

# HUNGRY BRITAIN

## FIGHT FOR JOBS AND A LIVING WAGE FOR ALL



**Nancy Taaffe**

Waltham Forest, east London

One million people are now being fed by food banks. In an effort to cut across the horror and sympathy this figure generated, government sources have denounced the author, Trussell Trust charity, as “misleading and emotionally manipulative”.

The Mail on Sunday went further, sending an undercover reporter to a Nottingham food bank to prove that he could get three days free food without having his story checked out. In reality he reported that he was ‘asked a series of questions’.

And as @KennyDownSouth tweeted: “No, no Daily Mail. The scandal isn’t that food bank volunteers didn’t check your cretin’s ID.

The scandal is that food banks exist at all!”

The so-called upstanding Christian ethics of the Mail on Sunday in Easter Week attempted to portray one million people as scamming the system, asking us to believe that even though many have secret stashes of tinned sausage and beans at home they’d rather rip off the local food bank and artificially inflate the food bank figures. In response to this poor excuse for genuine investigative journalism, £38,000 was donated in a matter of hours - heart-warming evidence of human solidarity.

It’s not surprising that the Con-Dems and the big business-owned press attack food banks. They are a physical manifestation of the failure and inability of capitalism to solve the most basic human needs. In the sixth largest economy on the planet people are going hungry because of soaring rent and bills, austerity measures, wage cuts and un-

employment. The economy is supposedly in recovery, sales of luxury goods are booming. Whole streets in Chelsea are bought up by oligarchs and sit in darkness as empty investment holdings.

There are more than enough resources to enable all the people of this island and the planet to have warmth, shelter and food - but we don’t all have these things. The logic of capitalism is that, as Oxfam revealed, Britain’s five richest families are worth more than the poorest 20%. This is Con-Dem ‘all in it together’ Britain.

Labour is also implementing the cuts agenda, contributing to the extension of the food bank queues. Labour MPs might run marathons in the name of eliminating hunger but Labour-led councils are slashing benefits, jobs and services just as much as their Tory and Lib Dems counterparts. The Labour lead-

ership has endorsed the expansion of food banks by committing to Tory spending cuts if it forms the next government.

We need an alternative. Councillors have a choice not to make cuts - but all the establishment parties are making us pay for the bankers’ crisis.

On 22 May I will be one of the over 550 trade unionists, socialists and anti-cuts activists offering a no-cuts alternative. Candidates for the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition will offer hope that we can fight for a future where food banks are utterly redundant - not a growth industry. Help us build that struggle. See [www.tusc.org.uk](http://www.tusc.org.uk)

All of us standing for TUSC in May will make one pledge above all else: We will not raise our hands and vote for cuts to jobs, services or benefits.

**See page 8 for more on TUSC**

# the Socialist

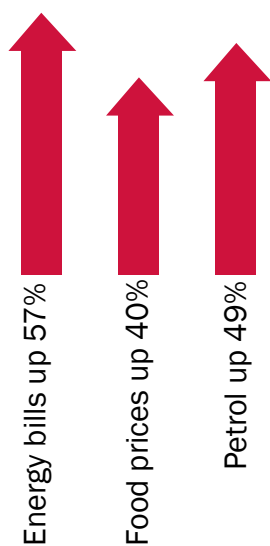
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## New figures reveal capitalism in crisis - not recovery

**D**esperate times call for desperate measures. That must have been the line of Con-Dem Chancellor George Osborne's thinking when he went about claiming new jobs and wages figures proved that his austerity measures were yielding a recovery.

Far from bringing relief to 'hard-working families', the Coalition's cuts and pro-capitalist policies are rapidly turning the clock back on living standards at a terrifying rate. Real growth can however be seen in workers' anger.



Osborne's claim, faithfully reproduced across the big business-owned media, was that wages are now rising faster than inflation. Statistical contortionists manufactured this figure by including fat-cat bonuses in the measure of wages and excluding sky-rocketing house

prices by using the CPI not the RPI measure of inflation. In reality real wages are still 6% below the pre-crisis peak of 2008.

The London Evening Standard (ES) produced a devastating graph. It showed that energy bills have gone up by 57%, food prices by 40%, and petrol has risen by 49%. Housing is in a league of its own with prices and rents increasing at a speed Usain Bolt would envy. London house prices have risen by 22% in the past year, with other areas also seeing significant rises.

We were also invited to celebrate the latest employment figures. Unemployment is down by 320,000 to 2.2 million. But again the devil is in the truth. Almost half the jobless are young people. Scandalously almost a million workers are in the grip of zero-hour contracts, living precarious, stressed-out lives. Unsurprisingly ONS figures show that two million or one in five part-time and temporary workers say they would like full-time work.

### Lack of investment

Other figures reveal that Britain is being propelled back to the 19<sup>th</sup> century. As job cuts in the public sector hit hard and big business refuses to invest its hundreds of hoarded billions in new jobs "worried workers price themselves into the jobs market", as an ES writer put it. In particular, frustrated and demoralised workers, seeking to avoid the monsters like Homer's Scylla and Charybdis of humiliating benefit regimes and workfare on the one side and low-paid insecure work on the other, have opted out to enter into self-employment.

Increases among Britain's 4.5 million-strong self-employed work-

force account for more than 40% of the 'jobs' growth over the last year, and for almost two-thirds in the last quarter. This, accompanied by aggressive privatisation drives, represents an attempt by big business and their servants in government to undo all the gains of the working class over the last century.

Self-employed people are often forced into financial and personal uncertainty. While the capitalist press is awash with tales of wealthy whizz kids, for the majority of self-employed workers this is hard graft with poor returns. Tax expert Richard Taylor worked out that "the average, inflation adjusted, earnings of those who are self-employed fell from just under £15,000 a year at the turn of the century to £10,400 in 2011, a real decline of just over 31%."

As the Socialist Party has explained many times, capitalism is in a blind alley, unable to further develop the productive forces (factories, offices, science and technique), or to use the surplus created by workers to invest in much needed industrial development. So the basics- clean water, homes, jobs, healthcare, environmental protection- are denied to billions of people.

Instead the capitalist classes appear to be retiring from their historic role. In Britain the number of employing businesses has fallen in most years since 2008. The number of private-sector businesses with 250 or more employees dropped 8.2% to 6,600 between 2000 and 2013. It is also predicted that there could be more self-employed by 2018 than the number of employees in the public sector. The TUC reports that rapid expansion of this sector, normally a feature of

recession, is growing fastest among impoverished pensioners, part-time workers and odd-jobsbers.

### Bubbling anger

But, as the Socialist Party has predicted, things will not continue like this forever. The working class will not continue trying to make ends meet while watching the rich get so obscenely richer. The anger that is bubbling below the surface will explode at a certain stage and pay and jobs will be a major factor in that explosion.

A foretaste of the action we can expect has been provided by the construction workers who successfully demanded to be taken on by the profiteering building companies on direct contracts. The frustration is also fuelling the votes for strike action on pay by workers in the NHS, among teachers, on the railways and more. It is what makes the Bakers' Union and Youth Fight for Jobs' 'Fast Food Rights' campaign against junk jobs so appealing to the super-exploited workers in that industry.

### For a real living wage

The Socialist Party fights for the immediate implementation of the Living Wage (currently set at £7.65 or £8.80 in London) as a step towards a minimum wage of £10 an hour, with regular increases to cover price rises. We oppose the pay cuts and pay freezes, parts of the Coalition strategy to make the working class pay for the bosses' crisis.

We say that, for example, the estimated £120 billion lost to tax evasion mainly by the super-rich 1%, would go a long way to rolling out a mass programme of socially

useful job creation. That would mean more homes built, more staff in our threadbare public services, and fewer people forced onto the dole or pushed into instability.

Protections against precariousness and poverty are also needed for workers who wish to remain self-employed. Making affordable credit available from banks would help. National Insurance payments should guarantee benefits when workers are unable to work.

But a programme needs a strategy to achieve it. Socialist Party members at trade union conferences have been winning big support when they argue for decisive action to defend workers' rights. This includes making the case for a 24-hour general strike as well as arguing the case for action on the issues affecting workers in the different sectors.

Fundamentally, though, we explain that capitalism is utterly incapable of satisfying even the modest aspirations of the 99% for a secure job, for a home that is not prey to the whims of greedy landlords or banks, for public services that meet their needs. So linked to the struggles for jobs and decent pay, must be a struggle to achieve all these basic needs, as part of a struggle to change society along socialist lines.

This would mean, as a start, nationalising the banking system and the big companies that dominate the economy and placing them under democratic workers' control and management. Socialism would mean democratic planning to end the chaos of the market and environmental destruction. And it would mean the end to the misery of millions in Britain and across the world. Join us in the fight for a future, a socialist future.

## In the fight to defend our NHS, know your enemy

**Terry Pearce**

Chair, Bracknell Forest Peoples Healthwatch

In their attempts to destroy the NHS the government has established local organisations under the guise of local accountability. In reality these bodies are part and parcel of the privatisation and fragmentation agenda.

The most important are the Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs). They exist in every locality, are responsible for spending about 80% of the national NHS budget, comprise of local GPs and commission most NHS services. It is they that are responsible for outsourcing medical services to private providers.

For example in Bracknell, when the NHS Minor Injuries Unit closed at Heatherwood Hospital, it was the CCG that commissioned a private provider to replace it. Sometimes there could be a clear conflict of interest with GPs both commissioning services and being themselves providers of private services.



cartoon Alan Hardman

Another body is the Healthwatch (HW), which is meant to be the local independent, health watchdog on behalf of patients. It is neither independent nor democratic. It is funded by the government via the local authority, although the money is not ring-fenced. HW is commissioned

by the local authority although the latter is responsible for public health, a clear conflict of interest.

In Bracknell our HW is supportive of all the government's reforms, including privatisation of dementia services. In fact they castigated campaigners for demonstrating

against the privatisation. So we launched Bracknell Forest People's Healthwatch, which is democratic, accountable and fights against NHS privatisation and calls for openness and transparency in the NHS.

We recently organised a survey asking people what they know about these bodies. Early indications are that most people have never heard about them, yet they are the organisations running the NHS at a local level.

Mobilising the trade unions nationally to fight the government privatisation of the NHS is vital, but it is also important to build local struggles. Here in Bracknell we have built a united front against the government policies, involving trade unionists, pensioners, anti-cuts campaigners, political activists and patients.

We think that to defeat the government we must first understand their strategy. While the local NHS bosses do not like us they have learned to respect us, after all we obtained 25,000 names opposing closure of our local hospital and they were forced to back off.

## Minimum income needed for all

The BBC took some time off from promoting Ukip recently to discuss the plight of the UK's pensioners.

Incomes for many retired people have fallen well below what you would get from working on the minimum wage. A lot of workers from now on will simply not be able to 'afford' to retire.

The presenters put that largely down to people not understanding how much they need to put aside for their pensions. Apparently we don't understand either that the state pension is not enough to provide even a basic subsistence level.

The truth is our wages have fallen so much that even those of us in full-time work can't afford to think about putting money aside for retirement because we've trouble enough stretching our wages to the end of the month.

The Socialist Party demands a real 'living wage' linked to a 'living income' for retired workers as well as those who society can't provide with an opportunity to work.

**Ronnie Job, Swansea**



# Doncaster care workers stand firm against cuts



At the Doncaster solidarity rally photo A Tice

With another four days action over Easter taking us to Day 20, the Doncaster Care UK strike is stronger than ever.

Since the Labour-run council awarded the contract to Care UK, its workers have been subjected to intolerable changes to their terms of employment. Some face losing £500 a month in pay, which could mean losing their homes.

On Friday 18 April, the strikers rally voted unanimously in a secret ballot to strike again, next time for two weeks in May.

On the following day 300-400 strikers and supporters marched through Doncaster to a great reception from local people.

Solidarity speeches came from the bakers union, RMT rail union, Unite in Yorkshire ambulance ser-

vice, NUT teachers, expelled Hull Labour councillor Gill Kennett, Disabled People Against Cuts, South Yorkshire Freedom Riders, other Unison branches and health workers - including three activists from Gwalia Social Care in Swansea who will soon be striking over the very same issues.

Recently, a number of strikers met with two of Doncaster's Labour MPs and a representative of Labour leader Ed Miliband (Doncaster North). All that came out of the meeting was a letter from the MPs to Care UK asking them to "negotiate to end this long-running dispute".

At the resulting meeting with the arbitration service Acas on Sunday 20 April, Care UK had nothing new to put on the table. One of the stewards attending said: "That's two hours of my life I'll never get back!"

So, after 20 days of strike action against 'a cost of living crisis' of 35% pay cuts and privatisation of the NHS, not a single local Labour councillor or MP has publicly supported the strikers.

That is why the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC) organised a protest lobby of Ed Miliband's surgery on Thursday 22 April coinciding with TUSC supporters' protests outside Care UK offices.

Care UK striker and shop steward Kirstine Carbutt finished the rally with an impassioned speech:

"At our strikers' rally we heard from a member who had been for their consultation meeting with Care UK regarding the transition payment and transfer over to new terms and conditions. At this meeting she was told to budget!

This from a company whose idea of budgeting is to tender for a contract they knew they couldn't afford to fulfil at its current rates. They had no intention of budgeting. They knew exactly how they would make the numbers fit.

Care UK expected us to roll over and accept these cuts because Doncaster council has reduced the budget and there is no more money in the pot.

Well there is no more money in my pot either. I have no idea how I can tighten the purse strings any more. Council tax, gas, electric, water rates all on the increase.

I can't remember the last time I had a pay rise worth mentioning. Of course, we also missed out on the disgraceful insult of 1% this year because we are not NHS anymore. I never thought I'd be envious of 1%!

Care UK blames the council. The council blames the government. Where does it end? A phrase comes to mind - shit rolls downhill, and doesn't it just! It's not MPs having to tighten their belts, it's not the shareholders of Care UK or its directors and management. No, it's us.

Well I for one am sick of going to work to struggle and budget. It's our service users who will suffer. Staff who have worked with them for years are forced out, to be replaced with minimum wage workers forced to take jobs or have their benefits cut or sanctioned.

We have all watched as our dispute has grown and are now beginning to understand that this is part of a bigger picture about privatisation of the NHS. To other people who work in the NHS, you need to stand together with us because sooner than you think, you'll be wondering whether you should put petrol in your car or buy food, because you've got to learn to budget!"



Join the fightback! Join the Socialists!

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## Zero-hour contracts damage your health

A recent report by the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills found that zero-hour contracts or flexible working generally can have a damaging effect on a worker's mental health, causing anxiety and other stress related disorders.

A fast food worker in Wales describes the stresses and strains of this exploitative practice.

"Having been on a zero-hour contract myself and worked with others on them I can confirm the findings of the report from first-hand experience.

Not knowing if you will get enough hours and earn enough money from one week to the next in order to pay bills

and buy food causes high stress levels for a worker and their family if they have one.

You live with a constant feeling of insecurity and have no chance of relaxing when you could be called in at a moment's notice or risk being fired.

While some workers will prefer to be on a flexible contract, low wage, insecure zero-hour contracts with very little employment rights should be scrapped.

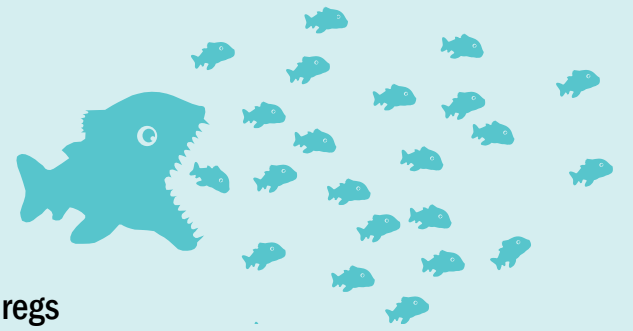
Workers who opt for flexibility should be guaranteed a minimum number of hours each week and should play a far greater part in deciding when to work their hours with their boss. A trade union body should be set up to ensure this process is not abused by employers."



**Fast Food Rights – International Day of Protest, 15 May.**

Involving industrial action by low paid workers in the USA and protests organised by campaigners in the UK including the Bakers, Food and Allied Workers Union and Youth Fight For Jobs (YFJ). See [www.youthfightforjobs.com](http://www.youthfightforjobs.com) for updates

## Them...



### Coffee dregs

Starbucks, notorious in the UK for tax dodging, surprisingly announced it was relocating its European headquarters from the Netherlands to Britain. Had the multinational seen the light after only paying 0.3% of its £1.78 billion sales in tax between 1998 and 2012?

At the risk of sounding cynical - well, no! Thanks to Chancellor George Osborne Starbucks can relocate knowing that all its royalties from Europe will be tax free. Osborne has changed the levying of corporation tax from companies' worldwide profits to profits generated in the UK. Tax analyst Richard Murphy commented: "One of the functions of its [Starbucks] European head office is to route the royalties earned on the use of Starbucks name from each operating country through to Starbucks in the USA".

Murphy also reckons that even taxes charged on Starbucks UK profits will probably be less than the overall tax paid to date in the Netherlands. But what about the jobs created? Apparently, no more than ten employees will be relocated!

appointees.

Firstly it transpires that his new City minister Andrea Leadsom has indulged in offshore banking to avoid taxes on her buy-to-let property company.

Mind you, tax dodging Tory MPs is nothing new. Back in 2010 Channel 4's Dispatches accused several of them, including George Osborne, of such practices.

And secondly, Cameron's judgement seems a bit iffy after appointing bankrupt businessman Tony Caplin chairman of the Public Loans Board - a £60 billion quango.

### Phone manners

On the subject of poor judgement, the Tory party carried out telephone canvassing of constituents in the Merseyside constituency of West Wirral MP Esther McVey during the recent two-hour commemoration service of the 96 Hillsborough stadium victims. 12 of the victims had come from the Wirral.

### Clear off

An inquiry into RBS's business practices, commissioned by RBS, cleared the bailed-out bank of driving small businesses to the wall in order to acquire their assets and boost the bank's profits.

Anyone who considers this investigation to be compromised obviously doesn't understand big businesses' ethics!

### Eat cotton

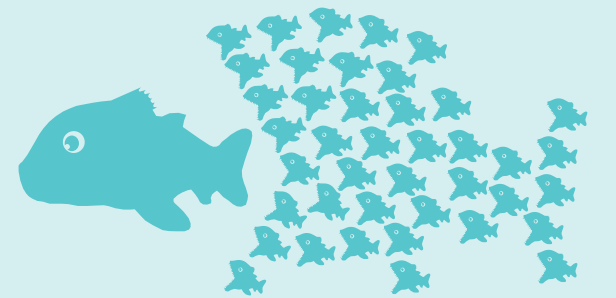
Environmental pollution is a worldwide killer. A report by China's dictatorship revealed that one-fifth of the country's agricultural land is polluted. Recently, benzene run-off from soil at a water treatment plant in Lanzhou resulted in water being cut to 2.4 million people.

The problem is particularly bad in the rice growing areas where hazardous levels of toxic heavy metals have been found. But the regime's solution is not a robust clean-up programme but to encourage growers to switch to producing non-edible cash crops!

### Bad choice

Tory Prime Minister David Cameron is in a bit of pickle over his choice of

## ...& Us



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



# Don't let Gove wreck education!

Neil Cafferky

Hundreds of teachers gathered in Brighton over Easter for the National Union of Teachers (NUT) annual conference.

The run-up to the conference saw gains for the left on the union's national executive (NEC), particularly for Lanac (Local Areas Network for National Action), an alliance of rank-and-file NUT activists in which the Socialist Party plays a leading role. The growing influence of Lanac in the conference was clear from the fringe meetings and the debates on the conference floor.

Teachers are currently in dispute with the government over pay, pensions and conditions. Conference debate was dominated by the question of the union's strategy in this.

The NUT leadership had put forward a plan of one-day strike action in the week beginning 23 June, followed by unspecified action in

the autumn term as well as a programme of consultation with the membership.

To strengthen this Lanac put forward an amendment calling for a day's strike action in the summer term followed by two days of strike action in either half term in the autumn. As well as this, Lanac called for clear demands to inspire the membership such as a £2,000 pay rise for all teachers.

## Clear strategy

Moving the amendment Socialist Party member Martin Powell-Davies argued that it would: "send a message to Michael Gove, and our members, that we are not going to let him wreck the education system and teachers' lives" as well as "providing a clear strategy for stopping his attacks".

Seconding the motion, Cleo Lewis gave a vivid account of teacher's frustrations with Gove's attacks.

Sheila Caffrey warned in the debate that: "We spent months waiting for the NUT. This should not happen again". An attempt by the leadership to close the debate down early was defeated on the conference floor.

The eventual vote on the Lanac amendment was close on a show of hands. A card vote was called where the amendment was defeated two to one. Despite this loss it was clear that Lanac has a large constituency of support in the union. This was underlined the previous evening at the Lanac fringe meeting that attracted 120 delegates to debate the way forward. 50 delegates attended a further Lanac fringe at the end of conference.

A surprisingly controversial debate took place around a motion on discrimination against older women. The motion was moved by newly elected NEC member Jane Nellist from Coventry Socialist Party. It concentrated on the many different types of discrimination older female

teachers face, including employers' refusal to make reasonable adjustments for women experiencing the menopause.

The motion was opposed by the Socialist Teacher Alliance delegates who criticised the prominence given to the menopause. In her reply Jane Nellist made no apologies for raising this "long taboo" subject.

After debate the motion was carried overwhelmingly with many female delegates thanking Jane for raising the issue.

The attacks by Gove on the education system, and the tacit support given by Labour shadow minister Tristram Hunt, have clearly raised the question of a political alternative in the minds of many teachers. A record number of delegates attended the Socialist Party fringe meeting, the largest in many years. This was on the question of 'Who can teachers vote for?', with Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition chair Dave Nellist speaking.

## In brief

### Higher education pay



UCU members on strike last year photo the Socialist

Socialist Party members in UCU are recommending the rejection of employers' latest offer in the bitter, months-long higher education pay dispute. Employers have made the offer as a face-saving exercise in order to avoid a marking boycott which would cause major disruption to universities as the exam period looms. UCU leadership has made the mistake of holding off the boycott while balloting members on the offer.

The offer of a 2% pay rise across the board, with 2.2% for lowest-paid full-time workers, is an improvement on the previous 1% offer, but still falls short of inflation - running at 2.5% this year - and doesn't make up any past ground for the 13% in real-term pay lost since 2009.

Strike action and the threat of the boycott have won some successes. Coordinated industrial action in universities has, importantly, broken through the 1% public sector pay freeze, and shown employers' claims that their old offer was all they could afford to be lies.

Instead of pausing, UCU and other higher education unions should press on and call additional strike days in order to fight a threatened lockout, and coordinate with other trade unions such as NUT in order to build a 24-hour general strike against austerity and attacks on the public sector.

### £10 an hour for all!

400 workers, members of the GMB union, have launched a court case for equal pay against the Asda supermarket chain. GMB has the recognition agreement with Asda in Britain, though not in Northern Ireland. Shop floor workers are paid significantly less than those at the distribution centres. If successful, the supermarket could be forced to increase the pay of their shop workers.

This pay rise should be an immediate step towards a living wage of £10 an hour for all workers. This should include higher pay for unskilled and overtime hours (which Asda workers do not get), and enough guaranteed contract hours to avoid the endless desperate scramble for overtime.

This case has massive implications to those working in other major retailers, who mostly recognise the shop workers' union Usdaw - namely Tesco, Sainsbury's, Morrisons, Marks and Spencer and John Lewis. The pay separations are very similar across the sector, and would allow other retail workers to follow by making their own claims for better pay on these same grounds.

An Asda shop worker

## Rail workers prepare for action

RMT member  
Birmingham

Recently it was revealed in the Guardian newspaper that from the £4 billion in tax-payer subsidy to train operating companies, £200 million was siphoned off as dividends to shareholders.

One of these companies, London Midland, is on course for a major collision with the RMT over a profit-maximising jobs cull. The company is intending to cut its overheads by slashing its revenue protection department (ticket inspectors and associated clerical staff) and getting rid of 150 jobs, replacing them with 48 new positions on inferior pay and conditions.

At a packed and combative RMT branch meeting in Birmingham on 3 April members from various grades were brought up to speed on the situation. The Company Council member representing the affected staff describing the plan as having "McNulty written all over it".

In 2011 the government published its infamous McNulty report which detailed ways of cutting rail industry costs, chief among them being by eliminating staff.

But nobody can fail to see the short-sightedness of cutting enforcement staff which will mean the company is actually reduc-

ing its ability to collect its own revenue.

It was also revealed at the meeting that London Midland has, so far, failed to observe the Promotion, Training, Redundancy and Relocation document which covers rail workers. As a result of this, RMT is preparing to ballot members in all grades for strike action unless the company agrees to rule out compulsory redundancies.

Importantly, everyone agreed that if the company is allowed to get away with attacking the revenue side, there can be no doubt that other grades will be next. Getting rid of guards and extending Driver Only Operation is a real and very dangerous aspiration for profit-hungry railway bosses.

Reps from other grades including the guards stood up and pledged maximum support for the revenue staff which was met with rounds of applause.

Rail workers generally enjoy better than average pay and conditions but this is only as a result of the struggle and sacrifice of previous generations of rail workers and the willingness of today's workers to defend conditions.

Once again it could be necessary to take strike action to defend ourselves and prove to London Midland management that we are united and are not going to be picked off one grade at a time.



Angry construction workers attend a Unite branch meeting in London. The meeting room was too small to accommodate all the workers wanting to fight bogus self-employment and for proper employment rights. photo Rob Williams

## CWU conference: Renationalise Royal Mail!

Clive Walder  
CWU Birmingham, Black Country and Worcester branch

The most important debate at the forthcoming Communication Workers Union (CWU) conference will be over the privatisation of Royal Mail.

Propositions submitted call on the next Labour government to carry out Labour's policy to renationalise Royal Mail. The arrogant denunciation made by the shadow Business Secretary hours after that policy was passed at last year's Labour Party conference has prompted several CWU branches, and not the ones that would be expected, to table propositions calling for a review of the union's relationship with the Labour Party.

A proposition from Socialist Party supporters calls for the union to initiate discussions with the rest of the trade union movement, aiming to secure real political representation for workers. Other propositions call for a ballot on whether any more political fund money should be donated to Labour if the next Labour government fails to renationalise Royal Mail.

Many other propositions still have illusions in a Labour government reversing the Con-Dem government's policies but there are propositions calling for the repeal of anti-trade

union laws and the immediate abolition of the bedroom tax.

There is also a proposition calling on the union to make a donation to the Workers And Socialist Party (WASP) election fund for the South African general election.

In the telecoms occupational conference the problem of performance management in BT and bullying in the workplace continue to attract motions. While the union executive has tabled a motion congratulating itself on its latest agreement with BT, two branches submitted propositions calling for an industrial action ballot by the end of July if real improvement isn't made.

Branches are becoming concerned that an agreement made by the BT-friendly executive, allowing for inferior pay and conditions for new call centre staff, is now being used by BT as the norm for recruiting all new staff. The executive is being instructed to agree to no more recruitment on these terms and conditions.

There is the beginnings of resistance to the blank cheque handed to BT by the executive. Although the current leadership will control the union in the short term, its support is beginning to be undermined. Branches not normally associated with opposition to the executive are beginning to stand up and be counted.



Striking rail workers (with Bob Crow, centre) defending pay and jobs photo SP Wales



# Why is there a housing crisis?



Caroline Vincent

The Daily Telegraph predicted that 2014 will be another profitable year for homeowners, suggesting that "the spring could be a great time to go for that investment-cum-country-house you have had your eye on."

What a luxury for a privileged few, to be able to snap up another property, sit back and watch the value soar! A stark contrast to the situation that most of us are facing. Homelessness in England has increased by a third since 2010, and home ownership is now at its lowest level in 25 years.

Most building companies are proud of their massive and rising profits. But while profits may be increasing, output in the building sector is 11.3% below its pre-crisis peak. Last year only 109,370 new homes were built in England, when 240,000 new homes a year are needed in order to meet demand. The consequence of this shortage of homes is sky high rents and house prices.

Renting used to be seen as a temporary stage before getting on the property ladder, but with house prices rising twice as fast as wages, the chance of becoming a homeowner is now little more than a dream for most people.

Currently rents take up an average of 50% of disposable income, a trend that is only likely to worsen. Moreover, the number of housing benefit claimants who work has risen by 104% since 2009, which says a lot about intensifying exploitation and casualisation in the workforce.

## Housing benefit

£24 billion pounds of taxpayer's money a year goes on housing benefit - most of which is going in the pockets of private landlords. Providing council housing with genuinely affordable rents would reduce the bill.

It is also well established that money spent on house building stimulates economic growth faster than any other industry - every £1 spent on housing generates £2.41 in the wider economy, and every new home creates 2.3 jobs.



Genuinely affordable housing is desperately needed photo Socialist Party



Campaigning for rent control photo Sarah Wrack

There are factors other than alleged red tape that can block house building.

## 'Land-banking'

While the working class suffer, profits roll in for the rich, with land prices having grown by a factor of 16 between 1983 and 2007.

This has led to the super-rich engaging in a practice known as 'land-banking', creating a situation where homes are not built despite the

existence of planning permission. Such land is then sat on until such a time as it can be built on even more profitably.

A report for the Greater London Assembly in 2012 revealed that 45% of homes for which planning permission had been granted would not be built because the companies that secured them are not in the building business!

Few believe the Tories lies, but the week before David Cameron's arrival at Downing Street in 2010, speak-

## No need for affordable homes

Milton Keynes Tory council leadership has criticised the government for scrapping the requirement for private developers to build affordable homes, saying: "People won't be able to afford to live in Milton Keynes". Deputy leader of the council, David Hopkins, wrote to the planning minister saying the government must drop the policy "that unfairly and inappropriately favours the interest of developers over the needs of present and future residents."

Separately, after questions in parliament the planning minister admitted that the government's new garden cities will not have to include any affordable homes at all.

ing on the topic of social housing he boasted: "The Conservative position... is very clear: we support social housing, we will protect it, and we respect social tenants' rights."

This 'support' obviously doesn't stretch as far as to actually provide social housing, as growing waiting lists illustrate - some 4.5 million people and counting.

The government's affordable housing budget for 2011-2015 has been almost halved. The social rented housing model has now been

dropped in favour of an 'affordable rent' tenure. New homes built will be let at up to 80% of local market rents with 'flexible' tenancies of a minimum of two years instead of secure lifetime tenancies.

This is just the latest in a long line of attacks. The Tories' 1996 Housing Act replaced a homeless person's legal right to permanent accommodation with temporary housing for up to two years.

## Stock transfer

This vicious attack was then followed by New Labour's demunicipalisation of social housing through 'stock transfer' to housing associations and by acting to expand the role of private providers and finance in this sector.

The 2011 Localism Act brought about by the Con-Dems has given teeth to the Tories' 'big society' vision of privatisation and charity-based welfare. The housing crisis has again been framed in such a way that blame has been shifted towards so-called 'scroungers' putting a drain on society.

House building should exist to provide shelter for all, but under capitalism, as with any other industry, the main aim becomes to make money for those at the top. Why would big business worry about providing roofs over people's heads if there is no profit to be made?

## Our demands on housing include:

- Tackle the housing crisis by mass building and renovation 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 alternative to capitalism

## Fighting anti-union housing bosses

Bryan Kennedy, convenor for Unite the union at One Housing group spoke to the Socialist.

I have been suspended from work since 12 February. I could well be dismissed at my hearing on 23 April (after the Socialist goes to press - Eds). Last year I led a strike for eleven days which managed to stave off pay cuts and also won compensation payments.

We were about to launch a campaign - not for a living wage, but for a minimum wage, for night staff who were on £3.79 an hour! The day after, I was suspended from my workplace. They came up with a lot of charges that were dropped but after a massive fishing trip, came up with other charges after I left.

One Housing builds 4,500 flats a year in London. That's a licence to print money so they make huge surpluses. Their care and support section is also expanding fast



The campaign wristband photo the Socialist

mainly by cutting pay to undercut other providers.

After they took over a stock transfer group in Tower Hamlets, One Housing sacked the convenor, a member of Unison, openly saying the union was subversive of their 'corporate agenda'. They don't worry about the notion of unfair dismissal.

One Housing say Unite is political but CEO Mick Sweeney has spoken at Tory party conference and invited Theresa May, Boris Johnson and other top Con-Dems to speak at his own conference centre.

We made tangible gains in our workplace and our union branch grew fivefold, so we are not just ac-

cepting this attack. Workers in One Housing have shown they want a voice by joining a union and supporting their convenor by striking against my dismissal.

We can't let them get away with anti-union behaviour again and again. We want people in the trade union movement to support us. If an employer that claims to be the tenants' friend treats its staff so badly, you wonder what kind of advocacy they are giving their clients.

Our protest is called I'm Bryan (www.housingworkers.org.uk) which has t-shirts, wristbands and determination and will carry on fighting whatever the 23 April hearing decides.

## End rip-off letting agents fees

Iain Dalton

Anyone who's lived in private rented property probably know its problems such as poor quality, high rents and short-term tenancies. Shelter's 2013 report, Letting Agencies: the price you pay, exposed the sky-high fees letting agencies were charging just for 'arranging' a tenancy.

Around nine million people in the UK rent their homes privately, but the turnover of housing in this sector is high.

Increasingly, properties are let or managed by letting agencies on behalf of landlords, partly due to the boom in buy-to-let mortgages. There are now over 15,000 letting agencies in the UK.

These agencies charge landlords a percentage of rent for their services but also charge tenants upfront fees.

The bewildering variety of fees includes admin charges, credit checks, inventory checks - plus renewal fees if you want to extend the tenancy between the usual one

year length or cleaning charges levied after you leave.

The average letting fee last year was £355, but one in seven was charged over £500 when the weekly average rent for a property was £164. On average tenants are charged for three fees - 38% are charged for four or more.

## Profit

Understandably, many people struggle to pay these as well as their deposit and first rent instalment. 27% of those using a letting agency had to borrow to cover the fees. 17% cut down on food or heating to pay the fees. Rents too increased, on average by £300 a year.

Private sector landlords don't let properties to tenants from the goodness of their hearts, they aim to make a profit. Tenants' needs are secondary to this. We need a massive council house building programme to create quality affordable housing.

This would really meet tenants' needs.



# SCOTLAND: CAPITALIST 'PROJECT FEAR' BACKFIRING?

## The socialist case for independence

Philip Stott  
Socialist Party Scotland

There is growing fear, horror would not be too strong a word, among the capitalist establishment in Britain at the possibility of a majority Yes vote on 18 September in the Scottish independence referendum.

The editorials and commentators of the 'august' journals of British capitalism are awash with concern at increasing support for independence in the last few months.

Typical of these was columnist Philip Stephens writing in the Financial Times on 10 April: "I am beginning to fear that he [Cameron] will be remembered instead as the prime minister who watched Britain amble into break-up."

Martin Kettle warned in the Guardian on 16 April: "One way or another the UK is shifting beneath our feet right now... Scotland is significantly more likely to vote Yes to independence in five months time than it was five months ago."

This wave of concern comes in the wake of a series of opinions polls throughout January, February and March that have shown support for independence increase to 44% on average. Worryingly for the pro-union side the rise in support for a Yes vote has come despite the unleashing of a barrage of threats about the economic consequences of independence.

The 'Dambusters Strategy', the name given to it by the Tory leadership, has thus far utterly failed.

### Project Fear is failing

The governor of the Bank of England Mark Carney kicked off a coordinated intervention by British capitalism in January by pointing to the inevitable difficulties of a currency union between Scotland and the rest of the UK, post

independence.

He was quickly followed north to Edinburgh by George Osborne who delivered his 'Sermon on the Pound' two weeks later: "If Scotland walks away from the UK, it walks away from the UK pound."

Within hours Labour's Ed Balls had given the same message: "Alex Salmond [Scottish National Party leader] is saying to people that you can have independence and keep the pound and the Bank of England. That is not going to happen."

Lib Dem Treasury secretary Danny Alexander insisted it was "crystal clear a currency union would create unacceptable risks both for Scotland and the rest of the United Kingdom."

A deluge of announcements by big business quickly followed this choreographed assault. RBS claimed they would have to move parts of its business to England, as did Lloyds, Tesco Bank and Scottish Widows. Oil giants Shell and BP insisted that a Yes vote would cause them major problems.

The vast majority of the capitalist media, who are staunchly opposed to the break-up of the UK, have regularly churned out scare stories to assist in this campaign - "Power bills will rise", "elderly care will be unsustainable", "supermarkets will increase food prices" and the "pensions system will collapse" are typical.

No doubt the calculation was that this propaganda would deliver a knockout blow to support for independence. Instead it has had the opposite effect. But there has also been another unintended consequence of this intervention: a dramatically increased politicisation of the campaign which is driving sections of the working class and young people to the left.

### 'Project Fear'

This is not reflected by the policy of the SNP leadership who are desperate to prove themselves a safe pair of hands for big business interests.

Support for Yes was already highest among the hardest-hit victims of austerity who are increasingly looking towards independence as a possible escape route from unending cuts and falling living standards. An opinion poll in December 2013 found that support for independence was 47% among the poorest fifth of households in Scotland. In contrast, among the wealthiest fifth backing for a Yes vote stood at 26%.

The sharpened politicisation which has emerged under the hammer blow of the attacks of the big business dominated 'Project Fear' has entrenched support for a Yes vote even further among significant sections of the working class.

These developments drove former Labour minister and ex-secretary general of Nato George Robertson to claim: "The loudest cheers for

the break-up of Britain would be from our adversaries and enemies... the forces of darkness would simply love it."

All three main pro-union parties are now promising more powers for Scotland, to bolster support for a No vote in September. The stick will still be wielded, but the failure of Project Fear means the carrot of enhanced devolution is now needed.

The strategists of big business and their political mouthpieces are now openly discussing the nightmare scenario for British capitalism - the break-up of the UK. But they will fight tooth and nail to defend their class interests and to try and ensure a No majority in September.

As an editorial in the Financial Times put it: "what is not in doubt - and has been too little discussed - is that the rest of the UK would be weakened. The international status of the 'rump UK' would be diminished. Britain's prized reputation for political stability would slip; investor confidence would be lost."

Or, as Tory Prime Minister David Cameron put it recently: "independence would rip the rug from under our reputation."

### United in austerity

A major stumbling block for the political parties spearheading the No campaign is their diminished levels of social support in Scotland. The Labour/Tory/Lib Dem pro-austerity lash-up has virtually no activist base on the ground.

Ed Milliband and Ed Balls' declaration that they will stick to Tory austerity if elected in 2015 has bolstered support for a Yes vote among Labour voters. As has the incredible decision by Labour MPs to vote for the Tory cap on welfare at Westminster in March.

The Scottish Labour leadership is still tarnished after calling for an 'end to the something for nothing culture' under the SNP. A reference to free tuition and prescriptions and bus travel for the elderly.

In contrast to the Better Together campaign 'Yes Scotland', although dominated at the top by the SNP leadership, has hundreds of local campaigns and thousands of activists - many of them not members of the SNP. The official Yes Scotland propaganda is largely based on the SNP's White Paper for independence. It proposes limited reforms, a pledge to increase the minimum wage by inflation, to double the number of hours parents are entitled to for childcare for three and four year olds and to scrap Trident nuclear weapons.

Yet, average wages in Scotland have fallen by 8% since 2009. Almost 500,000 workers in Scotland are earning less than the living wage of £7.45 an hour. There has been a 400% increase in the number of people using food banks in Scotland in the last year.

A recent charities report entitled Scotland's Outlook declared a 'humanitarian crisis' as a 'poverty storm engulfs Scotland'. It revealed that 870,000 people in Scotland were living in poverty, which the report articulated in language normally used to describe an international disaster zone. A further £6 billion is due to be cut from benefits and welfare in Scotland over the next two years by the Con-Dem Coalition.

"EU would force Scottish banks to move to England"

Daily Mail

"Scottish independence will bring 'guaranteed' costs, warns Weir Group"

Guardian

"Power bills will rise."

"Alex Salmond's separatist paradise will turn many of its own into foreigners"

Telegraph

"Elderly care will be unsustainable."

"Supermarkets will increase food prices"

"Pensions system will collapse."

### SNP - change flag, not system

Under these conditions the SNP's timid proposals will be like attempting to empty an ocean with a teaspoon. The White Paper from the Scottish government confirmed that under independence the SNP intend to continue with austerity and tax cuts for big business. They are opposed to even modest measures of public ownership, including of the profiteering gas and electricity companies.

Plans for a currency union with the rest of the UK underpin the SNP's proposals. It would be the "best option for business". Under Salmond's plan, an independent Scotland would cede control over interest rates to the Bank of England and, in practice, give up a significant degree of control over Scottish budgets as well. Such a euro-style straitjacket would bind an independent capitalist Scotland into long-term austerity. This would leave a Scottish government unable to increase public spending and put an end to cuts under these rules - or risk explosion from the currency zone.

A separate Scottish currency would not offer an automatic way out either. Only a wide-ranging programme of socialist measures, including a refusal to pay the debt stacked up by the bailout of the banks in 2008/09, linked to the full democratic nationalisation of the banking system and the major sectors of the economy can lay the basis for a way forward and a full reversal of the cuts.

### Socialist alternative needed

The desires of millions of working class people for an end to austerity will not be met under the SNP's plans. Socialist Party Scotland supports a Yes vote but we are opposed to the SNP's pro-business blueprint. Instead, we are playing a key role in building a socialist campaign for the independence referendum alongside Tommy Sheridan and others.

The overwhelming majority of people who are attracted to independence are seeking a solution to savage austerity and a way out of the crisis. This has created a unique vacuum for ideas that are far to the left of the official Yes Scotland campaign.

The space that has opened up for a socialist case for independence was reflected in late January when Tommy Sheridan was invited to address a meeting organised by independence supporters in Kirkcaldy. His speech was filmed and sent out via YouTube and has been watched 120,000 times.

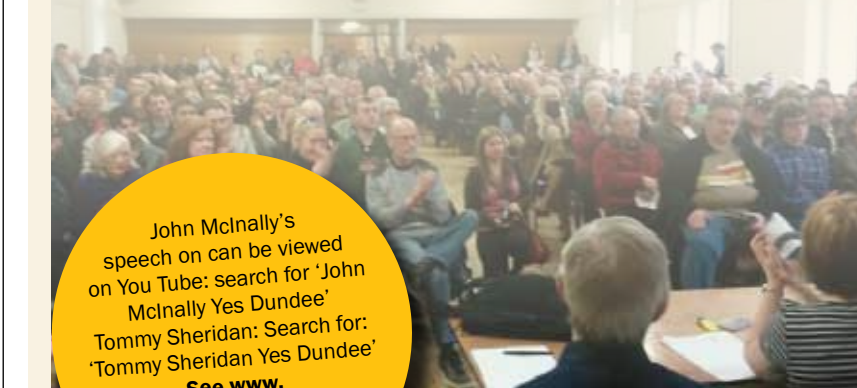
Tommy raised many good points on the need for public ownership, an end to cuts and low pay and for an independent socialist Scotland. Since then hundreds of working class people have been turning up to hear Tommy Sheridan speak at public meetings, looking for a socialist and left-wing case for independence that addresses their needs. There is huge potential for socialist ideas to grow in the next few months with such a campaign.

Whatever the outcome of the referendum in September, the struggle against cuts and austerity will continue. As will the need to build a new mass workers' party with a socialist programme to help end the nightmare of capitalism and build a socialist future.

### We say:

- Stop austerity and reverse the cuts
- Introduce a living wage of £10 an hour and end zero-hour contracts. Proper jobs and trade union rights for all workers
- End the attacks on welfare - for a living income for all
- Build a new mass working class party based on the trade unions, socialists and anti-cuts campaigners
- Bring into public ownership the banks, oil and the big corporations that dominate the economy under democratic working class control
- For an independent socialist Scotland as a step to a socialist confederation with England, Wales and Ireland and a socialist Europe

### Queuing up to hear socialist ideas



John McNally's speech on can be viewed on YouTube: search for 'John McNally Yes Dundee' Tommy Sheridan: Search for: 'Tommy Sheridan Yes Dundee' See www.socialistpartyscotland.org.uk for analysis of the referendum

hour contracts, etc. But to do that socialist policies are needed and a party to deliver them.

Tommy Sheridan made a very powerful speech railing against poverty, food banks and cuts. He lacerated the Labour Party and Project Fear and called for public ownership of gas, electricity, oil and the pharmaceutical industry, for a living wage and an end to zero-hour contracts and the removal of Trident.

350 people attended the 'socialist case for independence' meeting in Dundee on 15 April to hear Tommy Sheridan and John McNally, vice-president of the PCS union, speaking as a Socialist Party member. One hundred people had to stand as all 240 seats were full 15 minutes before the meeting started.

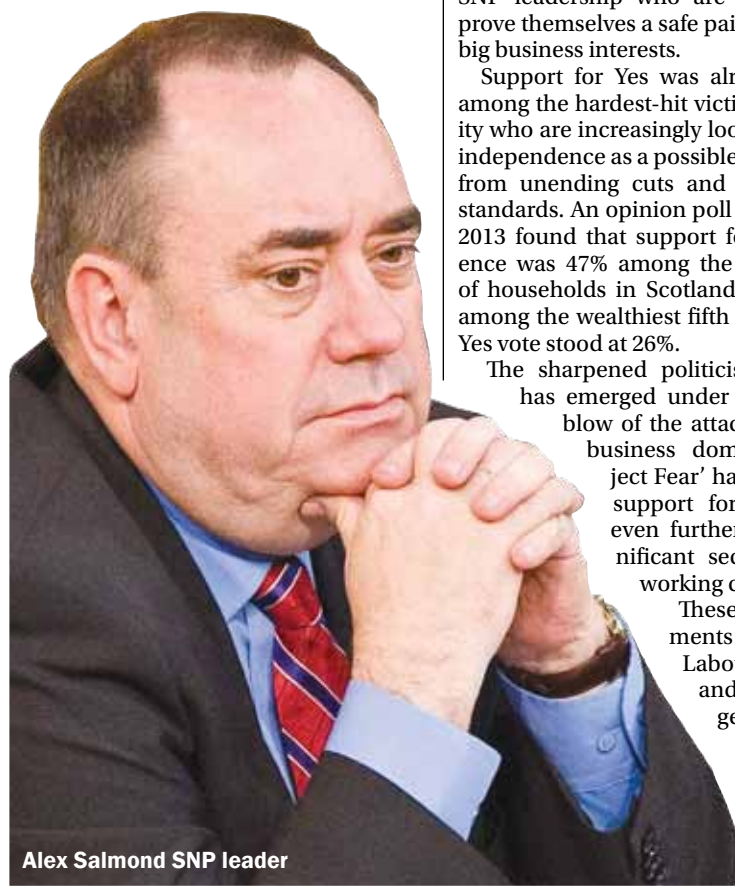
Chairperson Sinead Daly introduced the meeting, explaining that it was organised to offer a vision that was absent from the official Yes campaign. "This meeting will discuss how the powers of independence could be used for the working class. It doesn't matter if you change the flag over Scotland unless you go about preparing for the building of a new society, socialism, from the ground up to end cuts and austerity."

John McNally gave an excellent speech explaining the need to build unified and coordinated strike action by trade unions to defeat austerity. John pointed out the need for public ownership and the building of a new mass working class party to represent the majority. That hundreds of thousands were looking to independence to escape poverty and low pay, zero-

hour contracts and the removal of Trident. During the question and answer session there was clear opposition to the SNP's currency union plan, to the Queen remaining as head of state, to the bosses' club of the European Union, as well as real anger towards Labour. There was also strong support for public ownership and for a new working class party.

Copies of the Socialist Party Scotland 'Ten questions on socialism and the Indy referendum' leaflets were snapped up as people entered the hall. We sold out of copies of the Socialist newspaper. 135 people put their names down for more information about the case for an independent socialist Scotland and £480 was collected at the end of the meeting.

Hope Over Fear - the Case for an Independent Socialist Scotland tour will run for the next few months and thousands are expected to attend to hear a socialist alternative.



Alex Salmond SNP leader



# Over 550 TUSC no-cuts candidates in place

As we go to press the candidate count for the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition's no-cuts challenge in May's local elections has reached 554, with a few days to go before nominations close.

Whatever the final tally is - and the official nomination process is full of pitfalls designed to intimidate working class people from participating in 'politics' - it has been a massive achievement to put such a challenge in place.

And it is a real coalition that has been assembled to make sure the establishment parties don't have it all their own way - of trade unionists, community campaigners, and members of different socialist organisations.

The number of RMT members standing has now reached 54, from the union's assistant general secretary through to regional council officers, branch secretaries, industrial reps and workplace activists.

And, while the Unite union general secretary Len McCluskey tells the Guardian that Labour will face "a defining moment" at its policy forum in July, in May 137 Unite members will be standing under the TUSC umbrella, including the Southampton 'rebel' councillor

and Unite member, Keith Morrell, expelled from the Labour Party for voting against the cuts.

There are a broad range of working class community fighters in anti-bedroom tax organisations, local save our services groups, disabled people against cuts campaigns, etc who want to link their struggle with others by standing for election under the TUSC name. One of the Salford TUSC candidates is an anti-fracking activist at the Barton Moss protest.

## Political spread

And there is a political spread. Candidates from the TUSC constituent socialist organisations, the Socialist Party, the SWP, and the non-affiliated individuals organised in the Independent Socialist Network.

And candidates who are members of organisations not currently part of the TUSC coalition - a couple of Labour Party members (not for much longer!), and some who are members of Left Unity or Respect, who have taken up TUSC's offer to participate in the campaign with the same rights as other candidates to promote their organisations.

The full list of the candidates so far can be found at [www.tusc.org.uk/txt/295.pdf](http://www.tusc.org.uk/txt/295.pdf).



Campaigning in Derby photo Derby TUSC

The Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC) is an electoral alliance that stands candidates against all cuts and privatisation. It involves the RMT transport union, leading members of other unions and socialists including the Socialist Party. This May TUSC is standing hundreds of no-cuts candidates in the council elections against all the austerity parties voting through the destruction of jobs and services. Can you get involved? See [tusc.org.uk](http://tusc.org.uk)

## Vote TUSC to axe the bedroom tax

To be honest I've never been interested in politics. When I turned 18 I voted just because I could.

It soon became apparent to me that all of the parties were much the same and as a voter, I became dejected and confused at the cold, detached two-faced, greedy vibe from these parties who promised the earth and yet took away the moon.

Years rolled by and my disinterest in politics changed when the bedroom tax was introduced. I, and many others, am fighting to keep a bedroom, unlike the many politicians who drain the public purse for a second home.

How can they justify this suffocating tax that affects the most vulnerable in our society?

I was in a lot of debt due to the bedroom tax. It made my depression worse and I was very scared.

I am one of the lucky ones, I knew where to go for help and advice. I believe there are many more people



Anti-bedroom tax demo in Scotland photo Jim Halfpenny

affected by this dreadful tax that we don't know about. People who don't know they have or can have a voice, who think they are alone.

Well you are not alone and you do have a voice. Vote TUSC! We

don't promise you the earth, but we do promise to fight alongside you. Together we will fight to scrap the bedroom tax!

**Sarah Smith**  
Coventry

## Fighting for a fair, socialist society

All recent governments have attacked the hard-won rights of the trade union movement such as paid holidays and the NHS. With the serious weakening of the unions' position in the Labour party, will these rights survive the vicious cuts the three main parties want to implement to fix the crisis caused by the bosses?

Do we want to live in a society which makes you pay for decent healthcare as politicians cut funding to the NHS? Anyone with a heart would want a society where everyone has a good living standard with

equal opportunity to get where they want in life no matter the wealth of their families. These simple ideas of socialism have been abandoned by Labour.

I'm proud to say that I will be standing as a TUSC candidate and doing my bit to bring in a fair socialist society for all. As Ralph Nader said: "If you don't turn onto politics, then politics will turn on you." Don't sit by idly and let the Tories sell off what you hold dear, resist.

**Aidan O'Toole**  
Nuneaton

## Successful meeting to launch TUSC in Grimsby

"A new party 'for working class' unveils candidates" was the headline in the Grimsby Evening Telegraph after a public meeting on 14 April to launch TUSC.

Dave Mitchell, who chaired the meeting, opened by introducing the nine candidates standing in Grimsby in May's election, explaining what we stand for and how we can make a difference if elected.

The meeting also heard from Malcolm Moorland, former Lib Dem and Labour councillor now standing for TUSC.

Malcolm criticised the record of both parties in the area stating that "the main parties don't represent the working class" and argued that

Ukip was not an alternative.

Socialist Party activist Mike Foster said: "Labour has moved so far to the right that you can't put a fag paper between the Conservatives, Labour and the Lib Dems. The working class no longer has a voice. People have lost faith in politicians ... We are class fighters and we are not going to sell out our class. That's the difference between TUSC and all the other political parties standing in this election."

Showing that these points struck a chord, we signed up one new Socialist Party member on the night with a further eight expressing an interest in finding out more.

**Val O'Flynn**

## Election appeal 2014 - £1,570 raised so far

The Socialist Party is appealing for £15,000 to help finance our election campaigns for the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC) in the council and mayoral elections and No2EU in the European elections. A proportion of the appeal will also go to support the campaign of the Workers And Socialist Party (WASP) in the general election in South Africa. We are already getting a great response from our readers. Thanks to: a reader in Oman £50; members in Leeds £250; Dave Sharp £10; Neil Wareham £25; Steve Poole £20; Ken Braben £20; members in Peterborough/Huntingdon branch £200; the Socialist reader Beryl £35; members in Llanelli branch £100; Paul Gerrard £50; members in Bristol North, Exeter and Plymouth branches

### Socialist Party Election Appeal

[Click here to donate](#)

£70, and £5 from a member in Birmingham south-east branch. We need to urgently raise this money in the next four weeks - if you can't pay immediately can you pledge an amount to be redeemed by the end of May? You can donate via the 'Election appeal' button on our website [www.socialistparty.org.uk](http://www.socialistparty.org.uk) or telephone 020 89888777. Please make cheques payable to the Socialist Party and send to: Election appeal, PO Box 24697, London E11 1YD.

An RMT member who will be standing as a TUSC candidate went to her local pub seeking the ten names for her nomination form.

They put her on a table and she spoke about what TUSC stands for and why she was standing for TUSC. She got a round of applause and her ten names. Now that's the way to do it!

Can you imagine any Labour or other party candidate doing that? They'd be booed off the premises.

**Wally Kennedy**

## Get involved

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

## Donate

I'd like to donate £ \_\_\_\_\_ to the Socialist Party please make cheques payable to Socialist Party

## Subscribe

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

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## SOCIALIST PARTY FIGHTING FUND

	£ target	£ received	April-June 2014		Deadline 29 June 2014
London	6,100	1,531	█	█	█
Southern	1,200	289	█	█	█
North West	1,200	215	█	█	█
East Midlands	1,600	264	█	█	█
West Midlands	2,100	218	█	█	█
Wales	2,300	196	█	█	█
South East	750	29	█	█	█
South West	1,400	47	█	█	█
Eastern	1,200	39	█	█	█
Yorkshire	2,900	23	█	█	█
Northern	600	0	█	█	█
England & Wales	3,650	462	█	█	█
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>24,400</b>	<b>4,862</b>	█	█	█



# Building Socialist Alternative in the United States



Socialist Alternative

**K**shama Sawant's election as city councillor in Seattle has received repeated national media attention. Kshama is a member of Socialist Alternative – co-thinkers of the CWI in the US. This has helped to revive interest in socialist ideas and establishing Socialist Alternative as a pole of attraction for workers and youth looking to get active in the struggle against capitalist crisis.

Kshama's victory and the heightened national profile of Socialist Alternative come at a time when people are searching for a political alternative to the two corporate parties on a scale not seen in decades.

## Growing fast

Across the country, we're growing at a faster pace than we ever have before. Our membership has increased by over 200 since our election victory – and more than half of that growth has been in areas where, previously, Socialist Alternative did not have established branches.

Kshama and Socialist Alternative have shown that we are capable of using our elected position not just as a platform to popularise socialist ideas, but also to energise grassroots movements. Sawant is using the momentum of our election victory to lead the 15 Now campaign, which is poised to win the highest minimum wage in the US.

As a result, people across the country have been convinced that socialist ideas are an effective guide



to strategy for winning real gains in living standards. In March, 21 cities across the US participated in a week of action for a \$15 an hour minimum wage. Branches of Socialist Alternative, including brand new branches, led these actions in support of a truly historic step forward for working people.

Requests to join poured in by the hundreds on our website following Kshama's election victory and again following her appearance on Democracy Now!. But the largest flood of interest came after Kshama gave a response to President Obama's State of the Union address in January. The response was viewed online by nearly 100,000 people – more than either the Republican or Tea Party responses!

This shows the demand for an alternative to the pro-capitalist policies of the two major parties. The political impact of Kshama Sawant has spread far beyond Seattle!

In 2014, people have joined Socialist Alternative from 45 new

cities – several of them have already developed new groups in their areas. We're on track to more than double our membership this coming year through recruiting working people across the country.

From the Bay Area, California, to Birmingham, Alabama; from Portland, Oregon to Portland, Maine; and from Washington, DC, to Honolulu, Hawai'i, new members are organising in their workplaces, campuses and communities. In February, Socialist Alternative held our first Southern Regional Conference with activists from Florida, Alabama, and Louisiana.

## New branches

Socialist Alternative's first member in Hawai'i, Thomas Nishimura, joined after seeing the coverage of Kshama's election victory on Al Jazeera. He explains that he was looking for "a presence that has the direction and strategy to help lift the people of Hawaii out of the fog and to break free from

the chains of corporate imperialism. The time is right to build a strong force of workers to oppose the two-party system in Hawai'i!"

People across the US are seeking out a socialist alternative to the global crisis of capitalism. Carolyn Elerding of Columbus, Ohio, is building a new branch of Socialist Alternative in her community because "it seems that more and more people want to work together to address the inequalities built into our current system."

Our numbers are still small considering our massive goals to transform society, but our recent growth shows the tremendous trajectory of Socialist Alternative.

This year, we will play a key role in Seattle and beyond in the fight to increase the minimum wage. We are also well-positioned to be the left-wing of the coming move toward independent working class politics. Within this process, we will be educating hundreds of new activists in the methods of socialism and working class action.

## The Committee for a Workers' International

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

The CWI is organised in 45 countries and works to unite the working class and oppressed peoples against global capitalism and to fight for a socialist world.

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

## www.socialistworld.net

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



## CWI: History of the Committee for a Workers' International

40th anniversary of the founding of the CWI

[Socialistworld.net](http://Socialistworld.net)



## Sri Lanka: Provincial elections spike president's plans

Repression can provoke opposition

*Siritunga Jayasuriya, Secretary of United Socialist Party (CWI Sri Lanka)*



## Greece: International anti-fascist conference "No pasaran!"

Four thousand attend three-day event in Athens

*Sebastian Forster (CWI Germany) and Elin Gauffin (CWI Sweden)*

# China: labour disputes soar

[chinaworker.info](http://chinaworker.info) reporters

Workers at six out of ten factories in Dongguan, China, owned by Taiwanese multinational Yue Yuen have taken strike action after discovering the company has not been paying legally required levels of social security and housing contributions.

The strike is emblematic of a new wave of labour struggles especially in Guangdong, where Dongguan is located, and other developed regions of China. Samsung, Lenovo, Nokia and Wal-Mart are among the companies hit by recent stoppages. Strikes are up by almost one third in the first quarter of 2014 compared to the same period last year.

Dongguan, known as "the world's factory" has a workforce of around ten million. In recent years it has been badly hit by the global crisis and downturn in China's traditional export markets. The city has experienced several large strikes over severance pay, wage arrears and non-payment of so-called fringe benefits.

The latest Yue Yuen strike involves tens of thousands of workers. Media reports give contradictory figures. This is to be expected given the fog of official censorship, while strikes are of course illegal in China. According to NGO activist Zhang Zhiru, who is in contact with strike or-



ganisers, more than 30,000 workers went on strike on Monday 14 April, with more joining on Tuesday. The Global Times, which presumably has its own sources within the security agencies, also puts the number of strikers at 40,000.

Yue Yuen's website boasts it is "the world's largest branded footwear manufacturer" churning out 300 million pairs of shoes a year for Nike, Adidas, Reebok, ASICS, New Balance, Puma, Converse, Salomon and Timberland among others. In recent years Yue Yuen has been shifting production to Indonesia and Vietnam where wages are lower.

All companies are, under Chinese law, supposed to pay full mandatory social insurance for workers – including pensions, medical insurance, housing allowances and injury compensation. Recent legal reforms allowing migrant workers to transfer these payments when they relocate to other cities has led workers to pay



closer attention to how companies fulfil these obligations. A study by US-based China Labor Watch found that none of its survey group of 400 companies had paid the full amount of mandatory social insurance. So the problems facing the Yue Yuen workers – corporate evasion of social security contributions – are endemic across the manufacturing industry.

"Some of my colleagues estimate that Yue Yuen owes the workers as much as one billion yuan over the years," a mid-level manager told China Labour Bulletin

The Yue Yuen strike began on 5 April, when hundreds of workers staged a protest action by blocking a nearby bridge. The company promised to resolve the issues, but its later offer failed to meet workers' demands which led to a resumption of the strike on 14 April. Thousands took part in a protest march behind a banner that proclaimed: "Pay back the social security and public hous-

ing fund! Shame on Yue Yuen's illegal activities!"

The government has drafted in around 2,000 police from cities including Guangzhou and Zhuhai. Around 20 strikers were arrested at this demo, according to eyewitnesses, who also said that some workers who held banners had been beaten.

Significantly, and replicating a pattern seen elsewhere, police repression seems to have hardened the resolve of the workers, with reports of strike numbers growing afterwards.

Despite the regime's increasing resort to repression and arrests, the rising tide of strikes shows not only the will to fight on the part of Chinese workers, but also a clear trend towards more sophisticated organisation and tactics. Workers' expectations are also rising. Online posts by striking Yue Yuen workers criticise the role of the official company-controlled trade union and demand the right to elect their own union representatives. This is an unstoppable process of workers struggling to build their own independent organisations in order to fight capitalist exploitation and the chains imposed upon the working masses by a dictatorial police state. Workers and trade unionists around the world should give maximum support to these struggles in "the world's factory!"



# Workers' Memorial Day

## Building workers must strike for safety



### Dave Walsh

Unite convener, Liverpool council, deputy secretary of a large Unite construction branch

Workers' Memorial Day is on 28 April. In many towns and cities, construction workers and their trade union branches will take a lead in organising activities. The reason for this is simple; construction is Britain's most dangerous and deadly industry.

The Observer put this in context on 13 April, reporting that since 2001 there had been 760 workers killed on British sites; almost twice the

number of soldiers killed in action in Afghanistan over the same period. And these figures don't include the thousands of building workers who die each year as a result of exposure to asbestos, respirable crystalline silica and diesel exhausts.

The reasons for the industry's dire record are clear; over the last 30 years it has been deregulated and casualised, while bogus self-employment, anti-trade union laws and the industry blacklist have pushed unions to the margins and left workers too afraid to raise concerns about dangerous practices. As well as this, since 2011 Health and Safety Executive funding has been cut by 35%.

In 2010, yet another public inquiry into the industry's parlous state was overseen by Lady Donaghy. Her conclusion - welcomed by then Labour prime minister Gordon Brown - was that not much could be done about casualisation because of its benefits to the industry.

So instead of recommending changes which would encourage direct employment and increase trade union density on sites she called for a new government minister to be created for construction. This was a feeble attempt to give the appearance of worker-participation while completely ignoring the pernicious practice of blacklisting in the industry.

Incredibly, brave and determined trade union activists like Frank Morris and Steve Aitcheson have fought and won great victories over their employers in their fights to uncover and overcome the blacklist. Their campaigns helped build the confidence of rank and file activists in construction and helped the legal claims of thousands of victimised shop stewards and safety reps.

However, successive governments have failed building workers and worked hand in glove with industry bosses to marginalise trade unions. But workers have already begun to fight back. In 2009 workers won a stunning victory at Lindsey Oil Refinery after they took unofficial strike action to defend their national agreement (NAECI).

### Striking back

In 2012 electricians took on a number of large construction firms which were trying to scrap their national agreement and attack their pay terms and conditions. Their rank and file campaign of protests and unofficial walkouts culminated in an official strike action ballot by Unite which forced the firms to capitulate.

Employers are now attempting to circumvent new regulations by forcing workers into umbrella payment companies. This allows employers to avoid paying holiday pay and to force the employee to pay the company's NI contributions as well as their own. But again, building workers are fighting back.

On 4 April, 30 construction workers in Sussex downed tools and demanded direct employment for the duration of the job. They were successful and now enjoy the industry rate under the JIB national agreement. And at the Manchester City training ground site, agency electricians working for Balfour Beatty sat

in the cabin over similar attacks on their pay terms and conditions.

However, trade union density on building sites remains low. If this is to be turned around, the construction unions need to organise a national demonstration reinforced with the threat of national strike action. There should be a clear demand for direct employment and national agreements covering all workers' pay and conditions, including health and safety.

Most agency workers on building sites don't even claim the holiday pay that they lawfully accrue because they know if they do they won't get a call to return to work. There would be a tremendous response from these workers if the unions mounted a serious campaign for their rights. Their strike action would hit hard and could eventually be coordinated with all the other unions in struggle.

Many unions including the NUT, FBU and NAPO have live national industrial action ballots while many other unions are organising local disputes across the country, yet the TUC has failed to follow the resolution passed at its congress in 2012 which called on it to look into the practicalities of coordinating a general strike.

What is clear is that many trade union leaders are terrified of the political challenge that a general strike represents. This is why it is so important that a new workers' party is created so that trade unions have political allies who are able to voice their campaigns.

TUSC will mount the biggest left-of-Labour challenge for generations in May's local elections. TUSC candidates will campaign on issues affecting building workers and all other workers. We must continue to campaign within the trade unions to win support for TUSC and break the link with the Labour Party.

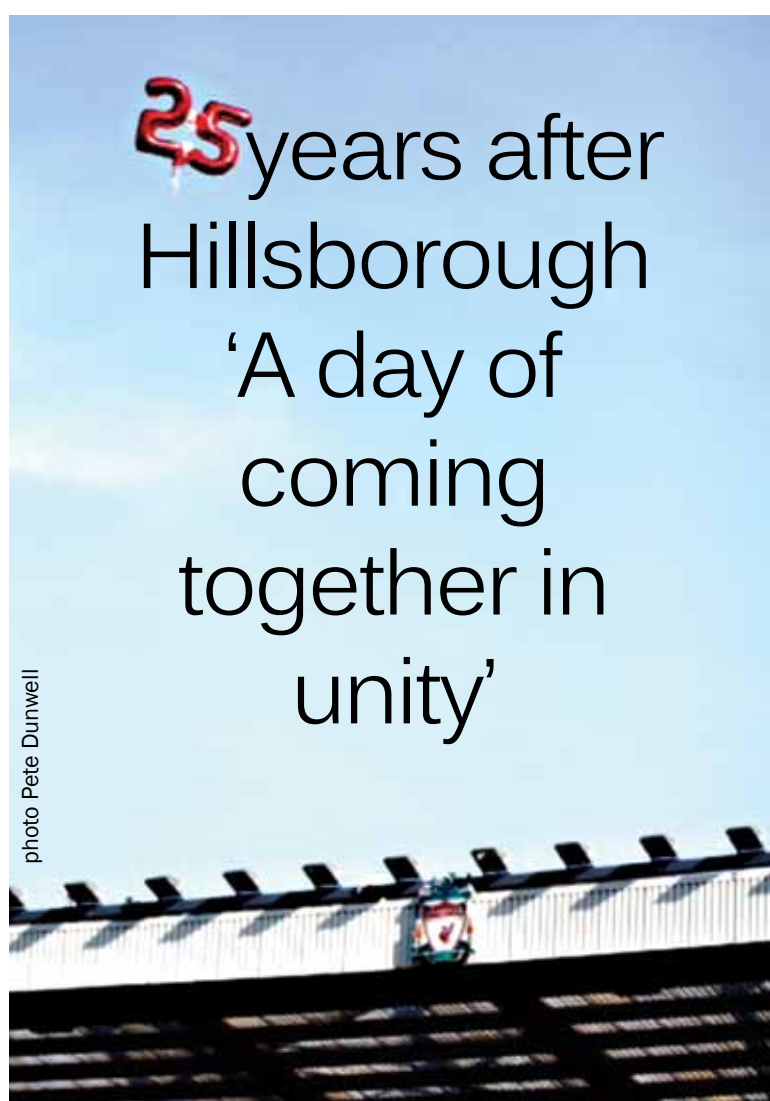


photo Pete Dunwell

### Rev Phil Lamb

The sun shone down on 15 April 1989. Little did Liverpool FC football fans heading for a cup semi-final know the sun would soon turn into the darkest night of their soul.

As the football ground got closer, they could see others they knew dressed in Liverpool's famous red shirt, the songs, the banter, the You'll Never Walk Alone, sang from the street and from the stands. At 3.06pm the singing stopped as 96 Liverpool fans perished on the Leppings Lane terracing at Hillsborough.

25 years later, fathers walk with sons, mothers with daughters and friends as brothers in arms bedecked with the colours of their favourite team, Liverpool FC, mingle around Anfield to await the beginning of the 25th Anniversary Memorial Service.

You could feel the people reflecting on just what might have been and see the pain etched on the faces of those who have lost loved ones. Nevertheless, they, like the city of Liverpool and the football community, united with the Hillsborough Family Support Group [HFSG] to fight for truth and justice for those who perished that day.

Among the Red Family, shirts were worn by fans with wreaths from their neighbours Everton, from Hull, Manchester City and Manchester United laying them



photo Pete Dunwell

among the hundreds of flowers at The Memorial.

Scarves from European teams were held aloft alongside the Liverpool faithful as Gerry Marsden led an emotional You'll Never Walk Alone. Over 20,000 people sang their hearts out as balloons (one for each of the 96 and a number 25 balloon) were released into the Merseyside sky.

The service, led with great sensitivity by local clerics, showed what the day was all about, a coming together in unity. Standing ovations were given to Brendan Rog-

ers, Liverpool's manager and Roberto Martinez from Everton who paid tribute to those who fought and continue to fight for justice, remembering Anne Williams who sadly died last year after campaigning so hard for 24 years.

One banner stated: "Justice delayed is justice denied". There is no denying, justice is finally coming to a city and a football club whose families, and supporters, would not be silenced. They have never walked alone, nor will they walk alone until justice for the 96 is received.



# The Broad Left Organising Committee

## Organising militant workers

Bill Mullins

Thirty years ago a national conference took place in Sheffield organised by the Broad Left Organising Committee (Bloc). Thousands attended, with 500 turned away due to lack of space. The meeting coincided with the start of the miners' strike in March 1984.

The miners' strike was a culmination of the rising tide of anger against the Margaret Thatcher government and its attacks on the trade union movement. Thatcher, the Tory prime minister, was preparing to close down the mining industry, mainly to break the most powerful trade union at the time, the NUM.

### Launch of Bloc

Bloc was a formation of trade union broad lefts which had been set up earlier in response to developments in the Labour Party and the use of the trade union block vote in an undemocratic way by the right-wing trade union leaders. At that time many of the broad lefts were led or influenced by supporters of the Militant (the forerunner of the Socialist Party).

Militant argued that, because of the growing list of attacks on the working class and the miserable leadership given by many of the trade union leaders, the time was right to re-launch Bloc as a new initiative. The aim was to try to give a lead from below to all those ready to struggle against the Tory onslaught.

It was clear that the original aims of Bloc would need to be developed. Bloc had developed a certain authority among many trade union activists. It needed to develop this rank-and-file organisation and at the same time continue to put pressure on the official trade union bodies to prepare their members for the coming struggle.

Bloc played an important role in mobilising workers behind the miners throughout their strike, including organising pickets of the power stations and a 2,000-strong lobby of the TUC conference in September 1984 to demand a 24-hour general strike to back the miners.

### Importance of strategy

Bloc held tremendously important conferences and campaigns throughout the 1980s on many issues, including important international workers' struggles. This included a London conference in October 1986 against the privatisation of Thames Water. Regional Bloc organisations were developed.

In April 1986 the second national Bloc conference again took place in Sheffield. The miners' strike had finished in March 1985. The defeat of



Bloc conference March 1984 photo Dave Sinclair

the miners affected the mood of the whole working class. Nevertheless 1,800 trade union delegates were at the conference to debate the key issues of the day.

The conference was called in conjunction with the socialist-led Liverpool district Labour Party and its theme was "how to map out a strategy to defeat the witch-hunt [in the Labour Party] and build the left". In 1983 the Labour Party's national leaders had expelled the five members of the Militant newspaper editorial board and in November 1985 they suspended Liverpool district Labour Party, in their drive to suppress socialist ideas. Derek Hatton and Tony Mulhearn, Liverpool councillors who had been sacked from office by the Tory government in 1985 along with 47 others, addressed the conference.

The Bloc conference also highlighted the battle by the South African working class against apartheid and discussed how the trade unions in Britain should aid that struggle. The president of the South African TGWU, Jeremiah Zulu, got a standing ovation when he called for direct links between the rank and file of the trade unions in Britain and South Africa.

A special conference was held in July 1986 in Birmingham, attended by over 350 delegates. This had the theme of fighting the privatisation of the public sector which had been unleashed by the Thatcher government.

At the time Dave Nellist was the Labour MP for Coventry South East. He opened the conference by calling for the renationalisation of all privatised services and industry with one third of the management boards made up of elected representatives of workers in the industry, one third

from the TUC and one third from a Labour government. Compensation would only be paid based on proven need. The conference called for Bloc to create a health service broad left to fight NHS privatisation.

### One-day general strike?

Bloc organised another conference in February 1988 which over 1,200 delegates attended, including many from the health service. When it was planned in September 1987 nobody foresaw the explosion of strikes, ranging from the health service to Ford in Basildon and many others that would take place leading up to the conference.

On one night shift in Manchester 38 nurses had taken strike action in frustration at understaffing, working conditions and low pay. They then left the RCN and joined Cohse, which later became part of Unison. The strike hit the headlines and forced the government into a u-turn which was massively report-

ed on the TV and media generally. This changed the whole mood of the trade union movement.

The conference called for the TUC to organise a one-day general strike in support of the NHS and the TUC was forced - by the mood of workers - to organise a national day of action on this issue, which included strike action at local level.

Bloc's role was crucial in showing what could be done if the trade union movement got together and acted in unison. Unfortunately, despite Bloc's growing influence, the right wing dominance at the top of the unions effectively blocked the path to more militant action.

The right wing's policies were based on acceptance of the market and capitalism. The argument was that this required a "new realism" - in other words, unlike the 1970s when militancy was the norm, which the right wing argued led to the Thatcher government.

It was clear that by the end of the 1980s the role that Bloc could play in

that period was drawing to a close. The collapse of the Berlin Wall and capitalist ideological offensive led to a fall in political consciousness of many trade union activists.

It required new events and a new, younger layer of activists to be brought into the struggle before the human forces for any new similar organisation would be available.

The National Shop Stewards Network (NSSN) today, in a very different political climate following the world economic crisis, has that chance. Indeed it is beginning to draw around it a new layer of trade union and community activists. It can fight to give an organisational form to the tremendous anger among working people against the government's policies.

**Bloc's programme sought to unite all the struggles that workers were involved in. It called for:**

- Regular election of all trade union officials
- Only the average workers' wage for all officials
- Opposition to all witch-hunts in the Labour Party and the unions
- Building the shop stewards' combines at local, regional, and national level
- A 35-hour week without loss of pay
- A campaign to defeat the attacks on abortion rights
- Repeal of all the anti-union laws
- Full support for health workers and for a 24-hour general strike



Bloc lobby of the TUC 24 February 1988 photo John Woulfe

**National Shop Stewards Network conference**

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**What recovery? We want our share! Fight Together for a Pay Rise!**

Break the pay freeze, fight for a real living wage, oppose zero-hour contracts, fight for PAYE

**NSSN 8th Annual Conference Saturday 5th July**  
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Speakers include: **Ronnie Draper**, BFAWU bakers' union General Secretary, **Steve Gillan**, POA General Secretary, and **Janice Godrich**, PCS President

The NSSN is supported by the following national unions:

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# Every job matters! SUPPORT THE TUBE WORKERS' STRIKE

**John Reid**  
President RMT London Transport  
regional council

**R**MT members working on London Underground (LU) will strike on 28-30 April and 5-8 May. This is because talks at Acas with LU have failed to make any progress. In fact LU have reneged on their undertakings made when our strike in February was suspended to allow talks to take place. During this time LU has also tendered for driverless trains - another threat to safety on the tube.

After eight weeks of negotiations LU are still saying that every ticket

office will close by the end of 2015. When we suspended our strike they undertook to review every station and that some ticket offices could stay open. But only five stations have been reviewed.

They plan to cut nearly 1,800 front-line staff and create 900 new managers. This clearly shows that these cuts are nothing to do with 'modernisation' but everything to do with cutting station staff and threatening safety on the tube. Our work is being downgraded and we face job cuts and pay cuts unless we fight for every job.

As well as the series of strikes in April and May we will be campaigning to get our message across to tube travellers - this will include demonstrations and protests.

The RMT has called a national mobilisation for the London May Day demo (details below). We will be celebrating the life of our general secretary Bob Crow with a rally in Trafalgar Square. And the building of an effective struggle to defend our mem-

bers' jobs on the tube and a decent public service for all is an important part of that commemoration.

Tube travellers know that their safety depends on proper staffing levels in the stations and elsewhere. They supported our strike in

February and we will be campaigning for their support again.

The strike runs from 9pm on 28 April to 9pm on 30 April and from 9pm on 5 May until 9pm on 8 May. (Fleet grades will start and finish their strikes at 6.30pm) There will be an overtime ban among station staff from 29 April until further notice.

**May Day March for Bob Crow**  
Assemble at Clerkenwell Green (closest station is Farringdon) from 11am.

The march moves off at 1pm. The rally will be in Trafalgar Square at around 2.30pm.



photo Paul Mattsson

## Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition

As part of the campaign to defend jobs and services on London Underground, 35 RMT members are standing as candidates in the local authority elections under the banner of the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC).

(see page 8)

## 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 45 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!