

# FIGHT CUTS BACK STRIKES VOTE TUSC

**O**n 22 May millions of working class people have the opportunity to vote in the local government elections. At the same time workers are voting or have voted for strike action to resist the attacks on their pay, pensions and working conditions.

This year, in almost one in seven local election seats, these teachers, firefighters, health and local government workers, civil servants, transport workers and others can choose a real anti-cuts pro-working class voice.

The Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC) is standing 560 candidates. In local government councillors can use their position to build the resistance to austerity. But only a handful have voted no to cuts. The Tories and Lib Dems, but also Labour, Green and Ukip councillors, choose to vote through attacks on working class people.

TUSC candidates have all pledged to vote against cuts. They back the working people taking strike action. In fact, in many cases, they are the strikers.

Workers cannot expect any support from Labour when they struggle. A day before a planned strike by RMT members on London Underground in defence of hundreds of jobs, Ed Miliband said: "The Tube strike is wrong and it shouldn't be going ahead." In June 2011, before the massive public sector strike, he repeated his denunciation of the action six times.

**Many workers are saying enough is enough. Here, some of them explain why they're standing as TUSC candidates:**

The Labour council's policies of making every single cut as directed by the Tories have failed. Labour calls cuts 'savings'! I call them cuts and these cuts hurt. I am a member of the RMT trade union and have consistently fought to defend working class people in the workplace, as I will on the council.

**Daren Ireland, RMT Liverpool**



We've had enough. We have lost three fire engines in Waltham Forest, one from my very own station. I am proud to be standing with other trade unionists and socialists campaigning against cuts, particularly those working in the local Whipps Cross hospital.

**Tim Roedel, FBU Waltham Forest, east London**



TUSC has helped Care UK workers lobby Labour leader and Doncaster MP Ed Miliband and the Labour mayor and council cabinet. But still they say there's nothing they can do and won't even make a public statement of support. That's why most strikers are backing TUSC in the council elections including two strikers and a partner who are standing as TUSC candidates.

**Care UK workers**



The sale of council housing to housing associations, the privatisation of housing services, and the constant transfer of care services between different providers has led to a race to the bottom for workers and users of these services.

The Unite Housing Workers branch, covering over 2,500 workers, has been mounting a concerted and successful fight-back against these attacks. With leading members of our branch I am standing for TUSC.

**Suz Muna, branch secretary of the Unite union's Housing Workers' branch**



**See [www.tusc.org.uk](http://www.tusc.org.uk)**

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## More local news coverage for TUSC, but BBC downplays council elections



TUSC's campaign for the council elections taking place on 22 May picked up more coverage this week in local news media.

The Salford Star spoke of TUSC "mounting the biggest left challenge to Labour dominance, fielding candidates in nine of the 20 wards

up for grabs". It also made the significant point that the Liberal Democrats, "once seen as the main opposition party in Salford", were fielding just two candidates this time.

A May Day election activity in Plymouth, where TUSC is standing

candidates in all 19 of the city's wards, made the headlines in the Plymouth Herald with a good photo spread. Plymouth is another city where the Lib Dems decline is on display, with the party contesting just four seats.

There was some decent coverage for TUSC in the Eastern region with the Peterborough Telegraph speaking of a "colourful battle", mentioning the TUSC challenge in six seats and highlighting the "well-known health care campaigner Mary Cooke representing the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition".

The Watford Observer headlined its piece on the local elections "Ukip and the Trade Unionists and Socialists Against Cuts party beef up their presence", referring to TUSC standing in half of the 12 wards in the borough.

In Yorkshire the Sheffield Telegraph wrote about Labour coming under pressure from Ukip, which is contesting all but two of the wards in the city. But it continued by saying that: "Labour's support could also be hit by a new left-

wing party, the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition, which is fighting 21 wards, focusing on opposition to the Con-Dem austerity agenda".

The Doncaster Free Press added: "the Trade Unionists and Socialists Against Cuts (TUSC), is currently supporting striking Care UK workers who are fighting against 35% pay cuts, have eleven candidates".

TUSC's support for the Care UK workers was the main subject of a story in the Thornton and District Gazette, quoting TUSC candidate Jason Fawley, whose wife works for Care UK, and the Doncaster TUSC election agent and health worker, Steve Williams.

All this is in contrast to the election coverage of the BBC nationally, not just its complete refusal to mention TUSC and the biggest left-of-Labour election challenge for 60 years, but its political decision to concentrate on the European elections.

The BBC website carries items on the English Democrats, for example, contesting the Euros but only standing in 31 local council seats. Who decided that the Euro polls are more

important?

Local councillors can vote to evict or not to evict people who cannot pay the bedroom tax; to shut down or keep open a local library or Sure Start centre - or, as in Doncaster, to hand over a wage-slashing contract to Care UK or to withdraw it.

Councils still have enormous powers to affect the daily lives of working class people. Councillors have the power to begin to tackle the housing crisis today, and not wait for a Labour government, by introducing rent caps now and using their borrowing powers to finance a council house building programme.

Electing MEPs, however: "can have a big impact on a party's mood and their leader's prospects ahead of the 2015 general election", the BBC tells us.

This infantilising approach to politics of the BBC's highly-paid leadership has one unintended positive side effect - it adds to the growing questioning of its authority, along with the other elite institutions in society and the tame 'mainstream' parties.

## Join the TUSC Thunderclap

**Dave Nellist**  
National chair, TUSC

Standing 560 TUSC candidates for the local elections is a magnificent achievement; but unfortunately it is short of the too-high requirement for a national election broadcast.

TUSC is holding a national press launch on 9 May in London, and press releases and letters to local papers can still produce results. And while there is no substitute for direct campaigning, leafleting

and canvassing, one avenue which the TUSC steering committee believes may allow us to reach a wider audience is a more organised use of social media, for example by using a tool called "Thunderclap".

A Thunderclap asks people with Twitter and Facebook accounts to sign up to allow their accounts to



#TUSC  
@TUSCoalition



Trade Unionist and  
Socialist Coalition

be used to simultaneously broadcast a message to potentially hundreds of thousands of people. On the first evening our Thunderclap was launched, 97 people signed up with a 'social reach' of 56,687. This could rise quite quickly with a sustained and methodical approach.

We are asking every TUSC sup-

porter with a Twitter or Facebook account to visit <http://thndr.it/1neKLAO> and sign up to our Thunderclap.

If you sign up please also click to re-broadcast your support to encourage others, and repeat the request to your own networks (especially Twitter) once a day to catch more people.

This needs to be started straight away as the planned 'broadcast', using material from the national press launch, will be on 12 May at 1pm.

## West London hustings- only TUSC candidate in touch



**Mark Benjamin**  
TUSC  
candidate

**Tony Gill**  
West London

I attended the hustings meeting for Elthorne ward on 29 April. The only candidate that impressed me was the local TUSC candidate Mark Benjamin. He seemed to be in touch with real issues that are adversely affecting our community.

Whereas the representatives of the three mainstream parties stood up and identified themselves by

their educational achievements. What has one's educational background got to do with standing as a local election candidate? Does this mean that those who never had a chance to pursue further studies or gain a university degree are inferior to those that have?

Education or not, they failed to deal with the real issues, such as the bedroom tax, the Con-Dem austerity cuts, food banks, the housing crisis and high unemployment among many young residents.

The Labour and Conservative candidates tried to show off to impress the crowd, criticising each other over the council's budgeting and spending. I asked my Labour representatives why Labour councils across Britain are implementing Con-Dem cuts. And why none of the three main parties are prepared to tackle the issue of the £120 billion in taxes avoided by the super-rich - most of which ends up in offshore accounts or tax havens.

The chair told me I must not question them over national issues!

## Will the real Ukip stand up

**TUSC supporters East Hull**

According to interviews with Nigel Farage: "The Tories have failed, only Ukip dares cut spending on the NHS and pensions". So you can imagine TUSC canvassers' surprise when we read the Ukip leaflet in Southcoates West ward in East Hull. In it, the local candidate puts the "campaign against cuts to public services" and a "campaign against the bedroom tax" as two of his priorities. The local candidate appears to be at odds with his party leader.

Ukip tries to portray itself as anti-establishment but in reality it is another pro-cuts party of the 1%. Ukip supporters attempting to organise a pro-cuts march in 2011 was a bit of a giveaway! And just like other pro-capitalist parties it gets caught saying different things to different audiences.

To a working class inner city audience like those in East Hull, fighting the cuts in public services is a priority. I suspect in the Tory heartlands Ukip's propaganda will be for

more cuts with promises for lower taxes for the middle classes.

Ukip is a party of business, TUSC is the only electoral force that ordinary people can trust to fight the cuts.



**Pro-cuts Ukip leader Nigel Farage tries to talk out of both sides of his mouth**

# TUSC AGAINST CUTS

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

# no<sup>2</sup>eu

yes to workers' rights

While TUSC is standing in the local elections, for the European elections the Socialist Party is supporting No2EU - Yes To Workers' Rights, which is led by the RMT union. As Bob Crow, No2EU and TUSC co-founder said: "Ukip is neither in favour of workers' rights, public services or welfare. If people are looking for an alternative, Ukip isn't it."

# Care homes abuse scandals For-profit companies don't care

Frankie Langeland

Yet another exposé into the abuse of elderly people hit the headlines. BBC's Panorama broadcast the latest in a string of shocking video evidence of direct abuse and neglect within care homes. During the same week the Care Quality Commission announced that 406 homes, housing almost 16,000 people, were failing to meet essential care standards, the bare minimum expected by law.

These findings are shocking. The social care sector serves people from all walks of life when they are at their most vulnerable. By 2025 a third of Britain's population will be over 55 years. This will pile pressure onto a system which has very weak foundations.

The rapid expansion of the private care system has put profits before people. Ten thousand different private care providers make up 90% of Britain's care services.

From working in this sector I have seen pay rapidly decrease in the past decade to the minimum wage, and training is often now a DVD you have to watch while doing your other duties.

Zero-hour contracts have increased the instability that workers feel. 41% of homecare workers are employed on zero-hour contracts and 307,000 care workers are employed overall on a zero-hour basis.

Workers employed by Care UK in Doncaster are taking strike action against imposed changes to their contracts resulting in wage cuts of thousands of pounds a year.

At a protest lobby of local MP Ed Miliband on 30 April, striker Roger Hutt summed up their battle:

"A hard working professional caring group of people will have to leave their chosen professions due to the crumbs Care UK are willing to pay us, to be replaced by unskilled, inexperienced individuals. We feel this will lead to future incidents of malpractice, neglect and God forbid, even fatalities."



## The rapid expansion of the private care system has put profits first

A lack of training, job security and chance to develop an understanding of service users' needs creates a breeding ground for abuse. The private health and social care market is worth £40 billion. If these homes were nationalised this money could be put back into the system and spent on properly trained and well-paid staff, who could be supported in what is undoubtedly a challenging job.

The reports in the media undoubtedly show abuse by individuals that is unacceptable and must be challenged. But beyond the abuse by individual care workers, we see institutional abuse through deliber-

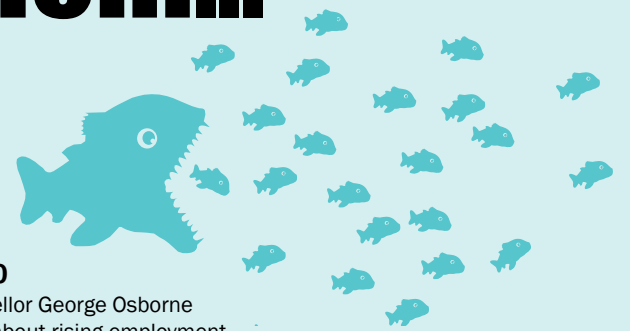
ate understaffing from the companies which sees people in care waiting for basic needs such as dressing, feeding, and toileting and drinking.

Bedrooms are built to be small so more can be fitted in, increasing profits but meaning that specialist equipment such as hoists and wheelchairs do not fit or making tasks dangerous to carry out for users and workers. A lack of choice at meal times to save costs or of meaningful activities means a poor quality of life for care home residents.

The root cause of abuse comes from the profit-driven capitalist system. We live in a time where we know more about care needs and health than at any other point in history, but the privatisation of care means this knowledge is not used to make improvements to the quality of life for service users as they are seen as too costly.

The money for a fully funded social care sector is there, but it's hoarded by the multi-millionaired '1%' rather than spent on the people who need it.

# Them...



## Year zero

Tory Chancellor George Osborne fantasises about rising employment but the latest figures from the Office for National Statistics (ONS) show a massive rise in workers on zero-hour contracts.

In February, 583,000 were on zero-hour contracts. Now, the ONS estimates 2.7 million of which 1.3 million workers were not given any hours in the two week sample period. In addition, the ONS survey did not include those categorised as self-employed but who may work for just one company.

Unsurprisingly, the survey confirms that zero-hour contracts are 'particularly popular with big business', with 47% of large companies making use of such arrangements compared to 12% of small businesses.

Typically those on such contracts are more likely to be women, in full time education, and under 24 years or over 65.

way system is an extremely popular demand, especially among rail commuters having to pay extortionate fares to privately-owned train operating companies (TOCs) in order to travel in overcrowded carriages. Since privatisation in 1993 the TOCs have received billions in revenue subsidies from the government - £3.2 billion in 2012-2013 - guaranteeing large profits for shareholders. Yet the east coast mainline, which was taken back in public ownership after National Express walked away from its East Coast franchise in November 2009, is now cheaper to run. But 'value for money' hasn't stopped the Tories privatising this directly operated company.

## Smoking gun

Tory MP Priti Patel, who is leading a rebellion against plans to introduce plain packaging for cigarettes, just happens to be a former lobbyist for tobacco giant BAT and who, coincidentally, chairs a parliamentary group whose secretariat is provided by two tobacco industry-funded organisations.

Patel reckons that plain packaging would be the "final nail in the coffin for small businesses", whereas most people see cigarettes as the final nail in the coffin for smokers unless they are encouraged to quit.

## Self-improvement

Another factor allowing the government to claim falling unemployment levels is the shift of people from full-time jobs to self-employment. The Resolution Foundation has pointed out that self-employment has risen from 650,000 five years ago to a staggering 4.5 million or 15% of the active workforce.

But far from becoming millionaire entrepreneurs the average weekly income of a self-employed person is 20% lower than in 2008 and 40% less than a typical full-time worker. Revealingly, 27% of those joining the ranks of the self-employed in the last five years did so because they had no other option - many the result of suffering JSA benefit sanctions.

## Rail against privatisation

Ed Miliband is under attack from the Tories and the right-wing media over even contemplating (not for long!) renationalising the privatised rail network.

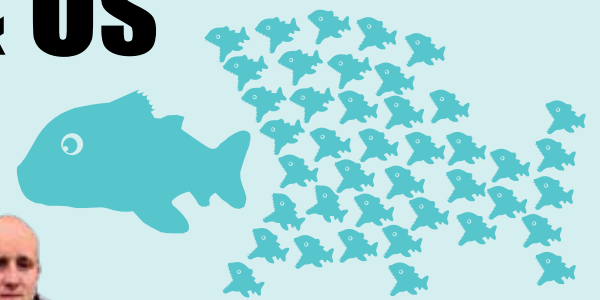
Yet, a publicly owned national rail-

## Fuel poverty

Energy customers on pre-payment meters are so broke and prices are so high that they are self-disconnecting. It's been revealed that Npower and EDF have tens of thousands of pre-payment customers who haven't topped up their meters for at least 30 days. This hidden fuel poverty often means having no heating and being unable to cook, for months on end.

People on pre-payment meters are also being stung by the mega-profitable 'big six' energy companies through higher fuel tariffs, compared to direct debit customers.

# ...& Us



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

## Pfizer takeover bid Nationalise to serve 'public interest'

'Big pharma', notorious for ripping off the public purse with overpriced, ineffective and sometimes dangerous drugs, is once again displaying its rapacious appetite for profit in the current multibillion takeover bid of US based Pfizer for UK based AstraZeneca.

The rationale behind Pfizer's acquisition move is twofold. It wants to avoid paying taxes back in the US by spending its accrued overseas dollar cash pool. And it also wants access to new drugs without investing in research.

Should Pfizer succeed, then it's a racing certainty that thousands of jobs will be axed and research and development (R&D) facilities closed, in both companies.

Former head of Pfizer's R&D, Dr LaMattina, admitted: "In major mergers today, not only are R&D cuts made, but entire research sites are eliminated. Nowhere is this more evident than with Pfizer."

In 2011, 1,500 jobs were axed and

part of its laboratory in Sandwich, Kent - where Viagra was invented - was shut.

Labour leader Ed Miliband attacked Tory Prime Minister David Cameron as being a "cheerleader" for the takeover, and said that it's not in AstraZeneca's workers' interests. Cameron in turn said he had received "robust" assurances from Pfizer on UK jobs and investment.

## Ownership

But the suggestion that a 'British' multinational company is better for jobs and R&D than a 'foreign' multinational is false. As the Institute of Directors points out, AstraZeneca is "run by a Frenchman and chaired by a Swede".

Also, the board of AstraZeneca is stuffed with former investment bankers. How can these people be trusted to ensure future jobs and R&D facilities in the UK any more than the bigwigs at Pfizer?

In fact, not that long ago, AstraZeneca axed 11,000 jobs worldwide in 2012-13 including hundreds of jobs in the UK and the relocation of 1,600 posts when it moved its R&D HQ from Cheshire to Cambridge. This relocation was despite the company previously getting a £5 million 'regional growth' grant, secured by Chancellor George Osborne.

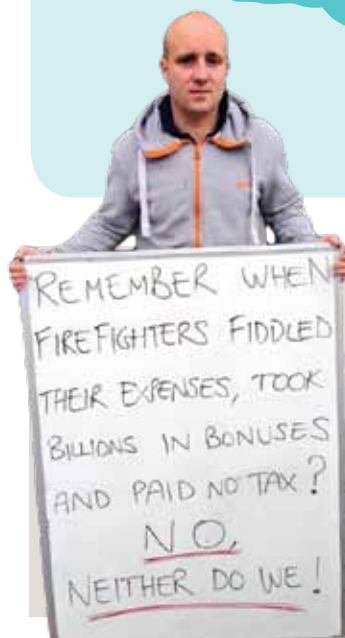
Miliband and Lib Dem business secretary Vince Cable's call for 'public interest' rules to govern such takeovers is largely empty rhetoric. They are simply playing to the electorate while, in complete contradiction, continuing to defend the capitalist 'free market'.

The only way to defend the public interest is to nationalise the pharmaceutical industry under democratic workers' control and management and use big pharma's resources to pioneer effective medical treatments at prices which don't undermine the National Health Service.



Join the fightback! Join the Socialists!

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**On the recent firefighters picket line in Birmingham - a placard giving a satirical comment about the class divide**

A picture which went viral on social media

What we saw

# RMT forces London Underground to back down

**Bill Johnson**  
RMT

RMT has won important changes in London Underground's (LU) proposals for job cuts and re-organisation on the tube.

In spite of the other tube unions leaving RMT to fight alone, at this stage the two-day strike that caused massive disruption to the tube network on 29-30 April forced LU to back down, at least temporarily. In return RMT has suspended its further strike action due to take place 6-8 May.

LU has now made a real commitment to ensure that no one whose job is abolished will lose pay. LU had previously told staff that it wanted to be able to promise that but refused to give a commitment, in spite of repeated demands from tube unions, until RMT forced the issue with strike action in April.

The company has also agreed to a wider mandate for its station by sta-



photo Neil Cafferky

tion review of its plans. This means RMT and other unions will be able to raise objections to the impact of proposals on displacement and relocation of members, the ability of

members to run stations and ticket selling arrangements.

There are many other outstanding issues, in particular proposed pay rates for new grades. But the

latest movement by LU in response to solid strike action is encouraging and should give confidence to tube workers that the union can resist LU's plans.

Last week LU had demanded that RMT "settle" its dispute with the company in return for any changes to LU's proposals. The union, quite rightly, refused this. After LU saw how effective RMT's action was, even without the support of other unions, they dropped this demand in order to get the three days of action scheduled for 6-8 May suspended. As a result RMT can put on further strikes if the station by station review does not restore jobs and ticket offices.

LU not only has its eyes on ticket office staff. It is also tendering for driverless trains and is planning billions of pounds of cuts. The RMT will continue its tradition of defending its members' jobs and conditions and the London Underground as a service. This may include further strike action, which should involve the other tube unions.

## In brief

### Lambeth College

University and College Union (UCU) members at Lambeth college in south London were on strike on 1 May. The college had been granted an injunction to prevent an all-out strike but the UCU responded by rebalancing for strike action.

The dispute is over attempts to change contracts to increase workloads, cut pay, sick pay and holiday entitlement.

### QA Hospital strike

Workers at Queen Alexandra Hospital in Portsmouth are going on a 24-hour strike from midnight on 9 May. The GMB members work for Carillion and are protesting against staff shortages, grievances which Carillion and the hospital trust are not taking seriously. The strike is scheduled to take place every fortnight.

## Fighting Land Registry cuts

Our members working for the Land Registry will hold a two-day strike against privatisation, job cuts and office closures on 14 and 15 May

The strike is specifically over Land Registry's failure to give assurances that there won't be any office closures or compulsory redundancies.

The privatisation proposals are a real threat to the government guarantee of title, will drive up the cost of house buying, force small, local high-street solicitors out of business and threatens the stability of the housing market.

Our members have been left with no choice but to take industrial action to try to force management to the negotiating table for meaningful discussions around our reasonable demands.

Management has failed to give assurances that there will be no office closures, indeed the head of the Land Registry Ed Lester has stated there will be. He has also failed to give assurances that there will be no enforced redundancies or that there will be no privatisation.

**Dave Lunn**  
Vice-President, PCS Land Registry Group, personal capacity

**See also**  
[www.socialistparty.org.uk](http://www.socialistparty.org.uk)  
Please send messages of support to [solidarity@pcs.org.uk](mailto:solidarity@pcs.org.uk)

## Care UK workers start 14 days of strike action



photo A Tice

**Alistair Tice**

Lots of hands went up to volunteer to join the Doncaster Care UK strike committee set up at the strikers' rally on 5 May, which began a further

14 days of strike action.

Ninety-three Unison members have refused to sign the new contracts that private care company Care UK are imposing on former NHS staff who provide supported living for adults with learning

difficulties.

This service was privatised by the council last year leading to proposed 35% pay cuts. Workers have already taken 20 days of strike action over the last three months and intend to make the next two-week strike really count.

Plans have been made to take a coach full of strikers down to the company headquarters in Essex. Other companies in the hands of their private equity owners Bridgepoint will be targeted for protest as well.

Care UK has just announced it's pulling out of a Newcastle GP service contract two years early. They say: "after reviewing our business strategy it was decided that Care UK will not run the service past January 2015". In other words it cannot make enough profit out of it.

In Aberdeen, Care UK was rated "weak" for quality of care and support, staffing, and management and leadership following visits by the Care Inspectorate. The company says: "The buoyant local jobs market means we have found it extremely

difficult to recruit suitable people to support worker roles". Which really means it pays low wages!

Care workers in Doncaster report many worrying changes in the quality of care since the privateers took over and the union is producing a dossier to present to the Care Quality Commission. Strikers will also show up in force at the next Clinical Commissioning Group meeting. These are the new Tory established bodies that control NHS purse strings.

The strikers' Unison branch is also expected to call on the union nationally to go on the offensive against Care UK by mobilising its organising team to recruit Care UK workers around the country and organise protests at regional Care UK offices like TUSC did two weeks ago.

**Send messages of support to [admin@unison-dab.org.uk](mailto:admin@unison-dab.org.uk)**  
**Donations/cheques made out to: 'Doncaster, District & Bassetlaw Health Branch' should be sent to: Jenkinson House, White Rose Way, Doncaster, DN4 5GJ.**

## CWU conference - time to build Broad Left

**CWU conference delegates**

A motion calling for the next Labour government to renationalise Royal Mail was passed at the recent CWU annual conference. But although delegates stressed the need to work for a Labour victory at next year's elections they were also angry at Labour's current performance.

A motion calling for the immediate abolition of the bedroom tax was passed but only Socialist Party member Clive Walder condemned Labour councils for evicting people in arrears with the tax. He called on the union to use its influence with the Labour leadership to get Labour councils to stop implementing it now.

Motions calling for a membership ballot on Labour Party affiliation or reducing the money the union gives to Labour were manoeuvred off the agenda.

The two major issues in the telcomms occupational conference were performance management and BT's proposals to introduce a new pay and grading structure for recruits in customer service and field engineering.

On performance management the Executive was defeated in a card vote on a motion that called for an industrial action ballot by 1 July if there isn't a serious improvement of members' experience of BT's performance management regime.

Skulduggery the like of which has not been seen at conference for ages surfaced in the debate on pay and grading. Conference overturned a ruling by the Standing Orders Committee that every proposition on this subject, all of which were critical or called for industrial action, if the Executive's feeble motion which did no more than note that negotiations were ongoing was passed.

On the morning of the debate the

Chair then made a ruling reinstating the instruction that these motions would fall. Because it only takes a simple majority to change Standing Orders but a two thirds majority to overturn the Chair's ruling the ruling was reinstated.

If the Executive go to those lengths to get their own way members are right to be worried about their future.

The misnamed Left Activist Network, who all the members of the Executive are either members or supporters of, organised this debate in great detail and even held an emergency invitation only fringe meeting. No agreement has been signed or recommended yet.

These actions show that the Executive are contemplating serious reductions in pay and a lengthening of the working week. A small number of branches have begun to move into opposition to the Executive which makes building the Broad Left urgent.

## Firefighters strike to save pensions



**Firefighters walk out in Coventry** photo Dave Nellist

At the FBU picket line at the Western Station, in Leicester on 2 May the strikers were waiting to talk to me when I arrived to give support. They already knew I was from the Socialist Party, and one of them immediately said: "You want co-ordinated strike action from everyone don't you? Our union leadership seems reluctant to do it, but I think we need it."

This was before I had even said anything! A debate immediately broke out about the value of a one-day general strike.

**Steve Score**

# Young people fighting back

## No support for zero-hour contracts

**Helen Pattison**  
Youth Fight for Jobs

With zero-hour contracts hitting the headlines again I got a phone call from Sky News asking if I would be interviewed as I used to work on a zero-hour contract.

A car picked me up to take me to the studio. The driver asked why I was going on the TV and we discussed how few opportunities young people have nowadays. He was shocked to hear about zero-hour contracts and thought they were a disgrace.

In the studio the make-up artist talked to me about the barrage of attacks on young people. She thought it was good that young people were standing up to low pay and poor working conditions. We spoke about the 15Now campaign in the US and the strikes by McDonalds workers there.

The taxi driver had waited for me outside and said he thought the interview was good. As he drove me back we discussed the importance of the right to strike and protecting jobs. He said that although his job was impacted by the RMT strike on London Underground he still supported it and we discussed how inaccessible the tube network is for disabled people.

Then the cost of renting a home in London came up. I have been pushed further and further away



photo Paul Mattsson

from central London to find lower rents. His children have struggled just the same.

The only person who didn't seem to think zero-hour contracts were such a bad idea was the interviewer:

"Aren't you lucky to have any job at all in these hard times?" Living in uncertainty, unable to afford a decent home isn't 'lucky', it's proof of the failures of this capitalist system and successive governments of austerity.

## Why I'm standing for TUSC

Henry Redmore, Budshead, Plymouth

The British Future thinktank recently carried out a survey which showed that 60% of young people do not plan to vote in the next general election. This is no surprise when you look at the pathetic policies on offer from all the parties of big business. TUSC stands against all cuts, for free education and decent jobs. That's a programme that is engaging the young

people involved to not just vote but stand themselves:

My name is Henry Redmond and I am standing as the TUSC candidate for Budshead this May. I'm 20 years old, a nursing student at Plymouth University and a part-time care assistant.

Thanks to the Con-Dem government we have seen exploitation and vicious, unnecessary cuts implemented throughout the public sector. From the brutal destruction of our NHS to the below-inflation pay rises,

to the raising of the pension age.

I am standing to protect the integrity of our fantastic Derriford Hospital and will ensure that the services it offers will be available to everyone who needs them. If it wasn't for our local NHS my father would have died three years ago.

The Labour-led council has done nothing to stop Con-Dem cuts. If elected I will campaign to put a stop to that. I will fight for workers' rights throughout the city and for better working conditions for all. For a real alternative to cuts, vote TUSC!

## Leeds protest against privatisation of student loans



photo Leeds Socialist Students

The government plans to sell off student loans to private companies. To show our outrage, 50 students from Leeds marched around Leeds University and Leeds Metropolitan University, to raise awareness of the situation and get more students involved in the campaign.

Mary Finch, one of the organisers of the demonstration, explained the effects, after years of hard work, to then face extreme pressure to pay off high amounts of debt. Mark Taylor-Batty of lecturer's union UCU expressed great support for us.

At the rally at Leeds Met, Amy Cousens called on the National Union of Students to bring students across the county together

to fight this attack by calling a national demo.

This call was immediately seconded by Piers Telemacque, NUS vice-president elect for society and development. Piers gave a passionate speech on the need to organise not just against the privatisation of student loans but to fight to defend education altogether.

TUSC candidate in Hyde Park and Woodhouse, Tanis Belsham-Wray, explained that the only way to defend education is for students to link up with staff as well as the wider trade union movement.

For many of us this was the first march we'd organised but we will keep fighting until we win.

**Leeds Socialist Students**

## May Day: Remembering Bob Crow and Tony Benn

### London

Thousands of trade unionists and community activists marched from London's Clerkenwell Green to Trafalgar Square on Thursday 1 May.

The march was celebrating May Day - international workers' day - and commemorating RMT leader Bob Crow and socialist Labour MP Tony Benn, who both passed away earlier this year.

The ranks of the RMT swelled the number of marchers this year, keen to pay tribute to Bob Crow, bringing RMT banners from the length and breadth of the country.

Among the speakers to make moving tributes to these two left figureheads at the rally, were RMT president Peter Pinkney, and Bob Crow's daughter Natasha Hoarau.

Natasha announced that she is standing on the London No2EU list of candidates in the European elec-

tions on 22 May, the list that her father would have been the leading candidate on.

Peter Pinkney and Unite general secretary Len McCluskey raised the need for a general strike and PCS assistant secretary Chris Baugh said: "We need to prepare the ground for the general strike that's needed in the UK - when the trade union movement begins to show its latent power".

The last but not least speaker of the rally was Paul Kershaw from Unite's housing workers' branch. He explained why Unite members in his branch were wearing "I am Bryan" t-shirts; they were supporting Unite rep Bryan Kennedy who has been suspended from work on trumped-up charges.

"An injury for one is an injury for all", Paul ended, echoing the spirit and solidarity of May Day.

**Judy Beishon**

### Swansea

Swansea Socialist Party members (resplendent in new Socialist Party t-shirts) joined other trade unionists for Swansea Trades Council's May Day rally. Together we honoured the memory of Tony Benn and Bob Crow by committing ourselves to continue their fight for socialism.

Tyrone O'Sullivan, South Wales NUM during the miners' strike and leader of the workers' co-operative at Tower Colliery, was the first guest speaker.

Despite being, in his words, "a Labour man all my life", Tyrone reserved his bitterest words for the Blair/Brown government: "Labour had three terms in office, three terms in office and did bugger all!".

Swansea West Labour MP, Geraint Davies, spoke out against those that have attempted to bring racist division to the city recently - the National Front and Nigel Farage and Ukip.

Continuing the theme of opposing racism was Swansea Socialist Party branch secretary, Claire Job, representing No2EU - Yes to Workers' Rights. Claire linked the fight against racist division with the need for a united campaign to end the poverty and misery from which racism breeds as she called for a united campaign for 'jobs and services not racism'.

Unison members in Gwalia Housing Association have voted overwhelmingly for strike action over Gwalia's drive to cut jobs and attack terms and conditions.

Their representative, Allan Thompson, explained that strike action had been postponed in order to reach agreement on how to protect some of their most vulnerable clients but that this is a postponement only and that workers are determined and angry.

Three people gave their details

to find out more about the Socialist Party and how we fight for socialism.

**Ronnie Job**

### Ipswich

Ipswich May Day festival included great speeches from Claire Laker-Mansfield from Youth Fight For Jobs and Megan Dobney from the TUC and Ipswich FBU.

John McNally, vice president of the civil servants' union PCS, called for a programme of joint co-ordinated industrial action across the public sector around common demands to defeat the pay freeze.

He said: "Capitalism has nothing to offer workers but racism, division, austerity and war. Build a mass movement to defeat austerity and fight for an effective political voice for the working class. Fight for a society that puts people before profit - a socialist society."

**Hannah Sell**  
Socialist Party deputy general secretary

Capitalism is a system in crisis. It is delivering austerity for the majority and unimaginable wealth for a few at the top. Inevitably it is increasingly being questioned.

The best-seller status of Thomas Piketty's 'Capital in the Twenty First Century' is an indication of the growing search for a solution to inequality. This book argues that rising inequality could lead to revolution unless action is taken, and pleads with the super-rich to accept a graduated wealth tax in order to try to save their own system.

A campaign by economics students across 19 countries - including the US, Britain, Brazil and Russia - demands that they are taught Keynes and Marx instead of continuing with the old syllabus which lauds economists whose ideas were smashed by the start of the great recession.

These are early indications of a profound change in outlook that is taking place, particularly among the working class which has now suffered seven years of austerity. Over the last few years the capitalist media has published endless articles arguing that support for public services and the welfare state is on the decline.

In fact, the public are far to the left of all the establishment parties. The experience of capitalism in crisis has enormously reinforced opposition to the profit vultures of the private sector. Support for keeping public services public has strengthened, despite the avalanche of propaganda attempting to blame the public sector for the economic crisis.

Opposition to the private sector running the NHS stands at a massive 12 to one. Support for renationalisation of Royal Mail, rail and the energy companies is between 66% and 68%. Rent controls, one of the central demands of this year's Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC) local election campaign, is supported by 56% of people, with only 33% opposing. This is despite rent controls, which were finally abolished by Thatcher in 1988, having been written off as 'outdated' and 'counterproductive' by all three establishment parties for a quarter of a century.

This radicalisation terrifies the more far-thinking sections of the capitalist class. At this stage, however, they can comfort themselves that it has no viable outlet. This will change on the basis of experience, as workers strive to find a way to defend their interests.

**Economy in crisis**

Whatever the outcome of the general election, the next government will inherit a sick and crisis-ridden economy, dominated by the finance and service sector. Con-Dem pledges to 'rebalance' the economy have been swept aside in favour of continuing the complete dominance of the City of London, and the partial re-blowing of the financial and housing bubbles. The very bubbles whose bursting triggered the world economic crisis in 2008.

British manufacturing continues to decline. The productivity gap between Britain and other major economic powers is now at its highest level for 20 years. The pharmaceutical sector is one of the few parts of manufacturing in which British capitalism remains a world player. Yet the short-sightedness of British capitalism is summed up in the potential takeover of UK pharmaceutical giant AstraZeneca, by asset-stripping Pfizer.

Pfizer's record, of taking over pharmaceutical companies that have discovered new drugs in order to maximise profits rather than investing in drug development, sums up the bankruptcy of mod-

ern capitalism and the urgent need to democratically nationalise the pharmaceutical companies.

That bankruptcy is brutally expressed elsewhere. The talk of a recovery in Britain's sick economy is meaningless for the majority, and above all for the young. The pay of young people - between 18 and 25 years old - has fallen by 14% in real terms since 2008.

As we approach the 22 May local government elections, the absence of a mass party of the working class has left millions - angry with all the three capitalist parties - without any effective way to express that anger at the ballot box. A section, in desperation to kick the establishment, is even voting for the right-wing populists of Ukip. In reality, however, Ukip is the establishment's 'anti-establishment party'.

The endless media coverage for Ukip leader Nigel Farage is a semi-deliberate attempt by the capitalist class to find a safe outlet for popular anger. Nonetheless, a strengthening Ukip is dangerous for the Tories, but also for Labour.

The capitalist parties are utterly incapable of cutting across the growth of Ukip. Only a real voice for the working class can answer the populist posing of Farage. How can the big three pro-austerity parties, all mired in the filth of the expenses scandals, effectively answer Farage - who himself has claimed over £60,000 worth of expenses? A debate with Dave Nellist - the national chairperson of the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition - who for nine years was a workers' MP on a worker's wage, would be a very different proposition.

**Ukip**

Those on the left who think it is a good idea to organise joint campaigning with the pro-austerity parties against Ukip, are making a fundamental mistake. It is the pro-austerity policies of Labour that has left the space Ukip is trying to fill. But Ukip is a pro-cuts party whose backers include press barons and the aristocracy and whose few councillors have voted for cuts budgets. Only a political force committed to fighting and voting against cuts can cut across them. TUSC is beginning to create that voice standing 560 candidates in the upcoming local elections.

Whether Labour or the Tories, or a coalition, takes power after the 2015 general election all that will be on offer will be continued austerity and cuts to the public sector. The Labour leadership has made this clear repeatedly. At the 2014 Hugo Young lecture Miliband said that, "Labour would keep austerity" and "cut public spending" if it forms the next government.

However, under huge pressure to promise to deal with Britain's growing housing crisis, Miliband has put forward some minor measures to regulate the private rented sector. There are nine million people living in the private rented sector and their rent takes, on average, nearly half of their disposable income. Any measures that curb the greed of private landlords will be welcomed by tenants. But Miliband's proposals fall far short of serious rent controls, which could be implemented by Labour councils now, even before a general election.

Landlords would be banned from introducing more than one rent rise in a year. A limit to the size of rent rises - linked to average rent rises and/or inflation - would be introduced. While this



The capitalist parties are utterly incapable of cutting across the growth of Ukip. Only a real voice for the working class can answer the populist posing of Farage



# PREPARE FOR ALMIGHTY BATTLES AGAINST AUSTERITY

- Coordinate the strikes
- Vote for TUSC

may limit the excesses of the most money-grubbing landlords, it will do nothing to reverse the complete unaffordability of the private rented sector for the millions who have no other way to put a roof over their head. Miliband has reassured big business that he plans to discuss his proposals through and reach agreement with landlords, but has said nothing about discussing them with tenants.

Exceedingly limited as his actual proposals are, Miliband's talk about unaffordable rents is popular, and could lead to an increase in support for Labour in the opinion polls, as was briefly the case when he proposed a freeze on energy prices. That Labour is still only a few points ahead in the polls is because of its failure to show serious intent to take action to stand up to the billionaires and bankers in whose interests Britain is run.

**Labour's record**

Memories of Labour's record in office add to workers' scepticism, as does the experience of Labour-led councils implementing austerity. On housing, a mass council house building programme is clearly the way to solve the housing crisis but Labour is not proposing this.

During its 13 years in office Labour built fewer than 1,000 council homes a year, less than under Thatcher. Miliband has talked about building 200,000 houses a year by 2020, but nothing has been said about whether these will be in the private or public sector. As Andrew Rawnsley pointed out in the Observer (4 May 2014): "There is only one word for this [Britain's housing policy]: madness".

The madness is blind subservience to the so-called 'free market'. This means that in the current four-year spending period less than £5 billion of public spending has been allocated to building homes and £95 billion has been allocated for housing benefit. Compare this to the 1970s when about four-fifths of public spending on housing was used to build homes, with only a fifth paid out in benefits to assist people with their rents.

A clear break with the current market 'madness' and a pledge to build a million council houses a year would lead to a landslide victory for Labour, but the Labour leadership is terrified of adopting any policy which challenges big business, no matter in how limited a way. That is why on rail - despite overwhelming support for renationalisation - the Labour leadership refuses to commit itself, instead talking about the need to find an 'innovative solution'.

A Labour government acting in the interests of capitalism would not even carry out all of the incredibly modest measures it is proposing to improve workers' living standards. Faced with the outrage of the fat cats at even the tiniest pruning of their privileges, and completely unprepared to take the decisive measures of nationalisation needed to really end their control of the economy, Miliband will be forced to retreat. But in any case, the dominant theme of Labour's programme is to promise continued misery for the working class and the majority of the population.

The capitalist crisis means a Miliband government would become incredibly unpopular, far more than any Labour prime minister in living memory. The dramatic drop in support for French President Francois Hollande is Miliband's future. Without doubt mass movements will develop, as the working class finds a way to fight back against austerity.

The preparation for that is taking place now. For two consecutive years the TUC congress has left the question of a general strike against austerity 'on the table', but has not taken any concrete steps to organise one. The right-wing trade union leaders hoped that any serious coor-

inated action could be put off and that their members would be prepared to wait in the hope the Con-Dem government would be 'swept from power' at the general election.

But the continued intensity of the attacks on the working class - particularly the cuts to public services and the public sector pay freeze - make this extremely difficult. The government's claim of an 'economic recovery' while simultaneously promising ever more austerity, has also increased workers' anger.

It is also difficult to build too many hopes in a Labour government coming to the rescue when Labour councils are slashing public services, and the Labour leadership insists that they would continue to squeeze the public sector. Nonetheless, there is bound to be a section of trade unionists who are 'hoping against hope' that Labour would be better. Many of these workers also recognise, however, that a serious fight to defend pay and conditions before the election is necessary to put pressure on the next government, whatever its stripe.

The RMT transport union is engaged in a heroic struggle on London Underground against the attacks of vicious employers. All the weasel words of London Tory Mayor Boris Johnson and Transport for London managers about their respect for the late Bob Crow are shown for what they were by the renewed attempt to try to break the RMT.

But workers cannot expect any support from Labour when they struggle. The Times (5 May 2014) reported that Miliband condemned the planned 72-hour walkout by the RMT and said he would consider proposals for a 50% threshold for strike ballots. "He told BBC1's Andrew Marr Show: 'The Tube strike is wrong and it shouldn't be going ahead'".

Firefighters in the FBU are also striking again, and teachers in the NUT voted for further action at their Easter conference. Alongside these unions even the right-wing leadership of Unison is being forced to propose action against the pay freeze imposed on its members. Socialists have to argue for each individual struggle to be conducted seriously, not just with token action, but in a battle to win.

**Coordinate strikes**

But we also have to argue to coordinate the strikes. The TUC is planning a national demonstration in October to demand a pay rise for Britain. This could form part of a serious struggle, but it is not the most important element of it. Coordinated action of the unions already involved in action before the summer could be a building block towards a 24-hour general strike against austerity.

The ground is being prepared for a new stage of workers' struggle in Britain, which will dwarf what has gone before. This year's London May Day demonstration, honoured the lives of Bob Crow and Tony Benn as well as celebrating international workers' day. Larger than in recent years, it was around 10,000-strong and dominated by militant trade unionists, particularly from the RMT.

The case for a general strike, but also for a political alternative to the austerity parties, was widely accepted among the crowd. Groups of workers even heckled some trade union speakers at the rally, calling for a general strike. This is an indication of a new generation of workers' leaders that will develop, steered with a determination to fight in the interests of their class, and therefore for socialism. **Do you agree? Want to discuss these ideas? Get in touch with the Socialist Party. Visit [www.socialistparty.org.uk](http://www.socialistparty.org.uk)**

**NATIONAL SHOP STEWARDS NETWORK CONFERENCE**  
Saturday 5 July  
11am-5pm  
Conway Hall - 25 Red Lion Square, Holborn, London WC1R 4RL  
**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  
Register online: [shopstewards.net](http://shopstewards.net)  
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e: [info@shopstewards.net](mailto:info@shopstewards.net)



# Battling the cuts: when push comes to shove

A pushchair protest took place in Leicester on 30 April against cuts being made by the council to children's centres. Parents affected by cuts to the centres joined members of Leicestershire Against the Cuts marching in opposition to the slashing of this service, which plays a crucial role in supporting families across Leicester.

Unison union placards decorated by kids were prominent on the march, and Unison had a marquee in the city centre where petitions were signed by many people going by. 96 jobs are under threat and Unison and the GMB union have both said they will ballot for industrial action.

The council and the executive Labour Mayor use the excuse that the government has cut the grants they get. But what angers people is that while cutting services like this and others, such as adventure playgrounds, homeless hostels and old people's homes, the council is spending tens of millions of pounds on rebuilding parts of the city centre.



photo Steve Score

As a parent said: "I'm all for the city centre being made to look nice, but what kind of priorities does the mayor have when services like this are being devastated?" Or as another protester against the adven-

ture playgrounds/youth clubs cuts previously said: "The Mayor is all fur coat and no knickers!"

Leicestershire Against the Cuts is arguing that, if he wanted to, the Mayor could set a 'no cuts' budget

using the £150 million reserves and the capital receipts from land and buildings they have sold off to keep services running, and build a mass campaign to force the government to return the money they cut.

## Freedom riders on a storm

### A freedom rider

Elderly and disabled people in South Yorkshire are still catching trains and refusing to pay. We've now held five 'Freedom Ride' protests against the withdrawal of our free train travel and restriction of our bus and tram concessions by mainly Labour councillors on the Integrated Transport Authority (ITA).

Each week groups of protesters catch trains in Barnsley, Sheffield, Doncaster and Mexborough, travelling to meet at Meadowhall. Over 100 take part every time, with attendances recently increasing, so any ITA hopes that protests would

fizzle out proved unfounded.

At the fourth Freedom Ride, Barnsley protesters, by far the biggest group, were told by the Northern Rail manager that there would be no more free travel. Next week they would be made to pay. But no one was put off. Freedom Ride 5 was the biggest yet!

### Blockade

Police organised a blockade, physically preventing Barnsley protesters from catching the train to Meadowhall. But they failed to stop the protest. Instead of going home, around 85 elderly and disabled people crossed the bridge to the other platform. Just in time to catch a train

with 17 of us from Sheffield already on as we'd been tipped off by phone.

Over 100 of us went on a scenic ride out to Penistone, waving at the police as the train pulled out. In addition, another 30 travelled free from Doncaster and Mexborough to Meadowhall.

Aslef, the train drivers' union, is supporting the campaign. It's featured on their national website and they gave a donation. Their vice-president addressed the Freedom Ride 3 rally. Also, Sheffield Citizens Advice and Law Centre are taking the issue to judicial review on behalf of two disabled clients on the grounds that the ITA failed to comply with the Equality Act 2010. Councillors are looking at the cost of

defending the action.

The annual saving resulting from these cuts is only £629,000 between trains, buses and trams and across South Yorkshire. With 265,000 senior citizen and disabled pass holders that's £2.37 each a year or less than 5p a pass holder a week. Our mobility is being restricted for such a small amount of money. That's the outcome of Labour councillors being unwilling to fight Con-Dem cuts to council funding.

Protesters' persistence has resulted in South Yorkshire Passenger Transport inviting a delegation of campaigners to meet them on 8 May. But the day before that we have Freedom Ride 6! We will be claiming our free rail travel yet again.

## Defend the right to campaign

### Tom Nally

TUSC candidate for Plympton St Mary

The left-of-Labour challenge put up by the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC) in Plymouth has received some significant press coverage. However, campaigners have also received some unwelcome attention.

Last October a campaign stall was erected in the city centre. Members of the public stopped to chat and buy the Socialist. A police officer stopped and told us we needed public liability insurance and that we were obstructing a

public right of way. We were told to take down our table. We refused as the stall was tucked away, leaving plenty of room for the public to go about their business. Eventually the officer left and the stall stayed.

Similar exchanges with similar outcomes became a regular feature of our weekly stalls. Recently, with the local elections looming, visits from the officers have been increasing.

Recently, Ryan Aldridge, TUSC candidate for Ham ward, was told by a police officer that he could be arrested under the Terrorism Act for not taking the stall down. As ridiculous as it seems that someone could be arrested for not remov-

ing a pasting table with a cloth and some leaflets on it, it does suggest the scary prospect of police using the Terrorism Act to stifle political freedom.

### Political move?

After the announcement that TUSC will be standing in all 19 wards of Plymouth on 22 May, I was out campaigning with a supporter.

Given that wind was forecast, we had left the pasting table at home. We were approached by a police officer who asked us if we were allowed to sell the Socialist. We explained that we were, but she radioed for back-up and three other

officers joined her along with a Plymouth City Council City Centre Manager.

They told us we needed a Street Trading License in order to sell the paper. We tried to tell them that our paper was registered with the post office making us a news vendor selling newspapers that was exempt from needing street trading consent, as per the council's own legislation. After sometime they left us alone to continue to sell our paper.

Is the Plymouth City Council intimidating TUSC candidates and supporters for political reasons? Who is giving the orders to the police to intervene in non-criminal affairs?

## Election appeal 2014 - £4,278 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 is also going to support the campaign of the Workers and Socialist Party (WASP) in the general election in South Africa.

We are continuing to get a great response from our readers. Thanks this week to: Steve McDonnell £50; Mr C D Cooke £250; Moira O'Driscoll £100; Gary Kandinsky £10; Rob Williams £100; Phil Snider £100; members in Carlisle £100; £200 collected at the funeral of Pat James (obituary issue 806); Roger Ingham £50; members in Bristol south £100, Gloucester £60 and Plymouth £20; Pete McNally £200.

We need to try and reach our target in the next two weeks but 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 8988 8777. Please make cheques payable to the Socialist Party and send to: Election appeal, PO Box 24697, London E11 1YD.

## FUND RAISING BADGES



### Enamel TUSC badge

£2.50 each or 5 for £10

Ring 020 8988 8788 or email [naomibyron@socialistparty.org.uk](mailto:naomibyron@socialistparty.org.uk)



### Enamel Socialist Party badge

£2.50 each, including postage.

Bulk rate: £15 for 10, including postage.

Ring 020 8988 8782 or email [alisonhill@socialistparty.org.uk](mailto:alisonhill@socialistparty.org.uk)

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## SOCIALIST PARTY FIGHTING FUND

	£ target	£ received	April-June 2014	Deadline 29 June 2014
North West	1,200	748	■	■
South West	1,400	532	■	■
Wales	2,300	847	■	■
East Midlands	1,600	563	■	■
Southern	1,200	354	■	■
London	6,100	1,668	■	■
West Midlands	2,100	395	■	■
Northern	600	86	■	■
South East	750	96	■	■
Yorkshire	2,900	279	■	■
Eastern	1,200	73	■	■
England & Wales	3,650	812	■	■
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>25,000</b>	<b>6,454</b>	■	■

# Fight for \$15: Seattle shows what a movement can achieve

But Kshama Sawant says “Our work is far from done”



photo Alex Garland

Under intense pressure from the movement for a \$15 an hour minimum wage, Seattle's establishment was forced to come forward with a proposal to significantly increase the wages for 100,000 low-paid workers. It is less than workers are demanding, and still not in any way a done deal. Nevertheless this shows the power of working people to stand up, raise their expectations and push back against the big business agenda dominating the US.

A year ago the proposed increase would have been hard to imagine. The Mayor of Seattle, Ed Murray, is proposing to increase the minimum wage by 50%, compared to the Washington State rate, over ten years. With a yearly inflation adjustment this would lift minimum wages in the 'emerald city' to more than \$18 an hour in 2025. The effects

The Mayor's proposal allows big business a three year phase-in from \$11 to \$15 in 2018 or even 2019 if they offer healthcare. Only in 2018 does the cost of living adjustment start. For small business, defined as up to 500 (!) employees, the phase-in is much longer, and tipped workers only reach the full amount in 2025. The wage increases for businesses with fewer than 500 workers which offer healthcare, or where workers are tipped, are extremely slow in the first few years, rising to \$10, \$10.50, \$11 then \$11.50 in the first four years.

nationally will be huge. Already it is clear that it will encourage workers all across the US and beyond to step up the fight for \$15, and more.

The strikes of fast food workers, the huge sympathy they received, the electoral success of Kshama Sawant in becoming the first socialist city councillor in Seattle in 100 years, and the impressive 15 Now campaign she and Socialist Alterna-

tive (co-thinkers of the CWI in the US) have launched - have redefined what is achievable.

However, the deal is not yet sealed - and it has some severe flaws that Kshama Sawant, Socialist Alternative and 15 Now are fighting to overcome. It was the movement of workers and socialists that achieved this - now the pressure must be increased in the coming weeks on the city council to correct the weaknesses in the Mayor's proposal. If the council fails to change the proposal, there is still the option of putting a Charter Amendment to voters in November.

## “Least offensive”

On May Day the Mayor's Income Inequality Advisory Committee finally delivered its plan. It's a complicated plan because it aims to give the appearance of \$15 to satisfy the public demands, while giving business loopholes to pay as little as possible in practice.

The president of the Seattle chapter of the National Restaurant Association, Bob Donegan, explained how the dominant section of Seattle business views the proposal when he told the city council that he is supporting it because it is the “least offensive of the imperfect solutions.”

The proposal reflects what business has been forced to accept. It also points to the danger that the bosses will attempt to undermine and overturn what they have been forced to concede as soon as they feel they are in a strong enough position to do so. The long-term phase-in runs the risk that future city councils could alter the plan before it fully kicks in. There should be no doubt that they will take advantage of the proposed “temporary”

tip penalty to make every effort to turn it into a permanent feature whenever the city council majority feels strong enough.

In contrast, Kshama Sawant is pushing forward the original plan she and the trade unions brought to the Income Inequality Advisory Committee - \$15 starting 1 January 1 for all workers at big businesses. Starbucks, McDonald's, Burger King, and so on - why should they get one more day to pay poverty wages?

Kshama Sawant's plan included a three year phase-in for small businesses (with fewer than 250 workers) and non-profits, no tip penalty, no healthcare deduction, and the cost of living adjustments start immediately.

On 7 May, supporters of the 'SeaTac initiative', which won a \$15 an hour minimum wage last November in nearby town Seattle Tacoma, will protest against business blocking its implementation through legal challenges. This is the next step to show the city council and business that we will not allow them to push back against decent wages.

## Debate

The Mayor's proposal has sparked an important debate among workers and the left on how best to proceed. The leadership of the Seattle trade union movement is mistakenly uncritically supporting the Mayor's proposal and unfortunately not looking to throw its weight fully into struggle to improve the proposal.

For Socialist Alternative and Kshama Sawant, there is nothing wrong with signing a deal that might not completely reflect our full demands, as long as the labour movement has used all its tools to push forward an agenda to defend

working class families' living and working conditions, to change the given balance of forces between the 1% and the rest of society, and to activate workers themselves. The question is, has this been done yet?

## The Guardian quoted the following research:

- A study by economists at the University of California Berkeley of San Francisco and other cities and states that require minimum wages above the federal level concluded that higher pay did not come at the expense of jobs. Instead, the costs were passed on through a mix of low price increases and higher productivity.

- A Puget Sound Sage study found that an increase to \$15 an hour “would result in a \$526 million stimulus to low-wage worker households in Seattle and the region”. Most of that money would be spent in the local economy, it said.

In our view, the answer is no. The Seattle trade union leaders believe the Mayor's proposal needs to be supported and not changed in order to avoid big business stepping in, using their financial power to manipulate public opinion to oppose an increase in the minimum wage - for example, on the ballot in November. But when did appeasement on our side ever stop big business from using all the tools at their disposal to strengthen their position and weaken ours?

We need to rely on our strength and use the debate in Seattle on \$15 to help rebuild a fighting workers' movement. The strikes of the fast food workers and the trade unions supporting them were absolutely crucial to turn the growing feelings of social injustice - revealed by the Occupy Movement - into action. Trade unions were decisive in winning the SeaTac ballot for a \$15

minimum wage.

However, the trade unions did not, unfortunately, offer a tool to turn the huge sympathy for the demand for \$15 into an organisational force for all workers and young people. Imagine what would be possible in the following months and years if the labour leaders were to throw their full weight behind the fighting strategy 15 Now and Kshama Sawant have put forward - hundreds and thousands gathering in city after city, discussing, organising and then moving into action.

## Time to fight

What a powerful tool to rebuild labour, give direction and hope to workers, and finally start to fight corporate America!

What a contrast to the strategy of too many labour leaders over the last decades - they tried to appease big business, tried to get agreements and compromises.

And did this stop business from increasing their attacks? On the contrary. Bosses were encouraged to demand more and more. The extreme accumulation of wealth in the hands of the 1% is the result of their unrelenting battle against the vast majority of people. It's time to fight back.

## The Committee for a Workers' International

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

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

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



the Socialist postbag

#### Do you have something to say?

Send your news, views and criticism in not more than 150 words to Socialist Postbag, PO Box 24697, London E11 1YD, or phone 020 8988 8771, email: editors@socialistparty.org.uk. We reserve the right to shorten letters. Don't forget to give your name, address and phone number.

Confidentiality will be respected if requested.

#### Empty promises

Ed Miliband is a true politician – asked if OneNationLabour will renationalise the NHS he replies: “There will be a National Health Service under Labour” but doesn't mention reversing any changes carried out under the Con-Dems.

There's also an important omission from his new proposals for housing – there's no mention of a rent cap, just a cap on increases. If you're already paying sky-high rents: tough luck. Similarly, he wishes to “protect people” from what he calls the “worst abuses” of zero-hour contracts. He implies Labour will abolish them, but read the “small print” and it doesn't amount to much. My partner recently started work at a unionised workplace where contract workers like himself were guaranteed a higher rate (presumably union agreed rate) after 12 weeks' continuous work. He was getting excited at the prospect of finally earning a wage that didn't skim the top of the minimum wage.

I warned him not to expect this would happen. On the cusp of his 12 weeks, the firm suddenly had “nothing for you this week”. This will be the third week – so it's back to signing on. At least the union is trying to stop the downward spiral of wages. But Miliband sets the limit before a fixed-hours contract at six months: isn't it obvious what's going to happen?

Many people will just knuckle down and accept any pay. The only likelihood of a “secure” job my partner's had in the past six months was from an agency – assembly work in a nearby town for £45 a day. Not too bad, but it was for a ten-hour day and well below the minimum wage. I have no illusions about “OneNation-forget-class-society-Labour” and their empty promises of a better future.

**A Gloucestershire Socialist Party member**

#### Terror in Ukraine

The upsurge in the use of violence by the unelected Kiev government against civilians in Eastern Ukraine is leading to a growing number of deaths of anti-government protesters. Yet Western governments endorse this violence against civilians, including the use of tanks and helicopter gunships. It clearly contravenes international law yet Obama and Catherine Ashton of the EU condone this “anti-terrorist” action. The terrorists in this situation are clearly the unelected Kiev government. Where is the condemnation of the murder of 39 people in Odessa burned alive after Right Sector fascists set fire to the Trade Union House building? Russian speakers in Eastern Ukraine will not now give up their weapons after these atrocities. All this state sponsored terrorism will achieve is Ukraine's descent into ethnic civil war, a tragedy for which America and the EU must share much responsibility. As the anniversary of World War Two which led to over 30 million dead in Europe approaches, it seems incredible that the EU and America can support a government which includes openly pro-Nazi elements which control several government ministries. These pro-Nazi groups such as Svoboda and the Right Sector are committing murders of Russian speakers in Eastern Ukraine.

**Dylan Murphy  
Huddersfield**

# Schools - Would things get better under Labour?

**Martin Powell-Davies**, National Union of Teachers (NUT) national executive member, looks at David Blunkett's Labour Party Policy Review on education



Teachers reading the Guardian's headline, “Labour vows to rub out Michael Gove's education reforms”, hoped a miracle had happened. Labour shadow junior education minister Tristram Hunt recently railed against “wasting political energy on undoing reforms, that in certain situations build rather successfully on Labour Party policy”. Had Blunkett's review recommended significant changes instead?

Unfortunately, the Guardian headline is wishful thinking – or New Labour spin. A quick read of the full ‘Putting students and parents first’ report soon confirms that Blunkett has only made very minor corrections. Worse, the Blunkett review extends the process of marketisation of schooling even further.

This is hardly surprising. David Blunkett was an architect of New Labour's education policies around 2001 with his talk of putting “relentless pressure” on teachers. Thirteen years on, the pressure is even more relentless and demoralisation and turnover of teachers remains a disaster for education.

A sentence in the report suggests even longer hours might really be on offer: “Freedom for all schools to adapt the school day and the school week”. Tory Minister Gove backed away from his proposals to alter teachers' work time, but Blunkett's review implies that Labour might go where Gove feared to tread.

Similarly, there is nothing to suggest that Labour will be funding schools sufficiently to recruit more teachers and reduce workload, nor to allow the improved access to professional development that the Review supports. What stood out to me were the references to ‘value for money’ – always a euphemism for spending cuts.

Of course, some Review proposals correct some of the more nonsensical parts of Gove's regime – like the wasteful spending on Free Schools in areas with surplus school places. However, Blunkett's plans to stop Academy chains misusing funds on executive salaries seem to forget what drives some ‘entrepreneurs’ to get involved in the education market in the first place!

Even the supposedly clear recommendation that schools should be employing qualified teachers, is far from clearly worded. The Review actually says there is a “need to ensure that properly qualified teachers ‘oversee’ the learning process”. ‘Oversight’ is a very different commitment to the one that parents and teachers would be seeking.



**Blunkett's proposals actually extend the marketisation of schooling.**

Blunkett's review says Labour's education proposals are about ‘collaboration’ not ‘competition’ and says that schools will have to work in partnerships. For example, primary schools will be brought together in arms-length ‘Community Trusts’.

However, what he really seems to be suggesting is a managed break-up of what's left of local authority schooling. “Reformed and modernised” local authorities will be reduced to a scrutiny role, providing data for others to use. Real power would lie with regional “Directors of School Standards” to oversee school provision and ‘invite proposals’ for opening new schools where they judged additional provision was needed.

Blunkett wants to suggest his model will enhance parental involvement. In reality, the last vestiges of democratic local authority control over education will be lost. The ‘DoSSers’ will be appointed, not elected. Parents will find they have no real input.

The Review says: “Academies are here to stay and we need to build on this landscape”. Blunkett tries to argue that the type of school is irrelevant; it's just the quality of teaching within them that matters. Such arguments try to ignore the effect of class

and poverty, a social divide being made worse by government policies. Secondly, he fails to acknowledge that the marketisation he promotes will undermine education, not improve it.

Academy chains will become the dominant provider of schools. Yes, schools might have the power to move from one chain to another but this just reinforces the false idea that, somehow, a ‘free market’ between competing academy chains will benefit education. No, privatisation consistently fails public services.

Blunkett's review says: “It is our belief that best practice lies within smaller configurations, geographically-based and properly focused”. But it certainly isn't recommending local authorities! Instead, it seems their place is to be taken by unaccountable locally-based academy chains.

The review tries to do the impossible – provide a manageable coherent marketplace for education. But markets aren't coherent and stable and certainly won't be accountable to parents and students. Parents and teachers together must fight for properly-funded, locally accountable, community schools, as the only way to guarantee a good local school for every child.

Even the supposedly clear recommendation that schools should be employing qualified teachers, is far from clearly worded. The Review actually says there is a “need to ensure that properly qualified teachers ‘oversee’ the learning process”

## Solidarity starts early



**James finds an alternative form of transport**



Probably the Socialist's first fashion model is nine-month old James Wrack. He wore this top, designed and made by his mother, Socialist Party activist Suzanne Beishon, in solidarity with the RMT picket lines on the London tubes. Suzanne says that travel on the tube with James in his buggy made

her realise how important the station staff that, London mayor Boris Johnson wanted to cut, are, for the safety of passengers.

“I hope the strike will win a real lasting victory for the RMT pickets”, commented Suzanne. James himself just smiled.

# Private sector rents and Labour

## It's a mad, mad, mad, mad world!

**Paul Kershaw**

TUSC candidate, Ponders End, Enfield

Labour launched its election campaign with proposals aimed at attracting private renters. There is little detail, but Ed Miliband raises the idea of three-year tenancies, offering tenants a little more security after a six month probation period; a limited restriction on rent increases, and an end to the outrageous fees charged by estate agents.

This doesn't go anywhere near far enough. The Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition's (TUSC) call for rent controls and a return to secure tenancies has had a massive echo on the doorstep. Crucially, TUSC also calls for building genuinely affordable council housing with secure tenancies.

The Observer's Andrew Rawnsley, no left winger, commented: "Whether or not the Labour plan is good enough... it looks like a canny bid for votes to offer more protection from exploitative landlords and increased security of tenure. There are about nine million people in private rented accommodation and, on average, their rent consumes nearly half of their disposable income."

There has been a hysterical response from landlords and their representatives, with the Tories comparing Miliband's timid proposal to the radical policies to the late Hugo Chavez in Venezuela. Tory London Mayor Boris Johnson warned of 'Mugabe style expropriations', while the Institute of Direc-

tors labelled the proposals a 'Stalinist attack on property rights'. George Osborne claimed Miliband had outlined "essentially the argument Karl Marx made in *Das Kapital*"!

More's the pity! Unfortunately, Labour's protests that they aren't considering a return to 'old style rent control' are all too accurate.

City AM is hostile to the proposals but sober. It points out that they amount to a version of so-called SGRC's (Second Generation Rent Controls) which "...are not really rent controls... They can temporarily decouple the rents paid by incumbent tenants from market rents. But they do not interfere with those market rents themselves."

### Timid

The proposals are actually more timid than those advocated by Angela Merkel (the right-wing German chancellor) in last year's elections.

Ian Fletcher of the British Property Federation, noted that many investors were "very receptive to offering longer tenancies". A high turnover of tenants is expensive for landlords to manage, and they are keen to make renting politically acceptable, so they probably think this is a concession worth making to avoid a return to secure tenancies.

The same writer was more concerned about the threat any restriction on rent might mean for profits despite Labour's reassurances. But just a week before the announcement Paragon Mortgages marked the 18th anniversary of the introduction of buy-to-let mortgages by boasting that landlords had made



Ed Miliband remains enslaved to market led policies photo Paul Mattsson

a whopping 16.3% annual return since 1996, dwarfing what they would get from other investments.

Much of landlords profit comes from housing benefit as the Observer comments: "There is only one word for this: madness." Perhaps it doesn't seem so mad if, like a third of MPs you are a landlord, but Labour's proposals do not address this madness. Even their 'target' of building 200,000 homes a year is less than the number required to keep up with new household forma-

tion. And they haven't committed to guaranteeing these are council homes.

The old rent act that gave people secure tenancies and allowed tenants to take landlords to a rent tribunal if they felt they weren't being charged a 'fair rent' is still on the statute books, some people still have pre-1998 tenancies regulated in this way. It wasn't perfect, but it could be reintroduced quickly as an emergency step without any need for new primary legislation.

The benefit cap which drives people to food banks should be immediately dropped. But the key would be a massive programme of building new homes. Instead of the madness of subsidising private landlords to make huge profits out of providing insecure, sub-standard accommodation we need a programme of building public housing.

Many renters may be 'thankful for small mercies' on hearing Labour's proposals but we need TUSC for an alternative to capitalist madness.

## Housing crisis

### TUSC candidates demand socialist policies

Showing the huge anger that exists about the housing crisis, especially in the capital, 150 people attended a recent meeting on the issue in Leytonstone, north east London.

Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC) candidates, who have been campaigning for rent controls and other measures in the local area, attended to raise the need for a serious and determined approach

to the campaign for decent housing.

Two advertised speakers, local MP John Cryer and Unison head of local government Heather Wakefield, didn't attend. This left Rosie Walker of campaign group Hackney Renters and Eileen Short from Defend Council Housing to introduce the meeting.

Rosie outlined the precarious situation facing tenants in private

renting, who face regular rent hikes and the prospect of being evicted for pointing out maintenance problems. She called for rent controls and secure tenancies. Eileen pointed out that only investment in council housing could offer secure, affordable housing for the mass of working class people.

Two Labour councillors contributed from the floor during the discussion. Gerry Lyons, Labour Whip, let slip the influence of private landlords on the council when he said that landlords are organised to apply pressure so we must be too. He seemed to suggest that only when we're organised enough, Labour councillors will step up.

TUSC candidate and Socialist Party member Nancy Taaffe said: "It's not good enough to say 'when you've built a campaign, we'll be there', you were elected to lead so either lead or step aside for those of us who will." Nancy also highlighted the disgraceful situation of one local councillor, Liaquat Ali, who rents out over 100 properties and has a reputation for being a bad landlord.

Nancy called for people to back the TUSC challenge of 33 candidates in Waltham Forest in the local elections and to sign our petition calling on the council to implement rent control.

Labour councillor Marie Pye, portfolio holder for housing, claimed to be very sympathetic but also "pragmatic" and passed the blame for a lack of action from the Labour-dominated council to Tory minister Eric Pickles and cuts from central government.

TUSC candidate and Socialist Party member Sarah Wrack pointed out that when faced with the pressure of a mass campaign, politicians are often suddenly able to overcome these obstacles, such as with the Scottish government not implementing the bedroom tax.

### Labour

She also responded to a member of the Labour Representation Committee who argued that we shouldn't write the Labour Party off because there are still people on the left of the party fighting to save it.

Sarah pointed to the two anti-cuts councillors in Southampton expelled from Labour for voting against cuts and said, "the time for fighting for Labour is over, you're being shut up and forced out. In these local elections vote for people who will fight side by side with us".

Unfortunately this approach was not replicated by the Socialist Workers Party, which is also stand-

ing TUSC candidates. SWP members welcomed the participation of Labour's Marie Pye and, despite wide agreement in the room on the need to stand anti-cuts candidates, argued that this is not the most important task, compared to what happens "on the streets". This fails to recognise that a strong TUSC vote could pressurise even pro-market politicians to act.

Several different campaigns were represented at the meeting. One resident of a council tower block threatened with being sold off and redeveloped with almost no consultation, highlighted the way this had been forced through by Labour. Sandra Sharpe, a disabled woman threatened with eviction over bedroom tax arrears, appealed for help that she hadn't been given from Marie Pye or John Cryer - helped by TUSC supporters, she had written to both.

Socialist Party members were clearly vocalising a mood of huge anger both in the room and beyond against the inaction of the Labour Party. Our petition was enthusiastically passed round and several people approached us afterwards to discuss what we had said.

**Waltham Forest Socialist Party member**



TUSC campaigners demand rent controls for private renters photo S Wrack

Labour's hollow promises not enough

# WE CAN SCRAP ZERO-HOUR CONTRACTS

The latest figures show up to 2.7 million people are employed on zero-hour contracts. More than one in ten employers now uses them. The real figures could be even higher. And now jobseekers can lose their meagre benefits for up to three years through the cruel sanctions system if they refuse to take a zero-hour contract job. Josh Asker, Southampton Socialist Party, calls for young people and trade unions to fight back in the workplaces and at the ballot box.

Ask any young person if they have experienced the Tories' so-called recovery and they will laugh. If we are 'lucky' enough to be employed we face pressure from managers and the constant threat of joining our friends on the unemployment scrapheap. The burden of low-pay is driving workers to food banks and rip-off payday lenders.

The proliferation of zero-hour contracts

has meant that even people in employment are unable to guarantee when the next pay cheque is coming. One Southampton retail employer decides who gets to earn based solely on their till speed from the previous week.

Labour leader Ed Miliband has been in the news condemning the use of zero-hour contracts. But dozens of Labour councils employ thousands of workers in this way.

In fact the Labour council in North Larkshire, where Miliband claimed he would crack down on zero-hours, employs 800 people on them! Labour's watered down and hollow promises aren't enough for us.

Talk is not enough when some employers almost exclusively use zero-hour contracts. One trade union stands out as having taken a big step towards organising young workers to fight back. The Bakers Food and Allied Workers Union organised its members at the Hovis factory in Wigan in a two-week strike against zero-hour contracts and won.

Working with Youth Fight for Jobs and others, they are now branching out into the fast food industry as part of the Fast Food Rights (FFR) campaign, with another day of



Fast Food Rights protest in Lewisham, south east London photo Jim Jepps

action planned for 15 May.

Some of the young people active in FFR across the country are taking their fight to the ballot box and supporting or standing as one of the 561 Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC) candidates on 22 May. They will be standing on a platform of no job losses, for a living wage and an end to zero-hour contracts with full employment rights from day one of the job.

All TUSC's candidates are 100% pro-working class and 100% against zero-hour contracts. All unions and their members should break the Labour link, join the RMT transport union in TUSC, taking steps towards building a party for the working class.

**Join the Fast Food Rights day of action 15 May, events across the country**  
See [youthfightforjobs.com](http://youthfightforjobs.com) for latest details

## What we stand for

The Socialist Party fights for socialism – a democratic society run for the needs of all and not the profits of a few. We also oppose every cut, fighting in our day-to-day campaigning for every possible improvement for working class people. The organised working class has the potential power to stop the cuts and transform society.

As capitalism dominates the globe, the struggle for genuine socialism must be international.

The Socialist Party is part of the Committee for a Workers' International (CWI), a socialist international that organises in over 40 countries.

### Our demands include:

#### PUBLIC SERVICES

- No to ALL cuts in jobs, pay, public services and benefits. Defend our pensions.
- No to privatisation and the Private Finance Initiative (PFI). Renationalise all privatised utilities and services, with compensation paid only on the basis of proven need.
- Fully fund all services and run them under accountable, democratic committees that include representatives of service workers and users.

- Free, publicly run, good quality education, available to all at any age. Abolish university tuition fees now and introduce a living grant. No to academies and 'Free schools'!

- A socialist NHS to provide for everyone's health needs – free at the point of use and under democratic control. Kick out private contractors!
- Keep council housing publicly owned. For a massive building programme of publicly owned housing, on an environmentally sustainable basis, to provide good quality homes with low rents.

#### WORK AND INCOME

- Trade union struggle to increase the minimum wage to £8 an hour without exemptions as an immediate step towards £10 an hour. For an annual increase in the minimum wage linked to average earnings.
- All workers, including part-timers, temps, casual and migrant workers to have trade union rates of pay, employment protection, and sickness and holiday rights from day one of employment.
- An immediate 50% increase in the state retirement pension, as a step towards a living pension.
- Reject 'Workfare'. For the right to decent benefits, education, training, or a job, without compulsion.
- Scrap the anti-trade union laws! For fighting trade

unions, democratically controlled by their members. Full-time union officials to be regularly elected and receive no more than a worker's wage. Support the National Shop Stewards Network.

- A maximum 35-hour week with no loss of pay.

#### ENVIRONMENT

- Major research and investment into replacing fossil fuels with renewable energy and into ending the problems of early obsolescence and un-recycled waste.
- Public ownership of the energy generating industries. No to nuclear power. No to Trident.
- A democratically planned, low fare, publicly owned transport system, as part of an overall plan against environmental pollution.

#### RIGHTS

- Oppose discrimination on the grounds of race, sex, disability, sexuality, age, and all other forms of prejudice.
- Repeal all laws that trample over civil liberties. For the right to protest! End police harassment.
- Defend abortion rights. For a woman's right to choose when and whether to have children.
- For the right to asylum. No to racist immigration laws.

#### NEW WORKERS' PARTY

- For a new mass workers' party drawing together workers, young people and activists from workplace, community, environmental and anti-war campaigns, to provide a fighting, political alternative to the pro-big business parties.

- Trade unions to disaffiliate from the Labour Party now and aid the building of a new workers' party! Support the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition as an important step towards this.

#### SOCIALISM AND INTERNATIONALISM

- No to imperialist wars and occupations. Withdraw the troops immediately from Afghanistan!
- Tax the super-rich! For a socialist government to take into public ownership the top 150 companies and the banking system that dominate the British economy, and run them under democratic working class control and management. Compensation to be paid only on the basis of proven need.
- A democratic socialist plan of production based on the interests of the overwhelming majority of people, and in a way that safeguards the environment.
- No to the bosses' neoliberal European Union! For a socialist Europe and a socialist world!