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SMASH THE PAY FREEZE

Organise for strike action now

Adrian O'Malley

Unison Health Service Group Executive (SGE), Yorkshire and Humberside, personal capacity

Tory Health Minister Jeremy Hunt has declared war on NHS workers. He has imposed a 1% non-consolidated pay rise for 2014-15 and 2015-16 and no yearly incremental rises for the 600,000 staff who are not at the top of their pay band.

The announcement was greeted with anger but hardly surprise by NHS workers who have grown to expect the worst from the Con-Dem government. The main question I have been asked is: "what are we going to do about it?"

Workers in Mid Yorkshire Health Trust demonstrated their determi-

nation to fight back last year when they took nine days of strike action. After being threatened with pay cuts and compulsory redundancies, the admin and clerical staff won an improved pay and job protection deal through this action.

Public sector unions Unite and GMB responded to the latest pay news by saying they will ballot for strike action. Even the no strike RCN has murmured that it may lift its strike ban, arguing that nurses have lost over £2,000 in real terms since 2009.

Members of the biggest NHS union Unison, who were looking for a fighting response from our leaders, were left disappointed. Head of Health Christine McAnea merely said: "we will be talking to our members about how we respond."

But four years of below-inflation

pay rises have resulted in a 10% pay cut in real terms. The squeeze on pay is compounded by the third year of increased pension contributions which will gobble up 3% of the paltry 1% rise. Added to the 3% "efficiency savings", ie cuts, in NHS budgets and staffing, this means that NHS staff are working harder every year for less money.

At the Unison national conference in 2012, general secretary Dave Prentis proclaimed to rousing support that the union will "smash the pay freeze". Two years later we are still waiting for action and our wages are falling further behind the cost of living.

Unison has got to take a lead and announce a strike ballot of its 500,000 members in the NHS alongside our local government and higher education members who are

also in dispute with their employers over the pay freeze.

Unison's health SGE meets on 2 April. The SGE must make a stand and recommend strike action to the union's health conference which starts on 14 April. The conference should become the launching pad for the strike ballot which could smash the pay freeze.

See page 4 for more on the strategy

Support Doncaster care workers

Low-paid care workers who have had their jobs privatised to Care UK are fighting pay cuts of on average £500 a month. They have just started their second seven-day strike.

Send messages of support to admin@unison-dab.org.uk and send donations/cheques, made out to "Doncaster, District & Bassetlaw Health Branch", to Jenkinson House, White Rose Way, Doncaster DN4 5GJ. See also page 4



Obituary

Tony Benn: steadfast in speaking out for socialism

Peter Taaffe

Socialist Party general secretary

In one week, the labour movement has suffered two big blows with the deaths of trade union left leader Bob Crow and now of Tony Benn.

Tony Benn had recently been in ill health but, because of his association and lifelong work for the left within the labour movement, his death comes as no less of a blow.

Tony Benn's political evolution contradicted the dictum of the cynics, which holds it is only to be expected to be radical and on the left when you are young, but inevitably, as you get older, you shift towards the right. He defied this stereotype.

He stood on the centre-right in Harold Wilson's Labour government of 1964-70, when he supported Barbara Castle's anti-union legislation 'In Place of Strife'. This was defeated by an uprising of Labour Party rank-and-file members and the colossal pressure of the trade unions. He shifted towards the left under the impact of the 1971 Upper Clyde Shipbuilders occupation, which he championed, as well as other workers' battles at that time, such as the miners' strikes of 1972 and 1974.

At this time, Benn emerged as the major figure of the Labour left, supporting the ideas of nationalisation and workers' control of industry. He gave firm support to the Labour Party Young Socialists (LPYS), led by Militant (predecessor of the Socialist) supporters. He worked together with Militant supporters and others on the National Executive Committee of the Labour Party helping to shift the party decisively towards the left. Tony Benn supported the demand for the nationalisation of the top 25 companies, which was carried on the NEC with the deciding vote of the LPYS representative.

Coup in Chile

This seemed to indicate an almost unstoppable movement towards the left within the labour movement, not just in Britain but internationally. However, in September 1973 the left-wing Allende government in Chile was overthrown in the bloody Pinochet coup.

Jack Jones, General Secretary of the Transport and General Workers Union (TGWU, now part of Unite), remarked at a fringe meeting, with Tony Benn sitting alongside him, that he could perceive a situation where a Labour government led by Benn could come to power and be faced with the same kind of conspiracy as Allende faced in Chile.

Tony Benn reflected the huge radicalisation that was taking place in Britain but also pushed it forward with his speeches and articles in favour of Labour adopting a socialist programme. These proposals did not go far enough for the Militant tendency. There were big elements of Allende's programme of limited

nationalisation in the proposals of Tony Benn. They were a big advance over the outmoded ideas of the Labour right, but because they did not propose to take away the fundamental powers of the capitalists, the ownership of the monopolies, the capitalists would be able to prepare the ground for a decisive blow, as in Chile.

However, throughout the 1970s, the left continued to advance both within the Labour Party and the unions as the campaign for Labour Party democracy scored important successes, with Militant and Tony Benn's supporters collaborating.

This was despite the fact that the Labour right, prompted by big business, used the 1975 defeat of the left in the 'Common Market' (now the European Union) referendum, to move him from Secretary of State for Industry to a less influential position in the Cabinet as Energy Secretary.

The experiences of that right-wing Labour government in turn prepared the ground for an even bigger shift towards the left within the Labour Party following its defeat in 1979.

Deputy leadership election

Tony Benn stubbornly resisted the right and put his full weight behind left, socialist policies. This culminated in his standing for the deputy leadership of the Labour Party in 1981, which he only lost by 1%, due to the betrayal of former lefts, like Kinnock, who voted for his opponent, Denis Healey, or abstained.

This in turn led to the offensive of the Labour right through the 'Gang

Tony Benn reflected the huge radicalisation that was taking place in Britain but also pushed it forward with his speeches and articles in favour of Labour adopting a socialist programme

of Four' who subsequently split from the Labour Party and formed the Social Democratic Party. Their aim was to split the anti-Tory and Labour vote in the 1983 general election, which they succeeded in doing. This helped to maintain Thatcher in power and prepared the way for the emergence of a determined right-wing offensive within the Labour Party.

However, this did not stop the election of three Militant supporters as Labour MPs in the 1983 and 1987



Tony Benn

general elections, in which Tony Benn gave sterling support to their campaigns. Neither did it prevent the victory of the socialist Liverpool councillors between 1983 and 1987, nor the outbreak of the mighty miners' strike, with Tony Benn backing these causes to the hilt.

However, following the defeat of the miners, the Liverpool councillors and the print workers at Wapping, the Kinnock 'counter-revolution' against the democratic rights of Labour Party members and socialist policies began in earnest.

This inevitably led to the political isolation of the Labour left and of Tony Benn because it was part of a worldwide process, the roots of which lay in the collapse of Stalinism and, with it, the planned economy. This allowed the capitalists to conduct a ferocious ideological campaign against all the ideas upon which the labour movement was built: socialism, trade unionism and solidarity.

Isolation

It is to his great credit that Tony Benn steadfastly held on to his socialist and left opposition and for that he was held in great esteem. But his isolation and, therefore, loss of political influence, particularly among the younger generation, was increased because he clung to the Labour Party, which was no longer a political vehicle for working class people.

In his recently published diaries, Tony stated that a Tory election candidate revealed to him that when Norman Tebbit asked Thatcher what she regarded as her greatest achievement, she replied "New Labour". He comments in his diaries, "That says it all really."

Yet, unfortunately he did not draw the necessary conclusions from



Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition supporters protesting outside the Labour special conference, which agreed the latest attacks on the trade unions' voice in the Labour Party, as Labour leader Ed Miliband goes in photo Paul Mattsson

this, that it was therefore necessary to take an entirely different road to the dead end represented by New Labour.

He came very close, however, at times, to breaking from New Labour. For instance, when he was approached by representatives of Bob Crow, to support 'No to EU' in the European elections of 2009, he was initially favourable.

But, unfortunately, pressure was exerted by his family, particularly by Hilary Benn, who warned him that he could be expelled from New Labour, which in turn would mean a possible breach with his family. This undoubtedly represented to him too much of a hurdle in a vulnerable period towards the end of his life.

I spoke with Tony Benn, alongside Tony Mulhearn and Len McCluskey, last year at one of the last

meetings he addressed. It took place in Liverpool to commemorate the 30th anniversary of the heroic struggles of the socialist council and the working class of that city in the 1980s.

This meeting witnessed the deep affection and veneration for Tony Benn; he had given them unswerving support in their hour of struggle and need, as he had done for the struggles of working people everywhere.

We should use the example of his life to reaffirm once more our implacable opposition to the capitalist system and for a new socialist world.

For more analysis of the ideas of Tony Benn see *The Labour of Tony Benn* (Socialism Today article) at www.socialismtoday.org/174/benn

Osborne's more cuts budget

Steve Score

The 'debate' in the run up to Tory Chancellor Osborne's Budget statement missed the point. It should have been about whether the government's austerity was really necessary, how to deal with the capitalist crisis, how to solve the problem of poverty and continued inequality, and all the other pressing issues faced by the vast majority.

But it wasn't. When Osborne argued that cuts must continue, Labour shadow chancellor Ed Balls agreed. When Osborne argued that a recovery was underway, Balls weakly pointed out that most people weren't feeling the benefit, while failing to put forward any alternatives that could solve the collapse in people's living standards.

The Tories claim a stable recovery is underway. But the predicted growth levels are far from showing stability. The economy is still below the level of production before the crisis in 2008, and the long-term prospects are not good.

Few concessions

This was the penultimate Budget before the next general election but as an electioneering budget it offered precious little.

The pressure from inside the Tory party was to help those on £42,000+ a year by raising the 40% tax rate threshold. They are likely to increase the personal tax allowance instead, but for most workers it will be a tiny amount of benefit, if any, against a deluge of cuts to real living standards.

The government says it has cut taxes for "hardworking families", yet it has raised VAT to 20% - which impacts much more on low-income families.

There is a proposal on childcare, an allowance to cover up to 20% of childcare costs, up to £2,000. This is upping the amount announced



The government continues to make the working class pay for the crisis

in last year's Budget. However, it would still leave up to £8,000 to be found by parents.

The government talks of building a new "Garden City" in Kent and will continue to encourage house building. But for the vast majority of those desperately needing housing it is no solution. Most people cannot afford to buy houses and there is an inadequate amount of affordable social housing.

The key issue is the Con-Dems' ongoing commitment to cuts. At least half of those announced by the government since they came to power have not yet been felt. But the strain on services such as the NHS, local government and education has reached breaking point. Now Osborne wants another £12 billion of welfare cuts.

The latest plan is to introduce a welfare "budget cap". This would

require a government to either hold a vote in parliament to increase the budget for welfare each time the spending nears the limit, or introduce even more cuts to benefits.

The welfare budget is rising because more people are forced out of full-time work and into poverty incomes.

The creation of proper jobs and decent pay would reduce overall welfare spending. But since a government based on capitalism in crisis won't do that, it is those on benefits and low-paid workers who suffer. The stark reality of capitalism is that, to preserve the interests of the richest, the poorest must be crushed.

The budget also shows the differences between the three main parties are minor. We need a socialist alternative to these pro-big business budgets!



Join the fightback! Join the Socialists!

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Oxfam report: A tale of capitalist inequality

Earlier this year the Oxfam charity pointed out that a mere 85 billionaires own the equivalent wealth of 3.5 billion people - half the world's population.

Now Oxfam has reported similar levels of inequality in Britain with five super-rich families owning more wealth than the poorest 20% of the population.

In its Tale of Two Britains report, Oxfam says the poorest 20% have a

combined wealth of £28.1 billion - an average of £2,230 each. In contrast, the top five richest families between them have property, savings and other assets worth a staggering £28.2 billion.

The super-rich list includes central London property magnate the Duke of Westminster, mining and metals tycoons David and Simon Reuben, industrial and finance capitalists the Hinduja brothers, aristocrats and property owners the Cadogan family, and Sports Direct retail boss and Newcastle United owner Mike Ashley.

No 'trickle-down'

Prime Minister David Cameron's infamous remark that "we're all in it together" under the Con-Dems' austerity regime and Chancellor George Osborne's equally ludicrous claim that 'everyone can expect to share in the prosperity', of the UK's weak and ephemeral economic upswing, are punctured by Oxfam's report.

Its authors point out that the wealth gap in the UK is becoming wider due to the super-rich grabbing the profits from growth. But that hasn't stopped Osborne slash-

ing a further £12 billion from welfare spending in the budget.

Also, since the mid-1990s, ie starting under Labour, the incomes of the top 0.1% have grown by £461 a week or £24,000 a year. By contrast, the bottom 90% have seen a real terms increase of only £2.82 a week or £147 a year.

So, what is Labour's alternative? According to shadow chancellor Ed Balls, an incoming Labour government would continue and extend the Tories' austerity plans.

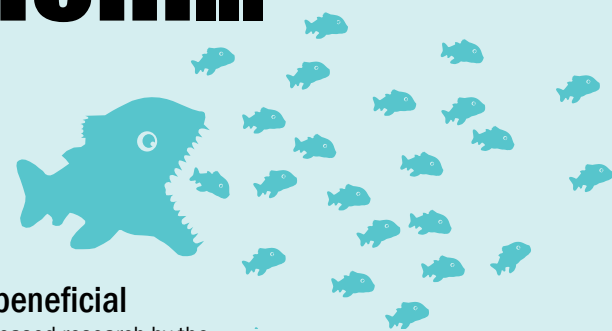
As an election carrot he says Labour will reinstate the top rate of income tax for those earning over £150,000 a year from 45% to 50%.

But he says this 50p rate is only temporary and a maximum, in order to reassure the wealthy that Labour is not 'anti-business'.

Labour's timid tax measures will not provide the resources to lift millions out of poverty, reverse inequality, nor provide long-term increased funding for public services.

To achieve that a socialist plan of economic production would be needed through the nationalisation of the major corporations and banks, under democratic workers' control and management.

Them...



Equally beneficial

Recently released research by the International Monetary Fund (IMF), shows that the ever-greater concentration of wealth and income has hindered economic growth. Contradicting its familiar 'greed is good' mantra, the capitalist institution says wealth redistribution would not only reduce inequality but would be economically beneficial. Those that come to Jesus last...

causes the collapse of society". But readers shouldn't despair. "Collapse can be avoided and population can reach equilibrium if the per capita rate of depletion of nature is reduced to a sustainable level, and if resources are distributed in a reasonably equitable fashion." I believe that's called socialism!

Health and wealth

The Equality Trust think tank has also added its voice to the negative impact of inequality on health, wellbeing and crime in its latest report. The Trust says that the ever widening wealth gap between rich and poor in Britain is costing the economy a massive £39 billion a year or roughly 40% of total public spending on the NHS. The report reckons the annual cost of inequality amounts to £622 for every person, with £12 billion lost through reduced healthy life expectancy, £25 billion lost through poor mental health, £1.67 billion lost through increased crime.

War chest

Outrageously warmonger Tony Blair has received £500,000 in public funds since 2011. This 'allowance' helps ex-PMs to "meet the cost of continuing to fulfil public duties". Given his legacy includes a situation where half of all children under five in Afghanistan are suffering irreversible harm from malnutrition, disgust at this real scrounger will be deeply and widely felt. The only public funds Blair should access are the ones used to run state prisons, for crimes against humanity.

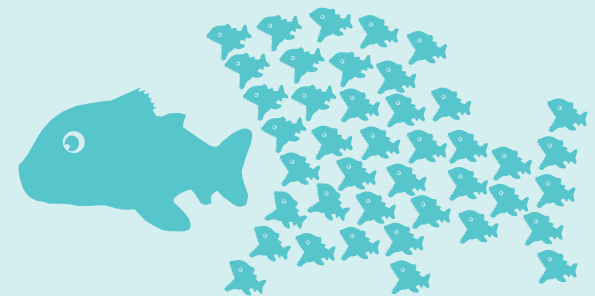
Rising spads

For a fourth successive year, millions of public sector workers face a zero or a below inflation pay increase. However, some civil servants have been treated favourably by government ministers. Special advisors or 'spads' who, presumably, dreamt up the government's austerity measures and other reactionary policies, have seen their pay levels go stratospheric. Welfare cutter Iain Duncan Smith has given his spad a 36% rise while Cameron's spad, Ed Llewellyn, got a 12% increase from £125,000 to £140,000, more than double the salary of a backbench MP. The list of outrageous salary increases to ministerial spads goes on. Appropriately, spad is also a railway acronym meaning Signal Passed At Danger.

Not rocket science

The last word (this week) on the adverse effects of inequality on society goes to Nasa, the space agency. In its report Human And Nature Dynamical (Handy) model, applied mathematician Safa Motesharri assesses the threat to civilisation by "the economic stratification of society into 'Elites' and 'Masses'", ie capitalism. According to Motesharri, "even using an optimal depletion rate and starting with a very small number of Elites, the Elites eventually consume too much, resulting in a famine among the Masses that eventually

...& Us



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

What we saw

Stewart Lee's Comedy Vehicle on BBC iplayer



Comedian Stewart Lee's amusing satire on the lack of policy differences over welfare cuts between Labour and the Tories



URGENT: Prepare for strike to smash pay freeze

Rob Williams

The hypocritical tributes from the mainstream press and capitalist politicians to Bob Crow and Tony Benn have grated on workers. In contrast, ordinary people have remembered how it wasn't just that Bob and his union fought for their members, it was that they often won, ensuring that railworkers in particular have been able to protect their jobs and living standards.

This must be the approach with which the continuing pay freeze in the public sector is challenged by the unions. There is absolute outrage that millions of workers will have their pay again pegged to 1% when RPI inflation is nearly 3% and even the government's preferred indicator, CPI, is almost double the pay offer.

Already, local government unions have put in a pay demand of £1 an hour across the board. As the RMT has shown, to win the unions must show they will fight for this.

All activists in the public



sector must immediately bring motions to their union branches and shop stewards' committees calling for their unions to organise strike ballots to break the pay freeze. They should also call for the strike action to be coordinated.

These ballots must be linked to a campaign for a vote for strike action, involving mass meetings, including workplace meetings, so all members can have the opportunity to debate the strategy.

The recent tube strike showed that there would be massive public support for strike action to protect workers' living standards. The heroic seven-day strike of low-paid porters and ancillary staff in Ealing hospital and also by care workers in Doncaster show the potential for coordinated action that could unite in-house NHS workers with those working for outsourced companies and agencies. Among the workers taking action the idea of a 24-hour strike is very popular.

In early 1988, 38 nurses took unofficial strike action in Manchester that ignited what became a mass movement to defend the NHS from Thatcher. Months later, well over 150,000 people marched in London as well as countless local protests. There was a mood then for mass

generalised action but the right-wing union leaders cut across it, as they did after the 2011 public sector pension strikes.

As Adrian O'Mally says on the front page, "the Unison health conference should become the launch pad for the strike ballot which could smash the pay freeze". That means activists preparing the ground now.

The campaign can also be fought in the vital elections in PCS, NUT, Unite as well as Unison. Members should vote for candidates who support a fighting strategy.

As the 2015 general election nears, some union leaders have argued that joint strike action should be put on the back burner in the hope of a Labour government.

Yet Labour leader Miliband agrees with the pay freeze. Ed Balls is "daunted" by the prospect of becoming chancellor in a Labour government continuing Tory austerity but undaunted in committing to maintaining the pay freeze.

Mass strike action now, up to and including a 24-hour general strike, would shatter the lull that is allowing the cuts consensus to dominate the political mainstream. This yet again shows why the unions also need to urgently discuss launching a new mass political vehicle that inscribes opposition to austerity on its banner. Now is the time to strike.

In brief



Blacklisting

The report into blacklisting from the Scottish Affairs Select Committee was published on 14 March. The report calls for blacklisting firms to be banned from publicly funded contracts. They also paid tribute to the work of the Blacklist Support Group.

Chair of the Blacklist Support Group, Steve Acheson welcomed the report saying: "Honest hard working men and women have been denied the opportunity to provide for their families because we were members of a trade union or dared to raise concerns about health and safety on a building site."

Steve himself has been blacklisted and won a court case for unlawful refusal of work. But the judge reduced the damages on a technicality. He then faced having his house repossessed. But the trade union movement rallied round in support and the appeal has just reached its target of £25,000. Donations came in from trade union branches and other blacklisted workers and the appeal was backed by Bob Crow, Len McCluskey and MP John McDonnell.

Doncaster care workers determined to win



Demonstration photo A Tice

In September 2013 Doncaster's Labour council sold the tender for the town's learning disability supported living to the cheapest bidder, Care UK. Care UK is owned by private equity firm Bridgepoint Capital. The chair of which is, former Marks and Spencer chief executive Sir Stuart Rose.

Rose has recently been appointed as an adviser to the NHS; a further illustration of the links between the Tory's privatisation agenda and their friends in big business.

In December 2013 Care UK effectively threw the TUPE transfer agreements out of the window with the declaration that new terms and conditions were to be introduced. These included the scrapping of enhanced pay for working unsocial hours; which would lead to a pay cut of, on average, £500 a month.

Unison members overwhelmingly rejected this proposal and balloted for strike action. The first strike was held between 27 February and 5 March. On its conclusion the staff voted for this, second week of action.

The strikers have received widespread support locally. The demonstration held outside of the council's Mansion House on 1 March was greeted enthusiastically by the public.

There is a recognition here that Care UK staff are fighting not just for their terms and conditions but against privatisation of the NHS and against the suffering that this will cause.

Steve Williams

Steward in Doncaster, District and Bassetlaw Unison

On Wednesday 19 March, Care UK workers in Doncaster began their second seven-day strike. This comes just two weeks after the end of the first strike and demonstrates the determination of the staff to win.

Ealing hospital workers fight miserly Medirest



Lively picket line photo Chris Newby

Chris Newby

Striking GMB pickets were again out in force on 17 March. The workers at Ealing Hospital in west London were on a seven-day strike against poverty pay.

The 150 porters and ancillary workers are fighting to get off the minimum hourly wage rate of £6.31 that outsourced NHS employer Medirest is currently paying them. This is 44% below the lowest comparable rate in the health service in London of £9.09. Medirest is only prepared to offer an insulting pay increase of 20p an hour.

The pickets were furious about reports that scab labour has been bussed in by agencies and is being paid £9 per hour! It seems that money can be found to break a strike but not to properly pay NHS workers.

Not only are Medirest paying these workers a pittance they are also not paying sick pay and will only allow the workers to take a maximum of

two weeks holiday from their 20-day annual leave at any one time. This directly affects those workers who have families in other countries. This is the third strike in this current dispute showing the determination of these workers.

The confirmation last week that the government is continuing its public sector pay freeze, with a 0% rise for NHS workers poses the need for coordinated strike action. It would bring in workers such as those at Ealing and many like them who have been privatised and outsourced to sharks like Medirest. This heroic action also shows how such mass joint action would be strongly supported.

Messages of supports and pledges of donations can be emailed to the London regional office via pat.kenny@gmb.org.uk. Address - Thorne House, 152 Brent Street, Hendon, London NW4 2DP. Telephone: 020 8202 8272 Fax: 020 8202 2893

Strike at HCA

Unite members at the Homes and Communities Agency have voted to strike over the divisive way the agency allocates pay. 68% voted for action because workers on HCA contracts are being treated differently from those transferred from the old Tenant Services Authority. The pay offer has already been rejected three times by the staff and the Agency management have refused to go to ACAS. Unite are seeking more talks but the strike will go ahead if the Agency continues its intransigent stance.

Budget Day march

The POA prison officers' union marched against cuts and privatisation in central London on 19 March, to coincide with budget day. Like much of the public sector, the prison service has been cut and privatised. POA members have been forced to work longer hours while suffering a pay freeze. They are also being forced to work until they are 68.

Lewisham education welfare

On 12 March, Lewisham's education welfare officers, members of Unite, held a successful one-day strike against a 50% staffing cut in their service, which has a good record in combatting school truancy through early intervention. Pickets were angry at Lewisham's Labour mayor Sir Steve Bullock and his cowardly council, for using their massive Labour majority to carry out, rather than fight, the cuts. There was growing interest in supporting the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition's local council electoral challenge.

Unite to end racism and cuts

Marvin Hay

Waltham Forest prospective TUSC candidate

On Saturday 22 March, as part of the UN's International Anti-Racism Day, the TUC has coordinated marches in London, Cardiff and Glasgow. We will be flying the banners of the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC) and the Socialist Party and call on others to join the protests.

It is indisputable that the plight of workers under the tsunami of austerity and neoliberal reforms is a cause for a mighty fightback. But the cuts are having a disproportionate effect on certain sections of the working class. Unison and TUC research in recent years has shown that since the Coalition came to power young black men have experienced the sharpest rise in unemployment.

Unemployment

In September 2013 the Department for Work and Pensions reported that while the unemployment rate for white people aged 16-24 was 19%, for young black people it was more than double that, at 45%. For young Pakistani and Bangladeshi workers it's even worse at 46%.

And it's not just young black and Asian people who are being affected. In 17 London councils (arguably the most diverse) black workers are being disproportionately hit by job losses - by up to 32%.

All this goes to demonstrate how much the austerity measures are

worsening the already unequal situation faced by black and Asian workers in Britain, with a similar effect in austerity-hit countries around the world.

The Immigration Bill (now in the committee stages in the House of Lords) is part of the Tories drive to make Britain, as described by home secretary Theresa May, "a hostile place for illegal immigrants". It has been described as one of the most racist pieces of legislation passed in the UK.

Threat to welfare state

Under pressure from Ukip's right-wing populist propaganda, combined with the government's attack on workers' rights to justice (made worse in the wake of legal aid reforms) the government is seeking to take back rights won by workers in the past.

The Bill will see foreign students charged to use the NHS, terror suspects (before conviction) stripped of British citizenship, the right of appeal against immigration decisions limited and the courts' and tribunals' right to give weight to the Human Rights Act restricted. This will be used as a wedge against universal access to all aspects of the welfare state.

The Immigration Bill will see private landlords required, under the threat of a £3,000 fine, to ensure that 'illegal' immigrants are not given access to their properties. The nasty reality of this draconian provision is that ethnic minorities will have a higher hurdle to climb to secure ac-



photo Socialist Party

commodation in what is already a process riddled with inequality and racial prejudice.

Despite the clear racist and xenophobic suggestion of the legislation and its attack on human rights, it was passed in the House of Commons by 303 votes to 18, with only six Labour MPs a three Lib Dems opposing.

It's telling that just 4% of local councillors, 2.3% of MPs, and 3.5% of senior civil servants are black. Almost none stand up for the working class. Pro-big business politicians

have no solutions to the problems we face. The reality is that legislation like the Immigration Bill, combined with continued attacks on workers' rights, including human rights, are increasing real racial inequalities, as well as whipping up divisions between workers. This has the potential to weaken any movement to resist the austerity attacks and must be opposed.

That's why only a united mass workers' party with a socialist programme can represent the struggle to genuinely combat racism, which

is what the Socialist Party and TUSC will be arguing for on the demonstrations on 22 March.

- London: assemble near Nelson Mandela statue in Parliament Square at 11am for march to Trafalgar Square where there will be a rally 1-4pm
- Cardiff: assemble 11am - venue tbc
- Glasgow: assemble George Square 11am for a march which will leave at 11.30am and be followed by a rally

Fight for real jobs for young people

Join the day of action on 29 March

Helen Pattison

London Youth Fight for Jobs

As budget day approached, mainstream politicians and media were scrambling around to look good or mud sling on the issue of youth unemployment and the economy in general.

Headlines screamed about the "huge economic growth" of 3% we might see over the next year. The Telegraph is peddling the propaganda from the government that youth unemployment isn't as bad as figures suggest and that more people are in work than have been for a year.

The British Chambers of Commerce is publicly calling on Osborne to make sure that the budget focuses on youth joblessness, with tax breaks to encourage investment and money for big businesses that are nice enough to give a job to a young person.

Labour no alternative

Labour has re-pledged its 'youth guarantee' - promising a six month job for all 18-24 year olds out of work for a year - supposedly funded by a one-off levy of bankers' bonuses. Labour's shadow housing minister was forced to admit this plan would mean the party would have to re-think using this money to fund house-building as had previously been promised.

The big businesses that take part would not have to pay a penny of wages. And of course it won't actually create any new jobs so the vast majority of participants would be

out on their ear at the end of the placement.

All this talk is just a smoke screen to hide the continued misery young people face of a jobless or slave-wage future - nothing has changed on the ground. The jobs that have been created have been measly zero-hour contracts or part-time work on minimum wage pay.

Fast Food Rights

But, offering inspiration to young workers and unemployed people here, the fight for a \$15 an hour minimum wage in the US rages on (see report on right). Now Youth Fight for Jobs, has teamed up with others, including the Bakers and Allied Food Workers Union, to begin building something similar here by setting up Fast Food Rights.

The campaign has been targeting McDonalds, Burger King and Costa. The bakers' union wrote to them all asking for the chance to come in and discuss with their workers about joining a union. McDonalds replied that their workers were perfectly happy, but when we leafleted their stores in Oxford Street, London, management ripped leaflets from the hands of staff and kicked us out.

The next Fast Food Rights day of action is on 29 March when up and down the country low-paid workers and their supporters will be protesting on high streets and in shopping centres for better pay, an end to zero-hour contracts and for trade union rights.

Check www.youthfightforjobs.com for details of events near you on the day of action

Activists in the US demand \$15 Now!



In Seattle on 15 March (and inset the front page of The Seattle Times) photo Socialist Alternative

15 Now campaign

On 15 March a national day of action took place across the US as part of the 15 Now campaign for a \$15 an hour minimum wage. In Seattle 750 protesters took to the street.

Union activists, 15 Now volunteers and low-wage workers rallied to chants of "Tip Credit? Forget it!" warning against a proposal full of loop-holes and exemptions, such as lower wages for tipped workers

or a so-called "total compensation" package which would attempt to count everything from health benefits to bus passes toward a minimum wage of \$15.

At the end of the rally Kshama Sawant, Seattle's socialist City Council member, said: "Let's use the next two months to hit the pavement and build a grassroots movement like Seattle has not seen in a long time. Let's get a first-hand experience of the power of working class solidarity - where we stand up for the interests of

everyone - workers and the unemployed, the poor and oppressed, of all races and color, immigrants and American-born, elderly and disabled."

The movement's next big mobilisation will be a conference on 26 April. The conference will launch the massive campaign to collect the 21,000 signatures required to put a robust \$15 minimum wage on the November ballot, should it become necessary. **For a full report and campaign updates see www.15now.org**

AFTER BOB CROW AND TONY BENN:

WE FIGHT ON!

'Destructive' element in Labour was not Tony Benn

Tony Mulhearn
Liverpool 47

The Dross Machine goes into overdrive – Newsnight, Andrew Rawnsley in the Observer, the 'Life of Tony Benn'. A parade of relics of the undead belched out their resentment at Tony Benn's 'destructive' behaviour as a leading Labour Party figure.

A smug Neil Kinnock was at his most repellent. Stripped of all the verbiage, Benn's 'crime' was the advocating of socialist policies and having the temerity to stand in the election for Labour's deputy leader in 1982.

Naturally, Militant figures prominently in their invective. Andrew Rawnsley in the Observer writes: "For a nice man he kept some nasty company. He never disowned and stood in the way of dealing with the Militant Tendency and other far-left entryists who were poisoning Labour from within. He does not bear sole responsibility for the split that led to the formation of the SDP, but he was one of the most crucial triggers for it."

For Rawnsley Benn, in advocating the implementation of elements of the socialist Clause 4 of the Party constitution is the 'destructive' element. But the traitors are those who, defeated in the battle for ideas in the Party, fled and formed the Social Democratic Party (SDP).

Those who could not stomach the Labour Party embracing socialist ideas included Shirley Williams, one of the gang of four with Roy Jenkins, William Rodgers and David 'I adore nuclear weapons' Owen. In the 1983 general election they stood as a

phony 'left of centre' SDP and divided the Labour vote. The Tory government ruled for 13 years with catastrophic consequences for the working class.

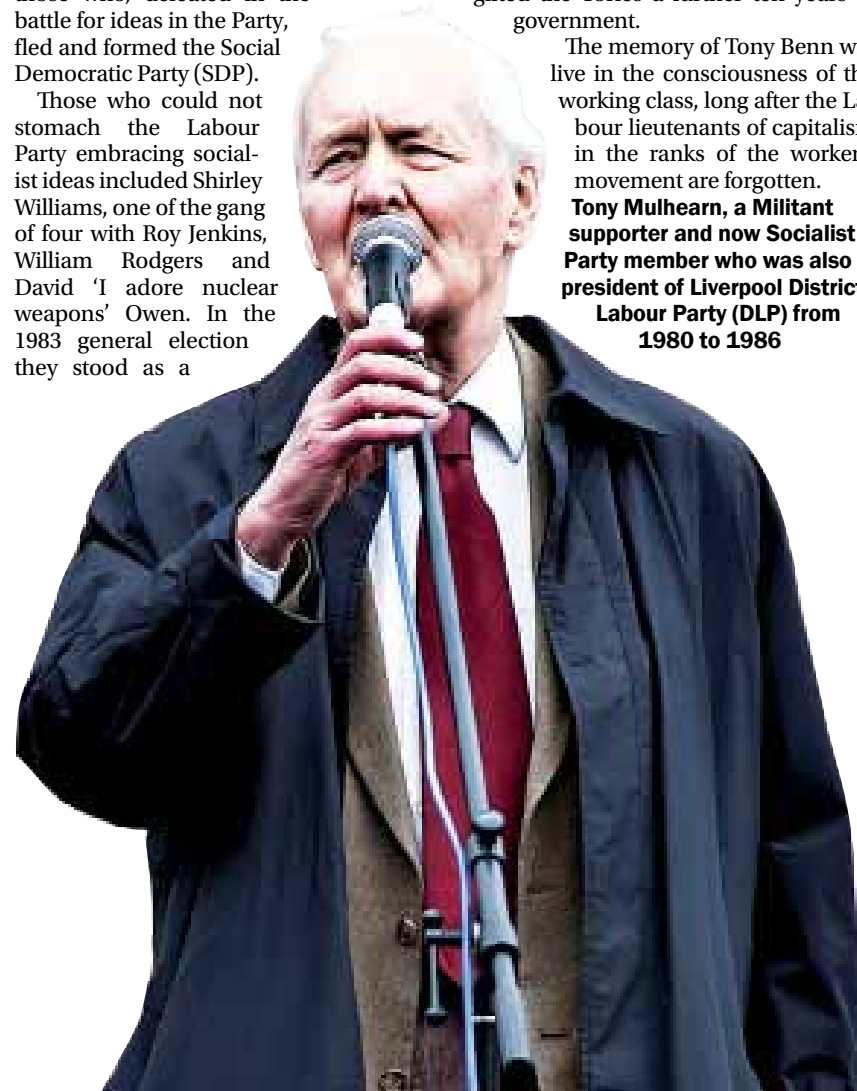
Denis Healey, former right-wing Labour chancellor (founder and steering committee member of Bildeburg, the self-appointed organisation of movers and shakers of world capitalism), was also wheeled out posing as a sage of British politics. In reality he was a justifier of nuclear Armageddon and a Thatcherite before Thatcher.

"He was a destructive force," he croaked. He meant: "I was the natural deputy leader, what right did Benn have to stand as well?" In spite of having an election team which included pension thief Robert Maxwell, Rupert Murdoch, the BBC, ITV, the Daily Mail and Express, Healey defeated Benn by a tiny margin of 0.05% of the vote.

Healey's political vision was revealed as political myopia when, after Lord Kinnock's treacherous attack on Liverpool council at the 1985 Labour conference, he said to Kinnock: "by that speech Neil you have won us the next general election." In the subsequent general elections Labour went down to the two worst defeats since 1931. So these 'destructive elements' gifted the Tories a further ten years of government.

The memory of Tony Benn will live in the consciousness of the working class, long after the Labour lieutenants of capitalism in the ranks of the workers' movement are forgotten.

Tony Mulhearn, a Militant supporter and now Socialist Party member who was also president of Liverpool District Labour Party (DLP) from 1980 to 1986



**TUSC
AGAINST
CUTS**

The Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC) is an electoral alliance that stands candidates against all cuts and privatisation. It involves the RMT transport union, leading members of other unions and socialists including the Socialist Party.

This May TUSC plans to stand hundreds of no-cuts candidates in the council elections against all the austerity parties voting through the destruction of jobs and services. Could you be a candidate? See tusdc.org.uk

The union stands for the working class using its power to defend and extend its rights and share of the world's wealth and for socialist change

What we think

A deluge of tributes followed the sad and shocking death of Bob Crow, elected leader of the Rail, Maritime and Transport union. He was known and respected beyond the ranks of the RMT because the union is to the forefront of militant action.

As the Economist put it, "Under Mr Crow, the RMT stood out, forsaking protests for traditional industrial activism." In fact the RMT supported a range of action – demonstrations, occupations as in Vestas on the Isle of Wight, and strikes. Members enjoy, as the BBC admitted, "pay rises every year even during austerity, good pensions and good holiday allowances", prove that combative working class action results.

What next?

The Economist asks: "What will happen to his union now?" The magazine's pro-capitalist target audience will hope for a 'moderate' successor. Working class fighters will watch carefully, hoping for the election of someone who stands in Bob Crow's tradition.

Who the next general secretary will be is for RMT members to decide. In doing so they will be conscious that their union plays a wider and leading role – in Britain and internationally – in standing up for the working class as a whole. The union stands for the working class using its power to defend and extend its rights and share of the world's wealth and for socialist change. The messages of condolence and solidarity from the US, Cuba and elsewhere reflect this wider role. It is immortalised in the RMT banners that carry the words of the traditional socialist and workers' song, 'the Internationale'.

Bob Crow stood for the general resistance of the working class to all attacks. He was central to the RMT's role in establishing the National Shop Stewards Network (NSSN) in 2007. This was a clear recognition of the inadequacy of many right-wing trade union leaders who rest on the 'official structures' and have tended to hold back the movement. The NSSN was an attempt to give voice to the rank and file of the unions. This, of course, cannot be seen as a substitute for transforming those unions, but is a complementary aid to defending members.

Against austerity, the NSSN plays a vital role in putting forward a general programme for resisting the government's attacks. Bob Crow seconded the motion calling for a 24-hour general strike at the 2012 TUC in Brighton. He also moved the

motion at the 2013 TUC to keep the 24-hour general strike on the table. The new leader must continue his proposals to build united effective action, including efforts to coordinate with other left unions and leaders.

Political strategy

Under Bob Crow's leadership the union also drew conclusions about the need to have a political strategy. A decade ago the RMT was expelled from the Labour Party because it supported socialist candidates in Scotland. Bob and others in the leadership recognised that, in order to defend RMT members and the wider working class, they had to take steps to build a political voice. The union debated the issue at two national delegate conferences and on both occasions backed participation in the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC). Bob was a co-founder and sat alongside Socialist Party members and others on the steering committee. He also led 'No2EU-Yes to workers' rights', a coalition set up to contest the European elections.

There have been innumerable expressions of solidarity with what Bob was trying to achieve, including a willingness to stand in May's elections. The latest batch of local election candidates to be approved by the TUSC steering committee, for example, includes the Finsbury Park RMT branch secretary and an Arnos Grove rep who have come forward just this week as prospective candidates. These London activists see standing as part of their battle to defend jobs and services on London Underground. Eight Portsmouth RMT members have also stepped forward as prospective candidates.

But now there

could be a danger that the right wing in the generally left RMT may begin to try to undermine Bob's legacy both industrially and politically. What alternative can they offer workers facing privatisation, job losses, and pay cuts? Asking workers to wait for a Labour government in 2015? That is no alternative whatsoever.

Labour has shown in words and deeds that it will continue with privatisation, job losses, and pay cuts. Rachel Reeves has warned a Labour government "would be tougher" on benefits than one that has presided over a regime where every two minutes a young person has their paltry benefits stopped. Ed Balls' comment, "We've backed 1% pay restraint," says it all.

Labour-dominated councils are decimating services and jobs. They claim to 'feel bad' about it but only a tiny handful of councillors have actually voted against the cuts. And they have mainly been expelled from Labour.

The death of Tony Benn is another sad loss to the working class (see obituary on page 2). He was a staunch defender of socialism. But on Labour he was mistaken. The time for equivocation is over – as Bob made clear.

Left journalist Owen Jones has commented on the situation after Bob Crow and Tony Benn but offers no way forward. He writes of a "fragmented" left but the real left exists not in little groups or in celebrities like him. The future of the left is in the unions and in the workplaces – organised and as yet unorganised. As wider sections of the working class determinedly

take up the fight, as the care workers in Doncaster and the health workers in Ealing are currently doing, new trade union leaderships and the mass political party the working class needs will be forged.

Owen Jones says that "the left's real mission is surely hope". But, hope for what Owen? That Labour will be the vehicle to change society? This is not hope. This is utopia. The strategy of Owen and those who want to ensnare the workers and all suffering austerity in the Labour dead end basically amounts to 'a hope and a prayer'.

Meanwhile there are springs of real hope as workers draw left and socialist conclusions from their experience of capitalism in the 21st century. In the US the fight for a \$15 an hour minimum wage involves young workers who want a share of the so-called economic recovery.

Legacy

In South Africa the working class is taking vital steps to construct a new mass party to continue the legacy of the anti-apartheid struggle, particularly in the form of the Workers And Socialist Party.

This pioneering work, with socialists central, recalls Shelley's revolutionary credo: "To defy Power, which seems omnipotent; ... / to hope till Hope creates / From its own wreck the thing it contemplates."

RMT members, by electing a leader who will continue the RMT's role in building both TUSC and determined trade union action to defend the working class at every turn, will be standing in Bob Crow's powerful legacy. And the Socialist Party will back them every step in that direction.



Re-elect Keith Morrell, Coxford rebel councillor

"I thought the last lot were bad, but this lot are worse. Yes, I support Keith and Don and what they have done." This was a local resident in Coxford, Southampton, struggling to cope with the hit on her pocket from the bedroom tax and angered at the continuing cuts from the Labour council elected in 2012.

All across the Coxford area, Keith and Don have touched the lives of their local community, supporting their stand to save Oaklands Pool and forcing the council to invest £1.6 million and re-open the

pool. Coxford has two representatives who are willing to fight alongside the community to ensure services like Erskine Court, supported living for the elderly, are saved. Keith and Don mobilised hundreds to surround Erskine Court in a determined show of defiance against the council bulldozer and won.

When the local Sainsbury's supermarket closed a pathway used by hundreds of people to do their shopping, the community was mobilised and the path re-

opened. When First Bus took away a local bus from elderly residents used to get to the council. In three years he has shown that he will not betray his promises to those who elected him as others in the Labour Party have done. Alongside side Councillor Don Thomas he has shown what is possible. Let's make sure Coxford keeps its rebel councillors, they are needed now more than ever. Give your support and re-elect Keith Morrell on 22 May.



Setting the record straight

It is deplorable that Guardian columnist Polly Toynbee used an invitation to talk about Tony Benn and his role in politics on Channel 4 news (14 March) to vilify the Militant, forerunner of the Socialist Party.

This from the woman who joined the rightward split from the Labour Party, the short-lived Social Democratic Party (SDP). She portrayed the Militant, tireless workers for the party, in Lambeth as alien infiltrators. The capitalist media and most commentators and politicians are keen to portray Tony Benn's politics and socialism as outdated and outmoded.

On the contrary, Tony Benn was an expert at explaining why socialism is necessary and how it would work. He also clearly explained that capitalism does not work except for the rich.

Tony Benn did not draw the wrong conclusions about Labour's electoral failure. The SDP and New Labour decided that it was because it was too left wing.

Tony Benn, like the Militant, knew that it was because Labour was not socialist enough. Capitalism tried to draw the sting out of Benn's politics by adopting him as an eccentric uncle.

The young woman in Bristol who said that he was her hero, a conviction politician, shows that Benn's ideas will always be relevant and modern.

Clare Wilkins, Birmingham

The following letters were printed in the Guardian

It's a shame that in an article of over 1,600 words Owen Jones couldn't bring himself to seriously discuss the political projects that Bob Crow was actually involved in ('Don't mourn, Organise', 15 March). But perhaps that fits a narrative Owen wishes to promote, that there is no future for any electoral politics outside Labour. Bob, however, saw the creation of a new political voice for working people, rooted in the organisations and communities of the working class, as an essen-

tial aspect of the struggle against austerity. For the past four years we had worked together building the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC), in a project officially backed by the RMT itself. TUSC will stand hundreds of anti-austerity candidates in this May's local elections in the biggest left-of-Labour challenge since the second world war.

Despite a number of approaches, Tony Benn didn't agree with an electoral challenge to Labour (though he did appear in the 2009 electoral broadcast for No2EU). I think he should have left the Labour Party, which had so clearly left him, but unfortunately he disagreed. In his latter years Tony was more a prisoner in New Labour, reduced to smuggling out notes through the bars. The socialist policies he stood for were killed off by successive Labour leaders from Neil Kinnock onwards, but they still exist in new projects, like TUSC and No2EU, co-founded by Bob Crow.

Dave Nellist
National chair, TUSC

In his obituary for Bob Crow (12 March), Christian Wolmar states that Bob "was not a member of a political party when he died". However, Bob sat with me on the national steering committee of the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC), which stands in general and local elections, from its foundation in 2010. Indeed, it was only a few days ago that we were discussing what public meetings he could do to support TUSC's 2014 local elections campaign, in what will be the biggest left-of-Labour challenge in such elections since the second world war. Bob was also the national leader of No2EU – Yes To Workers' Rights, a political party registered to fight the 2014 European elections. He was going to be the lead candidate for London. Bob couldn't have been clearer on the need for working-class people to have an independent political voice, which none of the establishment parties can provide.

Clive Heemskerk
Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition national election agent



Banners outside RMT headquarters up and down the country in tribute to Bob Crow. On the left is the national office in London and the right is the North West regional office.



Lewisham TUSC honoured the life of Bob Crow at Saturday's game against Charlton at the Den. We unfurled a banner in the south stand which read 'RIP Bob Crow - Working class fighter and Millwall always'. A tribute in the programme and in the pre-match announcement mentioned Bob's life long support of Millwall, a support which was as true as it ever was in the weeks before his death. Only a fortnight ago Bob attended a meeting of the 'Save our Millwall' campaign, not as a platform speaker or specially invited guest. Bob came, sat at the back of the meeting, listened to the contributions and offered his support and advice to the campaign. Many of the tributes to Bob have honoured his rousing speeches at rallies and demonstrations but his tenacity and day to day work fighting to defend and extend what workers hold dear are why he was respected so much. James Kerr, Lewisham TUSC and Millwall ST holder

RMT members, by electing a leader who will continue the RMT's role in building both TUSC and determined trade union action to defend the working class at every turn, will be standing in Bob Crow's powerful legacy

Election Appeal

Put your money where the struggle is!

Ken Douglas
National treasurer, Socialist Party

At its recent national congress the Socialist Party launched an appeal to raise £15,000 to help finance our 2014 election campaigns. Across England, Socialist Party members are getting ready to stand alongside members of the RMT rail union, other trade unionists and community campaigners in the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC) to mount the biggest left-of-Labour challenge since the end of World War Two.

We have a battle in these elections to make TUSC as visible as possible so the media gives the coverage it should to our challenge. We need to make sure in our local campaigning that TUSC leaflets, banners, posters, postcards and other material are widely available and prominent at every protest against cuts and privatisation, at every picket line and demonstration.

Socialists everywhere have been inspired by the success of Kshama



Southampton councillor Keith Morell photo Paul Mattsson

Sawant and Socialist Alternative in the Seattle city council elections in the US. The power of Kshama's campaign was based on the appeal of

her socialist programme and particularly the demand for \$15 an hour minimum wage to the thousands of ordinary people who made relative-

ly small donations to her campaign. These donations enabled Kshama to mount an effective challenge to the candidate backed by all the financial might of big business.

Southampton rebel councillors Keith Morell and Don Thomas have generated a groundswell of support for their stand against the cuts and won £1.6 million to refurbish the local swimming pool that the council was going to close.

TUSC will be standing city-wide in Southampton and other areas; the press, the political establishment and the television companies will try to brush away the TUSC challenge. We must make sure we have the funds and the support so they can't ignore us!

The Socialist Party is also participating in the 'No2EU - Yes to workers' rights' list in the European elections being held at the same time. Socialist Party members are standing in a number of seats. Dave Nel-list heads the list in the West Midlands and leading trade unionist Roger Bannister leads the challenge

against the racist BNP's Nick Griffin in the North West.

In addition we also aim to raise £4,000 to help finance the election campaign of the new Workers And Socialist Party (WASP) in South Africa. Moses Mayekiso, the inaugural general secretary of Numsa, the metal workers' union, is heading WASP's election list.

These campaigns all explain that the working class needs to build new mass parties to replace those like the Labour Party that speak only for big business and the crisis-ridden capitalist system. Fewer than 400 individuals worldwide own as much wealth as three and a half billion people so we need parties that represent the billions, not the billionaires!

Can you make a donation to support this historic challenge? Can you donate £10, £20 or £100 or more? Every pound will take us closer to our target and will make a difference in this campaign. You can donate via our website socialistparty.org.uk/donate or telephone 020 8988 8777.

TUSC campaigning in Derby



A TUSC stall in Derby with the new banner. There were lots of people interested. Typical comments were: 'Somebody's got to fight the cuts - it's good to see you are prepared to', 'When will there be a revolution?', 'Are you pretend socialists or real ones?' Through public meetings we have met many people who will support us and others who want to do leafleting. We are getting more support via Facebook. TUSC has been invited to send a speaker to an FBU meeting in Derbyshire. photo C Taylor

Get your May Day Greetings in

Suzanne Beishon

Over recent years we have had brilliant May Day displays in the Socialist. Let's aim to repeat that success in 2014. This year marks the 40th anniversary of the founding of the Committee for a Workers' International (CWI - which the Socialist party is affiliated to) and in the autumn, the 50th anniversary of the first issue of our party's paper.

Our 'reporters' are actively involved in the struggles they write about, from

workplaces, communities, universities, schools and colleges.

We report the victories that show that if you fight back you can win - from construction workers' disputes in Britain, to miners in South Africa.

And the Socialist doesn't just report workers' strikes and the anti-cuts movement, but puts forward a strategy to defeat the cuts and to fight for a socialist alternative. Help the Socialist continue that work with a May Day greeting this year!

Get a 25% discount by paying by

Friday 11 April.

Greeting price guide: £500 for a whole page (£375 before 11 April); £300 for a half-page (£225); £170 quarter-page (£127.50); £90 one-eighth (£67.50); £50 one-sixteenth (£37.50); £30 1/32 (£22.50); £20 small box (£15). Other rates are available.

Contact: 020 8988 8781 Email suzannebeishon@socialistparty.org.uk Give your greeting online at www.socialistparty.org.uk/mayday

Pensioner jailed for non-payment

Ross Longhurst of Nottingham, aged 72 and a longstanding campaigner, has been jailed for 28 days for not paying his council tax. Ross refused to pay in protest and wrote before his hearing:

"For the fourth year running Nottingham city council are imposing cuts on local services which target the most vulnerable sections of the community such as children and old people. This is part of the Coalition government's war on the poor and the Labour-controlled council are slavishly implementing the cuts."

Cathy Meadows, chair, Nottingham Stop the Bedroom Tax/ Defend Council Tax Benefits Campaign gave our solidarity to Ross on Radio Nottingham and to any people who feel so angry at the injustice they are making a stand, even if not affected themselves.

Cathy said that many people are

forced to choose between food, fuel, council tax and rent because of cuts to benefits, and cannot afford to pay council tax.

People whose income was so low that they were considered too poor a year ago to pay council tax are now being told to pay yet their income is still low.

And from this April, the minimum amount Nottingham city council (with a massive Labour majority) is charging will be 20% of council tax. Cathy said the council should stop harassing people, stop sending bailiffs and stop threatening people with eviction.

The campaign is clear: The council should not pursue people for council tax or rent arrears if their benefit has been cut or if people are now being asked to pay council tax / increased council tax because of the austerity measures.

Cathy said that in the short term

the council should use its reserves to cover the costs. The council should be working with the community and trade unions to demand the necessary money from the government.

Write to: Prisoner A0329DE, Ross Longhurst, HM Prison Nottingham, 112 Perry Road, Nottingham NG5 3AG.

Nottingham Stop the Bedroom Tax/Defend Council Tax Benefits Campaign gives advice to people to help support them when they receive letters from the council or social landlord including court letters. <http://youtu.be/f-9VfpdHNjs>

• On the day Ross was jailed, the thisnottingham website reported that a businessman was "spared prison after £4 million of fake goods were found." Nottingham Magistrates' Court sentenced the man to eight weeks in prison, suspended for 12 months.

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SOCIALIST PARTY FIGHTING FUND

	£ target	£ received	January-March 2014	Deadline 31 March 2014
North West	1,200	1,548	██████████	██████████
West Midlands	2,100	2,526	██████████	██████████
Wales	2,300	2,182	██████████	██████████
South West	1,400	1,167	██████████	██████████
East Midlands	1,600	1,327	██████████	██████████
Yorkshire	2,900	1,862	██████████	██████████
Northern	600	338	██████████	██████████
South East	750	358	██████████	██████████
Southern	1,200	516	██████████	██████████
London	6,100	2,184	██████████	██████████
Eastern	1,200	281	██████████	██████████
England & Wales	3,650	3,185	██████████	██████████
	25,000	17,474	██████████	██████████

South Africa: WASP registers for the 2014 elections

Workers And Socialist Party

The Workers And Socialist Party (WASP) in South Africa has registered for this year's elections to the national assembly and for the provincial legislatures of North West, Limpopo and Gauteng.

The presidential candidate and number one on WASP's national list is Moses Mayekiso. Moses was a leading trade union activist in the 1970s and 1980s for the Metal and Allied Workers Union (Mawu) of which he became general secretary. Mawu, along with other unions, founded Cosatu (the largest trade union federation in South Africa) in 1985 and was a key founding union of the National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (Numsa).

Moses became the first general secretary of Numsa, elected from jail for his labour movement activism and anti-apartheid activities. He was the hero of an international campaign demanding his release and demonstrations to "free Comrade Moss" were held in cities



A recent WASP recruitment drive and election campaigning in Limpopo photo WASP

around the world.

Moses was general secretary of Numsa when the union in 1993 adopted a resolution calling for the formation of a workers' party. In

joining WASP and taking his place in the leadership, Moses is retying the knot of history.

Please donate towards the WASP election appeal by writing cheques

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

For more see socialistworld.net

The Committee for a Workers' International

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

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

www.socialistworld.net

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



Venezuela: Popular Revolutionary Council Launched in Caracas

International solidarity needed!

By *Socialismo Revolucionario (CWI in Venezuela) reporters, Caracas*



Sweden: New mass protests against Nazi violence

Knife attack after 8 March demonstration

By *Rattvispartiet Socialisterma (CWI in Sweden) reporters*



Bosnia Herzegovina: Mass protests of working people and youth show the way forward

Working people stir to end poverty, joblessness, corruption and ethnic divisions!

CWI Leaflet text

Crimea referendum will not deliver peace and stability

Niall Mulholland

Crimea's 16 March referendum saw an overwhelming majority vote in favour of joining Russia. According to the claimed official result, 96.77% voted 'for' integration and turnout was 83.1%. Tens of thousands celebrated in Simferopol, the capital of Crimea.

On 17 March, the regional parliament declared the Republic of Crimea. President Putin and Crimea's leaders signed an agreement on 18 March formalising the region's absorption into Russia.

Crimea's de facto leader, Sergei Aksyonov, stated that next week Crimea will officially introduce the ruble as a second official currency along with Ukrainian hryvna. The Crimean parliament ruled that Ukrainian state property in the peninsula will be nationalised and Ukrainian military units on Crimean territory are to be "disbanded".

The referendum was denounced by western leaders as "illegitimate and illegal" and they condemned Putin for stirring up ethnic divisions. Largely toothless travel bans and asset freezes against officials from Russia and Crimea were imposed by the EU and US, with other sanctions threatened. But western powers are divided on how far to punish Russia. Many EU states fear that tit-for-tat sanctions with Russia could badly damage the weak EU economy.

History of 'intervention'

Despite their outrage at Russia's intervention in Crimea, the US and European powers have a proven record of similar actions, only on a much larger and more bloody scale. Violating their own international laws, the western imperialist powers invaded and occupied Iraq and Afghanistan, overseeing 'elections' in both countries. Months of Nato bombings against the Serbian regime in 1999 were the prelude to a western-supported independence referendum for Kosovo.

Certainly the Crimean referendum was not held under conditions that allowed for free democratic debate and choice. Following the

western-backed ousting of Ukraine's prime minister, Victor Yanukovich, 'self-defence' militias (both locally raised and those which are widely believed to be unidentified Russian troops), took control of military bases and other key strategic points in Crimea.

Democracy?

The parliament of majority-Russian speaking Crimea voted to leave Ukraine and to join Russia. The referendum was only then put to voters to rubber stamp the decision and only gave two options - for integration with Russia or for enhanced autonomy.

All pro-Ukraine media was shut down and weeks of state-run media blasted out pro-Russian nationalist propaganda. Crimea's minority Tartar and Ukraine-speaking populations (40% of the population) complained of an intimidating atmosphere and most of them boycotted the referendum.

Yet is also the case that the vote for union with Russia was hugely popular among the majority of Crimeans. This is in large part due to the reactionary character of the new Kiev regime and the manner in which it came to power.

The months-long mass protests against Yanukovich were fuelled by years of economic stagnation and growing poverty, as well as deep

Living standards will not be transformed by Crimea's integration into a weakening Russian economy

anger at the corrupt, authoritarian regime and its oligarch backers.

The revolt, which displayed elements of a revolution, quickly revealed the lack of support for the rotten Yanukovich regime. Riot police brutality towards protesters in Maidan Square provoked widespread revulsion and the regime fell apart.

However in the absence of mass

workers' organisations that pursue an independent class line, reactionary opposition politicians, including Ukrainian ultra-nationalists and the far right, dominated the protest movement.

Members of the anti-Semitic Svoboda party and fascistic Right Sector acted as shock troops on the ground in central Kiev and elsewhere. They physically attacked trade unionists and left activists who attempted to join the protests.

The new Kiev regime's anti-Russian rhetoric and the involvement of the far right, which holds key ministerial positions, provoked fear among the ethnic Russian minority, who are mainly based in Ukraine's east and south. Among the Rada's (Ukraine parliament) first decisions was one to downgrade the use of the Russian language and to vote to outlaw the 'Communist' Party.

Poverty

With Crimea already one of the poorest parts of Ukraine, many Crimeans also feared that the new Kiev regime would agree financial aid deals with the EU and IMF, linked to harsh austerity measures, resulting in their living standards falling even further.

But the outcome of the referendum will not deliver peace, stability and prosperity for the people of Crimea. Living standards will not be transformed by Crimea's integration into a weakening Russian economy.

The authoritarian Putin regime and its oligarch-backers are only intervening in Crimea, whipping up Russian nationalism in the process, to defend their 'near abroad' geo-strategic interests. The peninsula is the focal point of growing tensions between Russia and Kiev and its western backers - who aim to extend imperialist power and influence right up to Russia's borders.

This has led to a dangerous build-up of military forces. Last week, Washington ordered military exercises in Poland, Lithuania and in the Black Sea. After the Crimean referendum, Ukraine's parliament approved the partial mobilisation of 40,000 reservists.

Both sides say they are not going to go to war over Ukraine but a deepening of tensions can lead to 'localised' conflict nevertheless.

Working people across Ukraine will pay the price for an escalation of the crisis. Several people were killed last weekend when fighting broke out between pro-Ukrainian and pro-Russian protesters and mi-

96.77% claimed official result in favour of integration of Crimea into Russia

litas in the eastern cities of Donetsk and Kharkiv.

If some clashes develop momentum it could lead in majority Russian ethnic areas to calls for more referendums, attempts to break away and the horrific possibility of bloody break-up of the country.

Alternative

Only the organised, united working class, with independent and internationalist policies, can decisively counter reactionary nationalism and end big capitalist powers' meddling.

The demagogic nationalist politicians in Kiev, Simferopol and Moscow may be enjoying popular support at the moment by exploiting fears but their pro-market policies and nationalism will not improve living standards or end corruption and oppression. Already many of those who opposed Yanukovich complain bitterly about the new gang of crooks who seized power and handed out regional governorships to their oligarch friends.

As the recent revolt of workers and youth in Bosnia Herzegovina shows, new upsurges against dire economic and social conditions and corrupt politicians are inevitable but they require organised, political expression to provide a working class and socialist alternative.

Review

Call the Midwife

BBC one

Sarah Wrack

The third series of the BBC's *Call the Midwife* finished recently. The programme is based on the real life memoirs of Jennifer Worth (formerly Lee) who worked as a midwife in London's east end in the 1950s.

The series finale saw Jenny leave Nonnatus House, the nunnery her midwifery team work from. Jenny and her fellow midwives work under the instruction of an order of nuns, who were the traditional providers of maternity care for poor women in the Poplar area prior to the launch of the NHS.

For me the most poignant episode was in the second series. Nora Harding and her husband already have eight children when she discovers she is pregnant again. The family live between two rooms and are in dire poverty.

Distraught at the idea of another mouth to feed, Nora has an illegal backstreet abortion - selling everything she can to get the money - which leaves her fighting for life.

Jenny says: "Nora's life was saved

by doctors who asked no questions, but she never conceived again." She explains that, in the expansion of council housing, the family was relocated to a larger house outside London.

The midwives all come from relatively well-off, educated backgrounds. This contrasts with the deprived conditions in Poplar.

The area was devastated by bombing during the war, the local workhouse had not long closed its doors, many families still lived in one or two rooms with a shared bathroom.

Maternity care and labour make a good prism for the audience to look through, particularly given the post-war baby boom.

But the programme's interest stretches much further - it provides insightful social commentary on a



unique period in British history.

The main running theme is the huge impact that the introduction of the NHS, and the welfare state in general, had for working class communities - slum clearance, health promotion, social work.

The programme documents the rapid influx of medical improvements that followed the launch of the NHS. The women of Poplar can't believe their luck when gas and air become available - the doctor ends up running between houses with the machine as every woman in labour demands it. A mass chest x-ray programme is launched to combat tuberculosis.

Two baby brothers whose mother is suffering depression because she thinks their illness is her fault

are diagnosed with the little-known spina bifida. The doctor points out that a decade earlier this would not have been identified and they would never have survived.

Issues such as prostitution, 'illegitimacy', racism and domestic violence are dealt with sensitively, while giving a relatively realistic impression of how hard life was - there are no guaranteed happy endings.

Every episode emphasises how impossible life was for working class people before the welfare state.

It should make everyone who watches it redouble our efforts to stop the Con-Dems' onslaught of cuts and privatisation that threatens to reverse the progress shown in the programme.

Call the Midwife has been renewed for a Christmas special and fourth series next year. It remains to be seen whether the makers will do justice to the story and characters once no longer following the real stories of Jenny Lee and without the lead character. But I'll certainly be tuning in to find out.

Obituary: Stan Pearce, a Militant miner

Genetic Modification

A contribution to the Socialist debate



I heard the sad news that Stan Pearce has died. In a week that commemorated the 30th anniversary of the strike, Stan's passing ranks with that of Bob Crow and Tony Benn for a whole generation of Marxist miners associated with Militant, forerunner of the Socialist and the real Miners' Broad Left.

It was my privilege to work with someone who I looked up to as having the virtues of an irreconcilable militant miner. He was 20 years my senior but treated me the same as he would any other miner in the heat of battle.

Sure of his ideas, consistent with his support and attendance at meetings, determining the positions in a complex and difficult battle that he never doubted needed to be fought. No regrets for Stan, no doubts about the need to fight for the jobs for future generations. No navel gazing either, he could only see the justice of the miners' cause. The movement is smaller without Stan Pearce.

Good bye comrade.

Ian Isaac, former St John's NUM, S Wales Area



Simon Robinson
Leicester NUT member

The recent article in the *Socialist* issue 800 on genetic modification (GM) was an excellent antidote to the plethora of reactionary anti-science nonsense which prevails in a lot of media today. I would like to add my thoughts on GM to the debate.

I am a science teacher and you'll be surprised at how many students have absorbed a lot of the misleading ideas about climate change, GM foods and even the lunar landings. In the US, science teachers are at the forefront of the battle against creationism in the science curriculum. Giving students the power to look at information in a critical way and to understand the science is very important.

Since the beginning of agriculture, farmers have modified their environment, allowing human societies to flourish around the world. The problem with capitalism is that the health benefit to society is no longer the priority - the priority in agricul-

ture is profit. Monsanto typify this.

'Traditional' selective breeding is different to GM technology - both have radically altered the genetics of agricultural crops or animals, but just on a different timescale. I think selective breeding (or inbreeding) has been just as damaging to the genetic health of some organisms and very damaging to biodiversity around the world.

Selective breeding is responsible for the mono-crop lifeless prairies in the US and the plains of Russia and the grotesquely distorted bodies of cattle or dog breeds. It is also the reason for the loss of traditional seeds.

Many hybrid crops will not 'breed true' ie if you plant the next generation, you don't get the same characteristics. Most grain hybrids are like this. So, there is no real benefit from saving the seeds. Of course, this does mean that the farmer has to continually return to the seed companies to buy seeds, but this is not a GM issue in itself.

The research behind much of the GM health scare has been discredited. The real threat to health

is from the aggressive marketing of cheap, high sugar, saturated fats and salt foods which we are exposed to everyday.

Other health scares are linked to agrichemicals which were used well before GMOs were introduced. Monsanto's own 'Roundup' herbicide is one such example.

Many environmental campaigners have been warning against over-use and mis-use of chemicals in agriculture for decades - from Agent Orange, to DDT, to artificial fertilisers. It is estimated that 20,000 workers are dying from exposure every year to these agrichemicals.

There are some promising advances in GM crops. For example, in Bangladesh, brinjal (aubergine) crops are routinely sprayed with very toxic pesticides (linked to many diseases). A GM version of the crop has been introduced to provide resistance to the pests, which will greatly reduce the dependence on chemicals, and the companies like Monsanto who make them.

Join the debate. Contact:
editors@socialistparty.org.uk

No to the bosses' EU – Yes to an independent socialist alternative



Hannah Sell
Socialist Party deputy general secretary

The question of a referendum over Britain's membership of the European Union (EU) is problematic for all the mainstream capitalist parties.

In this parliament Tory Prime Minister David Cameron has faced enormous pressure from the predominantly 'euro-sceptic' Tory back benches, fuelled by increased support for Ukip - a right-wing populist, anti-EU party. Ukip are promoted by the capitalist owned media as the best stick with which to beat the pro-austerity parties.

Cameron has attempted to defuse the issue by 'promising' an in-out referendum on EU membership in 2017. Membership of the EU will,

which gives "one compelling reason to hold fire on Mr Miliband." (Janan Ganesh 15/3/2014). The CBI, representing big business, welcomed Miliband's announcement as 'giving businesses certainty'.

Labour under Miliband - as under Blair and Brown before him - is a safe party for British capitalism. The shadow cabinet has demonstrated this again and again.

As the late Tony Benn aptly put it Labour now represents the interests of 'Great Britain PLC'. This means a Labour government would continue to attack the living standards of the majority, the working class.

Meanwhile the passing of the Collins Review - at the behest of the Tories and the right-wing capitalist media - has destroyed the last vestiges of a voice of the organised working class within the Labour Party.

party's reliability on the issue.

The majority of the British capitalists support remaining in the EU because it is a market of 500 million people which is the UK's biggest export market. A majority of the financial sector, which plays a dominant role in the UK economy, also consider membership of the EU helps to maintain London's status as a global centre for financial markets.

Smaller businesses, as represented by the Institute of Directors - tend to be more anti-EU, as are one wing of the financial capitalists - who dream that leaving the EU would deliver them a City of London free from even the most minimal regulation.

What attitude should socialists take to the issue? We have to support the democratic right for a referendum to be held which would give the working class a chance to oppose the bosses' EU. In Britain, in recent years, it has been the right-wing media, Ukip and ultra-right Tory backbenchers that have been associated with opposition to the EU.

This can give the utterly false impression that opposition to the EU is the preserve of the right and is in itself reactionary or nationalist. In fact both Tony Benn and Bob Crow, two prominent socialists who sadly died in the last week, campaigned against the EU.

Working class opposition

Bob Crow stood for No2EU-Yes to Democracy in the 2009 European elections, while Tony Benn appeared in the election video. No2EU was an election platform offering a working class-led internationalist opposition to the EU, which is standing again in this year's European elections under the name 'No2EU-Yes2Workers' Rights', on both occasions with the support of the Socialist Party.

Karl Marx famously declared 'workers of the world unite' because the struggle for socialism is international. Workers across Europe - and come to that, around the world - have more in common with each other than with the capitalist class of their own countries.

That has been graphically demonstrated over the last five years, as workers in country after country - from Greece, to Spain, to Britain - have demonstrated and struck over the same issue; opposition to brutal austerity being meted out by their capitalist governments.

For those in the eurozone, in particular, their banners have also often featured demands against the institutions of the EU, which are demanding ever greater austerity for

the 'periphery' of the eurozone.

The EU capitalist project is fundamentally a series of inter-governmental treaties that act in the interests of the capitalist classes. Despite the fig leaf of a few workers' rights, the EU's directives and treaties push forward the interests of capitalism: deregulation, privatisation and the 'liberalisation' of labour markets are the norm.

Defy the directives

The EU is an attempt to overcome the limits of developing the productive forces within Europe's nation states and to enable the different capitalist classes of Europe to compete better with other global capitalist powers and blocs. But, as the Socialist Party has always predicted, capitalism has been proven incapable of overcoming the barriers between states and the antagonisms between the competing ruling classes.

Unity from above, in the interests of the bosses, has not created harmony and a genuine coming together of the peoples of Europe, but instead is creating inevitable recoil from the EU.

Workers in each EU country should demand that their government defy the pro-market, anti-worker EU directives and rulings. As opposed to a capitalist bloc, socialists stand in genuine international solidarity with workers in Europe and across the world to fight for a better future.

The crisis in the eurozone is not over and will enter a new stage, with countries abandoning, or being forced out of the eurozone, or even a breakdown of the EU itself. The Socialist Party campaigns for the working class to have its own independent position: no to the bosses' EU - for a socialist Europe.

No2EU –
Yes to workers' rights demands:



- Exit the EU on the basis of socialist policies
- Reject EU treaties and policies that privatise our public services. Yes to the NHS as a publicly owned, socialised health care service free at the point of delivery – No to the EU-US Trade Agreement. Reverse the privatisation of Royal Mail – No to EU postal services liberalisation
- No to public spending cuts – whether they come from politicians in Brussels or Britain
- Defend and develop sustainable manufacturing, agriculture and fishing industries in Britain
- Repeal anti-trade union rulings by the European Court of Justice (ECJ) and the EU rules which undermine collective agreements, workers' conditions, pensions and pay
- Blame the bosses and bankers for the crisis, not immigrants. No to racism and fascism. Yes to international solidarity of working people
- No to EU militarisation and an EU army
- Yes to restoring democratic powers to EU member states
- Replace unequal EU trade deals with fair trade that benefits developing nations
- Scrap EU rules designed to stop member states from implementing independent economic policies. Keep Britain out the eurozone



European Parliament - no friend of workers

however, be posed even more acutely for the next government, whatever its stripe.

Opinion polls on membership of the EU fluctuate, although over recent years most show a larger number saying they would vote to leave the EU than would vote to stay in. All polls have, however, shown overwhelming support for a referendum on the issue taking place.

The Labour leadership had remained silent on this issue up until last week, when Miliband declared that a Labour-led government would only call a referendum if a future treaty revision ceded further powers to the institutions of the EU, indicating that he considered this unlikely.

Why has the Labour leadership made this electorally unpopular pledge? As it was put in the Financial Times, it is designed as "a sedative for anxious businessmen"

Nonetheless, in order to stand a chance of winning the election, Labour has to put forward some policies that are popular with the majority, such as the promise to freeze fuel prices for 20 months. Modest as they are (renationalising the energy companies would be far more popular, over 70% of people support it) these proposals are unpopular with the capitalist class, who object to giving up even the tiniest bit of their gigantic profits.

Big business also correctly fears that a Labour government would be under huge pressure to go further, as workers that have suffered years of austerity demand that a Labour government offers them some relief.

It is in this context that Miliband has set out to show big business that Labour is more 'reliable' for them on Europe than the Tories. Since then the pro-EU Tories have tried to reassure big business of their own



The Socialist Party's magazine

Socialism TODAY

The March issue includes:

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Hannah Sell
- **Ukraine: The forces behind the crisis**
Rob Jones, in Moscow
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Defend education

SOLIDARITY WITH TEACHERS' STRIKE

FOR
TEACHERS

Martin Powell-Davies

Member of NUT national executive

The strike of National Union of Teachers (NUT) members on 26 March is most definitely on! Now every NUT Association and every school rep must go all out to get the biggest possible turnout for the national strike.

We must reverse the damage that has been done to teachers' pay, pensions and working conditions. In doing so, we will be defending education too.

Even official DfE figures have confirmed that teachers are typically working 60 hours a week. In April, yet more will be taken from our salaries to pay for a pension that many won't be able to claim in full until they are 68 or more. In the summer, schools can start to use Gove's performance-pay legislation to rob teachers of their annual pay progression.

We can't let things carry on like this.

Strike action is essential.

The other teachers' unions NAS-UWT and, regrettably, now UCAC in Wales, have pulled back from action. They justify their inaction by claiming that Tory education secretary Michael Gove has agreed to 'serious negotiations'. Regrettably, the only thing that Gove is really serious about is attacking teachers and education.

Michael Gove represents a government that is determined to cut costs, privatise services and encourage a precarious weakly-unionised workforce that will dutifully do the bidding of hard-nosed managers until they can take no more and resign. He isn't interested in the fact that such a regime also damages education.

The Secretary of State has always said that he is prepared to talk to teaching unions. However, he has also always made clear that any talks could only be about 'implementation' of his policies to cut our pay and pensions and to deregulate our working conditions.

Negotiations within Gove's 'implementation' parameters are unlikely to yield more than minor concessions - and, even then, it will be the threat of ongoing strike action that will be largely responsible for any gains that are made.

Shadow education secretary Tristram Hunt has already committed Labour to maintaining Gove's attacks. Teaching unions need to recognise that we will only win serious gains when we show that we are prepared to take serious action.

All of the indications are that the strike will be well-supported, just as the regional strikes were last year. I hope that the strike will also generate momentum for further action to be called next term, so that 26 March is not left as just another isolated 'protest strike'.

There is no room for hesitation. Let's go all out to build the strongest possible national action.

electmartin1.blogspot.co.uk

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!