in crisis and brutal austerity, and instead pledge to carry out a mass, publicly funded programme of job creation. If they fail, it's safe to say the mass protests that have swept the world will surely come to Britain too. **Claire Laker-Mansfield**  
Spokesperson, Youth Fight for Jobs

Zero tolerance for zero-hours: Youth Fight for Jobs day of action against zero-hour contracts on 5 November  
See [youthfightforjobs.com](http://youthfightforjobs.com)

# No to Royal Mail privatisation

## A postal worker speaks out

The postal service is being taken out of public ownership and ripped to shreds by private institutions and investors, all hoping to make a fat profit from our 497 year-old national treasure.

Postal workers are bitterly opposed to the sell-off, because they know it will lead to job losses and cuts in terms and conditions.

In a desperate attempt to divide the workforce, Royal Mail chief executive Moya Greene tried to bribe posties with the promise of £300 to cross picket lines.

But we know it's the banks and advisers that helped cause the financial crisis in 2008 who stand to make millions as Royal Mail is flogged off cheaply.

No wonder the government has rushed through privatisation, the overwhelming majority of the public do not support the sale.

Royal Mail will now dance to the tune of shareholders - spending millions on dividends and fat cat



Lobbying the last Labour government photo Paul Mattsson

bonuses, while services face terminal decline until the daily delivery to 29 million homes across the UK can no longer be maintained.

It will only be a matter of time before jobs are lost and services scaled

back as the drive for profit takes over. How long before Royal Mail ends up in foreign hands or needs a taxpayer bailout?

Anger is being directed at the Con-Dem coalition but also at Labour, who once again proved they no longer represent workers.

At the Labour Party conference, delegates unanimously passed a motion which called on the next Labour government to renationalise Royal Mail. This could have seriously dented the floatation. Yet shamefully the Labour leaders ignored the vote and refused to make such a commitment.

A growing number of CWU members are now questioning the link between Labour and the union. The need for a new mass workers' party has become clearer now and the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition is a step in right direction.

The CWU ballot is expected to return a strong 'yes' vote for industrial action when voting closes on 16 October, with strikes likely to take place within weeks.

CWU leaders should coordinate joint strike action with all the other unions that are in dispute and bring this weak Tory-led coalition down.

Moya Greene receives 72 times the average pay of a postal worker

## Firefighters rally against cuts

Neil Cafferky

Firefighters will assemble in London on 16 October to demonstrate against changes to pensions and cuts to the fire service.

FBU members in England and Wales took strike action on 17 September for four hours in defence of their current pension arrangement. These attacks include raising the retirement age. As the FBU points out: The employers' "own evidence shows that making firefighters work beyond 55 puts both public and firefighters' safety at risk."

The effects of the coalition's austerity policies have borne down hard on the fire service. Since this government took office, 3,600 firefighter jobs have been cut. Control rooms have been merged and vital professionals have been removed. Numerous local stations across the country are in line for closure, despite vigorous opposition from the communities they are based in.

Many stations that are to remain open have had pumps removed, reducing the effectiveness of the service.

These changes are not just a worsening of firefighters' condi-

tions and safety standards but also a threat to public safety. This is well understood by working people and explains the support that exists for firefighters taking action, either in campaigns to save stations or during strikes.

Understandably firefighters are very reluctant to strike, but the intransigence of the government has left them with little option.

But FBU members should take heart that they are not the only group of workers taking action in defence of their conditions. The Public and Commercial Services union still has a live ballot. The teaching unions NUT and NASUWT are currently engaged in rolling strike action across the country.

Members from the UCU, Unison and Unite in higher education are currently balloting for strike action, as is the probation officers' union NAPO.

There was clearly a mood for coordinated action on the FBU picket lines in September. As well as pursuing the individual campaigns, these unions' strategy must include coordination.

Also calling on the TUC to name the date for a 24-hour general strike would be a powerful blow against the government's cuts programme.

## Probation officers ballot for action

Chas Berry

Chair, Kent National Association of Probation Officers (Napo)

Public safety is under threat by plans to break up and privatise the Probation Service in England and Wales. Currently, around 180,000 offenders are managed each year in the community by 35 local trusts staffed by trained professionals. They work with police, prisons, courts and specialist service providers.

It works well, ensuring a 'joined up' service that minimises the risk of further offending. Justice Minister Chris Grayling wants to change all that by selling off 80% of this work to the lowest bidders in the private sector, creating a two-tier system that will put the public at risk.

Of course, there is always more that can be done, especially for prisoners serving less than 12 months who don't currently benefit from supervision on release.

Grayling plans to extend supervision to this group but only with private providers on a 'payment by results' basis. He pioneered this model when he was head of the Work Programme, but its failure to deliver hasn't stopped him heralding it as the best way to cut reoffending rates. He is a man in a hurry and wants to push through his 'Transforming Rehabilitation' (TR) programme by April 2014.

Napo has warned of the danger ahead since Grayling announced his TR programme in May. The union has fought a valiant campaign through the media and by lobbying MPs and sympathetic Lords as well other professionals in the justice field. A further lobby of Parliament takes place on 9 October.

National negotiators have reached an impasse, with Grayling's Ministry of Justice (MoJ) making impossible demands and imposing a timetable that is causing chaos and confusion. Probation workers are not known for their militancy but they are angry about the impending destruction of a service they are passionate about.

They responded in their hundreds to the call for lunchtime protests when Grayling published the invitation to tender for their work on 19 September but they recognise this will not be enough to defeat TR.

Napo is balloting its members for industrial action for only the third time in its history. We need a big turnout and a YES vote to both questions on the ballot paper. Members also need a strategy to win, linked to the struggles already taking place across the public sector and beyond through coordinated industrial action.

The ballot runs from 4 to 18 October.

## Striking Future Directions workers lobby Rochdale council

"We're as strong and solid now, as we were when we started", said Andy, a Unison steward at Future Directions. He was in a buoyant and determined mood, as the workers completed their third ten-day period of strike action.

Future Directions are trying to impose severe pay and other cuts on the support workers. Andy explained that some will lose £10,000 a year, putting their homes at risk.

Workers met on 3 October to discuss the progress of the campaign. The employers have claimed the union has refused to meet with Acas, but these lies were rubbished by Unison reps. The meeting was also updated about the donations flowing in and the national coverage the dispute is receiving.

The 60 workers then marched to where Rochdale council was meeting, for a noisy and enthusiastic lobby. A worker from the Hovis Bakery in Wigan brought a message of solidarity and explained how they won their dispute against zero-hours contracts by striking.

Unison officials pledged to meet with the employers and Acas "anytime and anywhere", and reported that the employer's response was to put off talks for at least another two weeks! The council leader, said that he would be writing to "both sides" and that Future Directions management should go to Acas with Unison.

The workers are planning further strike action while they wait for the Acas talks.

Kevin Corran



Marching in determined mood photo Hugh Caffrey

## In brief

### Cleaners' victory

RMT members working as cleaners on the Tyne and Wear Metro have won a victory in their battle against poverty pay. The dispute, which lasted over a year and involved 19 days of strike action, has won four annual 5% pay increases from this month until 2016. This takes them closer to a real living wage. The RMT is pointing to this victory as a landmark in its battle against train cleaning firms who pay poverty wages.

### Teachers' strikes

As we reported in the Socialist, there was overwhelming support for the strikes by NUT and NASUWT members in a second wave of regional strikes on 1 October. On 17 October the last of the regional strikes will spread to London, the South and the North-East. A national strike is planned for November.

### NUT elections

Lewisham NUT secretary Martin Powell-Davies is convener of the Local Associations for National Action Campaign (LANAC), which was formed to maintain and build a network of local NUT associations and school reps to exchange information, debate and discuss strategy to defeat the serious attacks that teachers face. Martin, a Socialist Party member, has been selected by LANAC to stand for election as NUT vice-president in an election which runs from 30 October to 20 November.

For more information see: [www.electmartin1.blogspot.co.uk](http://www.electmartin1.blogspot.co.uk)

### Grangemouth

Unite members at the Grangemouth oil refinery have started an overtime ban and work to rule in defence of their convener, Stevie Deans. Stevie has been under investigation by the owners Ineos since the debacle over false accusations about Unite's role in the selection of a new parliamentary candidate in Falkirk.

Unite says the company is trying to use the dispute as an excuse to attack the workforce, including introducing worse pay and conditions for new employees.

The workers voted overwhelmingly (81.4%) for action recently, including strike action. At the moment Unite is calling for more talks and an emergency debate in the Scottish Parliament but strike action is still possible.

### Defend the Four

After a momentous campaign lasting over six years four Unison members, two now members of Unite, won a tremendous victory against a witch-hunt in Unison. Come and celebrate with them: Suzanne Muna, Onay Kasab, Glenn Kelly and Brian Debus.

5pm onwards on Saturday 19 October at the Roxy Bar and Screen, 128-132 Borough High Street, London SE1 1LB. There will be a screening from a Reel News DVD of the campaign and special guest Anti Duhring Battalion. Food, music, dancing.

### Website

For more trade union and workplace reports see [www.socialistparty.org.uk](http://www.socialistparty.org.uk)

# Scottish Anti-Bedroom Tax Federation conference

## 'Let's bury it for good!'

Socialist Party Scotland reporters

"The bedroom tax is now a dead tax walking" commented Tommy Sheridan, the chair of the Scottish Anti-Bedroom Tax Federation in opening Saturday's conference. Over 120 delegates from 25 local campaigns and trade unions attended the second Fed conference of 2013.

A series of legal victories, concessions from the Scottish government, pledges of no eviction policies by councils and growing evidence that the majority of tenants are not paying, have all helped to leave the bedroom tax hanging by thread.

Even the Labour Party in Scotland have tabled a bill to legislate for no evictions and are demanding that the Scottish government provide the £50 million that has been stolen from tenants in Scotland by the Con-Dem coalition.

The overwhelming feeling at the conference was one of confidence that the bedroom tax could be defeated. Activists who have been at the forefront of fighting the threat of evictions in North Lanarkshire spoke movingly of their campaign.

Lorraine Fraser from Viewpark was told she faced court proceedings for rent arrears of just £248. Lorraine, who suffers from a spinal disability, explained that had it not

been for the work of the Federation she would not have been here today. She would, as she told the conference, have taken her own life. Instead the work of the Fed in mobilising the local community at a huge public meeting and a campaign run by the Daily Record newspaper, forced the Labour leader of the council to declare a no eviction policy.

Campaigners from Fife, Renfrewshire, Stranraer, Glasgow, Edinburgh, Dundee, Stirling, Motherwell, East Kilbride and Irvine all give excellent contributions about the campaigns in their areas.

### Unions' support

Trade unionists, including Ian Leech from Glasgow City Unison, which is affiliated to the Fed, spoke about the need to bring the campaigns against cuts together with the anti-bedroom tax work. Ian referred to the recent strike of social work staff in Glasgow, which was unofficial action but reflected the growing anger at cuts and ever increasing workloads.

Kim McLaughlin, secretary of the Glasgow Unison Housing Association branch declared to great applause that her union branch of 1,000 members was affiliating to the Federation.

Mike Dailly from the Govan Law Centre gave an account of the pro-

gress of the bill he has drafted that would change the legislation to rule out evictions for bedroom tax arrears. The bill has support from MSPs from Labour, Greens and Independents in the Scottish parliament, but so far no SNP MSP has signed the bill.

Under the rules of the Scottish parliament in order to be debated MSPs from at least three parties must sign. It was agreed that local campaigns should be lobbying SNP MSPs to demand support for the bill.

Philip Stott from Dundee highlighted the importance of continuing to build the anti-eviction armies in every area. While many councils have a one-year no eviction policy, as rent arrears begin to build the likelihood of Housing Associations and even councils moving to evict tenants will grow.

The Scottish Federation of Housing Associations is opposing the bill to outlaw evictions. Like the SNP government, it believes that threat of eviction is an important stick to threaten tenants with to force them to pay.

The conference unanimously agreed a statement highlighting the main priorities of the Federation in the next few months. The first is to build for a major lobby of the SNP conference on 19 October to demand the Scottish government act now to legislate against evictions.



Marching to defeat the hated bedroom tax photo Jim Halfpenny

And to demand the full £50 million be provided this year and every year until the bedroom tax is abolished to lift the burden from the 105,000 households affected.

The Federation conference also agreed that all debt due to bedroom tax must be written off and that anyone who has paid the tax through fear and duress must be reimbursed.

A new 23-strong expanded Executive Committee was elected, reflecting the rapid growth of the Fed since the first conference in June this year. Office bearers elected included Tommy Sheridan as chair and Gail

Morrow as secretary. Gail is also a member of Socialist Party Scotland. SPS members play a leading role in the local campaigns and in the Federation as office bearers and on the wider EC.

It was clear from the conference that there is a growing confidence to fight on until the tax is killed off and all debt is written off. The pressure on the Scottish government to use its powers and to provide the resources to protect all those affected by this brutal attack on the poorest will increase. We won't stop until the tax is buried for good.

## socialism2013

### London 2-3 November

A weekend of discussion and debate hosted by the Socialist Party

Theme	Saturday 3pm	Sunday 10am	Sunday 1pm
<b>Introducing socialism</b>	Are we naturally too greedy for socialism?	Is the Russian Revolution relevant today?	How would socialism actually work?
<b>Introducing Marxism</b>	An introduction to Marxist philosophy	An introduction to Marxist economics	Historical materialism - how can Marxists understand progress?
<b>Fighting austerity</b>	Will there be a general strike in Britain?	65 years since its creation - can we save the NHS?	How can we beat the bedroom tax?
<b>Other</b>	What caused the 'great recession'?	40 years since Pinochet's bloody coup in Chile: what lessons of the coup need to be learnt	Zero-hours, organising the unemployed and the role of a trade union rep today
<b>Revolution and counter-revolution in the middle East</b>	Egypt and Tunisia in turmoil	A cauldron of civil war - what programme should socialists put forward in Syria?	
<b>Political representation for the working class</b>	For councillors against the cuts - TUSC's electoral challenge	What form will a new mass workers' party take in Britain?	Forum: what conclusions should we draw from Miliband's 'clause IV moment'?
<b>Internationalism</b>	USA - can socialist ideas be built in the belly of the beast?	What future for Cuba?	Sri Lanka - 30 years since 'Black July' and the start of the Civil War: is a new period of struggle opening up?
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# The 1913 Dublin Lockout and its true legacy

**Cillian Gillespie**  
Socialist Party Ireland

“Crushing Larkin: The Tycoon Who Saved Dublin From Anarchy”. That was the headline splashed across the front page of the September 2013 issue of Irish magazine Business Plus.

This magazine, a mouthpiece of Ireland's capitalist class, is celebrating an individual who - along with most other Dublin bosses - attempted to starve 25,000 impoverished workers and their families for six months. This class has not lost the brutal callousness it displayed 100 years ago.

The tycoon in question was the notorious William Martin Murphy or “Murderer Murphy” as he became known among Dublin's working class.

The article echoes much of the bile and slander levelled against Jim Larkin by that Murphy's yellow press in 1913.

On 3 September that year Murphy convened a meeting of 404 Dublin bosses that demanded the city's workers sign a pledge repudiating their membership or support for the Irish Transport and General Workers Union (ITGWU), then led by Jim Larkin. Failure to do so meant they faced being locked out of their jobs.

Today, Ireland's ruling class is once again waging a class war against workers and the unemployed, this time through a vicious programme of austerity and wage cuts. Tragically, this is currently a one-sided war due to the cowardice and betrayal of the trade union leaders.

In recent debates and discussions on the anniversary of the lockout, trade union leaders have hypocritically claimed to hold to the traditions of the working men and women who courageously stood against Murphy and his cronies.

But today's union leadership is light years removed from the real revolutionary socialist ideas of Larkin and James Connolly that laid the basis for building the Irish workers' movement in the early years of the last century.

## Growing workers' movement

Jim Larkin, born in Liverpool of Irish parentage in 1874, arrived in Belfast as an organiser with the National Union of Dock Labourers (NUDL) in January 1907. The NUDL was one of the unions that emerged in Britain during the period of “new unionism” in the late 1880s and early 1890s. This movement sought to break with the craft unionism of relatively privileged workers, to unionise unskilled, low-paid and casualised workers.

Larkin began to organise casualised dock workers in Belfast. The momentous dockers and carters strike that began in May 1907, which successfully united Protestant and Catholic workers in common struggle, was the highpoint of the movement.

Larkin came into increasing collision with the leadership of NUDL based around James Sexton. Eventually Larkin's effective use of militant methods, such as the sympathy strike, resulted in his expulsion from the NUDL in late 1908.

In response, Larkin launched the Irish Transport and General Workers Union in early January 1909. The radical programme of the ITGWU stood for a retirement age of 60, the eight-hour day, universal suffrage for men and women, and the creation of an “industrial commonwealth”, a society where working class people would own and control the wealth they produced.

Membership of the ITGWU mushroomed from 3,000 members in 1909, to just under 30,000 members on the eve of the lockout.

All sections of the working class were involved in an explosive strike movement that led to the development of new unionism in Ireland among its mainly casualised and deeply exploited working class. In 1913 alone, 30 strikes took place in Dublin that resulted in wages rising by 20%.

In September 1911, the Irish Women's Workers Union (IWWU) was launched in the aftermath of a strike in Jacob's biscuit factory in Dublin by 3,000 of its mainly female workforce.

It was not only on the industrial front that the growth of the workers' movement found its expression. Launched in the same month as the IWWU, the Irish Worker paper - edited by Larkin - had an average weekly circulation of 20,000 and became the paper of the Dublin working class. In May 1912, in a motion moved by Connolly and seconded by Larkin, a decision was made at the conference of the Irish Trade Union Congress (ITUC) to establish a Labour Party in Ireland.

Ireland's capitalist class, headed by Murphy, watched with increasing trepidation the rapid growth of this new workers' movement and the potential for socialist ideas to gain support among working class people.

In 1913, Dublin's tenement slums had a death rate on a par with Calcutta and Moscow. Dublin's rack-renting landlords, many of whom were also employers, profited considerably.

The lockout was a calculated decision to smash militant trade unionism and the potential emergence of a socialist movement in Ireland.

## Lockout begins

In 1913, William Martin Murphy was the chief shareholder and director of the Dublin United Tramway Company (DUTC), the owner of Independent Newspapers, a major department store and the Imperial Hotel on Dublin's O'Connell Street (then Sackville Street). When it became clear that Larkin was seeking to unionise workers in Murphy's business empire he sought to make a pre-emptive attack.

On Friday 15 August, 60 members of the ITGWU working in Independent newspapers were sacked. Immediately, newspaper boys from across the city refused to sell the Irish Independent and Evening Herald. The following Tuesday, workers in the prominent Eason's shop came out in solidarity action with the striking Independent workers.

Within the week Murphy sacked 200 members of the ITGWU working in the DUTC. Members of the union working for the company, who at this stage were in a minority, voted for strike action. On the morning of Tuesday 26 August, drivers and conductors across the city abandoned their trams and grounded the entire service across Dublin to coincide with the beginning of the Horseshow in the plush surroundings of Ballsbridge, south of the city centre.

As the dispute escalated Murphy enlisted the support of Dublin Castle, then the headquarters of British rule in Ireland, to make sure the Dublin Metropolitan Police (DMP) would be ready to clamp down on striking workers. Other elements of the capitalist state would soon come to Murphy's assistance.

On Friday 29 August EJ Swiftie, Dublin's chief magistrate and a shareholder in DUTC, banned a union demonstration due to take place the following Sunday on Sackville Street.

Over that weekend the DMP, many of whom were drunk, went on a brutal rampage across Dublin to smash the growing revolt of Dublin's working class with a “dictatorship of the truncheon”. Tene-

On 3 September 1913, William Martin Murphy convened a meeting of 404 Dublin bosses that demanded the city's workers sign a pledge repudiating their membership or support for the Irish Transport and General Workers Union (ITGWU), then led by Jim Larkin. Failure to do so meant they faced being locked out of their jobs



Jim Larkin speaks to workers in Dublin

ments were raided. On Saturday 30 August two workers, James Nolan and John Byrne, were savagely beaten to death by the DMP on Dublin's quays.

At 1pm the following day, workers gathered on Sackville Street to hear Larkin speak, as he had promised to do in spite of Swiftie's ban on the demonstration. The DMP went on a “police riot” and indiscriminately beat up union members and bystanders gathered on the street. By the end of what became known as ‘Bloody Sunday’ over 500 were hospitalised from the tuggish repression of the DMP.

## Solidarity from Britain

The Dublin lockout had an enormous impact on the outlook and consciousness of workers in Britain. It coincided with the period of “the great unrest”. 40 million days were lost in strike action in 1912. Instinctively, the ranks of the British labour movement displayed enormous solidarity as the dispute developed.

This solidarity was reflected by the volume of money raised and food sent to alleviate the suffering that Dublin's poor endured during the dispute. £150,000 - £10,000,000 in today's money - was raised by trade unions and socialist organisations in Britain.

But key to winning would be industrial action by British workers themselves. The potential for such action to take place was indicated early on in the dispute when 14,000 transport workers in Liverpool and other British cities refused to handle goods that came from Dublin. Later in the dispute workers in South Wales refused to handle coal that was destined for the city.

When Larkin was imprisoned at the end of October, an enormous outcry by workers in Britain forced the Liberal government to bring about his release after it suffered humiliating setbacks in three separate byelections. Upon being released Larkin went on a speaking tour, his famous “Fiery Cross” tour, in all major cities in Britain with the explicit aim of directly appealing to workers over the heads of the British TUC leaders. Tens of thousands came to hear him speak, showing the extent to which he and the struggle of the Dublin workers were a source of inspiration.

## Church and state

At the end of October, with conditions worsening, two socialist supporters of the locked-out workers in Britain devised a scheme to send the strikers' children over to homes of Britain's labour movement members. But “the kiddies scheme”, as it became known, was used by the hierarchy of the Catholic Church to whip up a mood of sectarian hysteria by claiming it was an attempt to proselytise the children in non-Catholic homes.

Catholic priests and members of the sectarian Ancient Order of Hibernians organised mobs to confront parents and their children at train stations and ports on their way to England.

Combined with this, state repression became a feature throughout the dispute. Hundreds of workers were arrested and imprisoned and armed police terrorised workers on the streets and in their homes. Scabs were legally armed by the bosses and were not afraid to open fire when confronted by strikers and their supporters. Alice Brady, a 16 year old Jacobs' worker, was tragically killed by

one such scab on 18 December.

This repression led Connolly and Larkin to draw the conclusion that a workers' defence force was needed. On 23 November, the Irish Citizen Army (ICA) was founded at a Dublin City centre meeting. In the following weeks the ICA defended workers against violence from police and scabs.

## Betrayal and end of dispute

Towards the end of November, the British TUC called a special conference for 9 December to nominally discuss the question of solidarity action with Dublin workers. It was the first such conference to take place in the TUC's history, indicating the pressure the leadership was coming under from the rank and file of the labour movement.

The conservative and reformist leadership of the TUC was not interested in taking the necessary steps to “blacken” or refuse to handle all goods bound to and from Dublin and consequently bring the Dublin bosses to their knees. In fact, some of them had condemned solidarity action taken by workers in Britain. They were fearful and suspicious of the revolutionary ideas of Larkin and Connolly, which meant engaging in an all out confrontation with the capitalist class.

None of the 9 December conference delegates were elected or mandated. They were mainly handpicked union officials. In reality, it was a state-managed event that would betray the working class of Dublin. Rigged votes were heavily stacked against taking any meaningful action in Britain, a fatal blow that left the Dublin labour movement isolated.

On 18 January, the leadership of the ITGWU advised their members to go back

to work on whatever terms they could get. In the short term it was undoubtedly a significant setback for the union. But the bosses had failed to smash the union as an organised force. The legacy of the dispute, in terms of the courage and resilience displayed by the workers of Dublin, would mean that the workers' movement in Ireland would emerge as a much more powerful and cohesive force from 1917 to 1923. This was a period when socialist revolution was the order of the day in Ireland.

## The lockout's legacy today

Some sections of the capitalist establishment in Ireland have chosen a different tack than Business Plus when looking back at the events of the lockout. They are astute enough to realise the respect in which the working class people of the 1913 lockout and their leaders are held among workers and young people today.

To mark the anniversary of ‘Bloody Sunday’, an official state commemoration took place on O'Connell Street where a wreath was placed at the statue of Jim Larkin. When seeing such a spectacle, James Connolly's words come to mind: “The apostles for freedom are often crucified while living and sanctified while dead”.

This is certainly true of Connolly himself and of Jim Larkin. These two giants of the workers' movement were guided by socialist ideas and the confidence that the working class could take ownership and control of the resources of society, and plan the economy according to human need. At a time of deep capitalist crisis in Ireland and Europe, these ideas have never been more relevant.

Peter Hadden's writings:  
**Divide and Rule - Labour and the Partition of Ireland** marxists.org/history/etol/writers/hadden/1980/divrule

**Northern Ireland: Towards Division Not Peace - Can the working class unite to build a real peace process?** socialistparty.net/publications

**Troubled Times: The national question in Ireland** socialistparty.net/archived/troubled-times-the-national-question-in-ireland



Members of the Irish Women Workers' Union imprisoned during the Lockout photo courtesy of National Library of Ireland (reference: KE204)



Bloody Sunday: 31 August 1913



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## Hull students and workers agree: We need councils that fight all cuts!

**Paul Spooner**  
Hull Socialist Party

More than 30 socialists of all ages met in Hull recently to hear Tony Mulhearn link the struggle of Liverpool City Council in the 1980s to the emerging battle to defend jobs and services in Hull today.

Tony was president of Liverpool District Labour Party and one of the 47 councillors that fought and won £60 million of funding from Thatcher's Tory government.

There are now clear parallels between the two cities. Both Liverpool mayor Joe Anderson and Hull council leader Steve Brady have relied on Michael Heseltine, the failed Tory politician, for advice on implementing cuts, rather than campaign through the labour movement to stop them.

In contrast, Tony listed the achievements of the 1983-87 Liverpool council, including creating 2,000 jobs, building 5,000 council houses, five new sports centres and reorganising the education system.

He explained how those gains were fought for by the local Labour party, backed by council trade unions, the wider labour movement and local community groups, that linked together in a mass campaign. The council was not only attacked by the Tories and the press, but also the national Labour leaders as they sought to 'reform' the party into a big business party.

The discussion questioned the role of the Labour Party today. Sig-

nificantly, nearly half of those attending the meeting were members of the Labour Party, including the three Hull councillors who voted against their own party's cuts.

Anti-cuts councillor Gary Wareing agreed with much of what Tony said, but argued that the Labour Party could be won to an anti-cuts

Liverpool's mayor and Hull's council leader have both relied on Michael Heseltine for advice on implementing cuts

position. Others believed that the Labour bureaucracy would intervene as soon as socialists became a threat to the entrenched interests of the right wing.

This is a debate which has taken place in a very fraternal way in Hull in the unions and other forums over the past years. The Socialist Party in Hull will continue to work with anti-cuts activists both in and out of the Labour Party.

With students in the audience, Megan Ollerhead spoke on how Socialist Students' role is leading the fightback against cuts and fees, despite the treacherous role of the NUS leadership.

## London: Lessons of South Africa's Marikana Massacre

**Alex Davis**  
Hackney Socialist Party

Marking a year since the Marikana Massacre in South Africa, a London Socialist Party and Socialist Students joint meeting listened to Wales party organiser Alec Thraves and Unison activist (personal capacity) April Ashley.

Alec spoke about his two visits to South Africa since the massacre. 34 miners were killed in Marikana, with over 70 injured and numerous others arrested when police fired at the striking workers. Many were shot as they were retreating or trying to find cover behind the trees.

This was an incident which bears similarity to the brutal repression of the apartheid regime, but this time with the African National Congress in government. But, as April - who was involved in the struggle against apartheid - said, instead of silencing

workers, the massacre ignited more struggles.

Both speakers looked at how the ANC had become a pro-capitalist, anti-worker organisation. Almost 20 years after the fall of apartheid, mass poverty and suffering remains along with the highest inequality in the world.

Such desperation provides a fertile breeding ground for alcoholism, drug addiction, domestic abuse and crime in society, but also for mass movements.

The Socialist Party's sister organisation, Democratic Socialist Movement, played a pivotal role in the creation of WASP (Workers and Socialist Party), a new workers' party involving miners and other impoverished workers, to challenge the corrupt elite.

£800 was donated in the finance appeal.

**Hear a WASP speaker at Socialism 2013 - see page 5**

## Socialist Party fighting fund Over £20,000 collected in summer quarter

**Ken Douglas**  
Socialist Party national treasurer

Socialist Party members strove might and main to collect over £20,000 for the fighting fund in the last three months, which included the holiday period covering the summer months of July and August.

The Socialist Party doesn't have any rich backers - we rely on the fundraising efforts of our members and the support of ordinary people who back our opposition to the Con-Dems' cuts and their destruction of our public services.

Fighting fund enables us to produce the campaigning materials, the banners, placards, posters and leaflets that helped make our demands for a mass campaign to save the NHS and a 24-hour general strike against the cuts the most prominent on the TUC demo at the Tory Party conference in Manchester.

One member in Nottingham raised £62 selling 'Save Our NHS' stickers on the coach and on the demo itself!

Fundraising can be hard work, but our members do it because they know that they are building support for a workers' paper and a socialist alternative to the miserable future that capitalism holds out.

Showing grit and determination, Swansea branch members got up at 5am on a Saturday morning to bag a pitch at a car boot sale and then stood in the rain for three hours, raising a fantastic £115!

A new branch in Plymouth has soared to the top of the fighting fund league table, raising 302% of their target by holding regular campaign stalls two or three times a week, selling the Socialist and with branch members also putting in donations themselves.



Building the call for a 24-hour general strike on the Manchester NHS demo photo Claire Job

In four weeks time the Socialist Party will be holding its biggest public event, Socialism 2013, and at the rally for Socialism on the Saturday night we will be asking all our members and supporters to make a donation to the Socialism appeal.

Our message is simple: why can't the great wealth in society be democratically owned and controlled and used for the benefit of everyone?

It is obscene that a few individuals amass huge riches at the expense of millions of ordinary people - yet this is the future held out to us by the politicians of all the main parties.

We want as many of our members and supporters as possible to come to the Socialism weekend and rally, but whether you can or can't come, please consider making a donation to our appeal.

## Angry about an autumn of austerity? Build the fightback - sell the Socialist!

**Sarah Wrack**  
The Socialist sales organiser

Sales and subscriptions of the Socialist reached 63% of the target for the July to September quarter.

On 29 September hundreds of copies of the Socialist were sold on the national NHS demonstration in Manchester, including many on coaches and trains from around the country.

Sellers of the Socialist explained to protesters that the Socialist puts forward a clear strategy that includes

workers' action as the best way to defend our health service.

The four-page NHS campaign pull-out helped to show the different campaigns that Socialist Party members are involved in, the tactics we advocate and why we think a socialist alternative is ultimately necessary to ensure free and decent healthcare for all.

As we move into an autumn that looks likely to include many more protests, demonstrations and strikes, the Socialist has an important role to play in pointing to the need to link up the struggles and

fight for a 24-hour general strike against austerity.

To ensure we maximise the opportunities to do this, every branch should have regular sales at workplaces - especially those where action is planned - and sellers of the Socialist should try to sell to their workmates.

Every branch should make a detailed plan on how they will reach and surpass the target this quarter.

Keep the Socialist updated on plans and experiences with the sales and subscriptions campaign - editors@socialistparty.org.uk

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## SOCIALIST PARTY FIGHTING FUND

	£ target	£ received	July-September 2013	Final chart
East Midlands	1,600	2,131		
Eastern	1,200	1,538		
South West	1,400	1,783		
Northern	600	692		
North West	1,200	1,271		
Wales	2,300	2,391		
Southern	1,200	1,225		
West Midlands	2,100	1,970		
Yorkshire	2,900	2,259		
London	6,100	4,282		
South East	750	451		
England & Wales	3,650	378		
TOTAL	25,000	20,373		

# US government: 'Sorry, we're closed'

Federal shutdown over budget deficit reveals again the need for a new party of the '99%'

**Kai Stein**  
Committee for a Workers' International (CWI)

**A**round 800,000 federal workers are furloughed – sent on holiday without payment. While their families are on zero wages from the federal state, the \$174,000 annual income per member of Congress is untouched by the governmental shutdown which started on 1 October.

The Republican majority in the House of Representatives (lower chamber of the parliament) blocked any attempt of Democrat President Barack Obama to get a budget agreed or the old one prolonged.

On the one side, this is an attempt to bring down Obama's very limited and business friendly healthcare reforms.

On the other side, the US ruling class is confronted with a dysfunctional political system and Republican party. In a sense this is not a new phenomenon, but it has been exacerbated by the recent crisis of capitalism.

The most vicious part of the ruling class previously backed the right-wing populist 'Tea Party' Republican movement to fight for their interests. Despite them abandoning this movement in 2010, they do not fully control this Frankenstein monster. Therefore, in general, the Republicans do not act in the best interests of the US ruling class.

## Crisis

A three-week government shutdown could cut off 0.9% of GDP (total output), Goldman Sachs predicts. But what Wall Street worries even more about is the possibility of the US reaching the 'debt ceiling' around 17 October.

Without new legislation in Congress, the administration could not borrow more money and the US would be unable to meet its debt obligations and technically default – for the first time in its history. A default could spell disaster for the poorest who would be forced to pay for this crisis.

But who is responsible for the expanding federal budget deficit? Trillions of dollars have been spent in bailouts and quantitative measures since 2008 to shore up US capitalism.

This is on top of massive tax breaks for the super-rich and corporations and the escalating cost of funding unwinnable and bloody wars under successive administrations.

To avoid these deeper troubles, the more 'moderate' part of the Republicans in Congress are prepared to make a deal with the Democrats

and are searching for ways to compromise. However, this might reveal much deeper splits in the "Grand Old Party" (Republicans), leading to its fragmentation.

The narrative that the Democrats try to spin is that this is a repetition of the 1995/96 crisis. Then, a weak Clinton presidential administration conflicted with Congress, survived a 21-day shutdown, and came out strengthened as people blamed the Republicans.

There are elements of that perspective visible in opinion polls, as the approval rates of Obama have slightly increased (although, overall, they are still negative).

However, the parallel might not be 1995/96 but the summer of 2011 when a stalemate of Democrats and Republicans – at that time facing the automatic spending cuts they implemented to force each other to compromise – was revealed in all its sharpness.

## Occupy movement

Following the uprisings of the masses in the 'Arab spring' the mass protest movements in Spain and Greece and US public anger over huge corporate bailouts, the anti-capitalist 'Occupy' movement arose.

This fury is still there. Opinion polls show the increasing frustration with Congress – with approval rates down to 10% – and the whole political system. Even some of the most enthusiastic Obama voters – following the NSA surveillance scandal, the war-mongering over Syria, etc – are questioning the ability of Obama to really stand up to the Republicans.

Also, the economic situation has failed to boost support for Obama. There was a weak recovery, but only

But who is responsible for the expanding federal budget deficit? Trillions of dollars have been spent in bailouts and quantitative measures since 2008 to shore up US capitalism

for the rich. The top 1% increased its real income by 31% from 2009 to 2012, while the bottom 40% lost 6%. (Paul Krugman in New York Times, 23 September 2013).

The potential is there for another big movement like Occupy devel-



Federal state workers in Washington demonstrate over being laid-off following Congress's political impasse

## Fighting for a working class political alternative

As the shutdown shows, this political system does not function. Wall Street has two parties – Democrats and Republicans – working class people have none. Socialist Alternative in the USA (supporters of the CWI) is campaigning for a new mass party to fight for the interests of workers, the poor and oppressed minorities, on a socialist programme. Socialist Alternative is also fielding candidates in a number of forthcoming elections.

## Seattle socialist gains huge support

In money terms, Socialist Alternative's candidate in Seattle, Kshama Sawant, will not match the campaign of 16 year-long sitting councillor, Richard Conlin. He has already raised \$200,000 (£124,000) to defend his seat. The Socialist Alternative endorsed campaign against him has raised only a quarter of that – but that's quite impressive for a campaign fighting against corporate politics. Moreover, our lack of money is compensated with ideas that resonate among a growing layer of working class people and youth.

The "\$15 an hour and a union" slogan is branding the campaign. Running on an overtly socialist campaign, Kshama Sawant won 29% in November 2012 against Washington state representative Frank Chop in Seattle.

With 44,000 votes for Kshama Sawant in a primary (an election to narrow the field of candidates before the election proper) in August 2013 against Democrat incumbent Conlin, the campaign of Socialist Alternative showed that this is not just a one-off event. Even more voters will show their openness for a fighting, working class based and socialist candidate on 5 November in Seattle.

## Tight race in Minneapolis

As an activist fighting foreclosures and defending schools, Ty Moore has a proud record in his ward. He is facing five other candidates for city councillor in Minneapolis. All of them sought to be endorsed by the local Democratic Party. With almost no media attention and a confusing mayoral race, Ty's message about fighting for affordable housing, for a \$15 an hour minimum wage and against corporate hand-outs, has to be delivered door by door. And Socialist Alternative is doing so, supported by SEIU (one of the larger trade unions in the US), strong voices of the Hispanic community, and activists from many different backgrounds.

Although it's an extremely close race, it nonetheless shows the potential for socialists to win elections in the US.

## Openings for socialist ideas

Around next year's election more independent candidates on the left will challenge not only Republicans but also Democrats and the two-party system. The Democratic Party could see splits as well and 'leftist' populist forces could emerge.

Within such a new wave of opposition, Socialist Alternative, linked in solidarity with the CWI, is preparing to play a major role. This means assisting the workers' movement to get its own political voice, breaking from the Democrat Party, and to arm such a force with a socialist programme to fight to end capitalism.

oping, this time more likely around concrete social and economic issues and demands.

Immigrant rights groups are mobilising against anti-immigrant policies. Fast-food workers are rising up for a dramatic increase in their wages with the demand for \$15 an hour and full union rights.

Unorganised workers at companies such as Walmart, known for its anti-trade union stance, are starting to fight back.

The struggle against foreclosures and for affordable housing has seen new offshoots, like the Green Party mayor in Richmond, California, using "eminent domain" legislation (a form of compulsory purchase of residential property from investors on behalf of homeowners suffering from 'negative equity' mortgages).

Occupy Homes in Minneapolis and elsewhere have also provided lively examples of how grass roots movements can defend people's homes and stop evictions.

While generalising these workplace struggles and social movements still requires overcoming the dead-hand of trade union bureaucracy and the weakness of working class organisations, when the enormous US working class finds its voice the world will hear it.

## The Committee for a Workers' International

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

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

[www.socialistworld.net](http://www.socialistworld.net)

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



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## the Socialist postbag

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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.

**Unpaid overtime**

Telecom giant BT boasts how successful the launch of BT Sport was and thanks staff for a tremendous effort. An email I got at work explained why they were so grateful - some overtime needed to accomplish this feat was unpaid! BT made £2.3 billion profit last year and sees itself as a leading international company. But their barefaced lies about 'treating staff with respect' and 'allowing them to develop their careers' shows they're aping some of the worst employment policies of sweatshop and zero-hours contract employers. It isn't company poverty that drives down pay and conditions, it's thinking they'll get away with it. This whole process is aided by a union leadership that is perilously close to company unionism and an 'opposition' in parliament that supports all the employers' attacks on workers.

Forward to fighting union leaderships working with a new workers' party!

**A CWU member working for BT**

**Fightback needed**

Liverpool Labour Mayor Joe Anderson's latest declaration that a further multi-million pounds tranche of cuts is being imposed on the city and his compliance with the Con-Dem demands must warm the cockles of Eric Pickles' stony heart. Mayor Anderson has used the city's reserves to fund: a) a dodgy company to convert the ex-Tax Building into flats; b) Everton FC to purchase land for training facilities; c) the restoration of Cunard buildings as a cruise terminal. None of these enterprises will benefit those who rely on the city's services.

The council should use its reserves, not to subsidise the already very rich, but to campaign to restore services already cut. The mayor should spearhead a campaign of resistance to further cuts being imposed by the right-wing Tory clique who hijacked the government. They won't be satisfied until every public service built up over decades is flogged off to their filthy rich backers. The fightback should start now.

**Tony Mulhearn**

**Resign now!**

Swansea's Labour councillors have been taking to the streets on the issue of cuts - but not to fight them. They're part of a PR campaign for £45 million of Con-Dem cuts. They want our help in identifying which services to axe or outsource and which groups of workers to sack.

If a Labour councillor approaches you to help them identify Con-Dem cuts, tell them to resign. Then maybe we can get representatives who will fight the Con-Dems not make their cuts.

**Ronnie Job, TUSC Wales supporter**

**Outrageous outsourcing**

Outsourcing Birmingham city council's services to Service Birmingham (a joint venture between Birmingham council and Capita) cost almost £1 billion in six years. To meet government spending targets the council has to save £825 million by 2017. It doesn't take Einstein to work out how to balance the books! This privatisation scam is fleecing taxpayers. The company's structure means Capita received £36 million in dividends in this period while the council received nothing but paid £20 million in corporation tax! Even some Labour councillors think the contract should be scrapped.

Service Birmingham staff earn well under £20,000 a year. While Capita bosses were drawing their £6 million a year dividends they gave the staff a below-inflation pay rise. So called joint ventures are a smoke-screen for private companies' systematic embezzling of taxpayers' money. They should be immediately stopped and bought in-house with 'compensation' only being paid on the basis of proven need.

**Clive Walder**

**Why the frack?**

The man who runs fracking company Cuadrilla (33% share) and who also works in government - Lord John Browne - lobbied the Department of Energy and Climate Change four times in eight months last year. A Freedom of Information request showed the lobbies were commercial in nature.

Meanwhile the Con-Dem government rushed through an overwhelmingly pro-fracking policy and announced generous tax cuts for the industry. This is despite water industry groups raising concerns about fracking's environmental impacts - especially on the security of our water supply.

Anti-fracking campaign groups tried to raise the profile of the likely corruption at the heart of government, but mainstream media bosses mostly turn a blind eye. If proved, this could be a major scandal that ought to bring down the government. Why the frack isn't it being properly investigated?

**Andrew Duncan, Exeter.**

**Universal (Dis)credit**

Harrogate Socialists organised a protest on 1 October, against the planned roll-out of Universal Credit. This combines many benefits into one payment, and was originally scheduled to be implemented in Harrogate from October. But delays with £34 million wasted on failed IT programmes, means it will not be introduced in Harrogate until next year at the earliest. The system will mean less support for many people.

We protested outside Jobcentre Plus, highlighting this government's ideological attack on the welfare state and their attempts to scapegoat the poorest, most vulnerable people in our society. An unemployed father of two, signing on with his eldest told us: "Our grandparents fought for the welfare state. All they fought for is now being destroyed." G4S, who provide the security for Jobcentre Plus, panicked at the protest and called the police to complain about "harassment of passers-by"!

Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC) candidates are standing across the region in next year's local elections to defend the welfare state and fight the privatisation of jobs and services.

**Michael Docherty**

## TV review: Breaking Bad

**Bill Mullins**

**Spoiler alert**

Breaking Bad is an American TV mini-series which has now ended. It was only available on cable TV and DVD, and the final season on DVD will not be available in Britain until November. But it recently won Emmy awards in America and was much praised by media pundits, some calling it almost Shakespearean in its story lines.

Its basic plot is of a high school chemistry teacher who develops lung cancer and seeks to pay for chemotherapy and radiology treatment by producing the illegal drug crystal meth in a laboratory.

Set in Albuquerque city, New Mexico, it follows the chemistry teacher Walter White in his new life as a drug producer and later drug distributor. His original idea was to raise enough funds to pay for his medical treatment and - if the worst comes to the worst - leave enough money to ensure his family's survival without debt if he dies.

TV pundits characterise the series as a moral tale of the descent of somebody who starts off with high ideals of looking after his family to someone who gradually becomes 'inherently evil' as he begins to dominate the drug trade in the US south-west states.

Walter White's brother-in-law happens to be head of the local drug enforcement agency and, until the last season, does not realise that Walter is now the drug trade's Mr Big in his jurisdiction.

The series shows graphically that the 'war on drugs' is being lost on



**Making the drugs** photo AMCTV

a massive scale. The drug users are shown in general (but not exclusively) to be at the very bottom of society. Until Walter White comes along, production of the drug has been in the backrooms of drug distributors in the most unhygienic conditions. Walter makes the drug under stringent commercial laboratory conditions ensuring its purity for the user, so his product becomes extremely popular.

Hardly commented on at all by the critics is that the medical treatment to counter cancer is available if you have the money. Walter White's new wealth allows him access to the best treatment available (each trip to see his consultant costs \$6,000). As a result his cancer goes into remission. You have to ask what sort of society gives only the most extravagantly wealthy the possibility of a course of treatment that al-

lows this killer disease to be forced at least into remission.

White is fully involved in mass production and distribution of the drug by the time his cancer is in remission. In his new role of drug kingpin, he enters the full gamut of murder and mayhem that this entails, not just bumping off potential rivals but also innocent bystanders including a child.

Albuquerque city is shown as one of distinct economic and social contradictions. Walter lives in a nice middle class area but, in general, his customers live in slums. Some episodes show the relationship between the southwest USA and its nearest neighbour, Mexico, including the relationship with the drug cartels. In general the series is well worth seeing and enjoyable even if the contradictions remain un-commented on by most TV pundits.

## Newport council destroys workers' mural

**Dave Reid**

Over 500 angry people protested on 5 October against Newport Labour council and Queensberry property developers' destruction of the town's Chartist mural. The council pre-empted the protest by sending diggers in early to smash the mural, trying to erase the memory of working class struggle from Newport people's lives.

The mural was built in 1978 from 200,000 pieces of mosaic. The 35-metre wall cleverly depicted the march of the Newport Chartist uprising of 1839 when 30 workers were massacred as they rose up to demand democratic rights for the working class.

You could see individual workers marching as a mass carrying the six demands of the charter, only to be shot down by the army. This massacre ranks alongside the 1819 Peterloo killings as one of the worst atrocities to try to stem working class struggle for democratic and social rights.

When plans for the mural's destruction became known, the movement to save it grew. So the council smashed the mural to pieces two days before the protest was planned. Stunned passers-by protested as diggers ripped the mural from the wall.

Generations of Newport children learnt about their working class heritage from the wall. Newport people are proud of their revolutionary tradition - but not Newport Labour. Paul Flynn, Labour MP for Newport West, tried to derail protests, saying in February: "To suggest that the council would disrespect that memory is nonsense on stilts". But the council turned the memory to rubble.

Newport council could have moved the mural. They claim the



**Part of the mural the council smashed** photo Dave Reid

cost would be £600,000, but even that exaggerated figure pales into insignificance compared to the millions to be spent on the shopping centre and the £40 million of public money spent attracting the Ryder Cup to Newport in 2010.

Flynn says there are more important things than murals to protest about. Probably there are. But the

mural's destruction is a visible expression of working class people being robbed of their NHS, their jobs, their rights.

The capitalists want to wrest away all the gains of the generations after the Chartists, like the NHS, the welfare state and protection at work. And Labour walks alongside them while they do it.

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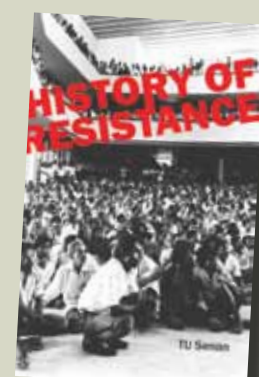
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# Socialist ideas are the Mail's real target

With good reason big business is accustomed to the main political parties doing its bidding – legislating for easy profits from privatisation of public services, cutting corporation tax and undermining workers' rights. So when Ed Miliband's speech at this autumn's Labour conference proposed some very timid policies, barely threatening to trim the fingernails of the 'big six' energy companies and the biggest housing companies, they went ballistic! Energy companies threatened a blackout if their enormous multi-billion profits were slightly infringed upon.

The Tory conference, which followed, attempted to paint Labour as 'going back to the bad old days' before Tony Blair removed the socialist Clause 4. Chancellor George Osborne actually compared Miliband's timorous proposals to Karl Marx's political philosophy. But in reality the Labour leadership is a body without a socialist bone in it.

Labour is committed to Con-Dem spending plans for 2015-16 at least, ie a continuation of the misery of the cuts which mean 15-minute care slots, job losses and growing queues at food banks. Interviewed about Tory Health Minister Jeremy Hunt's threat to cut even the tiny 1% pay rise in the NHS, Labour's Andy Burnham's opening words were, 'of course there must be restraint'.

## No Red Ed

The 'responsible capitalism' Miliband defends is a system based on private ownership of the wealth of society and entails no 'restraint' for the capitalists. Let's not forget that the Forbes rich list reported that the overall wealth of billionaires jumped 18% to \$5.4 trillion in 2013. A record 210 new billionaires joined the list. An estimated \$30 billion, short change to this gang, could end the grotesque levels of world hunger that coexist with this obscene wealth.

As to Labour challenging this, Financial Times writer Chris Giles correctly points out, "economists will struggle to detect a significant effect of the proposal" to raise the corporation tax rate from 20p to 21p after 2015. He says: "however much [establishment] politicians and their coteries talk about clear differences, the parties have rarely been closer on economics."

Nonetheless the venomous Daily Mail and other right-wing tabloids saw it as an opportunity to crush any perceived diversion from pro-market fundamentalism. As a Daily Telegraph writer summed it up: "The Daily Mail published a silly thesis (Ralph Miliband was a commie, so maybe Ed is too) under a daft headline (The Man Who Hated Britain)." Miliband responded and dominated the headlines during the Tories' conference. There's nothing the press likes more than a story about the press.

The Mail's foaming-at-the-mouth attack has, however, brought the spotlight on its role as a defender of the 1%. In February the Daily Mail revealed that the 'big six' 'use tax havens to avoid paying millions to the Treasury'. This was when it crusaded against the fuel bill rip-off to appeal to the experience of its vast readership who have been hit hard by Con-Dem attacks on living standards. And before the idea of action against the companies, no matter how tiny in scope, was mooted by would-be PMs.

DMGT, the company behind the Daily Mail, had profits of over £100 million last year. Also Lord Rothermere, the owner, is said to contribute to the estimated £20 trillion stashed in off-shore havens on which no tax is paid. The paper itself has very dodgy parentage – given the first Lord Rothermere's enthusiasm for the Nazis and the 1934 'Hurrah for the Blackshirts' headline. Many victims of the vicious anti-working class paper have celebrated this exposure.

The Mail uses every trick in the book to discredit the ideas of socialism – attempting to conflate a democratic planned economy run in the interest of the needs of the overwhelming majority with the dictatorships, albeit based on a distorted planned economy, which existed under Stalinism. Murdoch's Sun gets in on the action with a rabid Trevor Kavanagh's spittle-flecked comment that attacks Labour and the trade unions for bringing "Britain close to the brink of economic meltdown in the 1970s Winter of Discontent" and 'explains' that "Marxism is a revolutionary doctrine at odds with capitalism and democracy".

The vehemence with which these mouthpieces of the ruling class attack any suggestion of an alternative to capitalism is directly proportionate to the attraction they fear socialist ideas will have in this era of capitalist

crisis. Since the banking crisis when capitalism brought Britain and the world 'to the brink of economic meltdown' and its austere aftermath – increasing numbers of people are forced to consider an alternative.

The 45,000 votes for an openly socialist candidate, CWI supporter Kshama Sawant, in the Seattle primary in August, in the US, the belly of the beast, is but one small indication of this.

## Omission

It isn't only mention of a socialist alternative that brings the big business-owned press out in hives. They seem fatally allergic to struggle too. Every day working class people in Britain are engaged in the battle to defend public services and jobs, but it goes unreported.

The most blatant recent example was the way the Tory-influenced BBC reduced its report of the 60,000-strong NHS trade union-led demo in Manchester to a sub-headline. While thousands are engaged in the battle against the cruel bedroom tax, the BBC insisted that only the government's preferred name, 'an end to the spare room subsidy,' was used.

A myth is being brandished on the role of the press in elections and whether the Miliband-Mail tiff will impact on the 2015 election.

"It's the Sun wot won it" is the infamous headline that followed former Labour leader Neil Kinnock's 1992 general election defeat. Kinnock has seen the attack on Miliband as an opportunity to come out and bemoan his own harsh treatment at the hands of the press. But in 1992 the Labour leadership snatched defeat from the jaws of victory by failing to support the magnificent 18 million-strong poll tax battle which could have laid the basis for a Labour win.

Militant, the forerunner of the Socialist, warned in the run-up to the election that Labour must offer a positive alternative to the working class. But instead Kinnock offered a Tory-lite vision and prioritised ridding the party of socialist fighters. Labour had been 25 points ahead in the polls a few months before the election but people tend to choose the real thing when offered a pale imitation.

Ultimately Labour has always had a pro-capitalist leadership. After 1992, the Labour leadership sought to change it from a party

with a pro-capitalist leadership where the working class still had the potential to exercise its collective voice, to a party that the capitalists could rely on to do its bidding.

The myth of the power of the press barons was enhanced by Tony Blair's genuflection before Murdoch in advance of the 1997 election. But by then the two processes had borne fruit. On the one hand the Tories, the nasty party, had made themselves unelectable and thus unreliable for big business. On the other hand, the structures by which the working class had a say in Labour had been largely destroyed.

A clear challenge to the pro-capitalist consensus, particularly in the form of a new mass workers' party with a socialist programme, would speed up the process of wider numbers drawing anti-capitalist, pro-socialist and pro-struggle conclusions. But it is not the only factor.

Far greater is people's own experience. For example the Mail, the 'big six' and the Tories can rail all they like against a price freeze on energy and fuel bills. But, given average hourly wages have fallen 5.5% since mid-2010, adjusted for inflation, and fuel bills are soaring, people can draw their own conclusion.

And that goes well beyond Timorous Ed. Almost seven in ten would support the renationalisation of the big energy companies. A similar figure wants the railways taken off big business and into public ownership.

The horror at the phone-tapping and other scandals have plunged the capitalist press into a crisis of legitimacy. With Leveson about to report the Daily Mail has again revealed that a truly 'free press' means breaking the iron grip of capitalism.

The Socialist Party also opposes a state monopoly of news and information that existed under Stalinism. We stand for the nationalisation of the printing presses, television and radio, etc, to be run under democratic popular management and control. Facilities would be allocated to organisations and groups according to their popular support.

This would enable different views to be heard, and ensure an end to the scandalous abuse of power perpetrated by the billionaire barons. This has to be linked to a programme to abolish the roots of this crisis, the profit-motivated capitalist system and to fight for a socialist alternative.

## Is Ed red?

Roger Bannister

Most capitalist media commentators seem to think that Ed Miliband had a "good conference". Although praised for speaking for an hour without notes, this was clearly well rehearsed. Subsequent media interviews around his announcement to freeze fuel prices if elected revealed his familiar uneasy, faltering style.

He appeared unable to deal with probing questions of how this policy might work, as if unaware of the reason for the furore provoked by his fuel price policy.

It is this fuel price freeze issue, and his declaration of support for socialism, that has attracted most attention, both of which pleased conference delegates, and enraged capitalist spokespeople in equal measure. Even Peter Mandelson was wheeled out to play his role as Labour's pro-capitalist compass, and warn Miliband of the dire consequences of such actions.

Right and left wing trade union leaders seized on these pronouncements. Unison's Dave Prentis said



Blackout threatened

that Miliband's speech offered firm commitments to help hard pressed families. GMB's Paul Kenny described it as showing that Miliband had "grown into being a prime minister". And Unite's Len McCluskey said that people will know that this is a leader and a party that is on their side.

But in reality the speech was little more than empty rhetoric. Social-



Socialists support the principle of freezing fuel prices, but there is an old saying, 'you can't control what you don't own'.

ists support the principle of freezing fuel prices, but there is an old saying, 'you can't control what you don't own'. In media interviews Miliband kept reiterating a mantra that a future Labour government would want to work with the energy companies, while the same companies were howling with rage, and pledging the exact opposite!

Miliband had no answer to this problem, nor to what might happen if global fuel prices rose, and if so would he subsidise a price freeze, and thereby the energy companies, with tax payers' money. The policy

only makes sense on the basis of taking the fuel companies back into public ownership, ensuring that consumers pay a realistic price for fuel, not one burdened with massive profits for rich shareholders.

Miliband also made it clear that the current Con-Dem public expenditure programme would continue under a Labour government, at least for a year, and even then there would be a continuation of austerity measures. So continued misery for working class people, and no moves to abandon austerity, much less to extend public owner-

ship are the reality of future Labour government policy.

Ed Balls outlined Miliband's real thinking on socialism, saying that it was all right as long as it was not applied to economics! This relegation of socialism to a vague set of 'values' harks right back to the Blair era, and the introduction of New Labour. He said exactly the same thing.

But for genuine socialists, socialism is precisely about an alternative economy, where the major industries and services are publicly owned and democratically controlled, enabling rational planning to abolish poverty and need, rather than allowing a handful of people to accumulate vast wealth and political power at the expense of the majority.

The union leaders' comments give an important indication of why Miliband was prepared to give the impression of shifting to the left in his speech. He has set out to break the historic link between Labour and the unions. He turned the police on Unite following a campaign of lies and distortion about rule breaking in Falkirk. He now wants to put the union leaders in a position where they would be seen to break ranks, and put a Labour victory at risk if they oppose his reforms in spring. Sadly they seem to have fallen for it.

# Workers and youth: UNITE AGAINST THE FAR RIGHT

**Hugh Caffrey**  
North West Socialist Party

The founder of the English Defence League, Tommy Robinson, along with fellow co-leader Kevin Carroll, have both left the far-right, racist group, leaving the EDL in disarray.

But remaining EDL supporters claim they still aim to whip up fear and division with a demo in Bradford on Saturday 12 October. Local workers and young people are mobilising to stop them.

In Liverpool, EDL supporters recently tried to attack the Unite union offices. The EDL has also attacked PCS union members taking industrial action in Bootle, Merseyside, and Occupy Liverpool protests.

Unite the Union has initiated a demonstration in Liverpool on Saturday 12 October to show that trade unionists can and will organise to defeat the far right as part of the fight for jobs, homes and services.

The EDL resignations follow humiliating defeats for the far right. In Waltham Forest, east London, last year, the Socialist Party, Youth Fight for Jobs and the Day-Mer Turkish-Kurdish community group

linked up with local youth to break out from a police pen to stop the EDL from completing a march and holding a rally. Many EDL supporters then called for Robinson's resignation.

Last weekend the British National Party tried to demonstrate against immigration outside a Home Office building in Croydon. But the 20 BNP supporters were marginalised by 50 anti-racist protesters, led by the local trade union council and PCS members who work in the Home Office.

Far-right groups and right-wing capitalist politicians try to divert the anger of working class people at seeing their living standards eroded. It's the main parties, their banker-spiv backers and the capitalist system that are to blame! But, the far right tries to shift the blame onto any 'minority' they think is an easy target, potentially splitting and weakening anti-cuts movements.

Mass action to fight for trade union policies for decent wages and working conditions, an end to the bedroom tax, money for council housing not war, and so on, are the real alternative to the greedy fat cats and their pro-cuts politicians - not racism.

Counter-demonstrations organised by trade unions, appealing to local communities, against every far-right event and attack can be built, linking opposition to the far-right with the day-to-day concerns of all working class people.

The far right in Liverpool had no base during the 1980s. This was largely due to the way the socialist-led council inspired and organised massive resistance to Thatcher's Tories and won back £60 million in funding for the city. But today's Liverpool Labour council, like all others, are carrying out the Con-Dem cuts.

The Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition looks to stand widely at next year's council elections. Our candidates will argue for a fighting programme linked to struggle that includes axing the bedroom tax and banning zero-hour contracts, in favour of creating jobs and building council housing, restoring public services and pensions and people's benefits, for workers' rights and decent wages and democratic nationalisation of the banking system.

These are answers that neither the mainstream parties nor the far right can provide. All working class and young people need to unite and fight for jobs, homes and services.



**March in Liverpool against racism and fascism**  
Saturday 12 October assemble 12noon, William Brown Street, L3. Rally at Pier Head

## 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!