

the Socialist

www.socialistparty.org.uk

13-19 February

Issue 798

Price: £1 (Solidarity: £2)

FLOODS MISERY GOVERNMENT CUTS TO BLAME

Dave Carr

While thousands of homes and shops are waist deep in toxic water, and flooding hits new areas, government ministers indulge in a blame game.

Stand-in environment minister Eric Pickles blamed the Environment Agency for not dredging rivers, while the department's incapacitated minister Owen Paterson was reportedly raging to Prime Minister David Cameron over Pickles' attacks.

In reality, the entire government is to blame for a lack

of preparation and its outrageously inadequate response.

After all, climate change scientists have been warning for years about the expected increased frequency of extreme weather events - including unprecedented rainfall - caused by human induced global warming.

Moreover, instead of investing in measures that have enormous potential to defend people, land and property against flooding, the government has pursued a vicious austerity agenda of public spending cuts.

These cuts have been borne heavily by the Environment Agency, including its budget for

flood prevention. Incredibly, on top of previous cuts, some 1,500 agency jobs (15% of the workforce), including 550 jobs in flood prevention, are due to be axed by October.

Yet the cost to people's homes and the country's ruined infrastructure will run into hundreds of millions of pounds.

The floods have exposed how this government puts the interests of a rich elite above those of a long-suffering public. It's high time that these 'Eton millionaires' are booted out and an environmentally sustainable plan of flood defences and infrastructure is put in place.

Floods feature next week

“In July 2012 Guardian journalist Damian Carrington identified 294 shovel-ready flood defence schemes that had not proceeded because of cuts. Maintenance of existing defences was suffering too. The government was forced to throw another £130 million of emergency funding into the hole - yet that still left spending lower than in 2010. Watching the interviews of the people affected by the floods, you can see and hear the mounting anger. There has been a change in outlook among thousands of people with growing anger towards the Con-Dems over this issue. We have private water companies raking it in, while running a Victorian plumbing system nationwide which causes enormous problems and clearly needs replacing. The floods show how applying the Tory outlook of 'doing more with less' to the Environment Agency by cutting their finance has affected many thousands of people.”

Chris Fernandez

“The chain breaks at the weakest link. So it was in Dawlish, not two miles from my home town of Teignmouth, that a combination of high tides and winds broke the railway line that connects the south and west of Devon and Cornwall to the rest of the country.

Cutting off nearly a million people west of the river Exe, it has left Cornwall and major centres such as Plymouth and Torbay without rail connections. The West has been battered by storms - the worst for many decades, with record levels of rainfall resulting in damage everywhere and the flooding of 60 square miles of the Somerset levels. When this Coalition government was cobbled together in 2010, Cameron said he wanted it to be “the greenest government ever”. Since then they have done the reverse, seeking to undermine the science of climate change and cutting Environmental Agency funds by nearly 40%. Like King Canute, the Con-Dems refuse to acknowledge that to turn the tide against global warming, there must be planning on a regional, national and international level - an impossible scenario given the 'values' that sustain their capitalist system.”

Sean Brogan, Teignmouth



PO Box 24697, London E11 1YD • telephone: 020 8988 8777 • email: info@socialistparty.org.uk

The paper of the Socialist Party. Issue 798.

The Socialist, PO Box 24697, London E11 1YD Registered as a newspaper at the Post Office. Published by Socialist Publications, printed by Sharman and Co Ltd. ISSN 1366-9621

London tube stoppages show workers can win

The London Underground (LU) dispute is already having the effect of lifting up the sights of trade unionists.

Following the successful first strike management has suspended implementation of all elements of their cuts plan until 8 April. This includes withdrawing material from the company intranet and halting the voluntary severance process.

RMT members will see this as an important development. Before the strike LU was utterly intransigent but now they have also indicated that they are even prepared to revisit the issue of ticket office closures.

They have also agreed that the terms of the consultation will be mutually agreed and that they will take place at company council level – whereas previously they were at a level that couldn't challenge the economics of the LU proposal.

In return the unions have agreed to withdraw their strike action for 48 hours. Tube

workers have shown that management can be forced to retreat – if only partially at this stage. If LU does not drop their cuts package in the coming negotiations, millions of workers will support the tube workers if they have to reinstate the strike action.

Ticket office closures are opposed by 71% of the population – and the strike reminded Londoners that Boris Johnson promised to keep them open. The union has produced figures to show that cuts can be avoided by bringing privatised services back in-house, by fighting for restoration of government grant, and by capping senior pay.

Attempts to portray the unions as resistant to technological progress have been shown to be false. When Newsnight presenter Jeremy Paxman sneered at Bob Crow that he was a dinosaur, Bob simply replied, 'well, they were around for a very long time'!

But the unions are clear that they would be happy to discuss changes due to tech-

nology as long as workers are retrained and vital services are improved. But ticket office closures and shedding station staff are not about technology. These services are about the essential human relations that are necessary to make a massive transport system work for everyone.

However the suspension of the attacks doesn't mean a resolution to this strike will necessarily be quick. The viciousness of senior management calling the police on pickets and encouraging spurious complaints, especially in the case of Mark Harding, shows not only that the managers on the day felt they were losing, but also that the gloves are off.

Members expect their representatives to exploit every opportunity to negotiate. But if the bosses refuse to take the proposals off the table to allow genuine talks, the action must stay on and if necessary be escalated. If there is no movement, the RMT and TSSA

should call a council of war of all the unions in London to build up support of the organised working class across the city.

The current attacks are just 6% of the total £4.6 billion cuts planned – in reality only the first tranche of austerity cuts.

Representatives of the ruling class like Johnson expect a storm – but they're preparing to attack the unions. He says he would be willing to stand as an MP if only in order to push through further anti trade union legislation.

He wants a 50% participation rule for strike action (which if applied to his own election would see him out of a job!). He has ordered water cannon to be ready for use on the streets of London this summer.

But if the rail unions win, as they have the potential power to, with the backing of the public and of other trade unions in London, it could signal a real step-change in the longer war against austerity.

Effective action builds



PCS assistant general secretary Chris Baugh brings solidarity to a strike rally photo Paul Mattsson

London Socialist Party members

Kings Cross underground normally opens its gates at 4.50am. But the strike was 100% solid - not one worker was in and the doors were staying shut.

Pickets were in a cheerful mood at the Ash House depot on the Piccadilly line at Arnos Grove, with over 20 RMT members picketing.

Only one driver, not in a union, crossed the picket line, with another - an Aslef member - going in but coming out again half an hour later to join strikers.

Not a single passerby was hostile to the strike. One told us that he never supports strikes, but he'd heard Boris Johnson and Bob Crow on the radio. He was now backing the strike and bought a copy of the Socialist.

Confident and mainly female

pickets at Morden depot commented on the high level of support from station staff and a generally more positive attitude from the public than during previous disputes.

Over a dozen pickets at Edgware Road looked on while a manager tried to open the station gates but couldn't find his keys!

At Neasden, no trains were on the move at all.

Fulham Broadway tube was closed all day. A good victory as RMT members had earlier managed to see off an attempt to open the station using Boris Johnson's 'volunteers'.

No keys

A manager attempted to open Elephant and Castle station but at 7am notified people it was closed. It seems there is a stash of iPads left over from the Olympics and it's be-

ing suggested they will be used in stations as a substitute for humans. As one union member said: "If someone collapses what is the iPad going to do? And what am I going to do with the iPad?"

At Brixton the strike was solid. Around 8am, two managers came out. They demanded we stop "obstructing" the stairs.

Eventually their petty arguing moved us all off LU property - to less than two metres away. "That's why we have such a strong union", said one picket. "Because of gits like that!"

Nancy Taaffe reports: "We have been campaigning in support of the rail unions and we have had a very good response, reflected in 23 sales of the Socialist, which backs the strike, on one stall.

It appears Londoners know this strike is all about jobs, safety and pay."

State attacks trade union action

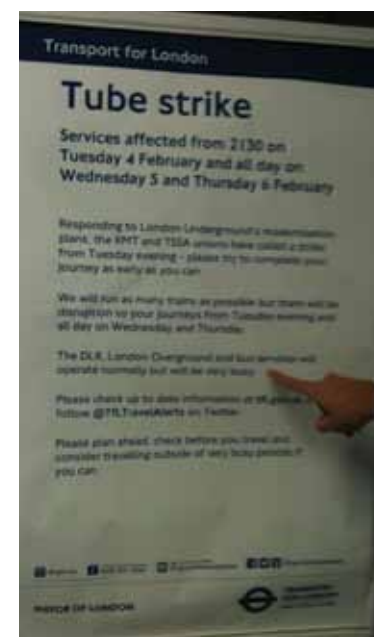
Neil Cafferky

The RMT strike on 6 February saw one of the most serious attacks by the state on trade union organisation in decades. Mark Harding, RMT Hammersmith and Fulham branch secretary, was arrested on the picket line by police while conducting lawful trade union activity. The police held him in a cell for 13 hours.

He was charged with "intimidation or annoyance by violence or otherwise". The purpose of these charges became clear when Mark's bail conditions were imposed: Not to be within Hammersmith Metropolitan Line station and not to be actively involved in any RMT trade union or any other union associated with LUL/TFL or to be in attendance at any organised industrial action until this case is finalised.

These were the same tactics used in the miners' strike when the full force of the state was used against the NUM.

These anti-trade laws are a licence for the employers to victimise trade unionists. These are the same laws that went untouched by 13 years of Labour government. The only way these laws will be thrown in the dustbin is if the trade unions challenge them and form their own political party that can roll them back.



The strike had a massive effect photo London SP

• Update. It seems that the bail conditions have been dropped after protests. Up to 150 RMT members and other trade unionists crammed into an emergency solidarity meeting to support Mark on 10 February. The meeting was hosted by Mark's RMT Hammersmith and City branch.

While welcoming the dropping of the disgraceful bail conditions, it sent a clear message that until Mark is in the clear, the campaign goes on.

A tube driver who worked last Wednesday during the strike complained of chest pains but was instructed to carry on driving from Golders Green to Morden with a train full of passengers. He then had a heart attack and was taken to hospital. It shows the callous disregard for the safety of staff and the public coming from the Mayor and his cronies.

Steve Hedley, RMT assistant general secretary, via Facebook

Fast food workers Hungry for decent pay and working conditions

Ian Pattison
Youth Fight for Jobs

A new campaign is seeking to replace fast food exploitation with fast food rights. A recent Unite the Union survey showed that scandalously 5.5 million workers in Britain are on super-exploitative zero-hour contracts. Burger King and Domino's Pizza are among the fast food employers known to recruit nearly their entire workforce on zero-hour contracts.

The Bakers, Food and Allied Workers' Union (BFAWU) and others launched a Fast Food Rights (FFR) initiative to help workers suffering these horrendous conditions. BFAWU raised the sights of workers everywhere when its strike at the Hovis factory in Wigan showed that zero-hour contracts can be beaten.

Increasingly workers are forced into low-paid, super-exploitative jobs in the fast food industry. However, given the lack of decent secure work, fast food workers cannot expect these to only be stop-gaps as may have been the case prior to the recession. This makes fertile ground for the demand that the super-rich multinational companies pay a living wage.

A KFC worker said: "We need a fighting union that will campaign for solid contracts and a living wage of £10 an hour, by calling for industrial action if necessary. We need shop stewards to stop unfair dismissals, bullying and harassment in the workplace."

With Youth Fight for Jobs and other FFR supporters BFAWU is calling a national day of action on Saturday 15 February. We've been inspired by the movement in the USA. Some fast food workers there have taken unofficial strike action, demanding a \$15 an hour minimum wage, to reflect the real cost of living (see 15now.



Hovis workers fought back against zero-hours photo Paul Mattsson

org). This movement even helped propel one of its key supporters, Socialist Alternative's Kshama Sawant, to victory in Seattle's city council election.

Initiative

Last year, Youth Fight for Jobs launched the 'Are You Sick of Your Boss?' initiative, taking up the scourge of under-employment. Armed with leaflets, Youth Fight for Jobs supporters marched straight into shops and handed them to staff. FFR will be doing the same on its day of action, this time handing recruitment forms for the BFAWU to fast food workers.

With Fast Food Rights we've already done preparatory work, leafletting staff in these stores to explain our protest is not against them but the fat cat corporations like McDonalds. BFAWU is taking on the urgent task of trying to organise the unorganised. The FFR campaign has the potential to bring fast food workers into the unions, strengthening them and the fight for all workers' rights.

Fast Food Rights day of action London - meet at the corner of Tottenham Court Road at 1pm, to march along Oxford Street, talking to fast food workers
See www.youthfightforjobs.com for further national details



Join the fightback! Join the Socialists!
www.socialistparty.org.uk • Phone 020 8988 8777 • Text 07761 818206

NHS: Kick out big Pharma

Simon Carter

Last week the Socialist published a feature article on the National Health Service - 'Big Pharma's deadly grip' - which showed how profit hungry multinational drug companies are bleeding the NHS dry.

Now, the Independent has revealed how Big Pharma is capitalising on the government's Health and Social Care Act which has opened up the NHS budget in England for private companies to plunder.

Under the Act while a majority of the NHS budget is handed to GP consortia, who can commission services from 'any willing provider', the remainder is controlled by NHS England.

According to the Independent, NHS England has allowed a lobbying company Specialised Healthcare Alliance (SHCA) "working for the world's biggest drugs and medi-

cal equipment firms" to produce a report setting out a five-year strategy for commissioning £12 billion of services.

To suggest a possible 'conflict of interest' is a mild understatement. NHS England may as well write a blank cheque now to Big Pharma. SHCA's director John Murray is also a lobbyist "whose company lists some of the world's biggest drug and medical device firms as clients".

All the costs of SHCA are paid for by 13 drug companies. Secretariat services to SHCA are provided by a lobbying company, JMC partners, whose senior partner is, again, John Murray. Its clients include multinational drug companies such as Novartis, Astro Zenica, and Pfizer.

JMC boasts of its lobbying claims in which it has targeted MPs and government ministers to ensure market access in the NHS for commercial medical companies.

This latest media investigation

confirms the stranglehold of Big Pharma on the NHS.

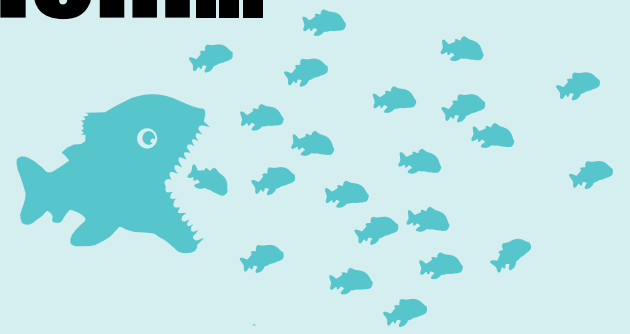
As the Socialist (issue 797) pointed out, it was recently revealed that giant drug manufacturers were fleecing the NHS of millions of pounds by using a legal loophole in the government's price regulatory scheme by selling marketing rights to smaller companies.

These smaller companies, not governed by the scheme, then set a new price. The cost of one medicine went up 2,400%, literally overnight!

The private companies acting like leeches on the NHS must be removed in order to free up precious resources for healthcare.

We demand an end to big business profiteering. Nationalise the pharmaceutical industry, scrap the rip-off Private Finance Initiative and abolish the Health and Social Care Act. Let's rebuild a fully funded, publicly owned NHS, free at the point of use.

Them...



Robbing us blind

What do you do to people who've screwed up the economy? That's right, you give them over £80 billion in bonuses!

According to the Robin Hood Tax campaign an estimated £81.7 billion will, by the end of this year, have gone into the pockets of mainly fat-cat financiers since the onset of the financial crisis in 2008. This is the equivalent of every man, woman and child in Britain handing over £1,250 to these latter-day robber barons.

a Labour frontbench MP ignoring workers in struggle readers might say. However, the irony of Hunt's action was underlined by the title of his lecture: "Marx, Engels and the making of Marxism".

Lording it

Ok, so you may have to queue for a food bank voucher to feed your family but spare a thought for our ermine clad betters.

Peers in the House of Lords have complained of being subject to meals in which the smoked salmon and scallops were poor and the pasta dishes could be found in any downmarket restaurant. Some had to wait 15 minutes for table service! For a £1.3 million public subsidy you'd expect top notch grub in the Lords canteen. If it gets worse our Lords will be forced to take their £300 a day attendance allowance and rub shoulders in a diner with the local riff raff.

Own goal

Immigration minister Mark Harper was hoisted by his own petard after hiring a cleaner deemed by the government to be working illegally in this country. The irony of a minister pushing through parliament a reactionary immigration bill - which, among a host of draconian measures, compels employers (and landlords and GPs) to extensively check a person's immigration status - was not lost on Harper who resigned his post. The Tory ex-minister is now liable for a £5,000 fine for his transgression.

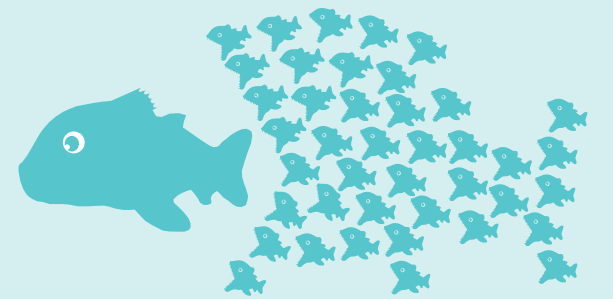
Making of a scab

Labour's shadow education secretary, Tristram Hunt MP, unrepentantly crossed a UCU lecturer's union picket line at Queen Mary University, in east London last week to give a lecture. Nothing surprising about

Bedroom tax arrears

Like Margaret Thatcher's unjust poll tax, today's Tory bedroom tax is unaffordable for a large number of social housing tenants. In Scotland, the tax has led to a huge increase in rent arrears, running into millions of pounds. Fortunately for tenants a formidable anti-bedroom tax campaign, in which Socialist Party Scotland members are playing a crucial role, has forced the SNP government to commit to its abandonment.

...& Us



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

What we saw

Mary Jackson, former TUSC candidate for Doncaster Mayor and Socialist Party member, quoted in the Daily Mirror on the political impact of the 1984-85 miners' strike.



<http://www.mirror.co.uk/news/real-life-stories/brave-women-who-battled-keep-3126222>

Women activists during the miners' strike

Teachers call national strike

Martin Powell-Davies

Member of the NUT national executive

The next NUT national strike will be on Wednesday 26 March. Every NUT rep and officer now needs to be spreading that news and building for a mass show of strength in opposition to education secretary Gove's damaging attacks on teachers and education.

We hope that other unions may be willing to coordinate with us in taking strike action on that day. The UCAC teachers' union in Wales has announced that they will.

The NASUWT meets on 14 February, when they will decide whether to participate.

We need to make clear that this is not just a 'protest' but must be part of an ongoing campaign of action intended to defeat the attacks on teachers' pensions, pay and conditions.

The new NUT parents' leaflet includes the important points:



Gove is not loved by teachers photo Iain Dalton

- Ensure every classroom has a qualified teacher. Academies and free schools are now allowed to employ

unqualified teachers. This is a big threat to standards of education.

- Allow councils to open new

schools where they are needed. There is a huge pupil place shortage but councils are not allowed to open new schools. Many councils are driven to putting huts on school playgrounds to cope.

The government only allows new 'free' schools and these are often in the wrong place.

- Make sure changes to the curriculum and exams are positive and planned

- Ensure there are enough new teachers - stop picking fights with the ones we've got

Michael Gove keeps criticising teachers. Morale is plummeting. Five years after qualifying two in every five teachers are no longer teaching.

Gove is on a mission to cut costs by making teachers work longer hours for less pay and pension. Even more will leave the profession. That's not just bad for teachers, that's bad for children's education.

We must make him think again - we have to build a solid strike on 26 March!

In brief

PCS elections

The elections for the leadership of the Public and Commercial Services union (PCS) will start soon, with nominations closing on 6 March. The election will run from 8 April to 8 May.



photo Paul Mattsson

Socialist Party members in PCS are part of Left Unity, which is standing candidates with the PCS Democrats - as the Democracy Alliance. Socialist Party members who are standing include Chris Baugh for Assistant General Secretary, Janice Godrich for President and John McInally for Vice-President.

The union's Democracy Alliance-led leadership has a proven track record of fighting the Con-Dems' austerity attacks by fighting for jobs, services and working conditions. PCS branches are being asked to nominate Democracy Alliance candidates - a full list is available on leftunity.org.uk

Tax strike

Senior officers working in HMRC are due to strike on 14 February. The members of the Association of Revenue and Customs, part of the FDA, have voted to strike over a new performance management system and changes to their terms and conditions. Nearly 60% of those balloted voted to strike.

Unison Black Members

At the Unison Black Members conference last month, general secretary Dave Prentis disappointingly concluded that the way to stop the



Conference delegates

photo the Socialist

cuts was to campaign for a Labour victory. But while Unison works with Labour to 'manage' the cuts our members are becoming fewer and working harder for less. Surely, we would be in a stronger position if we begin the fightback now to defend our jobs, pay, conditions and the services we provide, and prepare our members for action?

A conference delegate

Website

For a full report of the Black Members conference and more trade union and workplace news, see: www.socialistparty.org.uk

Posties vote yes - where now for postal workers?

Gary Clark

CWU Scotland No.2 branch, personal capacity

Postal workers across the country have overwhelmingly voted in favour of two national agreements, the 'agenda for growth, stability and long-term success', along with a new pension agreement. Both votes were around 95% for to 5% against.

These votes should be viewed against the backdrop of Royal Mail being privatised and CWU members' fear of attack on their terms and conditions. Already the current management style has members living in fear of intimidation and bullying.

Members clearly viewed that 3% backdated from last April, 3% from this April and most likely 2.8% the following April - allowing for inflation amounting to 9.06% over three years - is a reasonable pay deal.

The national union leadership has made great play of achieving a "legally binding" agreement on terms and conditions.

These safeguards mean that if the company sells off or franchises any

part of the company, the collectively agreed terms and conditions will not worsen. There will be the aim of no compulsory redundancies and no one will be forced to change their hours of employment unless they volunteer to.

The company plans to remain an employer of predominately full-time workers.

This can only be changed if something 'ground breaking' was to happen. It is not certain what this means but it could be a threat to us taking national strike action in the future.

The CWU could take the employer to court for breaking the national agreement.

But the bosses' courts have never been friends of the workers. The only way we can defend the interests of our members will be through our industrial strength.

The CWU has been viewed as one of the most combative unions - at least in the postal side. So this deal can be a major danger.

The new governance arrangements say that the CWU will have a chance to participate in the running of the business. The union will now be involved in making decisions



photo Paul Mattsson

that could affect our members. So it could become viewed as part of the management.

Just as dangerous are "new ways of resolving disputes" which in-

cludes no binding mediation. This could cause delays in members being able to defend their terms and conditions. There is a danger a mood for action could be dissipated by delay. But also our members could take more unofficial action in the future.

What is not in the agreement has been causing the greatest concern. Management have been creating havoc with their bullying style, forcing through unagreed changes. So important aspects like workload still need to be properly negotiated.

The mostly likely outcome of this agreement will be a period of relative stability. But management will eventually go back on the offensive.

That's why it is vital that we prepare for the period ahead. We must learn the lessons of the past in the postal side of the union, where we have never had an organised left wing.

This should start at this year's conference. We must start laying the ground work for a fighting programme and fighting candidates for the national executive committee.

Higher education pay campaign continues

Higher Education staff in the unions UCU, Unison and Unite took strike action on 6 February in their campaign against yet another real-terms pay cut. They have been offered 1% while vice-chancellors are getting much more.

Salford university

UCU and Unison members at Salford university mounted big picket lines and a demonstration. Salford was one of the 31 universities to say they would dock a day's pay for each of the three two-hour strikes - lumping all three deductions together in March so those affected will then lose half a week's pay in one go.

Hugh Caffrey

Central London

The Institute of Education, University College London, SOAS and

Birkbeck were all eerily quiet inside, hit by a combination of the HE and tube strikes. IWGB union members at the University of London were also on strike as part of the 3 Cosas campaign.

Paula Mitchell
London Socialist Party

London Met university

The Unison branch in London Met organised a rally supported by HE unions across London. Turnout was affected by the rain and the tube strike but a lively rally went ahead. John Reid, London RMT regional secretary, gave solidarity greetings from London Underground (LU) workers striking against devastating job cuts.

Rob Williams, chair of the National Shop Stewards Networks (NSSN) also spoke. The RMT strike was widely discussed on the picket lines, emphasising that if the RMT and

other striking LU unions were to beat Mayor Johnson's cuts, it would raise the sights of the entire trade union movement, and millions of workers under attack.

Ian Pattison, Socialist Students national chair, and Judy Beishon

Derby

At Derby University all entrances to the university were covered by pickets and the mood was upbeat. A council worker walked by and expressed his support. He said the council was cutting his pay by 11%! He added that all workers should come out together: "That would hit them and show our strength".

Chris Fernandez

Preston

At the University of Central Lancs (UCLan) the UCU is fighting tough battles on two fronts - firstly in

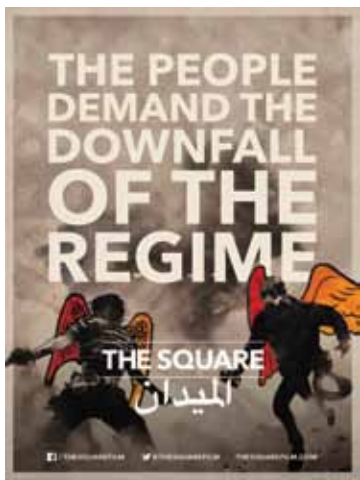
support of the national pay dispute and secondly over 75 planned redundancies.

UCLan has responded to the further two-hour UCU stoppage on 10 February over the national pay claim by threatening to deduct a full day's pay. This scandalous attack will almost certainly backfire. UCLan's UCU members are also balloting for industrial action over the redundancies and the employer's aggression may well strengthen the prospects of a 'yes' vote.

A shocking attempt by the university to establish itself as a private company had been met with derision by staff and was seen off by the union. The mood of staff had almost certainly hardened as a result - and if the attitude of the pickets was anything to go by, they are in excellent fighting spirit for the current battles they are facing.

Dave Beale
UCU retired member

Film review



The Square: bravery, determination and disappointment in Egypt

among the crowds, debating how society should move forward. But the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces had taken control of the government, the crowds were persuaded to go home and little seemed to change.

Where next?

Activists returned to the square to try to regain the position they felt they held months earlier. They were viciously attacked by security forces. The bruised and beaten body of singer Ramy Essam, whose songs had become the soundtrack for the uprising, is shown. Sensing their loss of power, one activist says: "It's like we did really well in an exam and forgot to write our name on the paper. Now no one knows who it belonged to."

Magdy, the MB member, is seen taking part in occupying Tahrir from the start of the uprising against Mubarak, despite the MB leadership's instruction not to take part. "I'm not happy with the Brotherhood leaders," he says.

Khalid argues with his mother, an activist from an older generation, about the forthcoming elections. He forcefully makes the point that only the Muslim Brotherhood are well-organised for the elections, but his only alternative is to call for their postponement. "All the politicians are failures."

The October 2011 army massacre of peaceful Christian protesters outside the Maspéro broadcasting centre is graphically shown. By December, the army are firing live bullets at the crowds around Tahrir.

The film's brave camera-work brings the viewer to the frontline alongside Ahmed, including the makeshift pavement hospital he is rushed to when injured. He appears stunned by the rapid change of events in under a year. "Revolutionaries are called traitors, while the traitors are called heroes." But he takes up the struggle once again.

When the presidential election is held in May 2012, the choice is between the MB's Morsi and the old regime's Shafiq. Nevertheless,



First time a crowdfunded film has been Oscar nominated

there is rejoicing when Shafiq is defeated, albeit by a narrow 3% margin.

Khalid draws the conclusion: "Most of the time we object and say 'no', but we have no alternative of our own." Magdy's teenage daughter says: "Nothing was gained from the revolution. We still can't get healthcare."

At the end of the film, the MB is under attack as Morsi is ousted following the largest demonstration in history. But General al-Sisi takes over - the senior military officers are still in charge.

The Square shows the revolutionary youth's bravery, determination and energy, and how many ordinary MB members like Magdy were influenced by their mood and fought alongside them for dignity and social justice. But it doesn't answer the question - why is Mubarak's repressive regime being reconstructed three years later?

Role of the working class

Absent from the film are the millions of workers who played a cru-



cial role in Mubarak's downfall and who organised into trade unions to fight for higher wages and better conditions. Their absence reflects the lack of an organised workers' presence in Tahrir, where workers participated as individuals rather than as a class able to give a lead to the unorganised poor and middle class sections of society.

The 2011 Tunisian and Egyptian revolutions sparked mass occupations of youth across Europe and the USA - the Indignados and Occupy movements. This film shows both the possibilities and weaknesses of those movements that mobilised so many to fight for change. But no clear idea of what that change should be or how it

could be won was put forward which left the ruling class able to keep power - hanging on by a thread in Tunisia and Egypt.

Building a party that could do this is the key task for all who are determined to change society. A strategy for a workers' government and a democratic socialist society, with an international appeal for support, could lead to victory for workers and poor people in Egypt and elsewhere.

The Square has had few screenings in Britain, despite winning awards at 2013 film festivals and a 2014 Oscar nomination. Socialist Party branches should organise screenings and discuss it.

thesquarefilm.com

David Johnson reviews the film *The Square* (el Midan, subtitled in English).

Cairo's Tahrir Square has gripped world headlines since 2011. Twice it was occupied by mass uprisings that brought down a president - Hosni Mubarak after 30 years of brutal dictatorship, and Mohamed Morsi after just 12 months of increasingly dictatorial powers. *The Square* is a vivid documentary film starting with January 2011's uprising against Mubarak and ending shortly after Morsi's downfall in July 2013.

The ebbs and flows of the Egyptian revolution are seen through the eyes of participants, particularly Ahmed Hassan - a young activist, Magdy Ashour - a Muslim Brotherhood (MB) member tortured under Mubarak, and Khalid Abdalla - the British-born actor from an Egyptian family, best known for his role in *The Kite Runner*.

In February 2011 the massive crowds are seen fraternising with soldiers. Muslims and Christians mix happily together. Young women confidently shout slogans. All are united against the regime. "Bread, freedom and social justice" are the demands on the lips of millions.

Mubarak out!

As an army officer announces Mubarak's resignation on TV, tears are shed and crowds dance. "This is when we realised the people are the true power," says Ahmad. "Good things are coming."

The euphoria lasts weeks. The film shows lively discussions

HOUSING CRISIS HELL: a worker's view

A London housing worker

Go back far enough and the council was the major landlord in the borough I work in. It built new homes and maintained them as well, with its own direct labour organisation. Families could get housed by the council and pay reasonable rents. Communities developed together. Not anymore.

Labour and the Tories both agreed to sell off the public housing stock. The promised 'local housing association' is now a shell, with all the major decisions made elsewhere. Repairs are dealt with, or not as the case may be, by private contractors. So what does that leave us with?

There are thousands of households on the waiting list. And their chances of getting housed are minimal or less. There are approximately 300-400



Council housing built by the Liverpool 47 councillors in the 1980s

new tenancies each year and almost all of these will go to high priority cases. Unless you have special needs or a bailiff's warrant, forget it. You simply won't get a tenancy.

The pressure on staff is

phenomenal. Reactionary pro-cuts politicians whip up myths - 'all the housing is going to Bulgarians and Romanians'. No it's not, it was sold off under Thatcher's 'right to buy' and never replaced. It's now

mortgaged to the banks and they don't have a fair allocations policy.

If Labour politicians were socialists, like the Liverpool councillors in the 1980s, they would find and fight for the resources for a large new building programme. Then families on the waiting list would stand a chance of getting housed.

Instead they are blown along with every populist campaign - giving preference to households in work or those leaving the armed forces does not build one extra property. It just divides the shortage a different way.

'Hard working families' stand a little chance as anyone else. The fastest growth in households coming to us for help now is not down to 'fecklessness'. It's households being evicted because their landlord thinks they can get a higher rent from someone else. The first Monday of the New Year is usually

the worst.

Rather than provide housing, our job has become to lower people's expectations, encourage them to stay in overcrowded accommodation, tell them that temporary accommodation could be miles away or to take substandard properties in the private sector.

I have the utmost respect for my colleagues, but do management? One crime at work is 'feeling sorry for someone'. This roughly translates as not having been dehumanised and believing that many people have a tough life in this rotten society. If you do, make sure all the paperwork is in order.

There is an election in May so watch the councillors' enquiries pile up. And one question they won't be asking: How many new homes could have been built with all the money paid to the banks?

As we go to press the Unite Executive is preparing to discuss the Collins Review proposals to 'reform' the link between the unions and Labour. This is in anticipation of the Labour Party special conference on 1 March.

Reportedly three out of the four Unite delegates at Labour's NEC voted to endorse the Review. Apparently this was on general secretary Len McCluskey's recommendation. The remaining delegate, Martin Mayer, abstained although we think that he should have voted against. This is both disappointing and alarming, for us and undoubtedly for many others on the left.

Falkirk controversy

Unite members won't forget this stitch-up was triggered when Labour leader Ed Miliband called in the police against Unite in the Falkirk parliamentary selection process. Unite members had been pursuing the union's strategy to democratically influence the selection of a parliamentary candidate.

Miliband's disgraceful step led directly to the sacking of the Unite convenor at Grangemouth, Stevie Deans, who was also the chair of Falkirk Labour Party. His fellow convenor Mark Lyons has also lost his job. Incredibly, Labour's investigation into Unite in Falkirk was leaked to the press on the very day that Mark's sacking had been confirmed! Therefore the Socialist Party believes that the decision to endorse the Collins Review, if persisted with, is seriously mistaken and would undermine Unite's position and that of the unions generally.

One Unite activist wrote: "As a Labour Party member and trade unionist since 1981 I am dismayed by a decision which appears to be the very opposite of action to reclaim our party."

This indicates that the Unite leadership will be arguing that the Executive, on behalf of the union, votes to accept Collins' proposals. The Socialist Party believes that would represent a further and decisive fundamental change in the relationship between Unite and the other affiliated unions with Labour – the party that the unions created over a century ago.

Democracy gone

As you know, the Socialist Party has long disagreed with the view that Labour can be reclaimed for working people from the Blairites' grip. We believe that it has fundamentally changed from the period that we, then as the Militant Tendency, worked with left allies like Len in the Labour Party in the 1970s and particularly in the titanic struggles in Liverpool in the 1980s when the socialist Labour city council faced down Thatcher.

The struggle that the left conducted in

Miliband comes out against workers taking strike action to defend themselves from austerity – the tube strike is the latest example

Labour then opened up the democratic structures of the party, allowing a whole number of left MPs to be selected. Among them were Militant supporters who stood on a worker's wage: Dave Nellist, Terry Fields and Pat Wall.

There was a time when unions could use their collective voice inside Labour – famously to defeat the Harold Wilson government's attempts to bring in the anti-union 'In Place of Strife' laws. Rank and file members made Britain's involvement in the Vietnam War impossible. But Miliband comes out against workers taking strike action to defend themselves from austerity – the tube strike is the latest example. Yet even Shirley Williams stood on the Grunwick picket line in 1977!

Unite's strategy defeated

Despite our belief that the union's efforts to 'change New Labour' were fruitless, we gave critical support when the Unite leadership argued to fight to maintain the union's collective voice and remaining power in the Labour Party. At the national Unite United Left (UL) meeting last September, Socialist Party members argued for disaffiliation but voted to mandate UL members on the Unite Executive to oppose Collins. The Unite North West Regional Committee was to the fore in getting a motion passed calling for this.

The disgraceful treatment of suspended Warrington Labour councillor Kevin Bennett, who voted against cuts and is also a member of the Unite North West committee, reinforced the mood of opposition.

We predicted that Unite would find it incredibly difficult to convince the targeted 5,000 members, a tiny fraction of the union's membership, to join Labour. On the other hand we said that Miliband's machine would not allow it to happen. Falkirk shows that Unite's strategy has been soundly defeated by the Labour leadership. The campaign there was the model of what the union was hoping to achieve. But in a move that evoked the disgraceful and undemocratic witch-hunt against the Militant by Neil Kinnock in the 1980s, Miliband simply tore up the rule book, even stooping to call in the police.

We believe that the transformation of Labour into one more party of big business has already gone too far. Under John Smith's leadership, 'One Member One Vote' for selection of MPs was introduced. This was a clear dilution of the ability of the organised working class to exercise its will in selection contests. Then Tony Blair successfully ditched Clause IV which, on paper at least, gave Labour a socialist aspiration. A previous attempt by Gatskell in 1960 was defeated by the unions.

The subsequent New Labour governments of Blair and Gordon Brown confirmed that Labour was a safe tool of the



Open letter to the Unite Executive Council from the Socialist Party

capitalists. They followed Thatcher's neo-liberal agenda – legitimising and pursuing privatisation, school academisation, as well as wars of imperialist intervention. Today Labour councils refuse to confront Con-Dem austerity, instead passing on eye-watering cuts. No wonder Unite struggled to recruit to Labour.

But now, following the Falkirk episode, while Miliband and the Blairites understood the significance of their victory and started a process that will end with the special conference, regrettably Len has glossed over its meaning. This has only re-

sulted in Unite activists being disoriented and disillusioned while the union's standing has been affected.

Decisive action necessary

This is disappointing considering the real positive changes that have happened in Unite since Len was elected. There was an impasse in the union after it was formed out of the merger of the T&G and Amicus in 2007. But after the supporters of ex-Amicus leader Derek Simpson were defeated, Unite is widely seen as a left militant union that has won significant victories.

The victory of the Sparks construction electricians against the Besna contract in 2012 and against blacklisting on Crossrail last year have been highlights for the trade union movement. The Socialist Party has argued this – but we also made constructive criticisms of how the union faced the threat from bullying Jim Ratcliffe of Ineos in Grangemouth last autumn. Our main issue was that the lack of preparedness for the massive attack by the employer and the decisive industrial action necessary to resist.

But the response to the political attack which Collins represents will determine how members view the future direction of Unite, both on the political and industrial planes. Members will fear that complying with Miliband's counter-revolution could signify Unite putting major industrial struggle against austerity on hold for the mistaken 'strategy' of waiting for a Labour government. This is while the Labour leadership 'Two Eds' have confirmed they will stick to Tory spending plans, including further cuts of £25 billion. Working people can expect nothing from a new

'Labour government'. The conclusions of the Collins Review are connected to this.

We agree with Kevin Maguire's Daily Mirror column (3/2/14) when he said that the unions should at least disaffiliate from Labour. But we disagree with his conclusion that the unions should not form a new party. He argues "the challenge for independent unions would be to issue bold agendas and seek to radicalise Labour from the outside, instead of swallowing abuse from the inside."

Kevin confirms the potential support a week later when he writes: "Ed Miliband should be frightened by the number of Shadow Cabinet members and union general secretaries who agreed with last week's column arguing Labour and unions should go their separate ways. I could form a government or new party with all those who told me they endorsed the call."

US shows the way

But not forming their own mass party is akin to how unions in the US are reduced to being just another Democrat lobbying group. However, the historic election victory in Seattle last autumn of the co-thinker of the Socialist Party, Kshama Savant, has clearly helped to challenge this situation. In Minneapolis

Socialist Alternative candidate Ty Moore showed that socialist candidates can win trade union support, on a local level at least at this stage. Just as impressive an indicator of how working class political representation can be built in the 'belly of the beast' of capitalism was the stunning success of 24 'Independent Labor' candidates in Ohio at the same time.

The main task is to build a mass political alternative, in which the unions would play a critical role. Maguire revealed that: "A Labour MP, a champion of the union link, whispered that he was afraid Ed is opening a Pandora's Box. Left-wing unions with holding up to £4 million from Labour under a new membership system, he said, would have the resources to fund a rival party." We couldn't have put it better ourselves!

The Socialist Party along with others, such as the RMT, have been pioneering the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC), which will this year be standing hundreds of candidates in the local elections in the biggest left of Labour electoral challenge for a generation. Imagine the impact TUSC would have with a fraction of that £4 million? TUSC supporters would have every right to argue that the affiliated unions should be able to support candidates outside of Labour if Collins is passed.

Such a party or formation standing on a clear pro-working class and anti-austerity programme would totally transform the political agenda in Britain. At least as a short-term by-product, it could also act as a left check on Labour. Of course, the forming of a new mass workers' party is not an end in itself but it would create a huge forum for debate and discussion in which we, as a distinct Marxist current, would argue and campaign for a socialist programme that is necessary to confront the brutal reality of capitalist crisis.

Waiting for Labour

Len has implied that should Labour fail to get elected in 2015 or if a Miliband government fails to deliver, he is in favour of the unions disaffiliating and forming a new party. We welcome this, in what would be an historic development, but the starting point has to be to at least oppose Miliband's proposals now and to recognise what they mean.

At all times in politics, you have to tell the truth to the members. It is not an accident that Collins and the special conference follow on from Falkirk. They are part of the same agenda – to nullify the collective voice of the trade unions within the party. At first, with GMB in the lead, it appeared that the unions recognised the gravity of the attack and were prepared to fight it. If they had come out with clear opposition at that stage, it was far from certain that Miliband would have got his way. But even at this late moment, it would be far better for Unite and all the other unions to vote against Collins to send a clear message that these proposals are against the interests of the trade unions and the wider working class.

Actually as Len himself admits, most Unite members that he talks to openly question why the union is giving millions to this party. These proposals will only increase this disaffection from the unions' political strategy. This is reflected in the other affiliated unions. At last year's Union local government conference, the leadership was overwhelmingly defeated on a motion supporting Labour councillors who oppose voting for cuts.

Block vote

Two years ago, one of the 47 Liverpool councillors, Tony Mulhearn, was given a standing ovation at the GMB manufacturing conference, even though he attacked Labour's acceptance of the cuts. Many CWU members are rightly angry that, after last year's Labour Party conference voted unanimously to commit Miliband to re-nationalise Royal Mail after Cameron sold it off for a song, shadow business minister Chuka Umunna rode roughshod over this and ruled it out.

Yet the fact that the unions will retain their 49% block vote for five years after this sham conference is given as a reason to be comfortable with the Collins Review! We have always been opposed to right-wing union leaders undemocratically using the block vote, usually against the left in the past. We are in favour of it being democratised but the Labour leadership's proposals would do nothing to increase democracy, rather the reverse by taking away the collective voice of the unions. Miliband knows full well that the 'opt-in' union affiliation would drastically reduce the numbers of

Miliband knows full well that the 'opt-in' union affiliation would drastically reduce the numbers of members that the unions would affiliate to Labour, opening the door in five years' time to reducing the block vote

members that the unions would affiliate to Labour, opening the door in five years' time to reducing the block vote.

If passed the proposals will also mean that party leaders in future will be elected by OMOV rather than the Electoral College in which Miliband relied on votes of individual affiliated union members to defeat his more Blairite brother! The threshold for the percentage of MPs needed to nominate candidates will be raised to 15% from 12.5% which last time would have ruled out Diane Abbott and Andy Burnham. It had already been raised from 5% by Kinnock in 1988, which prevented left-winger John McDonnell even getting on the ballot paper in 2010.

The review by Lord Collins – previously a right-wing senior officer of the T&G who helped negotiate the merger that formed Unite – is an attempt by Miliband, reflecting the interests of capitalism, to complete the last remaining unfinished business of Kinnock, Smith, Blair and Brown to transform Labour into an openly pro-capitalist party.

Tory politicians like London Mayor Boris Johnson have asked for water cannons because he fears people taking to the streets against his government's brutal cuts. Miliband's proposals amount to a beeping up of right-wing forces within New Labour to prevent the unions from applying any pressure and influence if a potential Miliband government comes to power and carries out Cameron's austerity offensive. For union leaders such as Len McCluskey to go along with them and to cover up their true significance is to disarm members and activists ahead of the mighty events to come before and after the next election.

Sharper debate

Despite our attitude to Labour, we support the fight to oppose the Collins Review proposals but if they are passed on 1 March as seems likely, there has to be an immediate debate and discussion throughout the trade union and anti-cuts movements on the need to build a new mass party that can stand up for the interests of working class people and the vast majority in society crying out for real change. If anything, the passing of these proposals will only make that debate, particularly in the unions and especially in Unite, sharper.



Ed Miliband (right) Keith Morrell, TUSC supporter and rebel councillor in Southampton (inset)



Lewisham Labour no use in the Lion's Den

James Kerr
Lewisham TUSC organiser and Millwall season ticket holder



Millwall fans have reacted angrily to Lewisham's Labour-run council agreeing the sale of land around the football club's New Den stadium to developer Renewal.

Renewal wants the land, currently leased to the club, as part of a multi-million pound regeneration of the area. Revenue from the regeneration was a key plank in the club's long-term plans. The sale puts the club and the Millwall Community Scheme at risk.

Labour says the sale comes after Millwall dropped the ball with the recent submission of business plans. But Lewisham council is making a fast buck from land close

to the City at the expense of fans and the local community.

Lewisham supporters of the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC) oppose the sale of public land and believe the council should move to halt the sale and safeguard the future of the club. A democratic mass campaign could mobilise thousands of Lions fans and the local community to force the council back.

TUSC also welcomes the suggestion that Millwall fans should stand against Labour councillors in the May election. TUSC will also be standing across the borough to offer an anti-cuts, anti-privatisation alternative to the main parties. Lions fans should lobby councillors at the council budget setting meeting on 26 February.

Big business sees the Den as a barrier to lucrative land near the City of London. Why should working class people get to spend their Saturday afternoons there when there is money to be made?

There have already been discussions about a potential move out of the city to Kent, something Renewal will use as a stick to beat us with unless we mobilise to stop the sale and defend our club.

Brighton solidarity with LGBTQ+ Russians



Lively solidarity protest on the opening day of the winter Olympics photo Serena Cheung

Beth Granter
Brighton Socialist Party

On Saturday 8 February, the first full day of the winter Olympics in Sochi, over 100 people in Brighton showed their solidarity with Russian lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer and other people being oppressed as a result of Russia's anti-gay laws.

A letter from Ksenia Zhivago, a Moscow-based Russian LGBTQ+ activist, was read out. It highlighted how the Olympics have caused many problems for working class people living or working in Sochi, and how LGBTQ people are being used as a scapegoat for wider societal issues.

A last minute update was sent from Ksenia just before the demonstration began. It reported that

activists demonstrating during the Olympics opening ceremony, by singing the Russian national anthem and waving rainbow flags on Red Square, had been detained by the police. Two female demonstrators had been threatened with sexual assault by police officers, while male demonstrators were beaten.

The demonstration moved to a McDonald's restaurant, where the group made clear their dissatisfaction at the Olympic sponsor's silence on the rising tide of homophobic violence in Russia.

Russian LGBT activists are asking people worldwide to:

- Protest in front of Russia's embassies and consulates during the Sochi Olympics
- Sports fans and athletes to organise solidarity action when attending the Olympics

- Demand a change in the rules of the Olympics that currently limit the right to protest against discrimination

- Support activists facing persecution in Russia, including those who have to seek asylum in the EU and other countries

- Organise protests during visits of Russian officials or celebrities known for their homophobic views

- Demand Olympic sponsors make clear statements against Russia's anti-gay laws

The "To Russia with love, Brighton" campaign will continue - to find out more visit www.facebook.com/russiawithlovebrighton.

A separate demonstration will take place in London on Valentine's Day, 14 February, outside the Russian Embassy from 12 noon: bit.ly/sochi14demo

Leicester Socialist Students member arrested during peaceful protest

Leicester Socialist Students

On 6 February a Leicester Socialist Students member was arrested when taking part in a peaceful protest in support of striking university workers.

He has now been released and charged over an alleged incident that took place during a Leicester University occupation in December 2013.

Why have police waited almost two months to make the arrest on a day when workers and students were taking action together?

The arrest is part of a concerted attempt to criminalise protest and deter people from fighting back. Other Leicester students have also been targeted by the police. Nationally, we have seen police violence on campuses and a general assault on democratic rights.

A day after the arrest, a rally was held in protest. At the same time, a sculpture was being unveiled by the vice-chancellor outside the university.

Protesters took the opportunity to challenge the vice-chancellor. There's money for statues but not for the 10% of Leicester University workers who are paid less than the living wage!



Solidarity demonstration

Leicester is also one of eleven universities which have docked a whole day's pay from lecturers for every two-hour UCU strike (see page 4).

We will continue to stand up against this intimidation and campaign for the education we have a right to receive.

Members from Socialist Students will be running for student union sabbatical officer positions. This will provide a valuable platform for our ideas, and an opportunity to forge a truly activist environment in a formerly conservative university. Elections take place on 23-26 February.

WASP: South African elections announced

South African president and ANC leader Jacob Zuma has announced the country's 2014 general elections will take place on 7 May.

The Workers and Socialist Party (WASP) has been campaigning in Tshwane (which includes capital city Pretoria) to get students, workers, street traders, youth and other community members to register to vote in the elections.

WASP campaigners have also been building community support for the student strike against finan-

cial exclusions, which is currently in motion at the Tshwane University of Technology among other campuses across the country, as well as for the mineworkers' strike for a living wage of R12,500.

A petition has been circulated calling for the resignation of President Zuma following the police massacre at Marikana, further police killings in Muthutlung, Roodeport, and now Relela village in Limpopo, as well as his government's failure to fulfil any of its promises to the poor

and to workers.

WASP, which was born out of the South African mineworkers' struggles, is appealing for international financial support from trade union branches, campaigning groups and individuals for its election campaign.

Please make cheques payable to "South African Miners Fund" and post to South African Miners' Solidarity, PO Box 66682, London E11 9ER

Find out more about WASP at workersocialistparty.co.za

Building the Socialist Party

Harrogate

Harrogate may be one of the smallest Socialist Party branches but we have a regular Socialist Party town centre stall.

We get a good response to the campaigns against privatisation of Royal Mail and bringing the railways back under public, democratic control.

Our recent letters in the local paper referred to possible fracking in the district. We linked the socialist struggle against fracking with the struggle against austerity.

Derek Evans
Harrogate Socialist Party

Congress

The Socialist Party's 2014 national congress will take place on 8-10 March. Congress is the main decision-making body of the Socialist Party.

The documents on British Perspectives, party building, trade unions, sales of the Socialist and finance have now been sent out to branches.

21 February is the deadline for branch resolutions, booking crèche places, and getting delegates names and £10 deposits to the national centre

28 February is the deadline for



branch amendments and visitors' names

We appeal to all Socialist Party members and readers of the Socialist to help support delegates' and visitors' attendance costs, as well as support the Congress fighting fund collection.

Contact your local Socialist Party branch organisers or phone 020 8988 8777.

Get involved I'd like to join the Socialist Party I'd like more information about the Socialist Party

Donate I'd like to donate £ _____ to the Socialist Party **please make cheques payable to Socialist Party**

Subscribe 12 issues £15 6 months £28 1 year £50 **please make cheques payable to Socialist Publications Ltd**

Western Europe: 12 issues £16, half year £32, year £50 **Rest of world:** 12 issues £25, half year £50, year £90

Return slip or pay at www.socialistparty.org.uk/subscribe

Name _____

Address and postcode _____

tel/email _____

Return to: Socialist Party, PO Box 24697, London E11 1YD

Phone 020 8988 8777 to pay by card, to arrange a direct debit, or to join

SOCIALIST PARTY FIGHTING FUND

	£ target	£ received	January-March 2014				Deadline 31 March 2014
West Midlands	2,100	946	■	■	■	■	■
Northern	600	226	■	■	■	■	■
North West	1,200	323	■	■	■	■	■
Wales	2,300	456	■	■	■	■	■
South West	1,400	246	■	■	■	■	■
London	6,100	717	■	■	■	■	■
Southern	1,200	89	■	■	■	■	■
East Midlands	1,600	77	■	■	■	■	■
South East	750	26	■	■	■	■	■
Eastern	1,200	30	■	■	■	■	■
Yorkshire	2,900	70	■	■	■	■	■
England & Wales	3,650	30	■	■	■	■	■
TOTAL	25,000	3,239	■	■	■	■	■

Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition:

Sheffield kicks off election year with 7.6% vote

Alistair Tice

The only people smiling at the Sheffield Arbourthorne byelection count were the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC) campaigners. We came from nowhere - TUSC has not stood in this ward before - to get 204 votes, 7.6%, coming fourth out of seven candidates.

Though Labour held the seat with just over half the ballot, they have lost 10% of the vote since the last



On the campaign trail photo A Tice

council election two years ago. Ukip, coming second, only increased its share by 3% despite two more years of media hype. TUSC was only nine votes behind the Tories, and we beat the Lib Dems, Greens and English Democrats.

Despite dark nights and persistent rain limiting canvassing and stalls, a team of 30 TUSC supporters ran an energetic and highly visible campaign meaning our candidate's name, Alan Munro, was the most known in the ward. We leafleted 8,000 houses twice, held two Sunday canvasses and campaigned and flyered outside local shops, schools and the jobcentre.

TUSC had window posters displayed, while we didn't see a single one from all the other parties!

TUSC's anti-cuts message

linked to the idea of standing up to the Tory government (which Sheffield's Labour council doesn't do) and electing a real socialist got a response. 71% of the votes cast were postal votes which shows that what we wrote in our leaflets, and getting them out early, resonated with many disillusioned Labour supporters.

Indeed, a Unite trade union activist and Labour Party member in Arbourthorne said: "I'm seriously considering stepping down and chucking my membership... [and] voting for the TUSC candidate as his manifesto had everything in it I agree with... I was one of the biggest advocates for fighting for the party from within but every time we looked like making progress the party leadership shifts the goal posts. Maybe it is time to walk away and create a true socialist party for our class."

TUSC will aim to build on this vote in May, as well as standing in over half the council seats in Sheffield, to give working class people a real alternative to the pro-austerity and far-right parties.

Standing up against cuts in Reading

A Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC) meeting on 4 February agreed to stand candidates for upcoming local elections in Reading and Wokingham.

TUSC is committed to opposing all cuts. Councils can use reserves and borrowing to keep services and then build support through local demonstrations and strikes to demand the necessary funding from central government.

Jo Lovelock, the Reading Labour council leader, says they have had to 'save' (cut) £44.8 million so far with

another £38 million of cuts likely over the next three years.

These are described as 'tough budget decisions where the vulnerable are protected'. No matter how this is dressed up it amounts to savage cuts by a Labour council that was not voted in to carry out Con- Dem policy.

We will be appealing for more people to stand for TUSC and have a further planning meeting arranged for 25 February.

Neil Adams, Bracknell and Reading Socialist Party

Waltham Forest: Rally for rent control



Inspired by Seattle photo S Wrack

Waltham Forest TUSC supporters and prospective candidates held our first Rally for Rent Control at a busy crossroads in the East London borough. We chanted, handed out leaflets and held signs for passing cars to see. We received loads of support, beeps, people crossing the road to take leaflets and cheering in agreement.

TUSC candidates are standing on a promise to lead a campaign to introduce rent control in the borough to bring private sector rents in line with social housing rents, as well as a number of other measures to make sure everyone can afford a decent place to live. See walthamforesttusc.com for more.

TUSC aims to stand 625 anti-cuts candidates in the 22nd May local elections. Can you be one of them? tusc.org.uk

TUSC AGAINST CUTS

New bosses at Medway Hospital

Following the departure of the CEO and chairwoman, Monitor have forced the appointment of two replacements at Medway Maritime Hospital. The new bosses are Nigel Beverly, who ushered in the wholesale privatisation of Hinchingbrooke Hospital, and Christopher Langley, former CEO of the camera shop Jessop's which went into administration, sacking thousands of workers last year.

With the hospital already under special measures, services are struggling to cope. The threat of privatisation of essential services like housekeeping and portering has loomed for years, but has always been scuppered by union opposition.

These appointments are a clear signal of intent from the board and Monitor: running down and privatising services when we need more staff, more beds and more time set aside for training.

Don't trust Labour with our NHS

Hugh Caffrey Secretary, Greater Manchester Keep Our NHS Public

Last week's centre pages of the Socialist were an excellent explanation of the terrible damage wreaked upon our National Health Service by all three main parties and especially by the current Coalition's Health and Social Care Act.

At our January meeting of Greater Manchester Keep Our NHS Public (KONP), we debated which (if any) party would be in line with KONP's policies for a publicly owned, democratically run and fully funded NHS. Several supported TUSC. Some suggested the National Health Action Party, among others. No one suggested New Labour, and with good reason.

New Labour is posing as a defender of the NHS. Both Labour leader Ed Miliband and Labour health spokesperson Andy Burnham have said they will repeal the Con-Dems' Health and Social Care Act,

and restore the duty of the secretary of state to 'provide' rather than simply 'promote' healthcare.

Remember that New Labour is the party that mastered spin! Labour's promises do not mean what some may expect, and what is needed - the reversal of what the Tories have done to our NHS!

Burnham promised in 2012 that the NHS under a future Labour government would be predominantly public, and that the role currently played by Clinical Commissioning Groups in 'commissioning' (buying) services would be handed over to local authorities instead.

Miliband, however, has made it quite clear that New Labour is not planning to go even that far. In 2012, Miliband promised Labour would lower the proportion of private sector work that hospitals can carry out, tweak the role of Monitor (the supposed regulatory body), and prevent GPs from commissioning services from themselves. In 2013, the only definite pledge he made when writing in the Mirror was to repeal the



Manchester NHS demo photo SP

Act and restore the duty of 'provision'

It's not hard to see how this will play out if New Labour wins the general election. The Act will be repealed, but all the consequences - a denationalised, largely privatised, health service, broken into competing and chaotic fragments - will remain. Services already cut during this process will not be restored.

The health minister's powers of 'provision' will amount to an energy minister's powers over the rip-off

private energy companies - futile appeals for companies to behave better, handwringing and empty gestures.

It's not hard to imagine Labour's excuse for not going further: existing pro-privatisation legislation in the EU for example.

New Labour promised to renationalise the railways before the 1997 general election, then didn't during 13 years of government. Part of the fight to defend and rebuild our NHS is to unmask Labour's spin.

2004 Morecambe Bay tragedy

Has anything changed?

Teresa MacKay

It is now ten years since the horrific tragedy of the 23 Chinese cockle pickers who drowned in Morecambe Bay. Heartbreakingly one of the bodies was only found in 2010. This was the highest number of industrial deaths since the 1988 Piper Alpha disaster.

The British government refused to compensate the victims' families for the deaths because they were undocumented workers. So they were left coping with debts ranging from the £10,000 to £20,000 that it cost them to travel to England from China.

What has changed since 2004 for migrant workers? The tragedy forced the Blair government to bring in the Gangmaster Licencing Act (GLA), which regulates agencies employing workers in the fresh food produce and packing industry, shellfish gathering, agriculture and horticulture.

After the GLA came into effect in October 2006, agencies were meant to have a licence and adhere to proper labour practices. The penalty, if found guilty of not registering, is imprisonment of up to ten years. More than 3,000 should be registered though just over one third are.

Only 20% of GLA-licensed labour providers are thought to be genuinely abiding by the standards. Unregistered labour providers feel they have little to worry about. As undocumented workers have no rights, they will not be covered by even the GLA.

Migrant Rights Convention

The UN created the international convention - known as the Migrant Rights Convention - in 1990. This set out minimum standards to protect migrant workers. Only 37 member states out of 192 ratified the Convention, all of them labour-sending countries. No migrant-receiving countries, including the UK, ratified this Convention.

In 2007 the Labour government yielded to the bosses' CBI pressure and decided not to pass the Agency Workers Directive, which would have given full employment rights to agency workers after six weeks of starting the job. Exploitation of migrant workers, particularly undocumented workers, continues with many not receiving the national minimum wage and sometimes no pay at all.

Employment agencies also illegally charge registration fees, making the workers pay again if they are dismissed and need a replacement job. They also charge exorbitant rents in overcrowded flats and make random deductions from their wages.

Immigration control means workers from non-EU countries find it harder and harder to come to the UK as documented workers. The existing 200,000 undocumented Chinese workers in Britain, here to lift themselves and their families out of poverty, continue to be maltreated and trapped.

With or without papers they want to be able to work openly. The government makes this impossible, maintaining the workers' illegality and exploitation through tightening controls and refusing to protect them.

Cheap flexible labour

There are up to one million undocumented migrant workers in Britain. Businesses make profits from their cheap flexible labour, working for appalling wages and working hours. They are producing wealth for a country that permanently excludes them. The trade unions should campaign to ensure no one gets paid below the rate for the job.

Migration is a global phenomenon and will not go away. The fluctuations of capitalism, wars and inequality cause an endless and growing movement of labour.

According to the ILO, the number of people living outside their countries of origin rose between 1975 and 2000, from 75 million to 175



It is ten years since 23 Chinese cockle pickers drowned in Morecambe Bay

million and could double again in the next 25 years. Undocumented workers account for 20% of global migration so there are 24 million 'illegal workers' worldwide.

There are 5.5 million illegal workers in Europe, yet they have no rights. The Council of Europe's report in 2007, 'Regularising Irregular Migrants,' even pointed out that a large proportion of these migrants could not be sent home as they were asylum seekers who may face im-

prisonment or death on their return.

Or they were smuggled into Europe, which means they have no documents for their countries of origin to accept them as citizens. They are here to stay as the 'ghost citizens' upon whose labour much of the wealth of Europe's capitalist class is built.

Let's fight for the rights of all workers, including defending health and safety at work, and avoid future Morecambe Bays.

For an in-depth analysis of Britain's hidden army of labour read Hsiao-Hung Pai's excellent book, 'Chinese Whispers.' She interviewed undocumented workers in the UK but also went 'underground' and worked alongside them, suffering the same humiliation, poverty wages and conditions reported in her book.

2004 Tebay disaster

Workers' grievances must not be sidelined

S K Metcalfe

Branch secretary, RMT Lancaster/
Dis. 0844 (personal capacity)

Ten years ago, 27 men and women merely making a living were killed because of their employers' sheer irresponsibility. The first group were the 23 Chinese cocklers in Morecambe Bay. The second were the rail maintenance workers from the Tebay disaster of 15 February 2004, our union branch members.

The RMT has campaigned ever since Tebay for improved protection (secondary protection) on track. This has still not been implemented as Network Rail systematically dragged their feet.

Presumably they do not want to incur financial responsibility for maximising workers' safety in our world of privateers and cuts where only capitalism is encouraged by all governments since the 1980s.

We, the RMT, are holding our tenth memorial rally at Tebay on Saturday 15 February. We are urging the railway management to imple-

ment effective secondary protection and not try to wriggle out of it anymore.

All are welcome to attend and show solidarity again. That's unlike all politicians in the area with the notable exception of ex-Morecambe and Lonsdale MP Geraldine Smith. Notwithstanding Geraldine, not one

Rail maintenance workers were killed in the February 2004 Tebay disaster

local councillor or county councillor has attended our rally in ten years!

This has to change. Workers' grievances must no longer be sidelined as have the Hillsborough victims, the Shrewsbury pickets and many others. Rally at 12 noon, a quarter mile south of Tebay where the A685 goes over the railway lines, at the memorial.

If we stand together we will win.

Socialism TODAY



The Socialist Party's magazine
The February issue includes:

- **South Africa: workers start to challenge the ANC**
DSM reporters
- **Greek fascists**
Christina Ziakka
- **Lenin's legacy**
Peter Taaffe reviews

£2.50 including postage:
Socialism Today
PO Box 24697, London E11 1YD.
Subscribe for £18 a year at
www.socialismtoday.org

A Civil War Without Guns

The lessons of the 1984-85 miners' strike

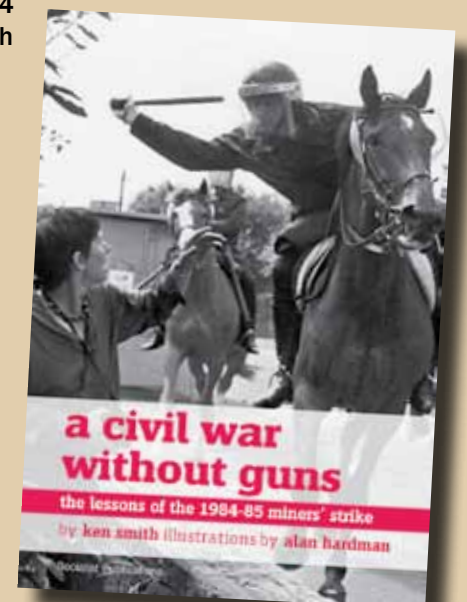
New edition of the 2004 book by Ken Smith, with illustrations by Alan Hardman

The Socialist Party's history of the 1984-85 miners' strike is being reprinted with a new introduction in time for the 30th anniversary of the beginning of the strike in March

Special pre-publication offer of £6 including p&p or bulk orders in multiples of 5 for £25

Contact bookshop@socialistparty.org.uk or call 020 8988 8777 or www.leftbooks.co.uk

Make cheques payable to Socialist Books




socialist books

Councils continue making Con-Dem cuts

The Institute for Fiscal Studies has pointed out that while the economy may officially be in recovery, most of us are experiencing the complete opposite – and more than half of the Con-Dems' cuts are still to hit.

As councils across the country set their next budgets, there is no sign that they plan to stop meekly passing on the attacks to working class people. But as the recent defeat of the bedroom tax in

Scotland shows, these cuts can be beaten by the strength of mass campaigns. Here a reader of the Socialist shows how cuts have affected him and Socialist Party members report from anti-cuts developments around the country.

Don't let them kill us quietly

I have not been able to work since having to retire from British Rail in 1988 and a serious car crash caused by a drunk driver in 1993 forced me to use a wheelchair.

In March 2012, my incapacity benefit was wrongly withdrawn. Following intervention by an MP, it was restored with an apology and £50 compensation. A pittance, considering I was hours from eviction and what it did to my health.

In September 2012, they stopped it again, claiming I did not attend an interview. Well I did not get any notice of this 'interview'. This seems a tactic used on many people as a means of getting us off the books.

Having no Incapacity or other main disability benefit other than Disability Living Allowance, means that since September 2012 I now eat

once a day, if that.

I have no money for my gas central heating, and very little for electric, since they forced me to have pay-as-you-go meters. So I have had no real heating for months.

The jobcentre recently refused me a conversation to ask for a crisis loan. I was told "they don't do them any more". Given enough time, lower temperature, or complication, I may well be dead before spring.

I keep being directed to use food banks - are Cameron's millionaires cynically divorcing themselves from their responsibility to protect the most vulnerable people in society? For the sake of thousands like myself, please don't let them kill us quietly.

Jack Harrison
Lancashire



Marching against cuts October 2012 photo Senan

"Don't blame us - other Welsh Labour councils are even worse!"

Ronnie Job
Unison steward (personal capacity)

Swansea Labour council leader, David Phillips, and deputy leader, Christine Richards, were given a rough ride by protesters against the council's proposed £45 million of cuts.

City and County of Swansea Unison branch called a lobby of a scheduled council cabinet meeting. An advert was run in the local paper demanding Swansea councillors fight Tory cuts, not implement them.

Zero-hour contracts

Our council leaders' sole response to the anger of union members and service users was to point out that neighbouring Labour authorities are making worse cuts! "Why aren't you protesting in Neath?" asked councillor Phillips, "they aren't paying the living wage."

Swansea may have agreed to pay the living wage (this year at least, and at the rate before the last increase) but it also employs hundreds of people on zero-hour contracts.

A number of Unison members have recently lost up to 10% of their income in changes to

terms and conditions. These changes were imposed with a public threat to accept new contracts and "sign or be sacked".

Sensing he was losing his audience, Phillips began to rant, telling us that protest "won't make a jot of difference." So much for talking to the trade unions - one of the ways Labour claimed they would be different to the Lib Dem-led authority they replaced!

Catching sight of a Socialist Party placard he shouted "If you hadn't stood," referring to the council elections in 2012 where Socialist Party members stood as part of the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC), "we would have had a bigger majority."

No alternative

The fact that a Labour council passes on Con-Dem cuts, while insulting and attacking unions, is proof that TUSC shouldn't worry about which cuts-making party we take votes off.

I think most of the people that vote for us have already given up on pro-cuts Labour - if we didn't stand, providing a no-cuts, socialist alternative, they'd have no one to vote for.

Council workers and service users need to come together for a lobby of the full council meeting on 18 February, 4.30pm at the Guildhall, to ensure that any wavering Labour councillors understand the anger that exists in Swansea towards the cuts and vote against them.

Lancs county council disgrace - Labour plans to axe 2,500 jobs

Dave Beale

On 6 February, Labour-led Lancashire county council's cabinet met to consider the results of public consultation over £300 million cuts planned for the

next three years. This includes 2,500 proposed redundancies between now and April 2016.

In its press release, Labour proclaims it has amended its plans, and is genuinely listening to the people of Lancashire. What an insult to our intelligence, as nothing could be further from the truth.

Its only concession so far is to rethink the proposal to scrap subsidies for rural bus services

(thus ending Sunday and evening services), and to seek savings from them in other ways. While every concession is worth having, at best this 'adjustment' could reduce the cuts merely from £300 to £298 million.

The biggest impact of the cuts will be the planned redundancies. This must be fought by Unison, which has made a welcomed start by organising a lobby of the county council meeting on 20 February.

No cuts necessary

The council's overspend for 2014-15 is estimated at £76 million. Its general usable reserve is £36 million, with a separate reserve for redundancies of £40 million, plus substantial borrowing powers.

So, contrary to what the councillors are always banging on about, it is actually possible to avoid all cuts and redundancies in 2014-15 by accessing these

financial resources.

This could buy time to organise a massive, militant campaign to oppose all cuts beyond 2014-15, built around the unions, workers and the people of Lancashire. Labour councillors are terrified of such a possibility because it would unleash a movement that would threaten their very existence.

Lessons from history

I am sure I can hear my granddad turning in his grave at all this! His political hero was George Lansbury, who led Poplar council's 1920s campaign with the slogan "Better to Break the Law than Break the Poor". In the 1980s Liverpool city council led a similar campaign.

With very few exceptions, the Labour councillors of today are a far cry from the fighting, defiant spirit of the courageous socialists who led these vital campaigns.

According to the National Institute of Economic and Social Research, it will take another six years before inflation adjusted wages return to pre-crisis levels. Currently average real wages are at 2004 levels.

Save mental health services in Salford

Salford Socialist Party

In Salford the battle against mental health cuts has opened up a new front - in addition to fighting the council we are now fighting NHS cuts too.

Among the 300 staff that Salford council wants to sack are the community care workers who help people to stay out of hospital. Last year Salford Unison successfully fought off plans to privatise the service and these workers are moving rapidly to a ballot for industrial action.

At the same time Greater Manchester West Mental Health Trust is 'consulting' over proposals to close several mental health wards, shunt all elderly/dementia patients to one location, and introduce 'community care' with a maximum of three visits a day. If all these cuts went through there'd be no one to keep you out of hospital and no hospital beds if you needed one.

The initial meeting of Save Mental Health Services in Salford, which

drew an attendance of over 40 service users, carers and staff, heard Diane Cawood, Unison steward on one of the threatened wards and Socialist Party member, explain why we need to fight the cuts.

Support

Steve Cullen from the service users' campaign denounced the Trust's manipulation of bed occupancy rates, as they only count patients who are 'sectioned' under the Mental Health Act.

We are pleased to have won the support of Beverley Callard, the actor who plays Liz McDonald in Coronation Street and has been open about her own battle with mental illness. Beverley has appeared on ITV's Daybreak to criticise the cuts and has promised to join us on the demonstration against cuts in Eccles on 29 March.

Across the Trust, which covers Bolton, Salford and Trafford, op-

position is increasing. Already the Clinical Commissioning Group in Trafford has withdrawn its support and confidence is growing that we can halt these cuts.

- **Lobby Greater Manchester West Mental Health Trust - 24 February, from 9am, Trust HQ, Prestwich Hospital, Bury New Road, Prestwich M25 3BL**
- **Demonstration in Eccles - Saturday 29 March, assemble 12.30pm, Eccles Cross, Church Street, Eccles M30 0DA**

See the Socialist Party website for more anti-cuts news and reports including the 'Bairns before bankers' protest against the closure of 21 children's playgrounds in Carlisle.

The Resolution Foundation has found that disposable income will only begin to rise above inflation in 2015 and that even then the living standard of the average household will be 3.5% lower than in 2008. In fact the thinktank predicts that even by 2018 households will still be worse off than pre-crisis.

TUBE STRIKE FIRST ROUND TRADE UNIONS 1 JOHNSON 0



The strike was solid photo Helen Pattison



Mayor Boris Johnson boasted a good service would run

Paula Mitchell

As we go to press a second planned 48-hour London tube strike has been called off. The RMT and TSSA rail unions suspended their industrial action after London Underground (LU) bosses have been forced to partially retreat.

Until today London Underground bosses and Tory Mayor Boris Johnson have been utterly intransigent, refusing to desist from imposing their cuts so that meaningful talks could take place. Now, as a result of determined strike action by RMT and TSSA, all aspects of the plan – which would mean the closure of

all LU ticket offices and the loss of 1,000 jobs – are suspended for eight weeks. The tube strike provided an important lesson for workers everywhere – the organised working class has power – and is popular!

RMT general secretary Bob Crow said: “After two days of intensive and detailed discussions through the offices of Acas we have now received proposals that halt the implementation of the job cuts which gives us the opportunity to discuss all of the issues away from the pressure cooker.

“We now have a golden opportunity to look again in detail at all of the concerns we have raised about the impact of the cuts on our mem-

bers and the services that they provide to Londoners. That is exactly what we have been calling for throughout this dispute.”

He said that the “RMT is happy to discuss any issues with LU through the machinery of negotiation” but correctly warned that strike action would be back on if there was “any further attempt to impose change from above”.

Before the first 48-hour strike London Underground management boasted that they had volunteer ‘ambassadors’ lined up to break the strike and that a good level of service would run. This meant lots of people started out on a journey that rapidly became impossible.

The scene at Stratford, where 1,000 people stood in the rain outside a shut station, was replicated across London. Everyone in London is affected by a tube strike. If the tube doesn’t run, the trains, buses and taxis are packed, queues stream along the pavements and spill out into the roads.

Traffic in central London was at a standstill and pavements were crammed with people undertaking long walks. On this occasion this was all happening in very cold wind and rain.

Inevitably any dispute like this will be polarising, and London’s transport system does carry some high-paid City types who are firmly

on the bosses’ side no matter what. But abuse was rare; it was much more common for people to approach the pickets to say “I completely support you” and even to bring donuts!

The reality is we’re all under the cosh, whether that’s from job cuts, pay cuts, benefit cuts, service closures, food and energy bills – and we’re all watching the bankers get their whopping bonuses and the rich getting richer. University workers, teachers, fire fighters, probation officers and civil servants have all taken strike action. Seeing this strike many of them will have thought: “This is what we all need!”

See also page 2

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!