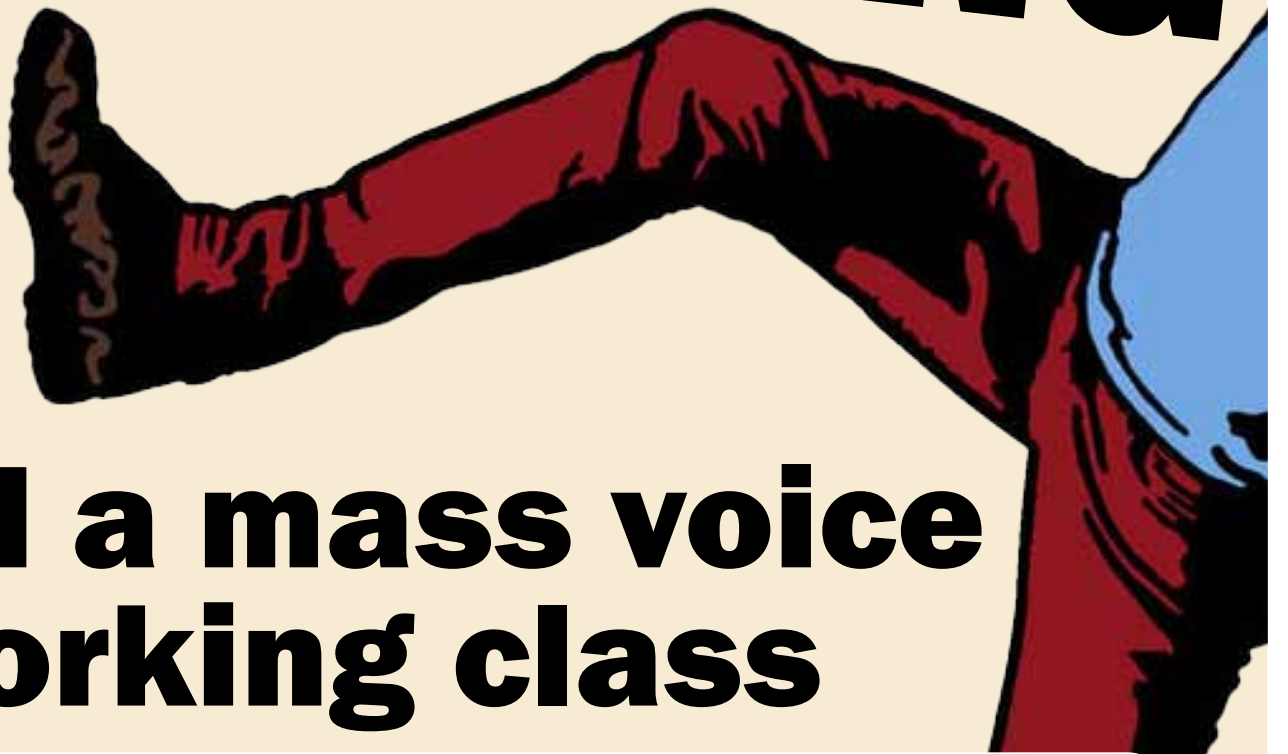


CON-DEMS GET A KICKING



Now build a mass voice for the working class

Sarah Sachs-Eldridge
Editor, the Socialist

In the elections for English councils voters sent a message to the Con-Dem cuts coalition. Get out!

The Tories are now 230 councillors lighter and they lost control of eleven councils. 310 Lib Dem local government representatives were unseated and they now lead only six councils. They were reduced to one MEP in the European elections.

For months the capitalist press gave Farage a platform to peddle his false 'man of the people' image. Ukip was undoubtedly presented as the best stick to beat the hated traditional

capitalist parties and was the main beneficiary of the protest vote against parties making cuts at national and local level.

But in reality Ukip is another pro-cuts establishment party of the super-rich 1%, which whips up racism and division. Among its backers are bosses and bankers, among its leaders are disgraced ex-Tories, and when faced with the choice to cut services and jobs its councillors have voted in favour. It actually represents all that is rotten in capitalist politics.

In local government Labour councillors have also chosen to make cuts rather than fight back against the cold cruelty of Con-Dem austerity. Labour councils are issuing eviction notices for non-payment of the bedroom tax

and council tax arrears.

In Southampton, the Labour group expelled Councillor Keith Morrell. His crime? Standing up and voting against cuts. But the working class gave its verdict by re-electing him with over twice the vote of his Labour opponent.

Voters were looking for a way to express their opposition to austerity - planned poverty, as the Socialist has explained it. The 561 Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC) candidates pledged to vote against cuts and offered a working class alternative.

TUSC suffered a blackout in the capitalist press but nonetheless, where campaigners were out the streets, in the work places, speaking at meetings and on the doorsteps, the idea of a working

class alternative gained an echo.

We were able to ask: who would you like to represent you - a party led by former stock-broker Farage or an organisation founded by class fighter and former RMT leader, the late Bob Crow? Even the BBC admitted that RMT members had "pay rises every year even during austerity, good pensions and good holiday allowances". Surely that's the best basis for a party to defend us.

Trade unionists who every day fight to defend workers' rights in the workplace were able to explain that they would take the same approach in the council - not accepting the capitalist 'logic' that workers always have to tighten their belts and accept cuts while the bosses and the

super-rich get ever richer.

This election gave us a tiny glimpse of what a new mass workers' party could offer. Now the campaign for the trade unions to break the link with pro-cuts Labour and build TUSC must be stepped up. No to cuts!

See inside for election analysis and TUSC reports.

Socialist election victories: in Ireland Socialist Party member Ruth Coppinger was elected as a TD (MP) as well as 14 Anti-Austerity Alliance councillors and in Greece a CWI member was elected as a councillor

the Socialist

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Euro elections: a revolt against the capitalist establishment

Peter Taaffe

Socialist Party general secretary

The long-predicted 'earthquake' - the electoral 'triumph' of the far right and their allies - took place in the European elections in some key countries. In Britain Ukip came first, pushing Labour into second position and the Tories - the 'governing party' - into an ignominious third position. The Liberal Democrats were completely humiliated, left with just one MEP!

In France, the governing Socialist Party suffered an even worse disaster, reduced to just 16% of the overall vote, with Marine Le Pen's Front National (FN) claiming victory against both François Hollande's misnamed 'socialists' as well as the centre-right UMP.

Far-right growth

In both cases the far right managed to hoover up the votes of many workers who had looked towards the left and the workers' parties in the past. The far right successfully deflected workers' anger and bitterness against their increasing impoverishment into a protest vote against austerity and immigration, which was presented as the author of all their misfortunes. The far-right Danish People's Party also won the biggest share of the vote while eurosceptics and right-wing parties gained across the Nordic countries.

Even in Germany, Alternative für Deutschland, a relatively new eurosceptic party, gained seats for the first time in the EU Parliament, which meant that Angela Merkel's party, the CDU, suffered its worst result in European Parliamentary elections. The neo-fascist NPD won a seat, as did a number of small 'protest' parties.

The new prime minister Matteo Renzi in Italy bucked the trend because he is still in a honeymoon period and workers crave some stability. That will change as his attacks on the working class are implemented.

However, the presumed unstoppable advance of the far right was not reflected everywhere and particularly where the working class had the alternative of voting for a mass left or workers' party. This was shown in the Netherlands as the advance of Geert Wilders' far-right Party for Freedom was halted, in the main because there was an alternative for workers to vote for in the form of the Socialist Party.

Notwithstanding the political inadequacies of this party on programme and internal lack of democracy, it nevertheless acted as a pole of attraction for workers, managing to cut into the expected vote of the far right.

The same is true for Greece, where Syriza topped the poll with 26%, 4% ahead of the main right-wing governing party, New Democracy. At the



Ruth Coppinger celebrates her election to the Dail with Joe Higgins and Paul Murphy

same time, the neo-fascist Golden Dawn got over 9% of the vote and has entered the European Parliament for the first time. The neo-fascists would have been undermined even further if Syriza and its leader Tsipras had not watered down some of its most radical demands, such as the cancellation of the debt and the nationalisation of the banks, in the mistaken belief that a more 'moderate' approach would boost its popularity.

Left victories

One welcome outcome in Greece was the victory of Nikos Kanelis a leading member of Xekinima (Greek section of the CWI, the world socialist organisation to which the Socialist Party is affiliated) in local elections in Volos. This is just a small anticipation of the way the long-suffering Greek workers will move en masse in the future.

In Spain the governing party did badly, as did the former social democratic opposition, PSOE, whose leader has resigned. But the left parties and formations like the United Left and Podemos did well.

The same is true of Ireland where, in general, the main capitalist parties - Fianna Fail and Fine Gael - suffered, while the Irish Labour Party received a major drubbing. Labour has been in government and presiding over vicious austerity. Party leader Eamon

Gilmore has been forced to resign.

But, like Spain and Greece, where there was a left alternative it did well, and in the case of the Socialist Party, spectacularly so. The election to the Dail of Ruth Coppinger in the parliamentary byelection in Dublin West, together with a slew of 14 councillors in Dublin, Cork and Limerick, represents a real triumph for socialism and genuine Marxism.

Unfortunately, Paul Murphy was not re-elected as a member of the European Parliament, despite nearly 30,000 first preference votes. One of the factors leading to his defeat was the shameful decision of the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) in Ireland to stand against Paul, a sitting MEP, which opened the way for a pro-austerity candidate to win the seat.

This was a blow not just for Paul, the left of the Irish labour movement and the CWI, but to all those workers who have been involved in struggle throughout Europe and wider afield than this, including Palestinians, Sri Lankan activists, and others facing repression. They have seen him as an energetic fighter for their many causes.

This spiteful and blatant example of sectarianism - putting your own short-term narrow interests before the cause of the left and the working class - has been passed over in complete silence by their counterparts internationally and especially in

Britain, where the SWP are formally in an alliance in the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC) with the Socialist Party.

What are the conclusions to be drawn from this round of elections? Firstly, the results of the national, local and European elections represent a revolt against the whole of the capitalist establishment, including the leaders of the ex-workers' parties like Miliband, Hollande, etc. Even these leaders speak of mass 'alienation' and 'disenfranchisement' without once really admitting that this disillusionment applies not just to the official right-wing parties but to their parties as well!

Moreover, unless alternative mass parties of the working class are established in time, possessing a clear fighting socialist alternative, then these disillusioned masses can turn in desperation to the far right.

Imagine if the trade union leaders in Britain, particularly those on the left like Len McCluskey, had assisted in the development of a new mass workers' party with radical socialist ideas, what effects this would have had in this round of elections and the general election in 2015?

It would have held out the possibility of cutting across the effects of Ukip and all the pro-capitalist parties. This is what the TUSC did manage to do in a small way in some areas - despite a media blackout (see

article page 9).

Only a class programme, involving such concrete measures as a cap on skyrocketing rents, an emergency council home-building programme, and fighting the cuts, could lay the basis for beginning to answer Ukip's empty demagoguery. Nigel Farage in his 'former life' was a stockbroker, a scion of the rich, a member of the bankers' fraternity, who dragged us into the abyss of a devastating crisis from 2007 onwards.

Many confused working people, in desperation, were seduced to vote for Ukip because they could not see an alternative in these elections. In some areas, where they could, they gave one vote for Ukip, and one for TUSC. This is just one indication that there was no entrenched racism among the majority. They could be won to a radical anti-capitalist party and a campaign which fought against the shallow, false notion that immigrants are the cause of the problems they face. This in turn could help to cement class unity by fighting for the 'rate for the job', against zero-hour contracts and for a living wage.

Establishment panic

In complete panic following this election, the Tories, and even Labour spokespersons like Ed Balls, have called for "noise" about immigration. Without a complete withdrawal from Europe - which is not favoured by the capitalists, and therefore is unlikely in the short term - they know they will not be able to immediately stop immigration from the EU.

Therefore, their propaganda is to stop 'immigrant welfare scroungers', so-called benefit tourism, despite the fact that all figures show that very few immigrants to Britain and elsewhere take advantage of these 'benefits'. The only effect of this will be to play up divisions and racism, which must be energetically combated by the whole labour movement.

Not voting was a key trend in these elections and an expression of the distrust of the political establishment - with a farcical 13% voting in Slovakia. In Britain, well over 50% did not vote, but the results do not necessarily indicate how people will vote in the 2015 general election. Nevertheless Ukip threatens to become an entrenched right-wing factor in Britain, like the Freedom Party in Austria or the National Front in France. Moreover, the after-shocks are having an immediate effect in Britain in raising question marks over the continued direction and leadership of all three main party leaders.

We need a workers' party

It is still unlikely that any of them will be ditched before the election. But Nick Clegg is certainly a candidate for removal as his party faces oblivion in the general election. Even Ed Miliband faces criticisms from his own party, including the Labour-supporting Daily Mirror: "Weird Ed... Odd Ed was always a greater political danger than Red Ed. Voters warm to bold policies and a left-wing fairness agenda is popular." (Kevin Maguire) But nominally 'Red Ed' will still not cut the mustard with the working class, imprisoned as he is within the framework of capitalism.

A new mass working class party consistently fighting for radical, socialist policies can offer a way forward for working people in Britain and Europe.

Super-wealthy get richer

Dave Carr

To join this club you need a minimum of £85 million. That's right; it's membership of the Sunday Times Rich List, featuring Britain's thousand wealthiest people. With sickening regularity, this year's list shows that the super-rich have got even richer.

This glaring inequality will further antagonise the overwhelming majority in the UK who continue to be battered with government imposed austerity, wage cuts, zero-hour contracts and ever rising utility, transport and housing costs.

The list reports that the richest 1,000 people in Britain have increased their wealth by 15% in the last year to an unimaginable total of £520 billion. That's enough money to run the NHS for several years and still have enough left over to build millions of new affordable homes, scrap tuition fees and do much more besides.

Deficit

These mega-rich individuals collectively increased their combined fortunes by £70 billion last year. So what is Chancellor George Osborne waiting for when he demands that the budget deficit is eliminated? It's simple George, slap a wealth tax on these people and restore the cuts in jobs, benefits and public services!

Of course the millionaire, Oxford-educated Tory chancellor has no intention of imposing a levy on his chums. But that hasn't stopped him imposing a pernicious bedroom tax and removing council tax support for the poorest in society, while reducing the top rate of income tax and corporation tax. And for good



Officially, the richest 1% own as much wealth as 55% of the population

measure he's left open enough tax loopholes to allow the richest to salt away their wealth in offshore tax havens.

But is Labour leader Ed Miliband jumping up and down demanding the application of tax justice measures? No. As usual, he's as quiet as a church mouse for fear of antagonising big business.

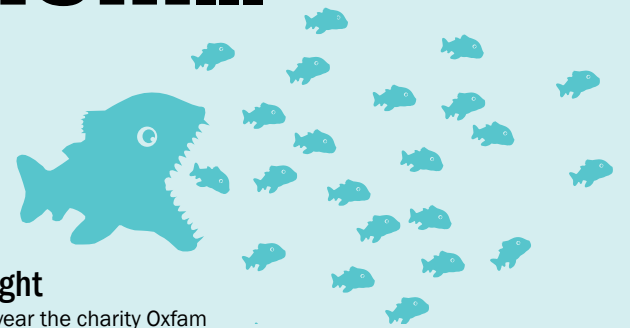
And what about the darling of the mass media - the 'anti-establishment' establishment Ukip? Not a peep from Nigel Farage. But that's not surprising as one of his party backers is Paul Sykes, who just happens to be a member of the rich list club!

Working class people need a new, mass party with socialist policies to end this unacceptable social inequality. That's why continuing the important pioneering electoral work of the Trade Unionist and So-

cialist Coalition will assist in bringing about such a vitally necessary party.



Them...



Out of sight

Earlier this year the charity Oxfam reported that a mere five billionaire families owned as much wealth as 20% of the population in Britain. More recently, the Office for National Statistics (ONS) has calculated that the country's richest 1% have amassed as much wealth as the poorest 55% of the population. But as shocking as this inequality is, critics have pointed out that the ONS calculations of the country's £9.5 trillion of property, pensions and financial assets, leaves out the trillions of pounds estimated to be salted away by the super-rich in offshore tax havens.

reducing the number of jobseekers from official figures is the application of financial sanctions on benefit claimants. Used by previous Labour governments, under the Coalition government sanctions have soared to affect nearly 900,000 claimants a year.

According to a former Jobcentre Plus adviser's dossier of evidence to a House of Commons select committee, Department for Work and Pensions officials repeatedly told staff to find imaginative ways to impose sanctions on hapless jobseekers, thereby creating the illusion of falling unemployment.

Profits before people

In the first quarter of 2014 energy giant E.ON made a £177 million profit - £36 million lower than in 2013. But despite still ringing up £2 million a day profit E.ON announced that it was scrapping its 25% saving scheme for the over 60s on pension credits. From June, an estimated 30,000 customers will have to pay the higher rate standard tariff. One 84 year old dual-fuel customer will now have to find an extra £360 a year. Yet keeping the scheme would only have cost mega-profitable E.ON an estimated £900,000 a month.

Unaffordable housing

34 first time buyers in Streatham, south London, were left stranded after their "affordable housing" was gazumped by their own social housing provider, Wandle.

After new valuations by Wandle, prices for one bedroom flats soared by an average £55,000 and two bedroom properties by £115,000. A catering worker told the Evening Standard: "I got my mortgage approved and my bags have been packed ready to move in. I've been living out of boxes for months just waiting for the keys. It's devastating." Another scuppered buyer described Wandle as "behaving like mercenaries".

Government lies

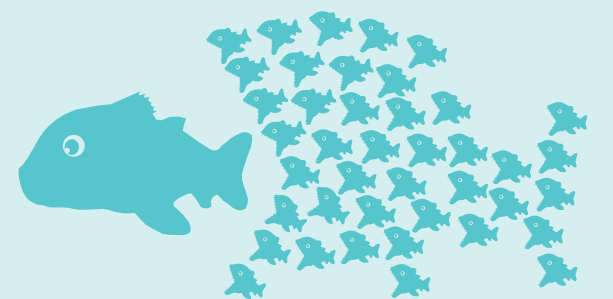
The old adage of 'lies, damned lies, and government statistics' has been underlined by the Con-Dems' presentation of the unemployment figures. George Osborne falsely claims that Britain's economic recovery is reducing unemployment. Of course what the Chancellor omits in his boasting is the huge rise in part-time working, zero-hour contracts and low-paid self-employment. Another widely suspected method of

Social cleansing

Despite an 8% rise in homelessness this year, Tory-run Westminster has withdrawn funding for two homeless hostels in the borough, forcing them to close. The charity Housing Justice, said services for the homeless in the West End were already stretched to "full capacity".

Westminster is one of ten London boroughs where the net value of properties outstrips the worth of all the properties in Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland combined.

...& Us



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



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Privatisation threatens postal service

Robert McArdle

CWU member, South Mids Postal (Coventry)

On the very week Royal Mail reported a 12% rise in operating profits to £671 million, the newly privatised company was complaining about 'market competition' from the likes of TNT.

It's ironic that directors at Royal Mail recently toured the country seeking to convince workers that

'external investment' was the only way forward for Britain's postal service.

As we have highlighted in the Socialist, privatising Royal Mail would be a big mistake for the public. And now, within months of its undervalued sell-off, the threat to the universal postal service is again on the agenda.

The daily delivery service to the 29 million homes and businesses is threatened because competitor companies like TNT cherry-pick end to end delivery in places like London and Liverpool.

The industry regulator Ofcom responded by saying: "We would expect Royal Mail to take appropriate steps to respond to the challenge posed by competition, including improving efficiency." In reality this means increasing workloads and pressure on postal workers.

Jobs

The threat of reducing the six-day delivery service would have a significant impact on jobs and services within Royal Mail.

It could also be used by management as a weapon to try and force through inferior working conditions and also have an impact on future pay deals.

Over the next few years we will

see the battle lines being drawn between a management driven by market profits and the CWU union, who will need to defend their members against vicious cost-cutting attacks.

The historic deal that has just been signed by the CWU and Royal Mail protecting jobs and conditions, will be tested over the next two years. Postal workers are right to be concerned about their future once the agreed pay deal comes to an end. Thousands of jobs were lost at BT after privatisation of the telecoms company and those remaining workers have seen their terms and conditions weaken due to the 'partnership' between management and the CWU.

The lesson for postal workers is clear - they need the union to fight to protect the gains made over the years. Royal Mail bosses will continue their race to the bottom as they seek to increase profits for shareholders but the CWU will need to stay alert to the dangers of 'partnerships'. Workers' ultimate power lies in the ability to withdraw their labour as a last resort.

The solution for Royal Mail's difficulties is simple; take it back into public ownership. Then the postal service could be delivering a service based on public need not on private greed.



What we saw

Teacher workloads
by Marcus Owen



The Devolution of Teacher-kind

PCS conference: Preparing for more battles

Rob Williams

PCS conference met from 19 to 22 May, yet again under siege from this Tory-led government and its austerity offensive. As one delegate remarked, it was an incredible feat to fill out the Brighton Conference Centre, when for the first time, all delegates had to use up their vacation to attend as facility time was denied.

Despite all the government cuts to jobs and attacks on union rights, the incumbent Democracy Alliance in which socialist-led Left Unity plays a leading role achieved a total victory in the recent national executive (NEC) elections.

PCS members understand that the best way to defend their interests and to protect jobs, conditions and services is to support a campaigning, dedicated, democratic leadership that is prepared to fight rather than bow down to, or collaborate with the government's austerity agenda.

Coordinated strikes

General secretary Mark Serwotka did not attend conference as he was recovering from surgery. Thirteen-times elected president Janice Godrich opened up conference by highlighting the debates on the potential coordinated strike against the pay freeze on 10 July and possible merger with Unite as critical for conference and the wider union.

After Unite approached the PCS regarding a merger the leadership has looked at first joint work and then potential amalgamation. Last year's conference outlined the expectations that PCS would have in any formal talks with Unite - especially maintaining the lay democ-



United on 30 November 2011 photo Senan

racy that has been established in the union.

The NEC motion to continue negotiations was defeated as was an openly anti-merger motion. However, a motion was passed which favoured continued negotiations but emphasised some bottom-line conditions PCS should put on a merger. The next issue of the Socialist will deal with this issue more fully.

In the debate on the pay strike, fellow Socialist Party members, re-elected assistant general secretary Chris Baugh and Department for Work and Pensions president Fran Heathcote, highlighted how PCS had been central in attempting to build a coordinated fightback against the Con-Dem cuts.

PCS was the critical force in building the mass joint pension strike of 30 November 2011 and was the

main driving force in trying to maintain it after unions like Unison, with TUC support, had signed up to the Tory Heads of Agreement betrayal.

The motions that were passed set out a serious strategy that would include PCS lining up with the likes of Unison, GMB and Unite in the councils, if the current strike ballots are in favour, with the NUT and possibly others in the biggest joint strike since N30.

Conference rejected a cynical motion that "turned the PCS strategy on its head" by saying the union should take national action on its own even if other unions were not involved in order to defeat the pay freeze.

PCS's strategy based on conference policy, NEC decisions and a massive branch consultation is actually very clear. PCS will pursue campaigns including industrial ac-

tion in the departmental groups, organise targeted action in areas where longer spells of action can have a disproportionately strong impact on the employer's operations, national action where appropriate and, this was the main demand of members and activists in the consultation, joint coordinated action across the public sector on those issues, like pay, pensions, privatisation etc, that affect all public sector workers.

The prospect is now raised of over a million public sector workers taking action together.

PCS will be pushing for a full calendar of action that goes into the autumn, which should also include NHS workers.

Welfare 'reform'

National vice-president John McNally set out the union's strategy in its fight against the draconian 'welfare reform' agenda explaining that because it was an attack on our entire class it requires a response from our whole class, especially from the whole trade union movement. "It is important that it becomes a major priority of our whole movement, not just PCS".

Socialist Party members played an impressive role throughout the national and group conferences. General secretary Peter Taaffe spoke at an excellent Socialist Party meeting on the TUSC electoral challenge and the need for a new workers' party in the week of the council and European elections.

A number of delegates signed up to join the party. Nearly £1,000 was raised from delegates who donated from their conference expenses to ensure we have the finances to continue the struggle inside and outside the union.

In brief

Local government ballot

Local government trade unions are currently balloting for strike action after the National Joint Council for Local Government Services' refusal to negotiate over its 1% final pay offer. The unions are fighting for a £1.20 an hour increase on all pay points.

The Unison ballot closes on 23 June, with the Unite and GMB ballots running over a similar timescale. If the ballots are in favour of action the strike is likely to be coordinated for 10 July.

Mark Harding

Transport union RMT branch secretary Mark Harding appeared in court on 23 May on trumped up charges arising from the London Underground dispute over ticket office closures. Outrageously, Mark is facing imprisonment under the anti-trade union laws and is waiting for a verdict on 2 June. Mark was held in custody for 13 hours after his arrest. Draconian bail conditions were only dropped when the union's lawyers intervened. A group of MPs and trade union leaders have backed the call for a fair trial and for the anti-trade union laws to be abolished.

Heathrow Express

RMT members working on the Heathrow Express are striking on 23 and 24 May and 26 and 27 May. This is in response to multi-million pound cuts which threaten pay, jobs and safety. 201 jobs are under threat as a result of the company attempting to pass Civil Aviation Authority cuts to the Heathrow Airport budget directly onto the workforce.

NUT supports coordinated action on 10 July

Martin Powell-Davies

Member of the National Union of Teachers (NUT) national executive

The NUT's executive committee has voted to make preparations to give notice for strike action on 10 July. This is the day that school support staff unions have put forward for when they hope to be able to call a coordinated strike.

Other public sector unions like the PCS have live ballots already in place and are also discussing the possibility of coordinating action too.

There will also be other campaigning activity including cam-

paign stalls, Education Question Time events, a Lobby of Parliament on 10 June and the People's Assembly national demonstration on 21 June.

There will be consultation with local officers and members on patterns of further strike action in the autumn term, including surveys of reps and random samples of members to be conducted after 10 July.

Reassurances were given that the June Executive meeting could discuss the draft content of any members' survey before it was issued (as well as getting an update on talks with government and news from other unions).

Importantly, it was recommended

by officers that the survey results be reported to the July National Executive - in time to make sure we could - if agreed - make plans for further action earlier in the autumn term, perhaps alongside other unions too.

Of course, at the same time another 'survey' of members will be taking place - the election for NUT General Secretary. I have consistently argued for the union to announce a calendar of ongoing strike action, mobilising members around a clear set of campaign demands. I believe that the support for that demand will be reflected in support for my candidature in June's general secretary election.

For more see Martin's blog: electmartin1.blogspot.co.uk

Land Registry strike may just be the beginning

A Public and Commercial Services union (PCS) member

On 14 and 15 May, PCS members working in Land Registry (LR) responded overwhelmingly to a call for strike action.

The action had been called as a result of the failure of LR management to give the union assurances about privatisation, no compulsory redundancies and retaining a presence in each of the current locations.

The action was also called against the background of a damaging article in the Guardian newspaper, which showed that despite public assurances given by Tory minister Michael Fallon MP that no decision had been made

about LR privatisation, detailed plans had been made to move the trusted and efficient public service into the private sector.

This led to significant support for the strike from customers and even a former chief Land Registrar who understand that the dispute is not only about defending jobs but is also about defending a public service.

In the build up to the strike, local PCS branches set up campaign committees involving not only existing activists but also members, many of whom had never been involved in union activity before.

On the strike days this was further borne out by the numbers on the picket lines, where in many cases dozens of members came along to show active support for their un-

ion. At the Birkenhead picket line there were 30-plus members making a stand, but the picket line also received a visit from a delegation of Swedish trade unionists who were in the region and wanted to show some international solidarity for our dispute.

The week following the strike, delegates met in Brighton for PCS conference and the Land Registry dispute was one of the hot topics of discussion.

In the coming weeks PCS will continue to push for the assurances that our members require and we will be making it quite clear to both management and the government that if they are not prepared to meet our reasonable demands that the action on 14 and 15 May was just the start.

Construction workers protest



NSSN members and other trade unionists joined construction workers on a day of action on 23 May. This national day of action was against the increasing attempts by large construction companies to refuse to employ workers directly. Workers are being forced to go through 'umbrella' companies and are expected to pay large sums just to get their wages processed.

On the same day a further protest took place in Northampton against blacklisting in the construction industry. The headquarters of the Danish owned employment agency Atlanco Rimec was occupied. This agency has been exposed on Danish TV as operating a blacklist. photo Neil Cafferky

Care UK workers plan more action

Alistair Tice

Care UK striker Mags Cowling told a strike rally on 17 May: "We are currently on our fifth round of strike action (just completed 34 days of strikes so far)! Negotiations have taken place with Care UK but with no movement except a 14 month transitional payment of enhancements, but when asked what are we supposed to do after that the reply given was 'Learn to budget!'"

"Also it was agreed that our senior managers would be given a rise of £2,000 a year.

"So again we fight back saying 'Enough is enough' and we the strikers will not lie down and roll over while they cut our wages to make profit for themselves and shareholders!"

'The Angry Mob' have toured the country. They have spoken at meetings from Scotland to Bristol. They have picketed Care UK offices in Sheffield, Leeds and Newcastle.

A coachful descended on Care UK's head office in Essex and another hit Bridgepoint (the private

equity company that owns Care UK) in London. Petitions were presented to Downing Street.

Dave Prentis, Unison general secretary, visited the Doncaster picket line pledging 100% support. Strikers were invited to Unison head office where they got tea and biscuits and met with Christina McAnea, Unison's head of health.

And there was a 200-strong demonstration through Doncaster on Saturday 17 May.

The election of a strike committee and new shop stewards has strengthened the leadership of the dispute and given it more organisation and direction.

The last strike meeting voted for another two-week strike next month, but the strikers need and demand that the words of support from Unison be turned into action.

The Doncaster Unison Health branch motion that was sent to the union's national industrial action committee holds the key to winning the dispute. Unison nationally must mobilise all its resources of finance, organisers and activists to declare war on Care UK all over the country wherever



Care UK workers protest photo A Tice

they operate or have contracts.

More pressure will be applied to Doncaster's Labour mayor and council to bring the contract back in-house with the NHS.

If that is done, the Care UK workers could win a famous victory which could start to roll back the tide of pay cuts and privatisation and give confidence to millions of other workers that if you stand and fight, you can win. There is no

doubt that this group of inspiring workers deserve that victory.

Requests for speakers, messages of support and donations to the hardship fund: admin@unison-dab.org.uk and donations/cheques made out to: "Doncaster, District & Bassetlaw Health Branch" and send to: Jenkinson House, White Rose Way, Doncaster, DN4 5GJ. Visit Facebook "Doncaster Supported Living Unison Strike" page.

Bradford campaign for £10 an hour

On 24 May a handful of Socialist Party members set up a stall in Bradford city centre to campaign for a £10 an hour minimum wage. None of us could have expected the response we got. Before the table was set up people were standing around offering support. At one point people were three deep attempting to sign the petition.

In the end we sold 30 copies of the Socialist paper and 13 people expressed an interest in joining the Socialist Party. Several shop workers came and chatted to us in their lunch break.

The history of Bradford includes the late Pat Wall, the socialist MP. Just one of the many reasons why this city needs a socialist alternative to the newly elected Labour group.

● Bradford Socialist Party meeting: Tuesday 3 June at 7pm. Resource Centre, Chapel Street, Little Germany.

Peter Robson
Bradford Socialist Party

Salford: anti-cuts rally defies council ban and BNP

Hugh Caffrey

Three hundred people joined the Salford Against Cuts "Rally on the Lawn" outside the civic buildings on 17 June. Campaigners from all the services affected by the Labour council's cuts rallied together in a fun festival.

Shamefully, this rally had been

banned by Salford's Labour council! They claimed that electoral laws meant there couldn't be an anti-cuts protest on council property this month. Labour is quick enough to say it's opposed to the cuts, but even quicker to attack those actually doing something about it!

But the BNP were allowed by the council to book a public meeting in the same civic buildings, under the

excuse of the same laws about elections. A swiftly organised protest meant the BNP never showed up.

Salford's burgeoning anti-cuts movement exposes the council's complicity in the Tories' vicious austerity cuts. This is why more and more people are getting involved in Salford Against Cuts and supporting TUSC, because a fightback is so obviously needed.

Fighting the Bedroom Tax

Chris Jackson

Labour dominated Nottingham council issued a claim for a suspended possession order for a bedroom tax tenant who was less than four weeks in arrears and whose arrears had been decreasing for the last four months.

On the day of the hearing members of Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Scrap the Bedroom Tax Defend Council Tax Benefit issued a giant 'summons' to the council for failing to respond to the campaign's requests for a meeting, failing to follow the eviction prevention protocol, failing to prevent possession hearings for bedroom tax tenants, failing to stand up to central government and failing to implement a no-



evictions policy.

The claim for possession was adjourned for one year but the tenant's payments were increased - by £1.10 a week.

Now the tenant does not have the fear of eviction hanging over them, but how many tenants have slipped through the net with no legal support in court and are now stuck with court costs and a suspended possession order?

As we announced to passers-by, Nottingham council says it is against the bedroom tax and that it is unsustainable so why are they taking people to court for arrears?



RMT members and others demonstrate in Doncaster against the McNulty report photo Karl Lang

Wales TUC If it wasn't for the socialists...

Ronnie Job

"If it wasn't for the trades councils there wouldn't be any debate here." This was one delegate's comment to me while I was selling the Socialist paper on the last day of Wales TUC. The majority of the Wales TUC leadership wants to work in partnership with the Welsh Labour government. Time and again we were told we have to accept cuts and be realistic.

The Socialist Party demands a fight against all cuts regardless of who is implementing them. We pointed out that Labour leads eleven of the 22 local authorities in Wales and the Welsh government. If they had the political will, Welsh Labour has a position to be a powerful force against Con-Dem austerity. But not a single Welsh Labour council has refused to make Con-Dem cuts. For that matter, not a single Welsh Labour councillor has refused to make Con-Dem cuts.

As well as providing the main political opposition, Socialist Party

members enriched debates including those on social housing, bedroom tax, zero-hour contracts and moved a resolution, unanimously carried, criticising the Welsh government for subsidising poor working conditions at Amazon, demanding union recognition be made a condition of Welsh government subsidies and calling for a drive to unionise.

If it wasn't for Socialist Party members, pretty much a single political viewpoint would have been heard at conference. This year's was the last as an annual conference. From now on the Wales TUC will meet for a full conference only every two years, a move we opposed as reducing democracy and hindering the potential for trade unionists to fight cuts. We need to find other ways next year to get the ideas of socialism and fighting cuts, to trade unionists in Wales and a number of delegates suggested convening a Welsh Shop Stewards Network in order to bring together the most militant sections of the Welsh trade union movement.

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Written and (General Sec and EC)

An Activist/Socialist

Local elections 2014: A GOOD BASE FOR TUSC TO BUILD ON

The final vote tally for the 560 local election and three mayoral Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC) no-cuts candidates in the 22 May elections is 68,031.

In 21 councils TUSC has polled over 1,000 votes. In ten of these, it has been over 2,000. There are 78 council wards where TUSC has polled over 5% of the vote.

Anti-cuts councillor Keith Morrell was re-elected in Southampton's Coxford ward with 43% of the vote. In Coventry, while Labour held on to the city's St Michaels ward, TUSC's national chairperson Dave Nellist polled a very good 974 votes, coming second with a 29.7% share.

In Birmingham TUSC's 12 candidates polled 1,766 votes, with James Redfern scoring 9.3% in Tyburn ward and Ted Woodley 7.6% in Stockland Green. Also on 9.3% was Amanda Dilley, the top TUSC result in Stevenage council. In Sheffield TUSC's candidates have collectively polled 2,657 votes across the city, with a 10.2% share of the vote

in Manor Castle ward and 8.4% in Burngreave ward. In Doncaster TUSC polled 1,556 votes, in Barnsley 1,361, and in Wakefield 1,257.

In London there were 5,482 votes cast for TUSC candidates in Waltham Forest, 4,166 in Haringey, 2,260 in Hillingdon, 2,162 in Enfield, 1,887 for the ward candidates in Newham (in addition to the 1,708 votes, 2.2%, for Lois Austin, TUSC's candidate for mayor), 1,315 in Lambeth, and 1,134 in Southwark. What is clear from the results is that 'the party that doesn't exist' for the national media has made its mark and prepared the ground for broader and deeper electoral challenges in the future.

The TUSC national steering committee is meeting on 28 May to discuss the results and plans for next year – the general election but also the 2015 local council elections, being fought in more seats (excluding London) than were contested this year. A full election report will be ready for the meeting (see www.tusc.org.uk for latest).



Great TUSC victory in Southampton

Keith Morrell has re-won his council seat in Coxford, Southampton, standing as part of TUSC. Keith was previously kicked out of the Labour Party for voting against cuts.

He has been decisively re-elected with 1,633 votes, 43%. This is a great result and vindication for his stand, alongside fellow rebel councillor Don Thomas, in opposing all cuts.

Ukip came second with 796 votes, Labour third with 724 votes, the Tories fourth with 500 votes, and Lib Dems last with 168.

Keith's result has lit up the idea that fighting councillors can help build support for a real alternative to austerity

The result has lit up the idea that fighting councillors can help build support for a real alternative to austerity. It is in sharp contrast to the close shave for Labour council



Keith and campaigners celebrate at the election count photo Nick Chaffey

leader Simon Letts who nearly lost his seat to Ukip after two years of implementing Tory cuts.

Keith said: "This result is a victory for the people of Coxford who fought to save local services and won an important victory to re-open our local swimming pool. It shows what is possible."

"Other significant results across the city for TUSC Against Cuts candidates show the potential that exists for a new party - a party that stands up for working people, campaigns for jobs and housing and tackles the growing poverty that affects so many families in the city".

Nick Chaffey

Support still strong for socialists in Coventry

In Coventry, standing as TUSC for the first time, socialist candidates received a total of 2,592 votes (3.5%) across the city. Dave Nellist recorded a solid 974 (30%) in second place in St Michaels ward.

We expected our campaign to be impacted by the 'European election factor' which undoubtedly boosted the votes of the main parties plus Ukip and the Greens (neither of which really exist on the ground in Coventry).

TUSC supporters can be pleased with the result given those conditions. More importantly we have laid the foundations for future TUSC work in the city. A significant number of leading local trade unionists took part in the campaign for the first time.

A fantastic campaign launch meeting of 65 people was held in March where many signed up to be part of a campaign team which distributed over 30,000 leaflets across the city, with multiple leaflets in St Michaels.

In St Michaels we still have a strong base of support despite an



increasingly transient population replacing former settled communities.

Our campaign and material focused on raising socialist demands and policies - calling for a £10 an hour minimum wage, thousands of new jobs and homes and kicking privatisation out of the NHS.

Unlike every other party, our campaigning won't stop on election day. We have established better roots and support in the city to build upon for the general election and for future class struggles.

Lenny Shail

TUSC local election reports



By Elephant and Castle tube station, election day

Lewisham

For weeks we have been pounding the pavements and front doors of New Cross and Brockley, looking for those TUSC votes that would elect a socialist back onto the council in Lewisham, south east London. We have had socialist councillors in Telegraph Hill ward before, Chris Flood and Ian Page, and residents on the doorstep and visiting our stalls had fond memories of this. In the end, Chris received 659 votes. Many people signed up to get involved in TUSC and in the Socialist Party.

Unlike when we have won in the past, there is no unpopular New Labour government that helped us in our argument that an alternative to Labour is necessary. With residents mainly wanting to punish the Con-Dems, the Labour 'brand recognition' and party machine is a formidable hurdle to overcome.

On election day Labour didn't bother to appear until late afternoon. For the last couple of hours, the Labour candidates degenerated into blocking the polling booth entrance and aggressively interrupting our conversations with residents.

Of course it is best for Labour to keep the conversation short - why get into any awkward conversations about the services they've closed, the jobs they've already cut or the hundreds of millions of pounds worth of cuts they plan to make over the next four years. If Labour in Lewisham continues with its plans, there won't be much of a council left for them to run.

TUSC stood more widely than we have done before with 12 candidates in ten wards and Chris Flood for mayor. Chris received 1,354 votes in the mayoral contest and all bar three of our candidates gained more than 150 votes. It is an excellent foundation to build on.

We will continue to campaign against cuts, the bedroom tax, service closures, and local housing and all the other attacks on our community.

Cheryl McLeod, Chris Flood and James Kerr

Tower Hamlets

In Tower Hamlets, east London, TUSC stood for the elected executive mayor and candidates in 13 wards. Some on the left argued before the election that we shouldn't stand because the independent mayor, Lutfur Rahman (standing during these elections as Tower Hamlets First), is left-of-Labour.

The political background was explosive. Rahman was targeted by

Labour because he stood against the Labour candidate last time. There have been allegations of corruption in his administration and even a Panorama special which led to police raids on his offices orchestrated by Tory communities secretary, Eric Pickles. The Labour candidate, John Biggs, was the borough's Greater London Authority representative. Undoubtedly the other mainstream parties would have preferred the safe Labour candidate to Rahman.

In this highly polarised election TUSC received enthusiastic support for a programme of rent controls, building council houses, a £10 an hour minimum wage and a fight to return £123 million stolen from the council by the government over the last four years.

The TUSC mayoral candidate, Hugo Pierre, got 871 first preference votes, which given the circumstances was a creditable result. In the council seats we got a total of 2,144 votes.

The count still hasn't finished at the time of writing but Tower Hamlets First and Labour hold 18 seats each with the Tories holding 4. The collapse of the Lib Dems, who ran



Hugo Pierre

the council for eight years until 1994, was quite spectacular, as they fell behind Ukip and the Greens.

Lutfur Rahman's re-election opens up a new stormy chapter in the borough, not least how he will deal with a gaping £80 million hole in the budget and a continuing and deepening social crisis.

Our stand was a modest but successful start to place working class action, solidarity and socialism as a

real option in the future for workers in this borough.

Tower Hamlets TUSC

Waltham Forest

In our first time standing widely across the east London borough, Waltham Forest TUSC gained 5,480 votes. This is a great success for our 33 candidates and all supporters and campaigners.

TUSC candidates received 3% of the overall vote, which is about 5% when adjusted for the number of seats we stood in. In High Street ward, where we stood a full slate, we got 5.2% of the vote. Our highest vote, 362 for teacher Dan Gillman in Markhouse, means more than 11% of voters in the ward voted for Dan.

That our vote held up regardless of how many candidates stood in each ward shows the real advantage of standing widely and will hopefully encourage more trade unionists and campaigners to join us next time to ensure we can contest all 60 seats.

If election results depended purely on who had run the best campaign, TUSC would have been the hands-down winner. Our demand



Leafleting in Waltham Forest

for rent control to bring down rocketing rents and investment in building affordable council housing got a huge echo.

We spoke to thousands of people on our rent control flashmobs, knocking on doors in our target wards and leafleting at supermarkets and schools. On all of these activities it was clear that the majority in Waltham Forest are sick of the parties of big business and were pleased to learn of an anti-cuts, working class alternative. On our final canvass, the night before the election, someone said he would definitely vote for us because we are saying what Labour leader Ed Miliband should be saying but is too scared to.

On election day it was clear that the campaign had made a mark - people enthusiastically wished us good luck and told us that they had or would vote for us. One

woman told us she was so pleased she had met us as she wasn't sure what she was going to do at the ballot box or if she would even bother voting.

We will now have monthly TUSC committee meetings, open to anyone who wants to help build TUSC in the area. We will continue our campaign for rent control in the borough - initially

by collecting the 4,000 signatures needed to force a debate on the issue in the council chamber.

Sarah Wrack

North-east

The north-east generally has been regarded as a Labour heartland but Labour's support is now fraying at the edges. It is against this backdrop that there were 21 TUSC candidates across Tyne and Wear.

The election campaign, whose candidates included trade union activists and many young people, was given a welcome boost when activists from Sunderland Against Cuts joined the campaign.

When one of our 18 year old candidates heard the BBC was interviewing candidates for the European elections in her local town centre she and her mam boldly went down, armed with placards asking: "Where's our Recovery?"

Our candidates and volunteers in Sunderland had 'blisters on their blisters' as they delivered 14,000 leaflets. On Facebook after the election one of them posted: "We've only TUSC begun!"

In Newcastle we were approached by a Labour candidate who requested we stood down as he was on the left. We asked if he would vote against cuts. He said he would argue within the Labour group against cuts but conceded that he was not prepared to guarantee us that he would vote against all cuts. For us this was not good enough and we stood against him.

One of Gateshead's Labour councillor's bragged in her election material that they were "supporting over 250 volunteers to help run five libraries and 15 community centres." This is because Gateshead's Labour controlled council has sacked workers!

In North Tyneside we stood candidates but also worked alongside an independent socialist candidate. **Elaine Brunskill**

Plymouth

This is the first time that TUSC has undertaken such a huge campaign in Plymouth, managing to stand candidates across all 19 wards. 17 of our candidates had never stood for TUSC before.

With relatively small numbers on the ground, we have managed to achieve 1,168 votes. With 19 candidates and a modest number of supporters we've already in-



Candidate, Corrina Smith

spired over 1,000 people to reject the notion that austerity is a necessity. We also had a great deal of interest from people who are willing to get involved with TUSC and we now need to build in anticipation of next year's elections.

The fact that Bill Stevens, newly re-elected Labour councillor for Devonport, saw fit to make a dig at us by proclaiming that he is a "real trade unionist and socialist" shows that Labour are already feeling the pressure that we are exerting on them.

The irony of his statement was that at the same time as he was making this proclamation, the Labour-led council was at the courts petitioning for the next batch of Council Tax Liability Orders. 20,000 people, in a population of around 250,000, have found themselves in council tax arrears since the Welfare Reform Act was introduced in April 2013.

Remember, if you're against cuts, sign up to TUSC!

Ryan Aldred

Salford

Across Salford 2,150 people voted TUSC. Across the nine wards we stood in (six of which TUSC had never stood in before) we received 9.9% of the vote. In Little Hulton ward we came second.

We'll be meeting on 28 May to talk about the results and discuss where next for TUSC in Salford. We need to continue building and growing so that there are 20 TUSC candidates standing in Salford in the 2015 local elections.

Matt Kilsby

On Twitter from Natasha Hourau (who stood on the No2EU Yes To Workers' Rights list in London in memory of her father, general secretary of the RMT, Bob Crow): "Well done in your victories! Looking forward to seeing how TUSC now moves forward from here!"



At the Sunderland count

Comment on Facebook from Coventry voter: "Voted for you in Sherbourne ward. Really nice to have somebody to vote for rather than usual bag of unscrupulous bastards. Thank you :)"

In Hillingdon: While we were leafleting Northwood Hills a young man came up to us and said: "Are you the socialists? Then I'm voting for you"

the Socialist postbag

Do you have something to say?

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Of mice...

Michael Gove is a hated figure to anyone who genuinely understands education. However the news that Gove has insisted that classic American literature like Steinbeck's 'Of Mice and Men', Ar-



Michael Gove

thur Miller's 'The Crucible' and Harper Lee's 'To Kill a Mockingbird' must be dropped from the new English literature GCSE has angered teachers, parents and students.

Of course not only are these books fantastically written and enjoyed by the young people who study them, they are also thought-provoking - and of thoughts that perhaps Gove doesn't want them to have. With The Crucible perhaps Gove doesn't want students to consider what life would be like in a world where dissent became unlawful - perhaps better to ban such 'satanic' literature instead!

Gove's narrow-minded act may prove another miscalculation. Books like this have made an impact on many a young person - and young people who are now parents.

Gove's ignorant decision will help make crystal clear why teachers have to take action to stop the damage being inflicted on education - and why we are calling on parents to support our struggle.

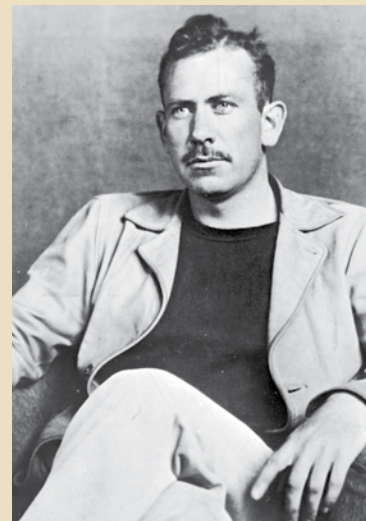
Martin Powell-Davies, NUT national executive

...and Tories

The personal interference of Michael Gove as Education Secretary in what can and cannot be taught in schools is a gross abuse of his powers. By banning the teaching of classic fiction Gove has revealed a level of pettiness on what should contribute to learning unseen in the last 50 years.

His philistinism shows him to be ideologically unsuited to holding any post in education. The books are to be excluded not because they are of poor quality, lacking in meaning or compassion, or because they have no thematic significance. They are banned because they are American contributions to English literature.

Michael Gove has taken English education to the edge of a pit where our history and culture is cast into flames



John Steinbeck

because it does not meet with the approval of a reactionary demagogue with the intellectual instincts of Martin Bormann.

Peter Flack, Assistant Secretary, City of Leicester NUT

Why I didn't rejoin Labour

Carl Harper

The Labour Party recently sent me an email asking me to rejoin Labour. I sent back this response:

"Nothing would please me more than to join a workers' party which was socialist and represents the interests of the working class. However, I must ask questions about the leaflet you sent outlining Labour's policies.

It claims that Labour "will freeze gas and energy bills until 2017". Energy 'controller' Ofgem says that dual fuel prices rose by 24% between 2009 and 2012 and suppliers' retail profits from £233 million in 2009 to £1.1 billion in 2012, an increase of 372%.

Would "freezing bills until 2017" be an initial step to breaking up the 'Big Six' energy firms and creating a nationalised energy supplier with affordable prices for all after 2017?

On the NHS, the leaflet says Labour will "renew it for the 21st Century". Does this statement mean that the NHS will remain publicly owned, with all parts privatised under the Con-Dem government renationalised?

And does this statement include an end to all PFI schemes in the future? Would all debt created by past PFI schemes be written off? Will assets sold off also be brought into public ownership? Does this statement also include fully nationalised NHS council services for elderly care and children's services?

The leaflet says Labour will "help make work pay with a 10p rate of tax". Will you also commit to an increase in tax of the super-

rich and the collection of the estimated £120 billion of tax uncollected mainly through evasion and avoidance?

Further to this, does the statement also propose introducing a Living Wage, a minimum of £8 an hour, a 50% increase in the state retirement pension and a 35-hour working week? Would Labour then also bring the top 150 or so companies, banks and energy companies into public ownership with democratic working class control and management?

The leaflet says Labour will "ban letting agents from charging rip-off fees". Does this mean a cap on rents with a nationalised and/or council run letting agency and a commitment to a programme of the mass building of affordable housing?

I welcome the claims that Labour will give working parents "25 hours of free childcare for kids aged 3 and 4" and that they will "scrap the bedroom tax". Would there also be a commitment to release funds to local councils for the running of children's centres?

The leaflet rightly condemns the government's austerity agenda which has led to the 'cost of living' increasing faster than wages. Does Labour therefore commit to a democratic socialist plan of production based on the interests of the overwhelming majority of people and always use the RPI index rather than CPI as a fairer measurement tool to ensure wages match the 'cost of living'.

I originally joined the Labour party believing that as a member I would be able to influence and ultimately prevent the move to the right which has systematically taken place since at least the mid-90s. I believed that the socialist ideology upon which trade unions and socialists formed the party could be democratically reintroduced from 'the bottom up' and reach the forefront of party policy.

Unfortunately this belief was crushed by repeated neoliberal policy announcements, the commitment to remain imprisoned within the capitalist EU and the party distancing itself from the trade union movement in the Collins Report.

Labour conference saw the overwhelming call from delegates for Labour to renationalise the Royal Mail. Labour's leadership denounced this motion shortly after, making a mockery of the democracy of the party. Would you commit to supporting the motion and fully renationalising the Royal Mail?

Finally, would you also commit to reinstating Clause 4 of Labour's constitution, which was removed and paved the way for the transformation to a centre-right party?

As your leaflet claims, Labour would indeed be 'stronger' with people like me, working class socialists, on its side. For me to consider rejoining your party I look forward to a positive response to the issues I have raised."

My 'demands' went unanswered. In any case, I knew Labour would never meet them. It is a clear indictment of Labour's move to the right which led to me leaving and joining the Socialist Party.

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The remainder will go to help pay for the No2EU election campaign, providing a trade union and workers' alternative to Ukip, and for the courageous challenge launched in South Africa by the Workers' And Socialist Party.

• Thanks to: Dave Gorton £80, Phil Barnard £70, Helen and Mark Kerr and other TUSC supporters in Stevenage £300, John and Alexis Edwards £50, David Hofman £40, Tower Hamlets branch £170, Waltham Forest branch £160, Roger Bannister £110, Andrew Wilkins £25, Kevin Wilson £25, Leeds collection £25.



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Victory for Modi in Indian election: But resistance will grow

Senan
(CWI)

At the end of a five weeks election process in India, Narendra Modi will head a government of the right-wing Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janatha Party (BJP). It gained the largest number of seats of any party (282 out of 543 seats).

But, in spite of all the hype, his party received only 31% of the popular vote. It also remains in a weak position in the upper house of parliament (Lok Sabha) where the BJP and its allies have only 63 of the 250 seats.

On a national basis, no other party managed to obtain more than 10% of the vote - the requirement to form an official opposition.

The Congress Party, which has been in government for all but 18 years since independence, has no more support than some regional parties. It was reduced to a mere 44 seats nationwide and couldn't manage a double digit result in any state.

Given their immersion in immense corruption scandals, their fall was expected. Thirteen out of the 15 Congress ministers who stood for re-election lost their seats.

Last year anti-corruption movements, anti-nuclear moments, women's rights movements and various others emerged, as well as a general strike that involved over 100 million workers.

Economic growth

The rhetoric about a 'Shining India', a 'rising middle class' and a return to 10% economic growth rates, as in the peak times of the Indian economy, is now empty. A speeding up in the country's urbanisation did create a small but significant well-to-do middle class during the boom times. But the most under-reported story is the fall in the economic growth rate, now somewhere between 3% and 4%.

Huge hopes for a future of jobs and prosperity was created among youth in particular. A staggering 65% of the Indian population is under the age of 35. Half the population is under 25.

The young Indian masses had a taste of a better life. But all the hope of this generation now hangs in the air as the impact of the world economic crisis is felt across India. Millions of young people now entering the job market will only find an utterly bleak prospect.



Narendra Modi



The gap between rich and poor is growing in India almost faster than anywhere else in the world

Modi overwhelmingly won the vote among young people, with the majority citing job creation as the motivating factor. But a significant number took a decisive step to reject all the establishment political organisations.

Modi, however, is now hoping to deliver a miracle with one of the most-used tricks in the capitalist book - a privatisation offensive. Pro-capitalist economists are aware of the potential for opposition from the disappointed masses. But they are warning Modi not to hesitate or employ 'caution', as the Congress government did. They are egging him on to bulldoze through his neoliberal agenda.

However, it is "mission impossible" as the real economy slows and the buying power of the masses continues to be eroded by inflation. More than 69% of the Indian population are acutely poor.

Modi is expected to use communal violence to suppress any opposition and push through his attack on labour rights and pro-big business policies. Communal violence was orchestrated in Uttar Pradesh (UP) state in the weeks before the election which aided the consolidation of the so-called 'Hindu' votes for the BJP.

Significantly, Dalit ("untouchables" caste) votes were won on a 'Hindu nationalist' basis and by the BJP drawing in some 'Hindu' Dalit leaders. The result was that 73 out of UP's 80 seats fell to the BJP - up by a staggering 63 seats.

The potential for further riots and attacks on religious minorities in places like UP and Bihar cannot be ruled out.

In India, the so-called Marxist parties such as the 'communist' CPI(M) and the CPI have failed grossly. They collaborated with, and acted to create a soft cushion for, the Congress-led offensive against workers' rights, democratic rights and national rights.

These parties maintained a criminal silence in the face of the massive corruption scandals. An effigy of the CPI(M) leaders was burnt by anti-nuclear protesters in Koodankulam. The CPI(M) leaders had stood shoulder-to-shoulder with Con-

gress on the implementation of plans for a nuclear power plant, despite the proven health catastrophe for the people living in the area of Tamil Nadu.

Having lost 13 seats (reduced to two) in its former stronghold of West Bengal, the CPI(M) can no longer claim national party status. In the name of 'defending secularism', they have often played second fiddle to the corrupted Congress party. The CPI(M) never set out to seriously challenge Congress.

There is therefore a massive political vacuum, with no anti-capitalist, anti-caste, anti-sectarian, pro-working class voice.

Common Man

Tears of joy rolled from the eyes of the urban poor when the Common Man Party (AAP) scored a significant victory in Delhi earlier this year. Subsequent activities and demands forced the Delhi police to effectively blockade roads and subways on several occasions in an attempt to hamper AAP activities.

The AAP was attempting, if imperfectly, to give expression to the

Given their immersion in immense corruption scandals, their fall was expected. Thirteen out of the 15 Congress ministers who stood for re-election lost their seats

aspirations of workers and ordinary people for a decent life and a political voice, free of corruption.

But the whole AAP cabinet in Delhi resigned after 49 days to 'keep their reputation intact for the coming election'. This resignation was attacked as a 'stunt' to secure a 'national profile' and the leaders of the AAP now admit that it was a mistake to give away the responsibility they had so recently taken on.

But, in the Indian context, it can also be seen by some poor people and workers as a demonstration of a principled stand. It further attracted a number of campaigners who have played, or are a playing, a key part in a number of significant local struggles such as that of the anti-nuclear movement in Koodankulam.

The AAP performed relatively well, winning four seats in Punjab and increasing its votes in Delhi (by 6%). It failed to secure much expected seats in Tamil Nadu and in Mumbai, but it has now emerged as a significant anti-corruption party.

If the AAP fails to build on the lessons learned, it is inevitable that they will be forced to compromise or split.

The election has revealed the mounting anger that is simmering under the surface in the sub-continent.

The Left also needs to appeal to the majority that did not take part in the election, as well as those who will quickly become disillusioned as Modi's mask slips, and call on them to step forward to form a mass organisation of workers, peasants and poor. The vote for the Common Man Party, the AAP, was significant. But the AAP leadership has so far not spelled out its plans for how it is planning to effect the change it says is needed.

Left parties, such as the CPI(M) and CPI, although their leaders have damaged their reputation in the past by not building fighting opposition to the Congress-led neoliberal offensive, could change their tactics too. An appeal should be made to all serious activists - in the existing parties, in the unions, in the community and resistance campaigns - to look at how mass resistance can be prepared.

The habit of calling ritual strikes must end. Instead, the enormous potential power of the working class - which strikes can most effectively demonstrate - must be mobilised properly. On that basis, an all-India 24-hour general strike would prepare the way for building up the kind of mass workers' movement that will be necessary to defeat the vicious anti-working class programme of the Modi government.

The Committee for a Workers' International

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

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

www.socialistworld.net

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



Egypt: Election of strongman al-Sisi - a foregone conclusion

Three years after 25 January revolution, workers need independent unions and a workers' party

David Johnson, Socialist Party (CWI, England and Wales)



Turkey: Mass protests and strikes erupt against AKP government and mine-owning cronies

Soma mine disaster deadliest in the country's history

Socialistworld.net



China: What lies behind the anti-corruption drive?

Case against former security czar risks dangerous splits in ruling party

Editorial from Socialist magazine, CWI

UNEMPLOYMENT KILLS

FIGHT FOR JOBS - FIGHT FOR A FUTURE

Clare Laker-Mansfield
Youth Fight for Jobs (YFJ)

The heart-breaking story of 20 year old Martin Hadfield, who tragically took his own life following months struggling to find work, is a shocking reminder of the real lives broken by a system that offers so many so little hope.

The human cost of nearly one million young people unemployed can never be fully expressed in the form of cold numbers. As Martin's stepdad eloquently put it: "He was never a statistic to us".

Britain's out of work youth are real people, with real hopes and dreams. Each of them is an individual with unique potential - with talents, skills and energy they're desperate to use. It is both a tragedy and an outrage that so much of what this generation has to offer is being criminally laid to waste.

Just like for the vast majority of those who find themselves out of work, laziness was never a factor in Martin failing to find a job. A trained gardener, he became unemployed when the firm he worked for downsized.

Next he found himself faced with the demoralising task of sending out applications and CVs - only to be knocked back by rejections and

employers who failed to even supply him with a courteous response.

For hundreds of thousands of young people this familiar process is no doubt made even more difficult by smug, privileged pro-capitalist politicians joining the right-wing press in a relentless campaign of myth-making about unemployed 'scroungers'. Perhaps this kind of rhetoric played a part in Martin's decision not to claim any benefits while out of work.

This human tragedy was the fault of an inhuman capitalist system. But any economic system which sees such vast accumulation of wealth for a few, while it presides over the wasting of the skills and talents of so many young people, does not deserve its continued existence.

The solution to youth unemployment is not ever harsher and more punitive treatment of those who are out of work; it's the creation of millions of secure, well-paid socially useful jobs - jobs that can provide the foundation for stable and happy lives for the next generation, as well as homes and services for those who need them.

Not one of the mainstream political parties currently offers us that. For young people facing unemployment - anger, frustration, stress and even despair can be normal responses to the bleak prospects austerity offers. But a concerted

fightback, by young people working alongside trade unionists, socialists and other campaigners, can challenge the cuts consensus and help secure a decent future for the '99%'.

Youth Fight for Jobs is helping to build this fight and to organise unemployed young people to demand their right to work. We say not one single young person should be left on the scrap heap. The cold cruelty of the Con-Dems leaves many thousands facing despair. But hope can come in fighting to change society.

We say:

- Prevent job losses. Stop public sector cuts
- Bailout workers not bankers. Nationalise big industries threatened with closure or large-scale job losses
- Share out the work. For a 35-hour working week with no loss of pay. No increase in retirement age
- For government investment in well-paid socially useful jobs with full trade union rights for workers
- For a massive public programme of house building, renovation and infrastructure projects
- Scrap workfare and all unpaid work schemes
- For secure jobs with guaranteed hours - scrap zero-hour contracts
- A living wage that's enough to live on - fight for a £10 an hour minimum wage and no youth exemptions



Youth Fight for Jobs on the march photo Paul Mattsson

What we stand for

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

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

The Socialist Party is part of the Committee for a Workers' International (CWI), a socialist international that organises in 45 countries.

Our demands include:

PUBLIC SERVICES

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

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

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

WORK AND INCOME

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

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

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

ENVIRONMENT

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

RIGHTS

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

NEW WORKERS' PARTY

- For a new mass workers' party drawing together workers, young people and activists from workplace, community, environmental and anti-war campaigns, to provide a fighting, political alternative to the pro-big business parties.
- Trade unions to disaffiliate from the Labour Party now and aid the building of a new workers' party! Support the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition as an important step towards this.

SOCIALISM AND INTERNATIONALISM

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