

Maria Miller expenses scandal

HOUSE OF THIEVES

photo Peter Symonds

FOR WORKERS' MPs ON A WORKER'S WAGE

Reporting on the recent 11% pay increase for MPs, the BBC noted that: "From his election in 1983 to his de-selection by Labour in 1992, Dave Nellist kept less than half his salary. Along with two other Labour politicians - Terry Fields, MP for Liverpool Broadgreen, and Pat Wall, MP for Bradford North - Mr Nellist chose to "get by" on a wage closer to that of the people he represented." Like Dave, Pat and Terry were supporters of Militant, the Socialist Party's predecessor. For the Socialist Party this, a clear socialist programme and the involvement of the mass of the working class are vital ingredients for a new party. For more on TUSC see page 2 and www.tusc.org.uk

Dave Nellist
National chair, Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition

With memories of duck-houses lingering in our minds, we didn't need another expenses scandal to remind us of the rotteness at the top of society. But Maria Miller, MP and Cabinet member, has provided one. With 'warm support' from Prime Minister David Cameron and some of the other Cabinet millionaires, she is clinging on to her position, as we go to press.

This follows revelations that she 'flipped' homes, claimed £90,000 for her mortgage, and made off with



over a million quid on the house sale, potentially avoiding paying 28% capital gains tax.

In 2010 Cameron promised to 'clean up politics'. But no one will be that shocked that it was a committee of MPs who reduced the amount Miller was asked to repay by almost 90%. Little wonder that trust in Parliament's pampered elite is at a historic low and almost 150,000 people have signed a petition demanding her resignation.

The Con-Dems are well and truly the representatives of the mega-rich 1% - using their positions to ensure themselves a place among that select few, while casting thousands onto the streets via the bedroom tax, and into misery via their cold cruel array of auster-

ity measures.

The Labour leadership have been silent on Miller. Is that in the hope that we won't remember that Labour MPs were jailed for expenses transgressions in 2009? Neither do they have any alternative to austerity - pledging to maintain Tory spending plans if they win the 2015 general election - or to the economic crisis.

Greed and graft

Greed and graft are truly rampant in Westminster - but the fundamental problem is that the people who sit in its hallowed halls represent, not just the richest, but their system - capitalism.

Labour leader Ed Miliband has insisted that he was in favour of 'responsible capitalism'. But capitalism

is a system built on exploitation for profit for the 1%. It's 'irresponsible' to the needs of 99% of the world's population. That's why a socialist transformation that puts the wealth of society into the hands of the working class under a democratic plan is the only way to provide decent jobs, homes, services and living standards for all.

The Maria Miller scandal just adds to the case for a new mass workers' party. The Socialist Party is working in the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition, taking important steps towards building such a party.

If you agree we need an alternative to the cuts parties of the 1% and a socialist alternative to the misery of capitalism - join us!

www.socialistparty.org.uk/join

the Socialist

The paper of the Socialist Party. Issue 806.

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

Break with pro-cuts Labour now

A Labour defeat, said Unite general secretary Len McCluskey, was likely if it went into the 2015 general election promising "a pale shade of austerity". In reality, in Labour-run councils around the country it is austerity red in tooth and claw that Labour is administering at this very moment, leaving millions of working class people devastated and without a choice at the 22 May local elections.

But much heat was generated following Len's remarks to a Commons Press Gallery lunch. There was talk of Unite forming a new workers' party, maybe with the GMB and the RMT unions. The RMT is part of TUSC, the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition which already has over 440 no-cuts candidates in place for May's poll.

The reality of what Unite is doing is, so far, a little different. Len's remarks suggested he could see the union donating money to other parties, or form a party of its own, which would need changes to be passed at next year's Rules Revision Conference, if Labour was to lose the general election.

Nevertheless, Len has since defended the union's political strategy at a United Left (UL)

meeting in London. Unite would continue to attempt to get better representation for workers and trade unionists in Labour despite the events in Falkirk and the subsequent defeat there, which Len does not consider a defeat.

Falkirk

But Falkirk was the jewel in Unite's 'reclaim Labour' crown. A significant number of the 700 Unite members recruited to the Labour Party as part of its campaign were in the Falkirk constituency. The result, however, was the disgraceful spectacle of Miliband calling in the police to investigate.

The big majority of unions, including Unite, then voted for the constitutional reforms put forward at Labour's recent special conference following the Collins Review, which will finally end the remnants of the affiliated trade unions' collective political voice within Labour.

Len's views were taken up by Socialist Party members in the UL meeting. There is no enthusiasm among Unite members to join a party making cuts. Of 1,900 members in the Greenwich council branch of Unite, only two are Labour members.

Len outlined his "Ten-point plan to help Labour save Britain from Tories" in the Daily Mirror on 5 April. It includes policies such as building 200,000 homes a year to employ half a million construction workers (although Len admitted that five million people are in "housing crisis"), the removal of the private sector from the NHS, the renationalisation of the railways, raising the minimum wage by £1.50 an hour, and removing the anti-trade union laws. These are all policies which the Socialist Party and TUSC supporters would agree could form the beginnings of a programme to benefit workers and their families.

Of course, the Socialist Party would argue that to permanently help the vast majority of people would mean proposing a socialist plan of production through nationalisation of the big firms in the economy and ending capitalism. But Labour's manifesto won't even go near Len's policies.

Much was made of the Labour Party's decision to support Royal Mail re-nationalisation last year. Yet its party conference has more of the trappings of a rally than a policy making body. And within minutes Chuka Umunna, shadow business minister, and other New Labour ap-

paratchiks were ruling out any such commitment in Labour's election manifesto. There will be a few sops to the unions but the overall manifesto will not be radical at all.

The truth is that Len and others, have put forward radical programmes which have no hope of being adopted by New Labour. Some in Unite say now is not the time to form a new party a year before the election. But for them, there is always an excuse.

Ukip threat

It wasn't 'right' when Tony Blair was prime minister (because Gordon Brown was waiting in the wings for his chance), after Labour's defeat in 2010 (wait for a new leader and elect Ed Miliband) or when Unite proposed its political strategy to transform Labour (recruit 5,000 Unite members to Labour but which has yielded only hundreds and ended in the Falkirk events). The truth is that pleading with the pro-big business leadership is having no effect whatsoever.

And the danger of waiting until after the general election to draw this conclusion is that millions of workers will not have a party to vote for in 2015 or in May or worse, will

fall into the hands of the Thatcherite Ukip.

Support in the polls for right-wing populist Ukip reflects the disgust among voters at the political system and how Ukip is presented by the BBC and other media outlets as the best weapon to beat the establishment parties.

A new mass workers' party would be able to cut across the growth of Ukip by offering genuinely pro-working class policies, instead of the Tory policies with a fig-leaf of pro-working class rhetoric provided by Ukip. Unite's strategy of trying to push Labour to the left from inside the party has failed. If the trade union movement was to launch a new workers' party that would be far more effective in exerting pressure on Labour and all the capitalist parties, just as Ukip has acted to put rightward pressure on the Tories.

Rather than giving even £1.5 million a year to Labour, halved from last year's affiliations, think what could be done if Unite's money was put into building a new party putting forward trade union and socialist policies, which could gain the support of millions of workers. This should be the urgent task of Unite and other unions currently propping up Labour.

Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition progress update



The Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC) national steering committee met on Wednesday 2 April to discuss the latest progress report on the biggest left-of-Labour local elections challenge in generations.

A further 91 applications to stand under the TUSC umbrella were approved. Check the website for regular updates on candidates in your area www.tusc.org.uk

The number of leading trade unionists, at national, regional and branch level, who have come forward as TUSC candidates is impressive.

This includes many members of the RMT transport workers' union, which is officially represented

on the TUSC steering committee. Fourteen members of the Finsbury Park RMT branch have agreed to stand.

Other trade union candidates include national executive members from the PCS civil servants union, the National Union of Teachers (NUT), the Prison Officers Association (POA), and the Labour-affiliated Union and Transport Salaried Staff Association (TSSA) unions.

There are 109 Unite union members standing, 19 Communication Workers' Union (CWU) members, including four branch officers, a Fire Brigades Union (FBU) regional secretary, and five branch officers of the University and College Union (UCU).

Newham: TUSC offers hope

Newham's left-of-Labour election challenge was launched at an enthusiastic meeting on 5 April.

Chair Helen Pattison reported how a local Labour councillor had looked at a TUSC leaflet which listed policies including 'Cap rents not benefits - build council homes' and 'A minimum wage of £10 an hour across the borough'. A polar opposite to most people's responses, he said: "I don't stand for any of that!" Mayoral candidate Lois Austin said: "Labour councillors say they can't oppose the cuts as it means breaking the law. But that's not true. We've seen £110 million of cuts in Newham, but they have £180 million in reserves while £111 million was spent on prestige council offices. We'd do all the things that working class people need, like restoring EMA.

"We'd set a needs budget. A third of families in Newham are deprived. We'd lift people out of poverty. We'd build a mass campaign, link up with other councils that agree with us, and take on the Tories - or Labour Party if they're in government - to get the needed money."

Steve Hedley, RMT assistant general secretary and a Newham TUSC council candidate, said: "Newham Labour say they're against cuts, but have no choice. It's like saying you're a vegetarian, and having pork

pies for lunch! That's why I'm urging everyone here to get involved in TUSC campaigning."

Coventry: vote socialist 2014

Over 65 people packed into the venue for the successful launch of the Coventry TUSC 'Vote Socialist 2014' campaign. Speakers included former Militant Labour MP and socialist councillor Dave Nellist and speakers from a number of trade unions and community campaigns.

The meeting began with a minute's applause for the late Tony Benn and Bob Crow. Many speakers, including Paul Reilly, branch secretary of Nuneaton RMT trade union, highlighted Bob's belief in the need for a new mass workers' party. Ellen White, a prospective TUSC candidate for Wainbody, spoke passionately about the lack of representation for young, working class women in politics, saying: "All the politicians are from the same class - but not our class. They all went to the same schools - but not our schools".

Jane Nellist, joint secretary of Coventry NUT, spoke (in a personal capacity) about the teachers' strike, pointing out that there is growing anger among teachers at the 'opposition' given by the Labour Party: supporting the attacks and privatisations of the Tories.

Nick Harrison from the Fire Brigades Union thanked the Socialist Party for support during the recent strikes



against cuts to services and pensions. He pledged his support for the socialist election campaign.

Many people, including those enthused by the meeting, have signed up to the Socialist Campaign Team. Tens of thousands of leaflets have been delivered across Coventry by the Team.

The Team is also asking everyone to display a TUSC poster in their window, and if possible to make a donation to help pay for leaflets, posters and other material. Unlike the three main parties and Ukip, TUSC receives no donations from big businesses and millionaires. It relies on the pennies and pounds donated by working class people.

Can you make a donation? See www.tusc.org.uk/donate or call

Challenging the cuts parties

TUSC has contested two town council byelections in as many weeks which were marked mainly by the low voter turnout - but which also saw, in that context, decent TUSC scores. Labour won the 27 March byelection in the South Yorkshire town of Maltby. With just 17% of the 1,800-strong electorate went to the polls. The TUSC candidate, Unison member Gavin Roberts, won a 13% share.

Only 9.6% voted in the Lydney West byelection on 2 April in the Forest of Dean. The seat was won there by the Tories with the TUSC candidate Claude Mickleson, a former treasurer of the National Pensioners Convention, pick-

ing up a 21% share of the 138 people who voted.

In 2014 TUSC has contested six byelections in which 7,500 people have voted, in Salford, Sheffield, Cardiff, Maltby, and the Forest of Dean. Around 6% of them were prepared to vote for TUSC's clear anti-austerity socialist message. By comparison the Green Party have contested 15 council seats in the same period. Yet, despite the profile given it by the mainstream media, its average mean vote in those contests is much the same, at 5.4%. It's easy to sit on the sidelines and dismiss the idea of standing against the establishment parties at the ballot box. But what alternative is that? Give them, and Ukip, a free run and a cuts candidate will be elected unchallenged. Who wins from that?

Hillsborough tragedy - the final chapter?

Tony Mulhearn

'Heartbreak, tributes, tears' was the headline in the Liverpool Echo as the next chapter in the Hillsborough tragedy unfolded. "Let our kids know that he wasn't a hooligan" was the plea of the widow of victim Patrick Thompson.

The jury listened to pen portraits of some of the victims at the current coroner's inquest called to consider all the evidence, and to finally root out the truth which has eluded the families of the 96 dead since 15 April 1989.

To this day, in spite of the massive weight of evidence pointing to a cover-up designed to shift the blame for the 96 deaths from the agencies of the state onto the victims themselves, not a single person culpable in the tragedy has been brought to book.

The inquest has been told that police accounts of the Hillsborough disaster were changed by senior officers and lawyers to remove criticism of the police leadership. Margaret Thatcher's statement at the time that the police should emerge blameless revealed the intentions of the establishment.

Determination

That this stage has been reached is due to the courage and fortitude of the families seeking justice for the 96 who, in spite of being fobbed off, crossing chasms of obstruction, showered with empty promises, refusal by ministers to re-open the case, pursued their quest with unremitting courage and determination.

A key factor highlighted by coroner Lord Justice Goldring was Chief Superintendent Duckenfield's decision to open the football ground's gates at Leppings Lane which triggered off the catastrophe.

Duckenfield's lie that the fans had forced open the gate was repeated by FA chief executive Graham Kelly, and media outlets ran with it before the lie was retracted.

Kelly visited the police control room where he was told by Duckenfield that there had been an inrush



The late socialist MP Terry Fields delivered a 50,000-signature petition to Downing Street protesting the Sun's vitriolic attack on Liverpool FC fans

of fans after they had forced open Gate C. He later admits this to be untrue but by 3.40pm, BBC Radio Two broadcast: "Unconfirmed reports are that a door was broken at the end that was holding Liverpool supporters."

Thatcher's chief press secretary Bernard Ingham is later quoted as saying: "I know what I learned on the spot; there would have been no Hillsborough if a mob, clearly tanked up, had not tried to force their way into the ground."

These remarks, along with the Sun editor Kelvin Mackenzie's vile

was delivered to Downing Street by the late Militant [forerunner of the Socialist Party] supporting MP Terry Fields and others from Liverpool).

The coroner has now posed questions which if investigated forensically should uncover the facts which have been shrouded in murk for 27 years.

For instance what was done to manage the approach of fans to the turnstiles at Leppings Lane? Did a crush outside the entrance develop? If so, could anything, or anything more, have been done to avoid or minimise that risk? If so, by whom?

The answer to that last question is the key to shining the light on and proving who bears the responsibility.

Such an outcome will be a testimony to the courage of those who suffered and the mass movement of ordinary working people in Liverpool who have never wavered in their determination to achieve justice for the 96.

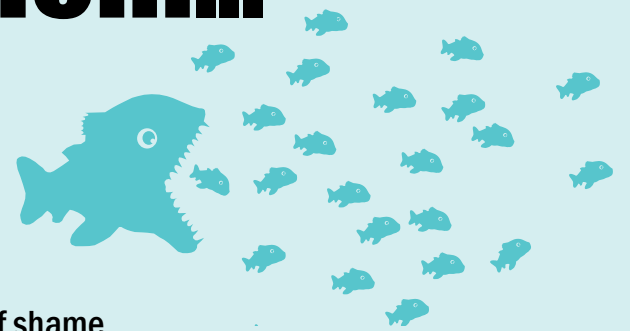
The families are to be applauded for their courage and tenacity in the pursuit of justice. A debt of honour is owed to them for showing that working class people, fired with courage and determination, can render the forces of the state accountable.



The front page of Militant following the Hillsborough disaster

onslaught, unleashed a Niagara of slander onto the victims and their families. (A 50,000-signature petition protesting the Sun's coverage

Them...



House of shame

Culture Secretary Maria Miller's insulting 30-second apology after fiddling thousands of pounds in expenses has reminded the public of the 2009 MPs' expenses scandal. The culprits included Prime Minister David Cameron claiming expenses to clear wisteria from his second property and 'Mr Austerity', Chancellor George Osborne, claiming expenses not only for his farmhouse but also for the neighbouring paddock! No wonder then that they continue to defend Miller's outrageous behaviour.

The nightmare scenario is that a private sector vulture company such as Serco, Circle Health or the much hated Care UK will take over running the Trust.

The obvious solution is to kick out these profit seeking parasites, cancel the PFI contract and bring services back in house.

Zero tolerance

RBS, a byword for capitalist financial failure, has once again bitten the hand that feeds it. This time, the bailed-out publicly owned bank has been advising thousands of UK businesses to draw up zero-hour contracts, which means job insecurity, rubbish pay and crap working conditions.

5 richest families in UK have more cash between them than the poorest 20% of the entire population, 12.6 million people.

No private cure

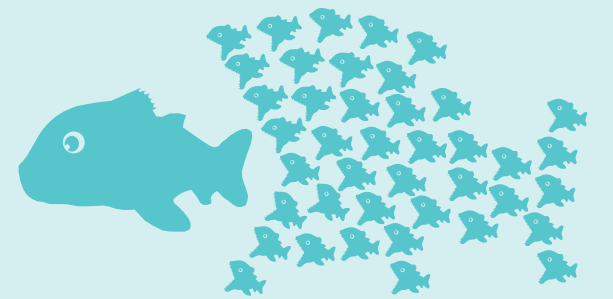
Having been bankrupted by a rip-off 33-year Private Finance Initiative (PFI) contract, Peterborough and Stamford NHS Foundation Trust is seeking to solve its financial problems - by turning to the private sector! Servicing its PFI debts is costing a staggering £42 million a year and is being bailed out by the department for health. If the contract runs its course the Trust's original £289 million capital spend will have cost it an unbelievable £2 billion.

£750 million made by shareholders in one day through the undervalued privatisation of Royal Mail

Revolution

'Warning signs of system failure. No.5 Inequality' "The 85 richest people on the planet own the same wealth as half the world's population but seem oblivious to the risk of widespread social unrest. So, of course, were the Bourbons and the Romanovs." Larry Elliot, the Guardian 6/4/14

...& Us



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



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

OECD report: A system in crisis

Neil Cafferky

"Society at a Glance 2014 OECD Social Indicators" doesn't sound like the most exciting document. However, many of the report's conclusions point towards a deep unease about the future direction of capitalism.

The report was commissioned by the OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) an organisation mainly composed of the major industrialised economies.

The Great Recession, as the authors call it, since 2008, has resulted in greater economic inequality and unemployment, while social protections have been severely weakened

and absolute poverty has increased. Moreover, the so-called 'recovery' has benefited the super-rich at the expense of the majority - the '99%'.

The report indicates that a whole generation of young people will end up on the scrap heap - what an indictment of the capitalist system! It also warns of the storing up of 'combustible materials' within society as young people - the most, energetic and combative element in society - search for alternatives to a system that has failed them.

The report's conclusions run counter to the austerity programmes being pursued by capitalist governments that make up the OECD. It calls for greater protection of existing social spending in an era when such programmes are being

attacked across the globe. It calls for reform of the tax system saying governments should "work to broaden tax bases, reduce their reliance on labour taxes and adjust tax systems to account for rising inequality."

This is a roundabout way of saying that a greater share of wealth produced in industrialised societies should go to working people rather than the super-rich. It flies in the face of trends in capitalism since the 1970s that have only been accelerated during the Great Recession.

However, the change that's needed will not come about from its recommendations. This can only be brought about when workers and young people build their own organisations that fight to change society.

What we saw **Minimum wage battle in Seattle, USA**
'Cities advance their fight against rising inequality'
 in the International New York Times

www.nytimes.com/2014/04/07



The aforementioned article appeared on the front page of the INYT (7 April 2014) quoting Socialist Alternative Seattle city councillor Kshama Sawant, saying she is leading the push for a \$15 an hour minimum wage in Seattle.

Doncaster care workers Unison must build national support

Alistair Tice

Doncaster Care UK workers took a further two days of strike action on Sunday and Monday 6-7 April. This follows two seven-day strikes as around 100 care workers, members of Unison, fight back against privatisation of the NHS and cuts in pay.

The strike remains very strong, with at least 50 on the picket line each day. The determination of the strikers was illustrated on Monday afternoon when 50 waited for two hours in the pouring rain for TV cameras that didn't arrive. They were due to film the burning of more copies of contracts on a deadline day that the company has now extended for a third time!

This shows that most workers have not signed up to the buy-out. This is 14 months pay compensation in a lump sum to give up NHS terms and conditions and all legal rights.

The company hope that by extending the deadline to 25 April that they can pressure more staff into accepting when they are back at work. A few more have returned since the start of the strike action but a hard-core, around 2/3 of those voting for strike action three months ago, remain committed to industrial action.



Outside Care UK's Doncaster office photo Alistair Tice

Sunday's strike began with a well-attended rally outside Care UK's Doncaster office where the greetings of solidarity and news of donations from trade unionists around the region gave added confidence and determination to the strikers. Afterwards, one striker said: "I'm beginning to think we can win this."

Adrian O'Malley, Unison branch secretary at the Mid Yorkshire Hospitals, told how nine days of strike action by 400 admin and clerical workers plus the threat of a branch-wide strike against similar pay cuts had forced his trust management into big concessions.

Vicky Perrin, Yorkshire low-paid

member of Unison's NEC, said that she would be pushing for the union nationally to increase support for the strike.

Money is pouring in that can sustain the strikers financially but more pressure needs putting on the company who are a major player in the increasingly privatised care sector.

Unison should declare war on Care UK, making clear that the resources of the national union are behind the strikers who are fighting for the future of the NHS and all care workers. Unison should mobilise its branches to support the Doncaster "FightBack" demo on Saturday 19 April and organise a mass protest outside Care UK's head office in Essex.

Dave Prentis, the leader of this 1.3 million member union must be seen on the picket line during the next four-day strike over Easter. Such an escalation would signal the start of a serious campaign to defend the NHS against cuts and privatisation.

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

In brief

Sparks fight on!

On 4 April, 30 agency construction workers downed tools at a NG Bailey job at Three Bridges in Sussex. They demanded to be employed directly for the duration of the job. They won this battle and they are now 'on the cards' with full construction industry/trade union



photo Rob Williams

agreed JIB terms and conditions. This followed the change in rules about self-employment which came into action on 6 April. Some construction firms have been trying to circumvent the new regulations by forcing workers into 'umbrella payment companies'.

This would allow the bosses to cut holiday pay and shift employer and employee national insurance contributions onto the worker.

Unite is providing help and advice to workers affected by this and workers have been taking direct action to stop the bosses in their tracks.

37 agency electricians walked off a job at AWE Aldermaston on 2 April. It is a Shepherds Engineering Services job and the workers are demanding to be taken on directly by Shepherds. Under the pressure of the walkout, Shepherds agreed to a meeting which a Unite construction officer attended.

Being told that they will have to pay Employers NI and their own holiday has outraged thousands of Agency workers across the whole UK and further action is likely. More than 200,000 construction workers could be affected.

On 8 April it appears that electricians on the Tottenham Court Road site walked out over the same issue.

HCA

Staff in the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) in London and Manchester began a three-day strike on Tuesday 24 March, and may call further action.

Workers in the Unite union are angry at a pay settlement that benefits higher grades, and at discrepancies in pay between workers on different contracts.

Kerry Feetham, a Unite rep for home workers, Leeds and Manchester said: "Members have had enough. They are angry at the disparity in pay, but it is not just about pay, it is also about stress with increased workloads, constant restructuring which leads to more middle management, and not being appreciated as key staff members who work in social housing regulation.

We hope this action will bring the HCA back to start a full negotiation process with us."

Probation workers unite to fight off no-justice vultures

Chas Berry

Kent Napo branch chair, personal capacity

Private vultures hoping to swoop down and feed off the remains of local Probation Trusts got a nasty shock when thousands of workers took strike action in defence of a fully integrated public service.

The action, on 31 March and 1 April, was the second national stoppage by Napo, representing over 9,000 probation workers, in their campaign to defeat the government's misnamed Transforming Rehabilitation (TR) programme.

Outside magistrates' courts pickets were swelled by criminal justice lawyers, protesting at cuts to Legal Aid.

Many small firms of solicitors facing extinction of their practices have common cause with probation staff in the fight to stop the corporate giants from taking over our justice system.

Justice not for sale

"Justice is not for sale" was the battle cry on the streets of towns and cities throughout England and Wales.

Over 500 attended a rally outside Parliament that went on to besiege the Ministry of Justice building, where a giant 'RIP Justice' birthday cake was delivered to Secretary of State Chris Grayling.

TR aims to privatise 70% of probation work in a planned share sale later this year but the determination of Napo members is causing many to withdraw their bids.

There are now only 28 bidders for 21 contracts with the number falling every week, raising serious

questions about whether the sell-off satisfies statutory competition rules.

Questions are also being asked about the cost of breaking up a valuable national asset while handing lucrative contracts to contractors with dubious credentials.

Ministers called before the Public Accounts Committee in March were unable to provide basic information about what the public can expect from the companies hoping to run TR, what happens if contracts fail and who will pick up the bill.

While giant security firms G4S and Serco have been ruled out because of previous 'overcharging', equally dodgy operators like A4e remain in the field despite having to sack a number of its senior staff over fraud allegations.

A successful share sale in October looks increasingly unlikely.

Meanwhile plans to create a smaller, highly centralised National Probation Service for managing high risk offenders are in deep trouble.

Napo has warned that trying to separate the management of the most 'serious' from the rest would be costly, bureaucratic and potentially dangerous and we are sadly being proved right.

Over £9 million has been spent on consultants, and measures designed to ensure the safe exchange of information are adding a whole new layer of complexity to work that requires forensic attention to detail.

TR is not a 'done deal'. While probation work remains in the public sector and private providers remain nervous about the costs of contracts there is everything to play for.

Visteon: Ford makes offer



Visteon pensioners on the march photo Alison Hill

Hundreds of former employees of Visteon/Ford marched on 2 April from their union Unite's HQ in London to Parliament to demand pensions justice. It was the fifth anniversary of Visteon going into administration, which closed the remaining plants. This was followed by a heroic struggle by the 600 sacked workers which won enhanced redundancy.

This proved to be an inspiration for the campaign that was then waged by 3,000 ex-workers who were robbed of parts of their pensions when Visteon went bust in 2009. Since then the Visteon Pensions Justice Action Group has campaigned tirelessly for the parent company, Ford, to live up to its obligations to the workers. This has been backed up by a legal claim by Unite against Ford which is due to be heard in court in November.

But the pensioners will be hoping that this will be the last time they need to march. At last Ford has made an offer of compensation. It is a victory in itself to force such a giant multi-national corporation to put something on the table.

The march was a success with hundreds gathering from former plants in Swansea, Belfast, Enfield and Basildon. The rally outside Unite HQ was chaired by ex-Swansea convener and NSSN chair Rob

Williams. The former Belfast convener John Maguire spoke, along with Plaid Cymru Welsh Assembly member Bethan Jenkins, Unite officials and other Visteon workers. At Parliament, they were met by MPs who had supported the campaign.

At the start and end of the march, a minute's applause was given in memory of those members who had passed away over the five years. Rob Williams said: "This is the human side to this story. People have died in the time that Ford has dragged their feet. We welcome the offer and thank our union and our general secretary Len McCluskey for Unite's support.

"This offer doesn't cover what we've lost or what we deserve but it is a testament to the incredible struggle that the pensioners have put up, inspired by the great fight of the sacked workers in 2009."

There will now be meetings in all four areas for Unite members to consider the offer.

• Ford created Visteon in 2000 when it 'spun-off' its component manufacturing plants. The workers were convinced to transfer their pension into the new Visteon scheme after Ford made the infamous Ford/Visteon Separation Agreement which guaranteed 'lifetime protection' for terms and conditions and pensions.

System change to save the environment

The recent Inter-governmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report (see last week's Socialist) has pointed to the devastating impact on food production, and habitat, and the resulting risks of increased famine, water shortages and state conflicts if human induced climate change is not halted.

Last November, the journal Climate Change reported that just 90 companies – mainly energy and mining – were responsible for two-thirds of greenhouse gas emissions causing global warming. Half the estimated emissions were produced in the last 25 years.

But capitalist production, where the bottom line is profit, is chaotic and incapable of overcoming its divisive system of competitive markets and the limits of the nation state, and agreeing a global, environmentally sustainable, plan of production. That is why only socialism can save the environment.



Return of the killer smog

Kate Jones
Socialist Party Wales

The old 'pea-soupers' which caused havoc - and thousands of deaths - in London and other major cities should be a thing of the past. In London's worst ever killer smog, in 1952, 4,000 died of respiratory illnesses. These smogs were caused by the burning of coal, both in domestic fireplaces and by industry, while today's version is a lethal combination of diesel and industrial emissions, on top of the natural phenomenon of wind borne Saharan sand.

Dangerous levels of invisible pollution actually occur regularly in our cities - it is the recent introduction of a new Met Office pollution forecasting system which means it is suddenly being reported, and surely no coincidence that responsibility for reporting has just moved to the Met Office from the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra).

An article in the Guardian (2/4/14) quoted an expert in respiratory toxicology at Kings College London: "Two weeks ago, when the air pollution map of the south-east turned red... the BBC ran stories about pollution in Paris... but no one thought it worthwhile to inform the



London hit by smog

British public that they were being exposed to dangerous levels of fine particulates."

What are particulates? They are tiny particles emitted by diesel engines - the cars we drive and the trucks that carry the bulk of our freight. They are a toxic brew of highly carcinogenic chemicals. They include ash, metallic abrasion particles, sulphates, silicates, and others classified as nano-particles - so small as to be invisible.

Out of sight, out of mind? Far from

it! Nano-particles are inhaled deep into the lungs where they can cause numerous health problems - especially dangerous to people with asthma and other lung or bronchial conditions - and contribute to heart disease, stroke and lung cancer.

It is primarily these emissions, rather than Sahara sand, that are the killers. And while people in Brussels and Paris were offered free public transport and ordered to leave the car at home, people in affected parts of Britain were just advised to stay indoors - not an option for many who need to get to work and school.

And unlike the smogs of the past, which were largely restricted to big cities and industrial areas, these high levels of pollution have extended to East Anglia, the Midlands, North West England and parts of Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

In the 1950s, after years of campaigning pressure, the Tory government (which had blamed the smog deaths on influenza) conceded the Clean Air Act, reducing air pollution by stipulating only smokeless fuels in towns and cities, relocating power stations and forcing industry to clean up. Where is the equivalent action today?

Far from taking urgent action the Con-Dems are actually relaxing controls, reducing regulation, getting rid of the so-called 'green crap'... any-

thing rather than hit their big business friends who profit at the expense of our health.

The UK government actually faces huge fines of up to £300 million a year, as the European Commission is currently taking it to court for failing to reduce "excessive levels of pollution" from traffic, despite 15 years of warnings and concessions.

The World Health Organisation reports that air pollution is now the world's single biggest environmental health risk, linked to seven million deaths a year worldwide. But the UK government is taking no action to move freight from road to rail. No action to invest massively in public transport to take cars off the roads. No action to shift energy production to renewables and away from coal and gas. No action to protect vulnerable adults and children from the effects of killer pollution.

Socialists call for immediate action to reduce air pollution, for honest reporting of pollution levels and for massive investment in clean public transport and the freight transport infrastructure.

The 'killer smog' scare may be a news headline for only a few days, but it highlights a major public health issue and demonstrates the urgent need for environmentally sustainable energy and transport policies, based on socialist planning of the economy.

Barton Moss anti-fracking camp: court backs off from eviction Stop police violence

Dylan and Jo Murphy

The Barton Moss Community Protection Camp has been saved from eviction for now, following a recent court hearing. The Court of Appeal has given the protesters an opportunity to put forward their arguments against an eviction order granted by a Manchester High Court judge in February.

Meanwhile, daily protests continue against the exploratory drilling by IGas. Barton Moss has hit the headlines recently over the violent tactics used by Greater Manchester Police (GMP) against protesters. For example the violent assault upon Vanda Gillett.

We joined the daily protest on Barton Moss Lane which tries to block the 20 strong convoy of trucks, carrying equipment and materials, from getting to the drilling site.

As usual the police formed lines and started to push us down Barton Moss Road. We were surrounded on all sides by 100 police officers, and were filmed from all angles - never mind the riot squad of the Tactical Aid Unit (TAU) lurking close by.

What a huge waste of public

money in this age of 'austerity' when public services are facing cut after cut. To add insult to injury the public is having to pay for the huge security operation designed to protect the operations of a private gas company.

The police kept telling us that we were preventing other members of the public from using Barton Moss Road!

One protester, a pensioner who turned up in his dressing gown, was dragged away and arrested. He was taken to Swinton police station and charged with "aggravated trespass". The situation got quite tense as lots of people protested against this arrest and challenged the police over their aggressive pushing.

Police change stance

Suddenly the police lines backed off and we came to a standstill. We later learnt this was due to the arrival of a senior police officer. A quick change of tactics to a softly softly approach as a handful of police liaison officers escorted us very slowly towards the drilling site. Numerous protesters asked him why the police could not always steward the protest in this peaceful non-confrontational manner.

As we got to the entrance to the drilling site, which looks like a fortified military base, the police forced us to the side of the road while the convoy of huge trucks went in. Several trucks had labels on them saying 'hazardous waste'.

The public is kept in the dark as to what chemicals and radioactive materials are being used and how they are being used.

The numerous arrests and routine use of violence by the police has totally failed to stop the protests. Indeed, it has had the opposite effect, with growing numbers of local residents joining forces with dedicated 'earth protectors'. The daily protests are slowing down the drilling.

Despite the coalition government being gung-ho about fracking, Larry Elliot, writing in the Guardian (6/4/14), argues that fracking could help trigger a new economic crisis.

"The Oil & Gas Journal reported last month that 15 major companies have written off \$35 billion in investment since the boom began. Getting oil and gas out of the ground is proving costlier and less profitable than expected."



The coalition government announced in December that 60% of the UK is now 'available' to be licensed for fracking. Oil and gas companies are poised to invest hundreds of millions of pounds into this get-rich-quick form of energy extraction. To extract the amounts of oil and gas the companies are bragging about will require tens of thousands of wells. This will lead to the poisoning of large areas of countryside.

Across Britain opposition to fracking is mushrooming with over 100 local protest groups formed at the latest count. This number will rapidly increase as the oil and gas companies expand their operations. The labour and trade union movement must urgently use some of its campaigning energies and resources against this threat.

Planning for the Planet

How Socialism Could Save the Environment

by Pete Dickenson
£10 including p&p

Special offer to readers of the Socialist



Available from
socialist books

PO Box 24697, London E11 1YD
020 8988 8789
www.socialistbooks.org.uk
bookshop@socialistparty.org.uk

Please make cheques payable to Socialist Books

CUTS AREN'T NECESSARY COUNCILS CAN HAVE A CHOICE

Are you angry about cutbacks to public services? Fed-up with cutbacks and privatisation of our NHS? Frustrated about the lack of decent, affordable housing? Enraged over zero-hour contracts and low-paid jobs? Disgusted with politicians who line their own pockets and help the richest 1% while doing nothing for us?

**TUSC
AGAINST
CUTS**

Get involved in the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC) campaign for the local elections on 22 May. This poster outlines some of the main arguments TUSC makes - display in your workplace, college, on a campaign stall or at a meeting.

BACK THE TRADE UNIONIST AND SOCIALIST COALITION IN 22 MAY ELECTIONS

FIGHT BACK AGAINST ALL CUTS

It's true that the Con-Dem Coalition has slashed local government spending - by 2015 councils will have lost 43% of their funding. Even Tory councillors are hypocritically complaining about that. The question is, what can councillors do about it? It's not true that councillors have no choice but to pass on these reductions - they can refuse to implement any cuts.

Keith Morrell and Don Thomas were Labour councillors in Southampton. When their local swimming pool was threatened with closure, they decided to make a stand. They voted against all the cuts and put forward an alternative budget based on what the people of Southampton need.

They appealed to other councillors to do the same. They pointed out that the council could use its borrowing powers to fund jobs and services to buy time while building a mass campaign in Southampton to demand the money back from central government. The potential for such a campaign has been shown by the huge support Keith and Don have received.

But no other councillors were willing to fight. Keith and Don were expelled from the Labour Party for voting against the cuts and



are pledged to vote against cuts to jobs and services and instead fight for the resources that our communities need, just like Keith and Don did. TUSC candidates will support work-

ers and campaigners fighting against cuts and work with local trade unions.
Photo: Southampton TUSC

GOOD AFFORDABLE HOMES: RENT CONTROLS NOW

Private landlords are raking in huge profits from sky-high rents, as workers are forced into their clutches while council house waiting lists increase.

Meanwhile another housing bubble is inflated putting housing way out of reach for most first time buyers.

But instead of the obvious solution to this dilemma - a massive council house building programme and rent control - the Con-Dems initiated

ed their hated 'bedroom tax' policy. Councils, including those run by Labour, are throwing the poorest in society out onto the streets.

TUSC candidates will demand councils refuse to implement the bedroom tax and adopt policies of no evictions, as well as the introduction of private sector rent caps to make housing affordable.

TUSC candidates oppose selling off council estates and will fight for a mass building programme of eco-friendly, affordable public housing.

Photo: Waltham Forest TUSC

FOR A MINIMUM WAGE WE CAN LIVE ON

The Con-Dems gloat that there's a recovery in the economy, but many workers won't be feeling it as wages continue to stagnate. Large numbers

of workers try to scrape by on part-time or zero-hour contracts despite wanting full time work. Meanwhile, utility bills and other costs are soaring, with over half a million people, including those in work, being forced to resort to using the ever-growing network of food banks across the

country. We need £10 an hour just to survive. TUSC candidates campaign for the introduction of a living wage, including for all council workers and contractors. Councils could ban zero-hour contracts being used for council workers or contracted workers.

NHS: PUBLIC HEALTH NOT PRIVATE WEALTH

The Con-Dems are accelerating the privatisation of the NHS begun under the last Labour

government. Yet there is widespread opposition to the decimation of the health service. Tens of thousands have marched in places such as Lewisham and Stafford to defend local services. TUSC councillors are pledged to push councils and service users fighting to defend the NHS.

FOR A SOCIALIST ALTERNATIVE

The Con-Dems and Labour can only offer a future of continued austerity and misery for all but the super-rich. That's because they defend the capitalist system. TUSC stands for a socialist alternative.

The resources exist to feed the world and provide jobs and homes for all, but capitalism, blindly driven by profit, is incapable of providing even these basics.

Socialists stand for the nationalisation of the banking system and the top 150 companies that control the economy. Running these democratically under workers' control and management, as part of a socialist plan of production, would mean the needs of the overwhelming majority and the environment could be met.

INTRODUCING THE TRADE UNIONIST AND SOCIALIST COALITION

The Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC) was formed in 2010 for people like you to have an alternative that fights for working class people. TUSC is an electoral coalition bringing together the RMT transport union, the Socialist Party, other left groups and leading trade unionists. Candidates have signed a pledge to oppose the attacks on us that all the main parties are united in carrying out. While Labour, Tory, Lib Dem and UKIP politicians are happy to pass on savage cuts to jobs and public services we all rely on, TUSC says that it's time to make the bankers and big business pay for the economic crisis, not us. With over £120 billion uncollected in taxes each year, mainly from the super-rich and big business, there's plenty of money that could be invested in decent jobs, social housing, the NHS and a whole wealth of other things that would massively improve our standard of living.

Join us and build an alternative that fights for the majority!

All TUSC councillors will:

- Oppose all cuts to council jobs, services, pay and conditions. We reject the claim that 'some cuts' are necessary to our services or that the national debt is a reason for austerity.
- Refuse to implement the Bedroom Tax. Councils should write off all bedroom tax-related arrears, withdraw all court proceedings and eviction orders where the bedroom tax has been a factor, and call on Housing Associations to do the same.
- Support all workers' struggles against the cuts, privatisation and the government's policy of making ordinary people pay for the crisis caused by the bankers and the bosses. Defend the national collective bargaining arrangements for council workers.
- Reject increases in council tax, rent and service charges to compensate for government cuts.
- Vote against the privatisation of council jobs and services, or the transfer of council services to 'social enterprises' or 'arms-length' management organisations, which are first steps to privatisation.
- Oppose racism and fascism and stand up for equality for all.
- Use all the legal powers available to councils to oppose both the cuts and government policies which centrally impose the transfer of public services to private bodies. This includes using councils' powers to refer local NHS decisions, initiate referenda and organise public commissions, and consultations in campaigns to defend public services.
- Campaign for the introduction of a Living Wage above the minimum wage, including for council employees and those working for council contractors.
- Vote for councils which in the first instance use their reserves and prudential borrowing powers to avoid making cuts. But we argue that the best way to mobilise the mass campaign that is necessary to defeat the dismantling of council services is to set a budget that meets the needs of the local community and demands that the government makes up the shortfall.
- Support action against climate change and for a future where sustainability comes before profit.

#TUSC

TUSC (@TUSCCoalition)

Don't leave it to the politicians - we can stand for ourselves! WE are the politicians! #TUSC

Jason Turvey (@TSSALTEC)

Len McCuskey - don't wait until 2015, a socialist alternative to austerity already exists. We're called #TUSC!

Robert McArdle (@robmacca)

As a postal worker, I am glad there is one party out there which would re-nationalise Royal Mail. #TUSC

Enfield TUSC (@EnfieldTUSC)

Selling land at Chase Farm hospital. Reminder what #NHS commercialisation agenda means for #Enfield #TUSC opposes

Waltham Forest TUSC (@TUSCWF)

We met someone whose landlord wants to increase rent by 50%! Need rent councils for fair rent caps #TUSC #voteTUSC

IF YOU AGREE -- GET INVOLVED. JOIN WITH US - APPLY TO STAND, OR HELP US CAMPAIGN

WWW.TUSC.ORG.UK

Fare-refusal protest in South Yorkshire

Freedom Ride participant

Around 120 mainly elderly and disabled people took part in Freedom Ride on 31 March. Groups of us caught trains from Barnsley, Sheffield, Doncaster, Mexborough and Penistone travelling to meet at Meadowhall - but without paying. We explained to train staff that we

A mother of a learning disabled man told me how her son travelled five days a week to an unpaid scheme starting at 7.30am. He will have to stay at home

were not buying tickets, as a protest against South Yorkshire Passenger Transport Executive (SYPTe) withdrawing our free train travel.

Holders of Senior Citizen and Mobility passes have had free train travel within South Yorkshire and on Northern Rail trains within West Yorkshire. Not now - we must now pay full fare. Sheffield to Leeds is now £10.60.

Also, our bus passes can now only be used on buses and trams after

9.30am. Previously, disabled people could travel at any time. Many need to travel early for jobs and voluntary work - some will have to give up.

A mother of a learning disabled man told me how her son travelled five days a week to an unpaid scheme starting at 7.30am. He will have to stay at home. And passes now can't be used after 11pm. Aren't we supposed to go out in the evenings? Should we be in bed asleep by 11pm?

Saving money?

SYPTe claims that the changes are needed due to lack of money. But they will save very little. People who can wait until 9.30am to travel will do so. Some will travel by bus instead of train. Many people who travelled by train will simply not go - restricting our mobility still further. And empty seats on trains do not save money.

There is a lot of anger about this. Many of those braving the fares inspectors for the Freedom Ride had never been to a protest before.

One pensioner who spoke at the rally at Meadowhall proudly told us that she had travelled there on the train alone and refused to pay. Several speakers explained why we need our travel concessions back, including a blind person, a mental health service user and a disabled student.

Our ability to get out and about has been given such a low priority. Disability has extra costs but disabled people have already faced cuts



photo Paul Mattsson

to our benefits and services. Elderly and disabled people have more hospital and GP appointments - many mean travel before 9.30am.

Other speakers said that if extra money was needed, the bankers and rich should pay. And how is it that all the police standing around our rally could be afforded?

One woman shouted: "What about the councillors?" Quite right - it's the local Labour councillors who've voted for this. We were told they had rejected the chance to buy rights for free train travel from one train company for only £329,000.

A victory on the day: the contin-

gent on the Barnsley train was so large that a SYPTe official told them that being the first day it was a 'discretionary day'. So he wouldn't try to collect fares! But none of the train staff, on any of the trains, had been told about this.

Continue the fight

Speakers from Unite Community and Barnsley trades council came and gave their support.

We held another Freedom Ride the following week which attracted a similar number of participants. Again no attempt was made to col-

lect fares on the train from Barnsley. When a ticket inspector turned up one of the campaigners asked: "Is it a discretionary day again?" and was told that it was up to them!

It wasn't as easy in Sheffield. A wheelchair user was unable to board the train as a staff member refused to lower the ramp due to him being a protester. A ticket inspector asked for our names and addresses - we refused.

We explained that our protest is not against the train staff but against the cuts. The train set off. None of us paid. The campaign will continue.

Pat James 1930 – 2014

Pat James, lifelong socialist and supporter of the Socialist Party, has sadly passed away at the age of 83.

Pat was one of nine children and was born in the working class community of Easton, Bristol. Her hatred of the capitalist system developed at an early age. She joined the Co-operative youth club which helped form her socialist ideas.

She became very active in the Labour Party and a staunch supporter of the Labour Party Young Socialists.

She was a formidable organiser and became Tony Benn's election agent. She was an activist in local campaigns, notably in the Stop the

Coal Imports campaign.

After more than 30 years as a member of the Labour Party, she concluded that it was no longer a workers' party, and looked for an alternative.

She continued to support the idea of a new workers' party and when the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition was formed she was inspired that a real alternative could be built.

Even with the blow of Bob Crow's death, which she learnt of from her hospital bed, she did not give up hope - she said loudly to the rest of the ward "what we need to do now is to build TUSC!"

Louise James

Help with the Socialist sales campaign

The Socialist sales campaign is well underway with Socialist Party members in different areas trying to find new ways to get our important news, analysis and strategy out to as many people as possible. Send reports of the campaign from your area to editors@socialistparty.org.uk. Here's one from the South West region of the Socialist Party



Selling the Socialist photo Socialist Party

The exceptionally poor weather in the South West over the last couple of months meant that several of our regular Saturday campaign stalls had to be cancelled at short notice.

This, coupled with the fact that many of our members aren't around on Saturdays due to having to work, has led us to trying new ways of bringing our ideas to working class people in the South West, including by selling the Socialist.

Outside workplaces or transport hubs where it's often difficult to erect stalls, we've managed without one

and sold the Socialist to passers-by.

Retired member Patrick in Bristol sells at least half a dozen, sometimes more, at his regular train station sale.

Members in Exeter have begun to emulate him at the bus station, while in Plymouth a whole host of sales take place, some with stalls where possible, some without where necessary.

Members in Gloucester sell weekly at the council offices, again without a table, while one of our veterans ventures over to Cheltenham College whenever he can and sells on his own.

Growing anger towards the Tories is expressing itself in growing interest in the Socialist. During the local election campaigns we'll sell on all the rush hour bus stops in central Bristol and at the local football grounds.

Having a well-decorated table is obviously our preferred option, but where that's not easy to do, we've found that displaying the Socialist with an audacious approach will get us sales almost anywhere.

Robin Clapp
South West Socialist Party secretary

Support the Socialist with a May Day greeting

This year marks the 40th anniversary of the founding of the CWI and later in the year there's the 50th anniversary of the first issue of Militant (forerunner of the Socialist).

Our 'reporters' are actively involved in struggles across the country, 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 the election of Kshama Sawant in Seattle.

The Socialist doesn't just report workers' strikes and the anti-cuts movement, but it also puts forward a strategy to defeat the cuts and to fight for a socialist alternative.

Last year we marked May Day with fantastic greetings from workplaces, trade unions, campaigns and Socialist Party branches. Help

us continue that work and support the Socialist with a May Day greeting this year.

Suzanne Beishon

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

Donate to the Socialist Party's election appeal to help with the costs of the elections for TUSC in the local elections (some material available is pictured here), No 2 EU in the European elections and the Workers' And Socialist Party in South Africa.

You can donate online at
socialistparty.org.uk/donate or
over the phone on
020 8988 8777



National Front thwarted in Swansea

Ronnie Job
Swansea Socialist Party

Anti-racist campaigners occupied Castle Square in Swansea on Saturday 5 April to deny the use of the most public open space in Swansea to the far-right, racist National Front (NF) who had decided to hold a 'white pride' event in the city.

Around 250 people turned up, many of them coming at short notice, as word that the counter-demonstration was on filtered out.

Unfortunately, in the previous couple of days, the leadership of Swansea Unite Against Fascism (UAF) had decided, without consulting other anti-racist groups, to call off the planned counter-demonstration.

They claimed victory on the basis that the police and the council had assured them that the National Front would not be allowed to march, would not hold a rally and would be denied access to all council property. If the anti-racist move-

ment had followed their leadership then the NF would have taken over Castle Square.

Swansea Trades Council, the Socialist Party, the Students Union and others, called on supporters to turn out to make sure that the assurances given were kept and to take the opportunity to campaign and leaflet against racism.

Luckily many people ignored the UAF's advice to stay away and turned up to Castle Square.

When it was obvious that, despite all assurances, the fascists were there, phone networks and social media were soon bombarded with messages calling for all anti-racists to come down to Castle Square.

The magnificent response to these appeals was the only reason that the NF were confined to a patch of wet grass near the castle ruins rather than rallying in the square itself.

They unveiled flags with swastika-based symbols, including one from the Greek Golden Dawn, in an area of Swansea completely flattened by the Nazi war machine during the Swansea Blitz.

In the end they were outnumbered, out-shouted and out-sung by anti-racists, and they looked pathetic.

But we could have had an even bigger turnout and prevented them rallying at all if confusion hadn't been caused by the UAF unilaterally announcing that the protest was off.

The day proved what many of us argued - that anti-racists can't rely on assurances from the police or council but only on our own strength.

Strategy and tactics on how best to oppose and defeat the racists and fascists need to be democratically debated and decided by anti-racist groups, trade union bodies and all those who want to oppose racist division.

Unity of workers, youth and anti-racists can and will defeat the National Front.

Jobs and services, not racism!



National Front and protesters are separated by lines of police photo Ronnie Job



photo Ronnie Job

Save Leicester Race Equality Centre

Andrew Walton

In the last 50 years Leicester Race Equality Centre (TREC) has given advice and support to an estimated 150,000 people.

Leicester is one of the few cities left in the UK with a Race Equality Centre. The city has been touted by the council, with its slogan "One Leicester", as a model of multiculturalism. Yet this has been shown to be a hollow boast by the decision to cut funding for TREC.

Asylum seekers and immigrants in the city still face prejudice. Campaigners for the centre feel that its political stance in standing up for the rights of minorities against the council has contributed to the council's decision to cut its funding. If TREC is cut, people seeking

support will have to go to the Citizen's Advice Bureau, which is itself under-funded and over-stretched. Leicester's Labour-dominated council and Sir Peter Soulsby, the city's Labour mayor, are also cutting many other services - for example nine adventure playgrounds and 133 workers in children's services.

Members of TREC and other local campaigns approached the Socialist Party and Leicestershire Against The Cuts to fight the plans by petitioning to remove the office of executive mayor altogether. We highlighted that just getting rid of a mayor wasn't going to solve all of the problems in the city - wherever Labour councillors vote for cuts, we vow to stand against them in elections.

130 people came to a public meeting called to oppose the cuts. We decided to organise a lobby

of the council's next meeting (9 April). A petition to support the Race Equality Centre is available at: www.ipetitions.com/petition/help-save-the-race-equality-centre and the Save Our Services Sack Soulsby petition can be found at: www.google.com/XGzhUd

The Socialist Party supports these petitions, but believes that petitioning alone is not enough. The council has already ignored the findings of 'consultations'. We need a mass movement to force them to back down.

We point out that there is no need to cut services. The council has reserves, which instead of paying employees' redundancy payments, could be used to keep services open while the council, linking up with the Leicester working class, fought the Tory cuts.

Doncaster: march commemorating miners' strike

Alistair Tice

500 people marched through Edlington in Doncaster on Saturday 5 April to commemorate the 30th anniversary of the miners' strike. Veterans of the strike mixed with the younger generation. There was particular mention for the women of the strike whose contribution was continued by the young women carrying many of the banners.

Crowds lined the main street with the biggest cheer for Robbie Conroy's "Ding Dong, The Witch is Dead" banner. Robbie said "I fly this banner down at my allotment so I just put another stick on it for today. I moved down from Scotland in 1963 to get work, but just over 20 years later Thatcher closed our pit, Yorkshire Main, costing 1863 jobs."

Speakers at the rally were Chris Skidmore, President of Yorkshire NUM, who spoke about how "ordinary working class men and women became extraordinary people" during the strike. And he called for the re-nationalisation of the mining industry to save Kellingley and Thoresby pits, two of



photos A Tice

the last three now threatened with closure, and re-invest in the coal mining industry.

A striker from Doncaster Care UK gave an impassioned speech about their fight against privatisation of the NHS and pay cuts.

Dave Douglas, former Doncaster miner and NUM executive member, introduced as a "class warrior", proudly described the Doncaster

coalfield as having been the strongest during the strike with only 1% from the 12 pits returning to work before the end.

Dave refuted accusations that the strike was futile by describing three times when victory was near, during the two dockers' strikes and with the strike ballot of NACOD, the pit deputies union. He said that despite the defeat, miners were un-



bowed and even in 1986 voted in a national ballot for strike action. He said it was then that the Tories decided that all the pits had to shut.

Special mention must go to Frank Arrowsmith and his comrades who spent six months organising this event which continued all day and into the night with nine bands and Attila the Stockbroker to round things off.

A civil war without guns

by Ken Smith

£8 (postage included)

The Socialist Party's history of the 1984-85 miners' strike, *A Civil War Without Guns*, by Ken Smith, has been reprinted with a new introduction for the 30th anniversary of this colossal struggle.



Available from



PO Box 24697, London E11 1YD

020 8988 8789

www.socialistbooks.org.uk
bookshop@socialistparty.org.uk

Please make cheques payable to Socialist Books

Book review: Silent Accomplice

The untold story of France's role in Rwandan genocide

It is 20 years since the Rwanda massacre in which one million Tutsis and non-sectarian Hutus were murdered by extremist Hutu militias in 100 days.

Back in 2001 Labour Prime Minister Tony Blair used the example of the 1994 massacre in Rwanda to argue for future 'humanitarian' military interventions – in reality a smokescreen to allow imperialist meddling. First published in

the Socialist in 2007, the book review below illustrates how it was precisely intervention by Western powers that contributed to the Rwandan genocide. Blair's 'moral commitment' also led to the subsequent disastrous invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq.

Today, warmonger Blair is an apologist for the current Rwandan dictatorship of Paul Kagame.

Dave Carr

Between April and July 1994 nearly a million Tutsis and moderate Hutus were massacred by the Rwandan government and its Hutu militias. The United Nations, the US Clinton administration and John Major's government in Britain, failed to prevent the genocide.

In *Silent Accomplice*, Andrew Wallis exposes one government (with a seat on the UN security council) who assisted it - the French government of 'socialist' president Francois Mitterrand. Wallis argues that this collaboration was part of expanding French imperialism's influence in Africa.

Divide and rule

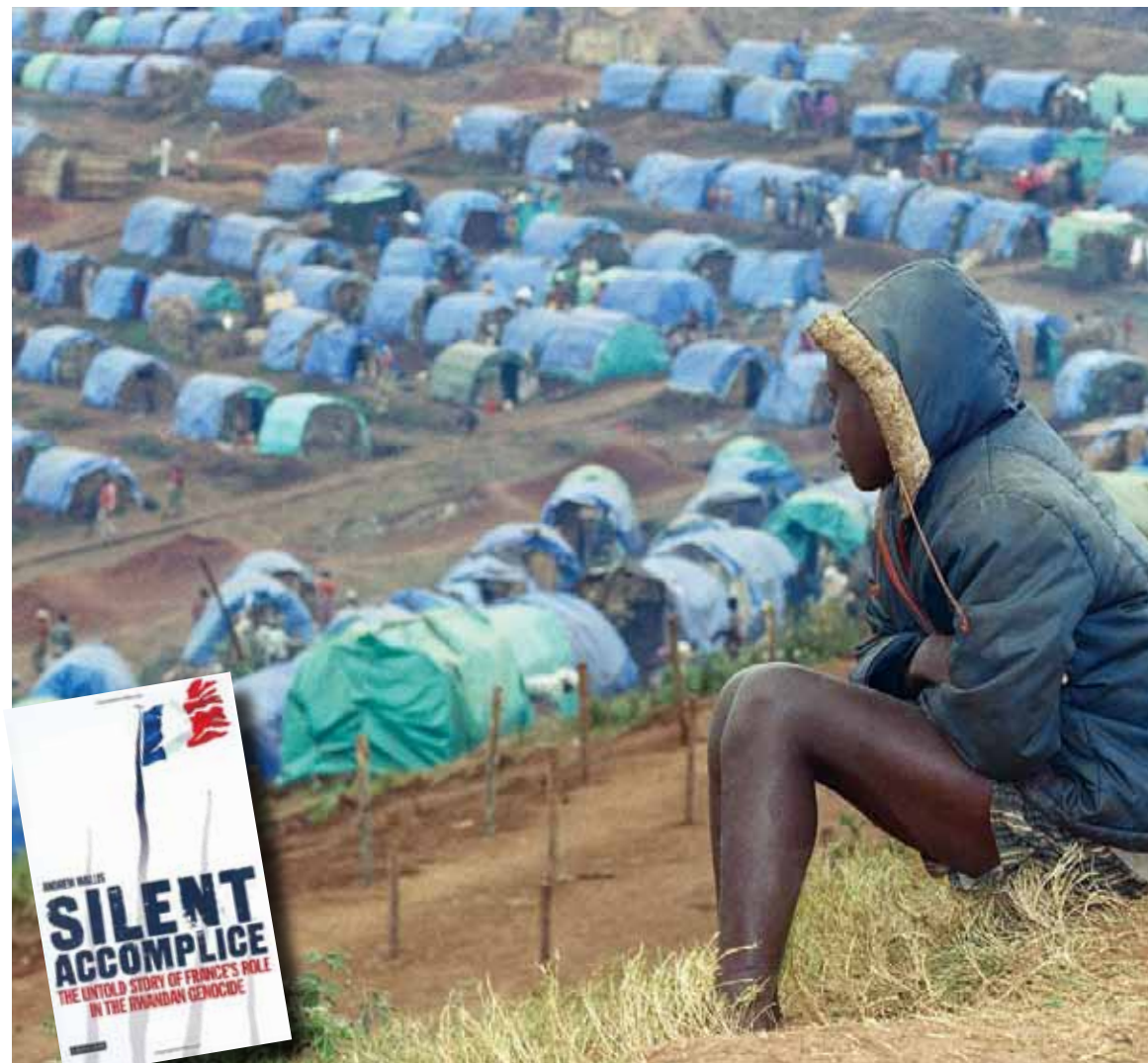
Between the end of World War One and independence in 1962, Rwanda was a Belgian colony. In 1933, in a classic 'divide and rule' policy, the colonial authority introduced ethnic identity cards for the majority Hutu and minority Tutsi and Twas; despite a shared language, culture and generations of inter-marriage.

The Belgians elevated the status of the Tutsis to aid their administration of the country. But prior to independence they allowed a Hutu counter-elite to emerge resulting in anti-Tutsi pogroms.

After independence, Rwanda was increasingly drawn into La Francophonie as one of France's client African states. French colonial policy was run from the Elysee (presidential) palace and was obsessed with rolling back Anglo-Saxon influence in Africa. Under president Mitterrand his son, Jean-Christophe (later sacked facing corruption charges) was appointed to head the Africa Cell.

Apartheid state

After a 1973 coup Hutu chauvinist Juvenel Habyarimana - an admirer of Hitler - came to power. Habyarimana enjoyed close ties with Mitterrand. A one-party apartheid state, Rwanda was regarded as a 'safe bet' for funding. "The land of 1,000 hills became 'the land of 1,000 aid workers' as external aid provided nearly



a quarter of its GDP" Habyarimana, his wife, Agatha, and the Hutu elite enriched themselves at the expense of poor workers and peasants.

In the late 1980s Habyarimana faced a challenge from the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF), based amongst Tutsi refugees living in neighbouring Uganda. In October 1990 the RPF invaded. Habyarimana appealed to Mitterrand for help and 600 elite French paratroopers and helicopter gunships were dispatched under the cloak of a humanitarian mission.

The RPF then resorted to a campaign of guerrilla warfare and much of Rwanda's imported weaponry was handed over to the civilian Hutu militias who began massacring Tutsis. French troops

manned roadblocks and trained the Interahamwe Hutu militia. The Hutu extremist journal, *Kangwa*, carried a full page photo of Mitterrand with the caption: "A true friend of Rwanda".

Planned genocide

In August 1992 Habyarimana signed an accord under pressure to halt the civil war. However, his own Hutu militias (led by his wife) resorted to fresh ethnic violence which scuppered the talks and the RPF resumed its offensive.

A small UN force was sent under the command of the Canadian Romeo Dallaire. But despite evidence of the planned genocide Dallaire was refused more troops by the UN.

The French government actually requested Dallaire's removal!

Habyarimana was then shot down in his personal jet. This event triggered the planned genocide. Within hours the presidential guard began systematically killing those whose names were on a pre-planned list. Ten Belgium soldiers of the UN force protecting the liberal Hutu prime minister were murdered alongside him.

As the genocide raged, the new Hutu 'interim government' was entertained at the French embassy in Kigali - many were later condemned by a UN tribunal of genocide. The following day French forces evacuated these criminals; Tutsi members of the embassy's staff were left behind to face the

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

Hutu militias.

In June 1994, under French pressure, the UN secretary general Boutros-Ghali agreed to a separate French force - Operation Turquoise (OT). This was despatched as a 'humanitarian mission', which lacked transport for refugees but was stuffed full of elite military forces. They received a hero's welcome from those Hutus responsible for the massacres, confident that they would go unpunished and that French forces would maintain them in power.

Wallis gives plenty of evidence that French troops acted in league with the Interahamwe and also raped, murdered and stole Tutsi property.

Few convictions

Despite the presence of French forces, the Hutu regime's days were numbered as the RPF made territorial gains. French forces set up a safe-haven zone where the Interahamwe could freely operate from and helped them to escape to neighbouring countries from where they continued armed raids into Rwanda. The RTLM radio station that had broadcast directives to kill 'Tutsi cockroaches' continued without interference.

The new Rwandan government of Tutsis and Hutus appealed to the West for financial assistance to rebuild the shattered economy. But the World Bank wouldn't help until a \$6 million debt run up by the previous murderous regime was repaid! The EU voted for \$200 million in aid but this was vetoed by the French government.

An International Criminal Tribunal Rwanda in November 1994 was set up to try the leaders of the genocide. Yet, despite a \$200 million budget and nearly 900 staff, it had only convicted 25 people by June 2006.

Reviews and comments

Red Poetry

Dave Gorton reviews Andrew Walton's *Little Red Poetry*

Poetry is often seen as the property of the ruling class. Yet, literature would be much less rich without for instance, Shelley's calls to arms in the 19th century, Sassoon's war poems, Brecht's socialism, or the sheer imagery and force of poets such as Norman MacCaig and Seamus Heaney.

Leicester Socialist Party member Andrew Walton recently published his own short collection *Little Red Poetry* which he says argues for socialism. It includes poems on issues such as the bedroom tax, an EDL march in Leicester and Unite, Falkirk and the

need for a new workers' party. Most readers of the Socialist will share his views but Drew describes his anger in a different way than most of us would in, say, writing a leaflet. Take Triple Dip:

Something is wrong, when the future of millions is described as if we were fruit in a yoghurt, Or sticks of chocolate in an ice-cream pot. Read and enjoy!

X-ray's vision

Minority communities make countless invaluable contributions to the character of modern Britain but the Somali community is yet to receive

due credit for producing one of punk rock's brightest stars - Poly Styrene of X-Ray Spex.

Poly was born Marianne Elliot-Said in 1957 to a British mother and Somali father. Like many men from Southern Arabia and the Horn of Africa, Poly's father arrived courtesy of Britain's Merchant Navy. Poly experienced her punk epiphany in 1976 watching the Sex Pistols. She formed her own band, teaming up with saxophonist Lora Logic to create one of punk's most original acts. Singles such as "The Day the World Turned Day-Glo" became some of the Punk/New Wave genre's most recognisable anthems. Unappreciated additions to British culture are brought by immigration to

film, fashion, food, poetry, the performance arts.

When Poet Benjamin Zephaniah was offered an OBE he turned it down saying: "I get angry when I hear that word 'empire'; it reminds me of slavery, of thousands of years of brutality, of how my foremothers were raped and my forefathers brutalised". But the decidedly multiracial UK Slam Poetry scene is thriving, though it has not yet attracted significant attention.

Daniel Johnson

Problem solved

Tests conducted by the capitalist OECD comparing students internationally show that school students in England came a healthy 11th out of

42 European, American and Asian countries on problem solving. One OECD test told school students to buy the cheapest available train ticket from a machine, but a fault meant no eligible discount fares were available. 'Successful' students were those who realised they must buy a full fare ticket! Who designed that test - a privatised rail firm? Of course, young people in Britain are used to solving problems - such as finding a job with reasonable wages and getting affordable accommodation. Young people also learn quickly. We encourage everyone to use their problem-solving minds to join the fight for a socialist society that recognises and uses talents for the benefit of us all.

Public and Commercial Services Union (PCS) elections

John McNally
PCS vice-president
personal capacity

The ballot for the PCS President and National Executive Committee (NEC) elections opens on 16 April and closes on 8 May. At stake is the leadership of one of Britain's most important unions.

The ballot of the PCS' 270,000-strong membership is significant not just because of the union's size and the importance of the jobs of its members. But because the left-led PCS is recognised as one of the most consistent and outspoken critics of the government's austerity programme and a leading organiser of opposition and action against government attacks.

Under the leadership of the Democracy Alliance - an alliance between Left Unity, in which Socialist Party members have played a key role, and the PCS Democrats - PCS has been transformed into a fighting, campaigning and democratic union. The Democracy Alliance candidates seek re-election based on their record in office, on a programme of:

- Defend jobs, conditions and services.
- Organise to defeat the attack on check-off and union facilities.
- End the pay freeze. Oppose privatisation and off-shoring.
- Fair pensions for all.
- Improved conditions for call centre members.
- Oppose the discredited Performance Management system.
- Challenge discrimination, lack of childcare facilities, unfair sickness rules. Equality for all.
- Defend the welfare state.
- Continue to campaign for our alternative to austerity, including improving jobs and services, investment in public services, climate jobs and tax justice.

The policies pursued by the leadership are agreed by the PCS annual conference. At every stage the PCS leadership has sought and received a democratic mandate for its actions.



PCS's stand against the government's austerity programme received overwhelming support of the membership in a recent consultation exercise covering over 80% of PCS branches. PCS activists and members are absolutely convinced that joint coordinated industrial action is the best way to win on common issues like pay and pensions and the union will continue campaigning to make this strategy a reality.

The government has launched a series of unparalleled and vindictive attacks on the union. Withdrawal of facility time from union representatives and the threatened withdrawal of "check-off" ie deduction of union subs from salary, an internationally recognised trade union right, are just two examples of the vicious anti-union campaign being waged against PCS.

These attacks will not stop the PCS leadership from doing what is necessary to protect and defend its members' interests and from more generally championing the interests of working people.

Nor will PCS be silenced or lulled into inactivity by the proposition that we should lie low and wait for a

Labour government, a government that would be committed to the coalition's spending plans, ongoing austerity and further cuts and privatisation.

The current NEC will be challenged by right-wing candidates of the old discredited 'Moderate' grouping re-branded as '4themembers'. They believe there is no alternative to the cuts and that the union should do nothing but accept the attacks on terms and conditions.

The right-wing candidate in the recent assistant general secretary election did not even achieve support of the minimum number of branches to get on the ballot paper, perhaps not surprising as she had claimed austerity is the "only show in town".

The right wing spend more time attacking their own union than the employer and the government would see it as a green light to step up their attacks even further if they were elected.

In order to meet the many challenges faced by PCS members by a government intent on further cuts and privatisations it is vital to re-elect a strong, dedicated, determined left leadership to defend jobs, conditions and services.

President		
Janice	Godrich	DWP
Vice President		
Sue	Bond	EHRC
Paula	Brown	HSE
Kevin	Mc Hugh	R&C
John	McInally	DWP
NEC		
Ian	Albert	DWP
Mark	Baker	DCLG
Clive	Bryant	R&C
Alan	Dennis	MOD
Mike	Derbyshire	MOJ
Richard	Douglas	NAO
Lawrence	Dunne	HO
Mary	Ferguson	DWP
Helen	Flanagan	DWP
Cheryl	Gedling	Scot Exec
Jackie	Green	MOJ
Sam	Hall	DWP
Elenor	Haven	Land Registry
Fran	Heathcote	DWP
Declan	Hickey	MOJ
Zita	Holbourne	ACAS
John	Jamieson	Rofs
Adam	Khalif	DWP
Mark	Leopard	R&C
Neil	License	R&C
Marion	Lloyd	BIS
Domonic	McFadden	R&C
Lorna	Merry	R&C
Chris	Morrison	Com S
Marianne	Owens	R&C
Clara	Paillard	CMSOA
Ian	Pope	DWP
Karen	Watts	MOJ
Hector	Wesley	R&C
Paul	Williams	DfT

Build on the fighting militant traditions of the RMT

Jared Wood

Following the tragic death of Bob Crow the RMT is to open nominations for a new general secretary. Nominations will close on 2 July and the postal ballot will run from 21 July to 21 September.

With nominations open until July it is not yet clear who will be on the ballot paper but early indications suggest that there will be several candidates seeking nomination.

The role of RMT general secretary will continue to have significance far greater than the relatively small size of RMT (compared with Unison, Unite or GMB). Bob's industrial and political leadership of one of the most militant and socialist sections of the British trade union movement will be a hard act to follow, but it is essential that the next general secretary does follow in Bob's traditions.

Former London mayor Ken Livingstone was no friend of the

RMT or workers on the tube but he was right when he said that any working class person on a decent salary in London was likely to be an RMT member. The militant fighting stance of our union has continued to deliver above inflation pay deals and has held off bigger attacks on jobs and conditions from many employers, including London Underground.

Bob also took this approach to the TUC and was a staunch supporter of the National Shop Stewards Network, which the RMT initiated in 2006.

Bob also led the movement in a political sense. Defending jobs and conditions always has and must continue to come first. But RMT has recognised that we cannot defend jobs, pay and conditions without a more profound political change. All the main political parties now openly support big business agendas including privatisation and cuts in jobs and pay.

Our union has been instrumen-

tal in the development of the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC). No one would say TUSC is guaranteed to lead directly to a new mass party of workers and the trade unions but it has the potential to play a critical role.

Bob was an official rep on the TUSC steering committee since an RMT ADM (national conference) decision in 2012. It is crucial that we continue to support the project and do not turn the clock back to the days when we were affiliated to a Labour Party that no longer represents working people in any real sense.

For these reasons the Socialist Party urges all those prospective candidates who do support the fighting militant industrial position of our union and the political strategy of continuing to build TUSC to ensure that one united campaign behind one candidate can take on any opponents who may seek to take our union backwards.



Bob Crow photo Paul Mattsson

HOUSING EMERGENCY

- **Cap rents not benefits**
- **Build quality council homes**

Chris Flood

Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC) candidate in Lewisham

My local area, the Labour-controlled south London borough of Lewisham, is no longer an affordable place to live. One of the main questions socialists and trade unionists get asked is why is there no decent accommodation at a reasonable price?

The private sector is failing to build affordable homes, most spectacularly in London and other big cities. Even Con-Dem minister Vince Cable admits that "a family on average income is nowhere near able to afford a house at the average price."

House prices in the London borough of Brent went up by almost a third in one year. All bar one London borough has had double digit price rises.

Big cities such as Manchester also saw enormous house price rises. The private sector, aiming for instant massive profit, is not building houses - home completions are still way below pre-financial crash levels.

So how do people on low wages find housing? More and more people are renting and most rents have

gone sky high. London Mayor Boris Johnson recently approved two schemes in north London. He insisted that 30% of the flats should be 'affordable'. By that he means tenants paying 'only' 80% of the rent on the private market. But that's still over £22,000 a year - even 'affordable' Tory rents are unaffordable to most people!

We are seeing the return of what was called 'Rachmanism' where impoverished tenants paid slum landlords massive rents for mouldy hovels. Today it's often buy-to-rent landlords, many of them corporate, who are buying up local houses just to collect the juicy rent.

We will fight for the council to set up a register of private landlords, and a council run lettings agency to ensure the quality and safety of private accommodation. That agency should cap rents at council rent levels.

Councils used to reduce the impact of Rachmanite landlords by building flats and houses at affordable subsidised prices. We say today's councils need to build many thousands of new houses to give new hope to tenants and also put a brake on private rents.

In Lewisham, the council should start building new council homes as a matter of urgency! As a start we call

for the building of 18,000 new homes to house those people who are in the most urgent need. We also need to fight to save the council housing we already have. Lewisham Mayor Steve Bullock has the crazy plan to privatise the borough's entire council housing stock!

Whoever wins the May elections, we will keep fighting for real action to make the borough affordable for all its people to live in. Labour and most establishment politicians timidly accept the government's cuts. We do not.

Help make a difference - vote Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition on 22 May and join the struggle.

Our demands on housing include

- Tackle the housing crisis by mass building of council houses
- Cap all rents in the private sector at council rent level
- Scrap the bedroom tax
- For a £10 an hour minimum wage for all
- Nationalise the house-building companies
- Fight for a socialist society based on the needs of the overwhelming majority of people

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!