



photo Jim Halfpenny



- **Yes support hits the Tories**
- **Strike on 14 October to fight cuts**
- **Fight for a socialist alternative**

**T**en days before the Scottish independence referendum, the Guardian's Martin Kettle wrote: "These may not be ten days that will shake the world, as John Reed called the Russian revolution. But they will be ten days that could change all our lives, shaking the British state and its people to their very foundations."

Polls showing big growth in support for a Yes vote have sent dismay and terror coursing through Westminster's capitalist elite.

The result on 18 September looks very close but remains uncertain. What is clear, however, is that growing sections of the working class and youth are seeing the vote as a chance to say No to austerity and strike a blow against the Con-Dems.

Even the Tories acknowledge the Yes surge is about opposition to them and their policies. Why else did Scottish Tory leader Ruth Davidson say it did not appear likely that her party would win a second term in government? Yes is seen as a way for Scots to rid themselves of the Tories.

Polls also show that support for Yes among Labour voters has almost doubled in the last month from 18% to 35%. As well as the Labour leadership's commitment to Tory spending plans in the event of a Labour government in 2015, Labour councils have been implementing Tory policies, cutting jobs, slashing services, spreading misery to millions everywhere.

Given that it also implements austerity,

neither is the Scottish National Party seen as a party capable of resolving the problems faced by Scottish workers and young people.

#### **New party needed**

Socialist Party Scotland (SPS), the sister party of the Socialist Party in England and Wales, is energetically building support for Yes. SPS explains the need for the powers of independence to be used to end austerity and for democratic public ownership to run the economy in the interests of the 99% - socialism.

SPS argues that to most effectively express its needs the working class in Scotland has to build a new mass party. The same goes for us in England and Wales.

The most important lesson from the campaign so far is that we, working class people, can have an impact on events. The capitalist parties are falling over themselves to offer concessions to Scotland in the event of a No vote. This was not on the table until they felt the hot breath of opposition on their necks.

The preparations for the coordinated public sector pay strike on 14 October across England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland and the TUC demo on 18 October should be infused with the confidence that the working class has enormous potential power to influence the course of events - let's use it to fight cuts and change society!

**Read more on Scotland on pages 6&7 and see [www.socialistpartyscotland.org.uk](http://www.socialistpartyscotland.org.uk)**

# the Socialist

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## NSSN rally: Building pressure to maximise coordinated anti-austerity action

**Dave Walsh**  
Liverpool Socialist Party

Linda Taaffe, secretary of the National Shops Steward Network (NSSN), welcomed 150 people into a room meant for 100 for a Liverpool rally on Sunday 7 September.

Many of these were delegates to this year's TUC congress taking place in the city. Two years earlier, the NSSN rally in Brighton helped get the POA's 'general strike motion' on the agenda.

The first speaker, Daren Ireland of the RMT transport workers union, paid tribute to his union's former leader Bob Crow and his role in founding the NSSN. Daren said rail privatisation had allowed the owners to drive down pay and introduce zero hour contracts through sub-contractors. Shipping employers are paying £2.66 an hour to workers registered overseas.

Darren said that no mainstream political party is offering renationalisation, which is why Bob Crow also helped launch the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC).

Chris Baugh, PCS union assistant general secretary, said NSSN activists must dispel fatalism within the trade union movement, too many leaders accept the need for cuts and austerity. He reminded everyone of the billions of pounds paid in bankers' bonuses and the obscene energy company profits.

Chris also said the 'deal' with the government by a number of unions after the 30 November 2011 pensions strike didn't give workers any respite. It emboldened the Tories to go faster and deeper with their austerity attacks.

### Dispute updates

Roy Bentham gave an update from the Blacklist Support Group. A number of local authorities have said they will not allow blacklisting companies to bid for contracts. The campaign has won compensation for workers affected by blacklisting

and had got them reemployed in their industry.

Dave Honeybone spoke from the campaign in Doncaster where care workers have taken 60 days of strike action over pay and conditions. The

**national shop stewards network**  
...building the rank and file since 2006  
[www.shopstewards.net](http://www.shopstewards.net)

employers - Care UK - had made a paltry offer to settle the dispute but workers were determined to continue their campaign until victory.

The Napo general secretary, Ian Lawrence, said privatisation had failed in every industry and was doomed to fail in the probation service. Ian was determined to build confidence among Napo members for strike action.

### Giving a lead

Steve Gillan, POA general secretary, said he was proud to support the NSSN as a grassroots organisation which is growing in numbers and authority. He said the Labour Party makes no commitments on pay or pensions and added that workers have won all their previous gains through struggle.

Ronnie Draper, general secretary of the Bakers, Food and Allied Workers Union was scathing about trade union leaders at the TUC who have spoken against a general strike.

Ronnie said he was proud of his union's victory against zero-hour contracts at Hovis and that the TUC must support his union's motion to abolish them. He warned that Ed Miliband had put forward a fudge which would allow employers an easy route around his proposed regulations on zero hours.

Helen Pattison said how Youth Fight for Jobs is working with the bakers' union to organise fast food workers. Young workers in Britain



On the lobby following the rally photo Bob Severn

are inspired when they hear of the magnificent campaign in the US which won a \$15 an hour minimum wage in Seattle.

### Struggle brings results

Tony Mulhearn compared the achievements of the 1980s Militant Labour council in Liverpool which forced Thatcher's Tory government to pay £60 million towards the city's needs, with the present Labour council's destruction of vital services and jobs. He said the NSSN is a way of rebuilding the shop stewards' movement which will be vital in building confidence among workers to fight back.

Jane Nellist, a National Union of Teachers executive member, called on NUT delegates at the conference to pressure their leaders to support the 14 October local authority strike (see page 4).

The 10,000 votes for NUT general secretary candidate Martin Powell Davies showed the growing appetite

for radical left leadership.

Finally, NSSN national chair Rob Williams called on TUC delegates to work together to build for coordinated strike action. Rob said that the NSSN makes no apology for its call for a 24-hour general strike and that 'history will not end' if a Labour

government is elected. Austerity will continue and the NSSN will redouble efforts to get workers organised. He finished with a rousing call for everyone to go outside and lobby delegates.

**TUC backs £10 minimum wage: see page 4**

### North West marches for end to austerity

Hundreds of trade unionists from across the North West marched in Manchester on Saturday 6 September calling for an "End to Austerity". After a march through the city centre, a rally was addressed by union activists including Manchester TUC president Annette Wright, Unison general secretary Dave Prentis, and NUT north west regional secretary Avis Gilmore.

The speakers highlighted the impact of pay cuts, service closures, benefit cuts and sanctions on working class people and challenged

Labour to do better.

Upon hearing Prentis issue his latest "ultimatum" to Labour about not taking the unions and working people for granted, one person commented: "Isn't this all a bit ironic considering we're in a city where the overwhelmingly Labour council is doing nothing about austerity?" We support Unison and other unions in calling further days of strike action against pay restraint. But there needs to be action that can win, including further coordinated strikes.

**Steve North**

## British leaders back expansion of Nato war machine

**Steffan Bateman**  
Cardiff Socialist Party

The world does not look like a safer place after the Newport Nato Summit, held on 4-5 September.

In response to the crisis in Ukraine they agreed to establish a 'rapid reaction force' to be deployed within 48 hours of a Russian invasion. 4,000 soldiers are being sent to the Baltics, a quarter from Britain.

Five Nato members will supply Ukraine with arms. Despite the ceasefire agreed between the Ukraine government and Russia-backed rebels, shelling continues.

Nato also discussed military intervention in Iraq as a 'solution' to the crisis that its member nations created. But the new bombing campaign against Isis (Islamic State in

Iraq and the Levant) extreme religious fundamentalists in Iraq will only create more carnage.

The leaders of the military wing of western capitalism were protected from the people of South Wales by 12 miles of steel fencing, nearly 10,000 police officers, 25 fighter jets, and even five Nato warships.

### 'Security'

An estimated £50 million were spent on the security operation for the delegates, while austerity is wreaking havoc in Wales just like the rest of the world.

A luxury banquet was held for Nato attendees, including US President Barack Obama and German Chancellor Merkel: A disgusting spectacle in a city where many rely on food banks.

The Socialist Party joined the hundreds of anti-war and anti-austerity protesters in Newport and Cardiff. Our leaflets and meetings stressed that war is inextricably linked to capitalism. We were loud, lively, and colourful, shouting the need for a socialist society to replace the misery of our war-torn society.

The ruling classes of this world have no solution for the economic mess we're in, they don't have answers for the sectarian wars ripping apart the Middle East, and their rush to re-arm Ukraine and Israel will only prolong slaughter.

Only a workers' alternative can achieve long lasting solutions in Ukraine or the Middle East. That means a socialist society where the energies of humanity are spent on improving living standards, not killing machines.



photo Paul Mattsson

# Bedroom Tax edges toward its doom ...but tenants still suffer

**Dave Murray**

If a man dives headlong into a cess-pool and then clambers out of it, the first thing he will do is find a way to wash his face and hands. This is what Deputy Prime Minister Nick Clegg has tried to do by supporting the 'Affordable Housing' Bill, a private member's bill which got a majority in the House of Commons at its first reading on 5 May, to the fury of the Conservative party.

If it becomes law the bill will mean that only people who refuse a reasonable offer of alternative housing will be affected by the Bedroom Tax. Given the shortage of smaller properties this would be a big step towards abolishing the hated measure, which has cut an average of £16 a week from the income of 500,000 of Britain's poorest households.

There is a long way to go before the bill becomes law. It does, however, mean that the bedroom tax will be in the public eye repeatedly

until the coming general election. Whether this will do Clegg's gang any good is doubtful as the Bedroom Tax could never have been born without the support of Lib Dem MPs.

While the Lib Dems, cynically, have been 'reconsidering' around 100 tenants have been evicted and 22,000 have been forced to move out of their homes. The rest have either racked up rent arrears or have gone without essentials to make their payments.

Labour and Lib Dem councils, just like the Tories, have been willing to threaten tenants with eviction to force them to cough up. It has driven at least one person to suicide and countless more to the food banks.

It's a tribute to the efforts of socialists and community activists that there is any prospect of defeating the tax, as they have campaigned, lobbied, protested and

taken direct action to defend those affected for over a year, without any real help from the Labour Party, let alone the Lib Dems. We must keep up the pressure, linking the tax to the other benefit cuts and austerity measures which all of the main parties support. They are all dirty.



**Join the fightback! Join the Socialists!**  
[socialistparty.org.uk/join](http://socialistparty.org.uk/join) **020 8988 8777**  
 text 0776 1818 206 @Socialist\_party /CWISocialistParty

# Government spending cuts deepen prisons' crisis

Government cuts, leading to massive staff shortages, are deepening the crisis in the prison service as **John Hancock** of the Prison Officers' Association (POA) national executive committee, explains.

The latest chief inspector of prisons report into Wormwood Scrubs by Nick Hardwick makes for uncomfortable reading however he must be commended for its accurate portrayal.

In just five years I hardly recognise my prison. Go through the gates of any wing and the first thing you sense is the stench of body odours, drains and cannabis, as you pick a way carefully along the

The test of a nation is the way we treat our prisoners. Sadly, at present, the Scrubs is failing

landing, especially if it's raining, to avoid the numerous puddles where the roof leaks.

The morale and motivation of staff is at the lowest that I can remember and while they struggle to do their best there is little or no



**Wormwood Scrubs prison**

support. It's a case of 'just get on with it'.

The basics are no longer there. Inmates are unable to get soap, toothpaste or even a toilet roll and yet can gorge on a myriad of drugs.

## Shortages

Because of staff shortages the inevitable will happen; bullying, assaults on inmates and staff alike, which have seen a huge increase over the past few years.

Inmates expecting to go to work or education are now told that their classes or workshops are shut. They then return to the wing or their cells for yet another period of 'bang up'.

The report rightly highlights the unacceptable level of suicides. This is a national problem which has increased dramatically.

Any suicide puts intolerable pres-

sure and stress not only on the family of the victim but also the staff who have to deal with the situation.

Can anyone imagine having to cut someone down from a ligature or confront a suicide where he has cut his wrists or set fire to himself? These are truly shocking incidents which prison officers are unfortunately facing on a regular basis.

The national offender management service (NOMS) must be held accountable for its failure. In key areas they have:

Allowed too many staff to leave under a voluntary redundancy package.

Closed prisons that they determined to be too expensive and yet were effective in their delivery.

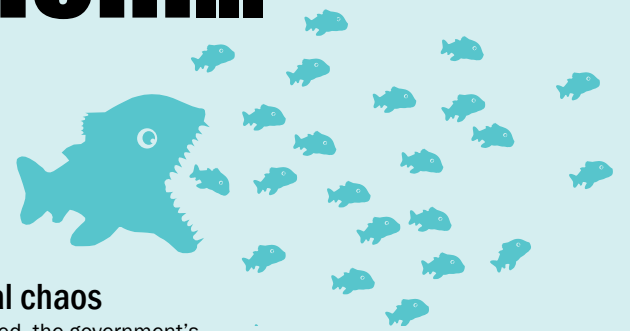
Miscalculated the prisoner population over the last 12 months, resulting in overcrowding.

In effect, these problems, when calculated together, have created the 'perfect storm'. One can only hope that prisoners and staff at Wormwood Scrubs, one of the most well-known prisons in England, do not reap the whirlwind.

The problems that the report has focused on are not insurmountable. The POA is willing to work together with NOMS to avoid another disastrous report. However, the coalition government must also play its part in this process and properly fund the prison service.

The test of a nation is the way we treat our prisoners. Sadly, at present, the Scrubs is failing. I want my prison back as I remember it.

# Them...



## Universal chaos

As anticipated, the government's cost-cutting Universal Credit (UC) system is leading to increased rent arrears among tenants. So far 8,500 have been moved onto UC in a number of trial areas. Leaked figures have revealed that average rent arrears for these claimants have doubled to £942. Monthly payment of UC replaces six current benefits, including housing benefit/allowance, and is due to be phased in by October 2017 - although welfare minister Iain Duncan Smith has admitted this deadline is unlikely to be met. The scheme is proving to be largely unworkable and has been dogged by huge IT problems and massive cost overruns.

in Hackney, east London, has risen by 864%. The value of property in London (currently 35% of Britain's total) is expected to top £2 trillion by 2017.

## Lobby sharks

Top market property sharks have funnelled nearly £1 million to Tory party coffers over the past two years - indicating who is benefitting from the government's housing policy.

## Newport schools

When teachers take a day's strike action to defend education as well as their pay and conditions they are condemned as "destroying children's education". Yet, hundreds of schools were either fully or partially closed during the Nato conference, as part of an effort to minimise traffic disruption on the route to the conference. Parents and teachers were angry because in Newport alone 48 were fully closed during the conference and eight partially closed. So 'destroying kids' education' to prevent Nato delegates and press getting stuck in traffic jams is ok then?

## Masters of universe

1,645 individuals, 47 based in the UK, control global assets approaching £4 trillion...

...£1.06 trillion worth of global financial deals struck by London dealers in first six months of 2014 (up 75% on 2013)

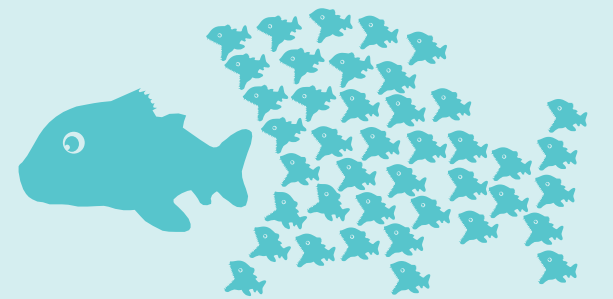
## Price bonanza

The chronic shortage of social housing, along with the government's pro-private landlord policies, is fuelling a property price bonanza in many cities. Since 1987 the total value of homes

## NHS budget grab

The amount of the annual £113 billion NHS budget going to profit making private companies - Spire, Circle, Ramsay Health, etc - has more than doubled since 2007.

# ...& Us



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

## What we heard

### Socialist Party member triggers outburst from Ukip rep in radio debate

Last week I was invited onto a live radio show with a Lib Dem and a Ukip spokesperson to discuss why Ukip's votes were increasing.

During the interview the Ukip representative, Elizabeth Jones, said we should stop taxing big companies for carbon emissions because we couldn't be sure climate change was man made.



**Helen, left, and Ukip screamer**

She also said they would scrap inheritance tax and welcomed millionaire donors. And she admitted that the only real difference between Ukip and the Tories was the issue of EU membership. It shows who they really represent - big business and millionaire bosses.

When challenged for suggesting lowering taxes for the rich, Jones hysterically screamed at me to shut up. Ukip isn't willing to have its policies debated, because that would

expose how pro-establishment its leadership and representatives really are.

**Helen Pattison**

Readers (using earplugs) can hear Jones' outburst on [www.huffingtonpost.co.uk](http://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk)

# NUT members angry as leaders stop October strike action

**Jane Nellist**  
NUT executive member  
(personal capacity)

I was recently elected as National Union of Teachers (NUT) executive member with a manifesto clearly stating we needed to escalate strike action. We needed a clear calendar of action to win our demands on pay, pensions and workload as well as to seek the widest possible coordinated action with other unions.

But the executive meeting on 5 September voted against striking on 14 October, the date chosen by other trade unions including those representing support staff in schools.

Already, on social media, many teachers are expressing anger with this decision.

In TUC congress, there are clear calls for further coordinated strike action and my own union will be supporting those motions despite failing to take the opportunity to put that into practice.

One of the reasons given by the leadership was perceived lack of consultation and communication on the part of other union leaders to bring that about. Some tried to argue that the focus of our disputes were not the same.

As I pointed out in the executive meeting, there is a real desire at local rank and file level to work together as was demonstrated at 10 July strike rallies up and down the country.

## Young teachers

In Coventry, confident young teachers joined the rally for the first time and lead the chants.

Not long after 10 July, education minister Michael Gove had gone - we had become the 'Govebusters'! But the replacement, Nicky Morgan is proving herself as bad - if not worse!!

The other major reason given by the leadership for not calling 14



Teachers and children at the 10 July rally in Coventry photo Nicky Downes

October strike action was because we are entering into a period of consultation over the next month. The consultation will support further strike action before the general election.

I fear that what the executive is putting to members is still not sufficiently strong enough. Not calling October strike action alongside our support staff colleagues will make it more difficult.

As teachers return to work this September, they face an unprecedented assault on their living

At TUC congress, my own union will back calls for coordinated action despite failing to take the opportunity to put that into practice

standards with no guarantee of pay increases, even the 1% cost of living rise.

Payment by results will be a feature of their working lives as well as the constant threat of capability issues.

The executive decision is a huge setback. We need to seize any opportunity to try and reverse that by putting pressure on them.

We need a strong leadership locally and nationally. We need to get the NUT back on track and make sure we win for our members.

## TUC votes for £10 minimum wage

**Neil Cafferky**

The first day of the TUC congress was dominated by discussion over pay in the public and private sectors.

Moving composite eleven on public sector pay and living standards, Unison general secretary Dave Prentis said that unions must be prepared to build on the action of 10 July. Seconding the motion, Chris Baugh from the PCS union said that now is the time to make the case for a pay rise.

In a moving speech in support, Kathy Smith from Unite told the story of one of her members. Working in schools to take care of children with cerebral palsy for £12,000 a year, she was denied a pay rise. But at the same time, the CEO of her borough - Bromley - was making over £200,000 a year and councillors were claiming over £1 million in expenses.

A motion to support the demand of a £10 an hour minimum wage was moved by Ronnie Draper from the bakers' union. He said that a £10 minimum wage would lift five mil-

lion workers out of poverty. The motion was inspired by the struggle of workers in America for \$15 an hour. Ronnie said: "We need a bold TUC to achieve this. We're not asking for the moon, we're asking for the means to transport our members there!"

Supporting the motion, a GMB union rep said he was sick of hearing that these demands were bold and radical. £10 an hour and proper working conditions are the least that workers can demand. The motion was passed unanimously.



## Care UK workers set for longest NHS strike

Dave Honeybone, lead Unison steward at Doncaster Care UK, spoke to the Socialist about the latest developments in their pay strike

"We're now in our third consecutive week of action. At the back end of the second week we had a meeting with the management, and they've put a proposal on the table that basically offers new Care UK workers a 2% pay rise starting on 1 October. There is nothing on the table for the TUPE staff who are already working there. They've also offered to go to what's called pending and binding arbitration. Our members meeting on Sunday 14 September will ratify which way we go.

For new staff the offer equates to 14 pence an hour extra. For us - transferred staff - it still represents a 33% pay loss as it stands. We're looking for a marked rise in that offer and for new staff to get somewhere near the living wage.

We're resolute, strong and determined to see it through to the end.

Whatever happens with the latest offer, we will start another three

week strike in mid-September. That strike will take us to 88 days of action, the longest NHS dispute in recent history."

Six Care UK strikers attended the TUC conference as visitors. The following day strikers visited London to lobby both Care UK offices and the HQ of its owners Bridgepoint private equity. They also went to Barnet to support fellow care workers who were on their second consecutive day of action against 9.5% pay cuts by employers Your Choice.

Send messages of support for Care UK strikers to admin@unison-dab.org.uk and donations to Jenkinson House, White Rose Way, Doncaster DN4 5GJ (cheques made out to 'Doncaster, District & Bassetlaw Health Branch').

## In brief

### Unite London bus demo

Unite's "Driving Up Pay" campaign aims to win a common contract across all London's bus companies. Socialist Party members are playing a key role in the campaign's steering committee.

As part of this campaign Unite has called a demonstration of London bus workers for 11 September.

The Socialist Party also supports those bus drivers in dispute with their companies over imposed below-inflation pay increases. A successful bus workers' campaign could provide a real inspiration to all workers. The 2012 victory over the Olympics bonus shows that militant united action can win.

### Pirates' pay protest

photo Mark Thomas



Greenwich Unite members dressed up as pirates on Saturday 6 September to let residents know that the council is nothing but a bunch of robbers. While refusing to support the union pay claim of a pound increase per hour, it is nevertheless ready to spend over £2 million on a "tall ships festival". The protest was organised at the same time as two days of strike action by parking wardens in the borough - a popular strike among car drivers!

The union had contacted every councillor to ask that they support the pay campaign. Yet not a single Labour councillor from this local authority with a massive Labour majority even responded. The Unite branch in Greenwich is now preparing for further action, building for the national strike on 14 October and the national TUC march on 18 October, while also balloting members in libraries over pay, staffing and workloads.

**Greenwich Unite members**

### Napo protest

Around 180 members of the National Association of Probation Officers (Napo) from across England and Wales attended a mass lobby of parliament on 3 September against plans to privatise the probation service.

At a packed rally, speakers gave shocking accounts of the chaos and disintegration that has gripped the service since it was split in two earlier this summer in preparation for the sell-off later this year.

**Chas Berry**

### FBU elects Matt Wrack

Fire Brigades Union general secretary Matt Wrack has been re-elected unopposed for a new five-year term.

### Website

For more reports on trade union and workplace issues see the Socialist Party's website: www.socialistparty.org.uk

# Ebola virus

## Victims of a failed capitalist system

Jon Dale

Infectious bodies rotting in the streets... health care facilities overwhelmed... health workers dying in shocking numbers.

These horrific scenes are spreading across West Africa. Ebola virus has brought terror to Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone and threatens Nigeria, Senegal and beyond.

Since Ebola virus was discovered in Congo in 1976 there have been seven outbreaks in East Africa. Two of these were in 2012, giving warning that a major outbreak could soon occur. Yet all governments were ill-prepared when this outbreak began.

The death toll has passed 2,000 - more than all previous outbreaks combined. 42% of deaths have occurred in the past month. This epidemic is out of control.

Yet Ebola is a tiny killer compared to malaria and tuberculosis, which both kill several million each year. But there is no preventative vaccine or cure and it is highly infectious.

### Breaking point

Crisis measures are urgently needed. But the governments of all the affected countries are completely incapable of carrying these out.

Health services are at breaking point. Kailahun in Sierra Leone has just four ambulances for almost half a million people. Heroic nurses, doctors, gravediggers and other frontline workers lack enough personal protective equipment to

prevent them becoming infected - and infectious - themselves. Nurses in Liberia have been on strike demanding protective clothing and higher pay.

The World Health Organisation estimates \$600 million (£366 million) could stop the epidemic. This is just 0.034% of annual world military expenditure (2013 figures). When governments talk of 'defence' spending, who and what are they defending?

Pharmaceutical companies make massive profits. They have not developed preventative vaccines or treatments for Ebola - a rare illness needing treatment for just a few days, hitting people too poor to buy drugs.

Of more than 1,500 new drugs that came to market between 1975 and 2004, just ten were targeted at tropical infections that killed millions each year.

Shareholders' profits mean selling drugs for long-term conditions to patients paying high prices, either directly or through tax-funded health care, like the NHS.

Potential Ebola treatments are now being belatedly developed. Rushing untested drugs through that were subsequently found to have serious side-effects could increase distrust of medicines already associated with neo-colonial exploitation and corruption.

Immediately needed is massive investment into health care - training and equipment to 'barrier nurse' patients and prevent them becoming dehydrated. Clean water is vital for hygiene and infection control.



Healthworkers in Liberia have been on strike demanding better protection from Ebola virus and improved pay

A public health programme, including health education, is needed - not imposed by corrupt central governments or Western imperialism.

Viruses don't stop at national borders. A coordinated international response can only be achieved on the basis of democratic socialist states cooperating together, in Africa and across the world.

### A tale of two worlds

William Pooley, the British volunteer nurse who survived Ebola virus, contracted in Sierra Leone, said after successful treatment in London: "I was very lucky... in the standard of care I received, which is a world apart from what people are receiving in West Africa at the moment."

### Funding shortfall

The United Nations World Health Organisation's budget for outbreaks and crises has declined by 35% since 2010. WHO estimated that \$103 million was needed to continue the fight against Ebola. But the agency only has a fifth of that available.

## Exploitation and domination

Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone were all wracked by civil wars in the past 25 years. They are among the poorest in the world, despite being rich in natural resources. Centuries of imperialist exploitation have sucked huge wealth out of mines and plantations.

They spend more on interest charges to the World Bank and International Monetary Fund than on healthcare, education and infrastructure. 'Aid' comes with strings, demanding privatisation of health and other public services.



## Nationalise 'big pharma'

What little research into Ebola treatment that has been carried out has been funded by the US Department of Defence, concerned at the threat of bioterrorist attacks. In 2013 the Centre for Biosecurity of the University of Pittsburgh reported that monoclonal antibodies showed potential to treat infections such as Ebola.

Sales of these treatments could reach \$62.7 billion in 2015. 75% are for cancer or conditions like rheumatoid arthritis requiring long-term treatment. The only one developed for an infectious disease is for premature babies, who need six months treatment.

In 2012, these drugs cost up to \$25,000 per patient a year. Changing manufacture methods could potentially cut costs by nine tenths. But "this is not currently a priority for commercial industry," reports the Centre for Biosecurity.

The whole industry must be publicly owned and democratically planned for need - not profit.

## Nigeria: Neoliberalism has undermined healthcare

Peluola Adewale  
Democratic Socialist Movement  
(CWI, Nigeria)

The World Bank President Jim Yong Kim wrote in the Washington Post: "If the Ebola epidemic devastating the countries of Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone had instead struck Washington, New York or Boston, there is no doubt that the health systems in place could contain and then eliminate the disease." Spot on!

However, what he doesn't say is that this reality is a reflection of the crisis of capitalism, especially in neocolonial countries. These countries along with Nigeria, which also has cases of Ebola virus, are rich in natural resources. But the domination of these economies by imperialists and multinationals, as well as the implementation of the World Bank promoted neoliberal capitalist model that discourages public spending, has made it impossible for them to build strong health system against infectious disease like Ebola, let alone provide safe water and sanitation.

For instance Nigeria, Africa's biggest economy with a population of 170 million, has just four laboratories that are capable of

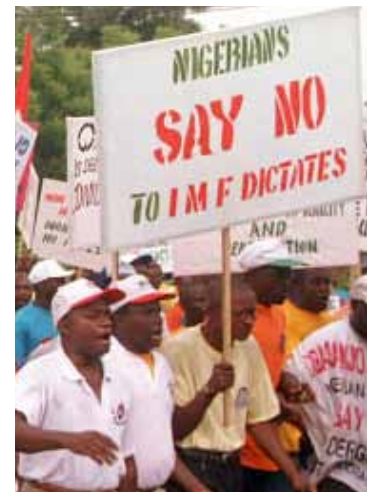
testing for Ebola virus. But even these laboratories are reportedly only funded with grants from foreign charity organisations.

Besides, in the run-up to 2015, the target year of the Millennium Development goals, hundreds of Nigerians are still dying annually from preventable diseases such as cholera - a water-borne disease.

According to the government statistics, there were 22,347 cases of cholera between January and June out of which 288 people have died in Nigeria. These cholera outbreaks, which have been underreported in the media, reveal much more the monumental failure of the anti-poor, capitalist government than Ebola virus disease which has so far accounted for eight deaths in Nigeria.

Massive public spending on healthcare under a democratic control of workers is vital, especially in neocolonial countries. This is more imperative as evidence has shown that a strong health system, along with provision of safe water and sanitation, can reduce significantly the fatality and incidence of Ebola and other infectious diseases.

The Ebola crisis has also shown that without massive funding from governments and international agencies the multinational phar-



maceutical companies will not produce a vaccine or treatment for Ebola even if all the clinical trials are successful.

This has also put on the agenda the call for public ownership of big pharmaceutical companies so that research and production of any medicine will be on the basis of the needs of humanity and not profit of a few. But all this will not be possible without a mass movement and struggle for socialist change.

The full version of Peluola's article can be read on [www.socialistworld.net](http://www.socialistworld.net)

# SCOTTISH REFERENDUM

## A mass revolt against austerity

Philip Stott  
Socialist Party Scotland (SPS)

The 6 September YouGov survey for the Sunday Times has sent shock waves through the capitalist political establishment in Britain. For the first time during the campaign an opinion poll has shown the Yes side ahead by 51% to 49%.

A Yes vote would represent the biggest constitutional crisis in Britain in decades, as well as a major political crisis. This is against the background of the existing social and economic crisis and the enormous unpopularity of all the Westminster parties.

Within hours of its publication Chancellor George Osborne announced that the No coalition of Tories, Labour and the Lib Dems had agreed a new "action plan" that would give "more powers to Scotland, tax powers, spending powers, more powers over the welfare state."

### Con-Dem arrogance

Ironically, the leadership of the Scottish National Party (SNP) in 2012 offered a multi-option referendum that would have included a question on more powers - a form of 'devolution max'. This was rejected by the Con-Dems and Labour who arrogantly believed they could inflict a decisive defeat on the SNP and kill off the threat of independence. This co-

cialist Party Scotland as a vital strategy in turning the tide against austerity - the referendum has taken on a proxy form of class struggle, reflecting the huge anger and desire for economic and social change.

### Anger of thousands

Thousands of people queued up at council offices across Scotland last week to ensure they were included in the vote. An estimated 300,000 voters registered in the last two months. An unprecedented turnout is expected, over 80%.

The legacy of Thatcherism, the criminality of the poll tax, the miners' strike, mass unemployment and the destruction of communities under the Tories, all feature as driving forces for Yes. British capitalism is paying the price for its past as well as its present crimes.

The Labour leaders, who promise to implement Tory austerity if elected, are hated almost as much as the Tories. At public meetings, the anger and disgust at Labour's Ed Miliband, Alistair Darling and especially Tony Blair is ferocious. The polling evidence is damning. 61% don't trust Darling, head of No campaign 'Better Together'. 67% distrust Miliband, who fares only slightly better than David Cameron, whose levels of distrust are currently at 73%.

### No confidence in SNP

But nor do the leaders of the SNP inspire confidence. 58% say they don't trust what Alex Salmond has to say. The political platform of the SNP promises to cut corporation tax for big business and seeks an austerity currency pact with the Bank of England. Given it implements Tory austerity when in power, the SNP is not seen as a party in which the working class can have confidence.

For that very reason, as SPS anticipated two years ago, a huge space has opened up to the left of the SNP and the leaders of the official Yes campaign. The referendum debate has ushered in a vast interest in political ideas: how to build a 'better and fairer' Scotland? How to end cuts, raise the minimum wage and defend public services?

When Socialist Party Scotland activists took the Socialist Case for Independence to the Glasgow Clyde College freshers fair, a construction student summed up the mood of some young people: "I'm voting YES but there is no point unless society is changed, things are too unequal. The rich are richer, wages are low and there are no jobs. What is socialism?"

The Socialist Party Scotland has been playing a lead role in the Hope Over Fear tour with well-known Scottish socialist Tommy Sheridan. The tour has given a more concrete expression to the desire for definitive change.

The meetings that Tommy has addressed have taken on the character of vast assemblies of an angry and energised working class. He condemns the capitalist establishment, and demands

that under independence the cuts should end, and that the economic resources of oil and the privatised energy utilities should be publicly owned to implement a living wage and to end zero-hour contracts.

The point of reference that Tommy has become during the campaign is an expression of the vacuum that exists for the building of a new, fighting working class party and his role as leader of the successful mass anti-poll tax campaign in the late 80s and early 90s.

SPS also fights for the type of reforms and improvements for the working class that Tommy Sheridan rightly demands. We also explain that in an independent capitalist Scotland austerity will not end.

the working class majority.

The idea put forward by many on the left, including Tommy, is that it would be possible to make a transition to a fairer and socially just form of capitalism. This is summed up in the policy of the Common Weal, which proposes the 'Nordic model' of Norway, Denmark and Sweden as a template for a new, fairer Scotland.

### 'Nordic model' not possible

We have replied to the Common Weal by explaining that given the scale of the economic crisis there is no possibility of sustained and long-lasting improvements for the working class today within the

framework of capitalism. A mass movement of the trade unions and the wider working class needs to be built to defeat the cuts agenda, linked to a struggle to end capitalism by introducing decisive socialist policies.

A return to the unprecedented post-World War Two economic upswing that the social democratic Nordic model was built on is not possible. Today, capitalism is attempting to drive through an eradication of the gains made by the working class, including in the Nordic countries.

With ten days to go until voting begins, the outcome of the referendum sits on a knife-edge.

The consequences of a Yes majority for the British capitalist elite would be colossal and unprecedented and would have far-reaching consequences. Cameron could be forced to resign and the Tories tipped into a much deeper crisis, accelerating a possible split away towards Ukip. Already there are whisperings about votes of no confidence in Cameron.

### Establishment faces disaster

In order to avoid this disaster for them further concessions on powers will be forthcoming from the capitalist establishment. 'Project Fear' will also be ratcheted up again. The Queen has let it be known that she is "concerned" about her constitutional position if there is a Yes vote. A UK military intervention into Syria and Iraq may also take place before 18 September, which could also have an impact on the vote. Expect dire warnings about the threat of financial meltdown and economic collapse.

Over the last four weeks support for Yes has increased among Labour voters from 18% to 35%. Labour would also be thrown into major crisis following a Yes vote.

But if Labour adopted a fighting socialist programme and offered a clear alter-

land who will demand real and fundamental change post-referendum.

Socialists and trade unionists should oppose the approach of leaving such vital talks on issues like the currency and what powers an independent Scotland would have to pro-cuts politicians. Instead we would demand democratic elections to a negotiating body, open to all, including the standing of trade union and socialist candidates that would take the independent class demands of the working class into the talks.

For example, the over £4 billion stolen from public services in Scotland as a result of Tory austerity policies since 2010 should be returned - but not linked to cuts in public services in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. All money stolen from all local authorities in the rest of Britain should also be returned.

Whatever the outcome of the referen-

## Socialist case for yes draws hundreds

The Hope Over Fear - Socialist Case for Yes public meeting in Dundee on 4 September attracted over 500 people. An impromptu overflow meeting was organised outside to allow 100 people who were unable to get in to hear Tommy Sheridan speak.

Sinead Daly (SPS) opened, explaining that this was the 96th Hope Over Fear meeting. More than 20,000 people have participated.

"Tonight we need to discuss how we will use the powers of independence to make poverty history and to build a society for the millions, not the millionaires. We want to see an independent socialist Scotland for the interests of the working class," Sinead explained.

### Spawn of Thatcher

To rapturous applause Tommy Sheridan lacerated the cuts politicians from Thatcher and the "spawn of Thatcher" Cameron to Miliband. "You wouldn't trust him to run a bath, never mind a country."

Tommy also called for public ownership, a living wage and an end to poverty in an independent Scotland and received a prolonged standing ovation from the packed audience.

Jim McFarlane a leading Unison member in Dundee spoke for Socialist Party Scotland: "I'm voting Yes because I'm a trade unionist and a socialist. I have worked for Labour councils and SNP councils. When it comes to making cuts they are both guilty of cutting without even a protest or a campaign."

### Public ownership

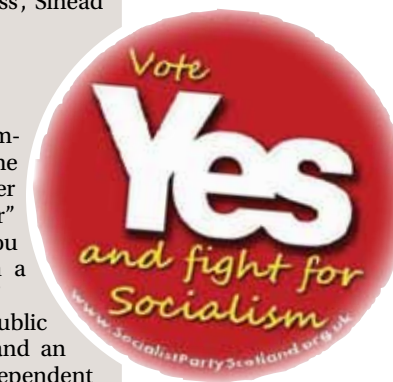
"We're campaigning for public ownership of the banks, the oil and gas industry and the major sectors of the economy. The powers of independence should be used to deliver a living wage for all, an end to zero-hour contracts and a fully resourced welfare state."

"We need a new mass working class party with socialist policies to deliver on that in an independent Scotland. A mass movement against the cuts and for an independent socialist Scotland linked to the struggle for socialism in England, Wales and Ireland is the only real escape from savage austerity."

Reflecting the thirst for ideas, over 100 people bought copies of the Socialist and over 300 took copies of the Socialist Party Scotland four-page referendum leaflet. They also gave hundreds of pounds to the financial appeal.

This is an edited version of the article that appears on the website of Socialist Party Scotland. See [socialistpartyscotland.org.uk](http://socialistpartyscotland.org.uk) for full version and more news and analysis.

60% of Scots under 40 are thinking of voting yes - up from 39% four weeks ago



35% of Labour voters are thinking of voting yes - up from 18% four weeks ago

56% of working class Scots are thinking of voting yes - up from 41% four weeks ago



Trade unionists march in Glasgow photo Jim Halpenny/SPS

47% of women are thinking of voting yes - up from 33% four weeks ago

lossal miscalculation has come back to haunt them with a vengeance.

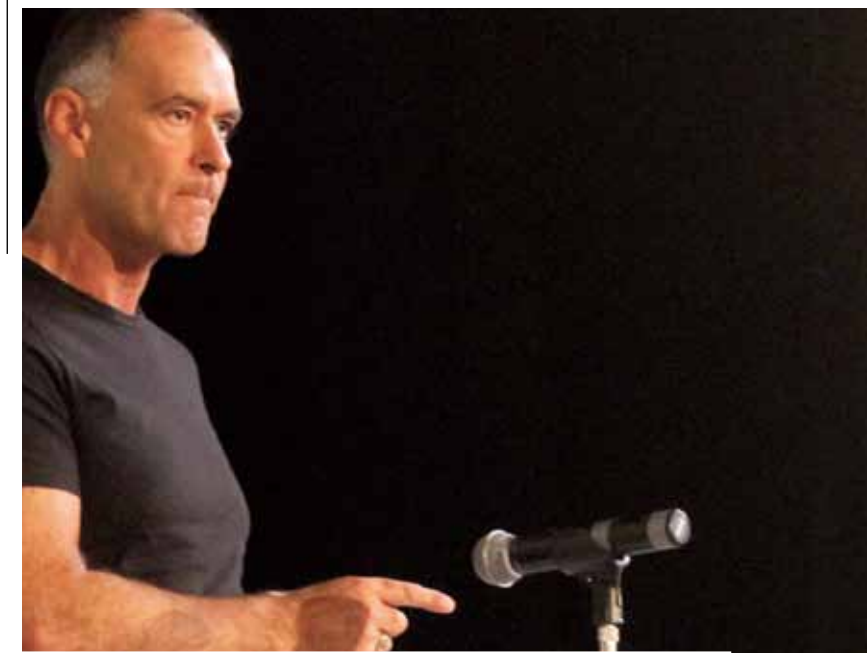
Even in the event of a No vote on 18 September, it's clear that major new powers for Scotland are inevitable. Demands for another independence referendum could also follow quickly - as was the case in Quebec in the 1990s.

As it is a majority vote for independence is now a distinct possibility. 'Yes' is being taken up by big sections of the working class as a weapon to hit back at the hated Westminster political elite - those responsible for benefit cuts, wage freezes and savage public sector cuts. It has become a mass revolt by the victims of austerity against their class enemy.

In the absence, temporarily, of mass action organised by the trade unions against the cuts - advocated by the So-

Salmond and the SNP will continue with cuts after the referendum, whatever the result. Socialist policies are essential to achieve an end to austerity.

Central to the programme we put forward is the forging of a unified working class response to capitalist austerity, not only in Scotland, but also in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. The class solidarity of trade unionists through a mass coordinated campaign of strike action across the UK is vital in turning the tide against the cuts and privatisation. So is the demand for the building of a new mass party to represent the interests of



Pro-independence Scottish socialist Tommy Sheridan photo Senan

native to continued austerity they would win a majority at Westminster - even in the future without Scottish Labour MPs. It is the Labour leadership's slavish adherence to capitalist policies and Tory spending plans that undermine Labour's chances of forming a majority government. The trade unions should move to build a new mass workers' party as a matter of urgency.

Many workers in England and Wales see the Yes campaign as a way of fighting back and are enthusiastic supporters. Others fear that a Yes victory would weaken their ability to remove the Tories at the 2015 general election. Both reflect the absence of a mass party through which the working class could oppose austerity.

### 'Team Scotland'

The SNP leadership is already moving to try to include leading Labour figures like Darling and Scottish Labour leader Johann Lamont into 'Team Scotland', as well as Lib Dems and Tories.

This is the body that would lead the negotiations with the UK government on the independence settlement. This is part of an attempt by the SNP to dampen down the aroused expectations of big sections of the working class in Scot-

dum, up to two million people will have voted Yes to independence seeking an end to austerity and falling incomes. Yet it's clear that the SNP leadership are preparing to carry on with cuts - a further £3 billion in the next two years.

### Trade union action needed

The trade unions should immediately call for an end to all cuts in Scotland, linked to a mass campaign of generalised and coordinated strike action against austerity. Without doubt this would inspire more struggles in England, Wales and Northern Ireland where anger is simmering below the surface waiting for an outlet.

The working class response to the Hope Over Fear tour and the re-emergence of Tommy Sheridan as a major figure should be built on to help provide a stronger political voice for socialism following the referendum.

Socialist Party Scotland has helped to initiate a Scottish Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition conference on 1 November in Glasgow, aimed at bringing together all those seeking to build a working class, anti-cuts and socialist electoral alternative.

Whatever the outcome of the vote next Thursday, the political terrain will have changed decisively in Scotland. The urgent task of channelling the colossal anger that has been so evident into a mass struggle to defeat the cuts agenda and to strengthen the ideas of socialism in Scotland will need to be stepped-up on 19 September.

# Guardian story confirms councils can resist cuts

Clive Heemsker  
TUSC national election agent

A recent Guardian article vindicates the central point of the local council policy platform of TUSC (see box right). Aditya Chakraborty's story on the efforts of Enfield council to respond to the housing crisis shows that councillors can find ways to resist austerity if they choose to.

Chakraborty explains the desperate housing situation developing in the north London borough - although it's not restricted to there! The backdrop is an historic underbuild of social housing, the government's benefit cuts, and rising private sector rents.

He shows that councils still have powers they could use, if the will is there, to intervene. Enfield, he reports, "has arranged a credit facility of £100m" to bulk-buy homes, in a programme begun in March this year.

It is introducing a scheme to license private landlords and, "for the first time in 30 years, it is building council homes" - with 180 starts this month as the first step.

Back in January the TUSC national steering committee issued a policy statement outlining the powers councils have to implement - here and now - policies that would positively improve the position of millions of people struggling to survive in 'austerity Britain'.

This included the call to use councils' powers to compulsorily register private landlords and set up council-

**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 workers' union, leading members of other trade unions including the PCS, NUT and POA, as well as the Socialist Party and other left and anti-cuts groups and individuals.  
[www.tusc.org.uk](http://www.tusc.org.uk)

run lettings agencies. This could tackle high rents, repair standards, over-occupancy and extortionate letting fees for private rented homes.

It also included the demand to build council homes now, by using councils' 'prudential borrowing' powers for capital spending.

Even though Enfield is not following exactly these policies, or at least their full scope, it is showing that 'something can be done'.

## Not the new Poplar

Enfield is not the new Poplar, the east London council that radically extended local government services in the 1920s. Or Liverpool council that took on Margaret Thatcher and won new resources for the city in the 1980s.

For example, Aditya records that ten employees in Enfield's already overstretched housing department received redundancy letters in the week he was researching the article. TUSC opposes all cuts to council jobs, services, pay and conditions.

Also there is no indication how this Labour-controlled council plans to deal with the national Labour Party's determination to implement austerity.

Just last week Labour's shadow local government and communities secretary, Hilary Benn, said this in an open letter to council leaders.

"As we will inherit, and stick to, the government's spending plans for 2015-16, we will not have any more money to give to local government" (the Guardian, 25 August).

TUSC was right to stand candidates in Enfield in May's local elections - polling 2,162 votes across the borough - to keep the pressure on Labour as much as the other austerity consensus parties.

TUSC will fight next year's elections on the same policy of opposition to all cuts to council services. But we will also highlight the positive aspects of the Enfield example to show what more councils could do.

Our message will be that councillors can make a difference - if they are prepared to fight.

## Comment: the many faces of the Guardian

[tusc.org.uk](http://tusc.org.uk)

Aditya Chakraborty's article (see main story above) answers the myth that 'councillors can't do anything' to resist austerity. And that's important because it is a widely promoted myth, including by other journalists at the Guardian.

Many TUSC supporters have written to the Guardian's letters page explaining our policies - but in the overwhelming majority of cases their letters haven't been published. Our campaign in this year's local elections, when TUSC fielded 560 candidates in the biggest left-of-Labour challenge since the Second World War, was not mentioned once in the news pages.

Part of the reason could be that the Labour-supporting paper just does not want to give TUSC any coverage at all. Their "Comment is Free" editor turned down a request by former Labour MP and TUSC national chairperson Dave Nellist for space following the untimely death of fellow TUSC co-founder Bob Crow earlier this year. This was after their obituary wrongly claimed that Bob "was not a member of a political party when he died".

But the prevailing idea amongst its editors that 'there's nothing councils can do' to fight the cuts is almost certainly another reason.

This was shown when a Nottingham TUSC candidate, Cathy Meadows, not stating that information on this occasion in her letter, argued

the case for Labour councils to use their reserves and borrowing powers to avoid cuts. She called for them to launch "a national campaign with local organisations and unions to demand funds from the government to fully fund services". She received an unsigned, six-word reply from the Guardian letters email address: "I think it would be illegal..."

As Aditya's story says, Enfield council "didn't start off radical" (and, as explained in the main article, is not taking its resistance all the way). "But circumstances are forcing it to break old habits", he concludes, "and try new things". More and more working class voters will do that too in the period ahead. And perhaps more journalists at the Guardian will do so as well.

## TUSC councillors back taxi struggle

Tessa Warrington and Wayne Naylor  
Leicester TUSC

100 RMT members packed Leicester town hall last Wednesday evening at the city council's planning control meeting. The council had granted temporary permission to a private hire taxi-cab company to operate in the area around the train station, an area already licensed to the self-employed RMT hackney cab drivers.

In six months the private hire company has contravened parking regulations, contributed further to major congestion and violated their insurance policy in order to gain more custom at public risk. Not only this, but it has taken vital business from the self-employed RMT members and undercut their ability to earn a living.

Councillors Wayne Naylor and



Cllrs Wayne Naylor and Barbara Potter photo Ambrose Musiyiwa

Barbara Potter are members of Leicester Independent Councillors Against Cuts, which recently joined TUSC. Wayne spoke for them on behalf of the RMT members at the meeting, and assured them that TUSC in Leicester will continue to support the workers with their grievance.

A lobby has been organised of

the next full council meeting on 18 September. We are also building towards the Leicester People's Budget Conference on 25 October, where Leicester RMT members have been invited to lead a session on city transport issues.

Contact [tessawarrington@gmail.com](mailto:tessawarrington@gmail.com) for more information on the conference.

Party  
news

The Socialist Party is active in communities and workplaces all over England and Wales. For more news from around the country, and more detail on the reports below, visit [www.socialistparty.org.uk](http://www.socialistparty.org.uk).



East Kent branch campaigning in Folkestone photo Sean Dempsey

### New branch in Chester

The Socialist Party established a new branch at the end of August: West Cheshire, based in Chester.

### Worcester

Socialist Party Worcester recently held stalls opposing zero-hour contracts and calling for a £10 per hour minimum wage.

The issue went down well. People were almost past the stall sometimes before taking in what we were doing and coming back to sign.

Many said zero hours was becoming the norm, including one worker from the Co-op.

Pete McNally

### Plymouth

We attracted many workers to sign our petition calling for a £10 minimum wage and an end to zero-hour contracts.

One worker spoke of how she was only given three hours' work that week meaning that she had to turn to family members for help.

Numerous sad stories were heard over and over again, from people happy to see that the Socialist Party is taking action.

We couldn't help but agree with a worker who said that he cannot believe he had to use a food bank despite working for a company who make millions in profit!

Tom Taylor

## North West fundraising success

Hugh Caffrey  
Socialist Party North West region

A mini "collectathon" in the North West raised nearly £400 for the Socialist Party's fighting fund. We ran four additional all-day street stalls, with one alone raising £137.

Campaigning against zero-hour contracts gets huge support from working and middle class people an-

gered at super-exploitation.

Branches have been taking fundraising seriously with some notable successes. Liverpool recently raised £93 on a car boot sale, while Manchester raised £140 on one demonstration.

Fighting for socialism requires serious financial resources. Working class people are ready to donate when they see us out there campaigning on the issues they are most angry about.



Northern curry party raises £200! photo Elaine Brunskill



Donate to fund the fightback!

[socialistparty.org.uk/donate](http://socialistparty.org.uk/donate)

020 8988 8777

text 0776 1818 206 @Socialist\_party /CWISocialistParty

## SOCIALIST PARTY FIGHTING FUND

	£ target	£ received	July to September 2014	Deadline 29 September 2014
North West	1,200	1,965	████████████████████	████████████████████
Northern	600	842	████████████████████	████████████████████
Yorkshire	2,900	2,559	████████████████████	████████████████████
East Midlands	1,600	1,266	████████████████████	████████████████████
West Midlands	2,100	1,542	████████████████████	████████████████████
London	6,100	4,134	████████████████████	████████████████████
Wales	2,300	1,226	████████████████████	████████████████████
Southern	1,200	599	████████████████████	████████████████████
Eastern	1,200	571	████████████████████	████████████████████
South East	1,400	467	████████████████████	████████████████████
South East	750	202	████████████████████	████████████████████
England & Wales	3,650	474	████████████████████	████████████████████
TOTAL	25,000	15,846	████████████████████	████████████████████

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After the historic \$15 victory, don't miss Seattle's socialist councillor **KSHAMA SAWANT**

Kshama will be speaking at the Saturday night rally along with Bakers' union president Ian Hodson, Irish TD Ruth Coppinger, PCS general secretary Mark Serwotka and Socialist Party general secretary Peter Taaffe



[www.socialism2014.net](http://www.socialism2014.net) or 020 8988 8777 for bookings/info

# US: building a movement to end poverty pay!

On 4 September strikes and protests took place in over 100 cities around the US demanding an end to low pay in the fast food industry and a \$15 an hour minimum wage. This is the latest action in an ongoing movement for decent wages and conditions. In an outrageous attack on the democratic right to protest, 436 people were arrested across the country. **WILLIAM BLUEHER** (member of Socialist Alternative – co-thinkers of the Socialist Party in the US), gives an update on the movement to raise the minimum wage.

In 2012, fast-food workers in New York went on strike to demand higher wages. Practically overnight, these strikes spread to cities across the country.

Last year, this struggle was brought to Seattle when Socialist Alternative ran a candidate for city council, Kshama Sawant, whose platform included a demand for a \$15 an hour minimum wage. This key demand helped propel Sawant into office, and within the first six months, Seattle won \$15, becoming the first city in the entire country to achieve such a victory for its workers.

### Spreading the movement

But Seattle is not alone. Cities and states all over the country are beginning to see people come together around this issue, particularly after President Obama's failed attempt to raise the federal minimum wage to even a modest \$10.10 (from \$7.25). In Chicago, in March, a nonbind-



15 Now campaigners march in Seattle photo Alex Garland

ing resolution to raise the minimum wage to \$15 an hour appeared on the primary ballot, and a staggering majority – over 87% – of Chicagoans were in support of it. Now, Mayor Rahm Emanuel has assembled a minimum wage task force to try to raise the minimum wage to \$13 an hour by 2018.

In San Francisco, home to some of the greatest income inequality in the entire country, a “consensus measure” for the November ballot has been put forward that would raise the minimum wage in the city to \$15 an hour. Inspired in large part by their neighbours in Seattle, activists are pushing hard to make sure the same loopholes that the Democrats and big business secured in the Seattle minimum wage law are not repeated in San Francisco. Ac-

tivists in Los Angeles are pushing forward a similar ballot measure.

### No loopholes!

In Massachusetts, the legislature just passed a bill to raise the state's minimum wage to \$11 an hour by 2017, making Massachusetts home of the highest state minimum wage in the country. While this is undeniably a huge gain for hundreds of thousands of workers, the bill has serious problems. One is that that \$11 an hour is not indexed to inflation, so what seems like a big gain now will rapidly erode.

In New York City, newly elected Mayor Bill de Blasio rode into office decrying the “tale of two cities,” he has yet to come out publicly with a plan to raise the minimum

## Subsidised hunger



The United States is the richest country in the world, but one in six Americans (48 million) admit that they run out of food completely at least once a year. There are now 15,000 food banks (called Food Pantries in the US). The federal Supplementary Nutritional Assistance Program (formally known as Food Stamps) supplies 48 million Americans with an average of \$133 (£80) a month – just finding enough to eat and feed their family has become a central worry for millions.

Most of the hungry are working, drive cars, may appear well-dressed and are even overweight. But in a big country with poor public transport, a car is vital. And if they are overweight it's because the only food they can afford is junk. When a family has to pay rent, pay fuel bills and keep a car on the road just to survive, the only

thing left to cut is food.

And the cheapest food in the supermarket is processed, with a high content of maize flour and corn syrup. It is cheap because the US Government gives nearly \$11 billion a year in subsidies to agribusiness maize and soya growers. Corn syrup goes into sodas, and energy drinks – amazingly these provide the largest daily source of calories for low income families.

As one expert put it “The problem can't be fixed by merely telling people to eat their fruit and vegetables, because at heart this is a problem about wages, about poverty.”

The ‘problem’ is that agribusiness is subsidised to produce unhealthy food, while millions of workers are not paid a living wage.

**Geoff Jones**  
Socialist Party Wales

wage. Recently, however, Governor Andrew Cuomo claimed he would raise the state minimum wage to \$10.10, allowing municipalities, which currently don't have the right to set their own minimum wage, to go 30% higher than that.

Now more than ever, as these cities

and states across the country begin to take up the issue of the minimum wage, it is imperative that activists, workers, and organised labour join together to demand a meaningful minimum wage increase.

## 15 Now campaigns growing

15 Now, the driving force behind the triumph of \$15 an hour in Seattle, is an organisation that has a unique role to play in the movement. It is a constant presence in communities that does not just come and go on the important days of action. 15 Now doesn't limit its demands to what Democrats will deliver. It had a democratically run national conference in April and is setting up democratic structures throughout the country. In Minneapolis, 15 Now is leading a determined struggle of airport workers to get higher wages. We are organising alongside workers – union and

non-union – to fight to win significant improvements in living conditions. In airports, there are concentrations of both food service and airline workers. When united, these workers have tremendous power in a vital industry. Across the country, we can turn airports into sites of struggle for \$15 an hour.

In Wisconsin, lawmakers were discussing increasing the minimum wage to \$10 an hour. 15 Now and allies in many endorsing unions packed the meeting to demand more, getting an echo and changing the conversation.

In Philadelphia, two city councillors,

due to the pressure of our movement, signed up to the demand for a \$15 an hour minimum wage.

### Setting up local groups

We've organised 15 Now groups in both Pittsburgh and Allentown. The Pittsburgh meeting was a “who's who” of the local labour movement.

15 Now Boston has a nonbinding referendum on the ballot in West Roxbury, and 15 Now in Portland, Maine had its launch on the front page of the popular Portland Phoenix weekly newspaper. 15 Now in

New England is backed by two of the biggest unions in the region, the Massachusetts teachers' and nurses' unions.

We've been active out on the West Coast and down South, too, with new groups popping up in Los Angeles, in Arizona, and in Tampa Bay, Florida. There is far too much activity to mention it all here!

In Seattle, we'll be hosting a concert with Rage Against the Machine guitarist Tom Morello to raise funds for our movement!

**Ty Moore**  
Socialist Alternative

## The Committee for a Workers' International

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

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

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



# Tamil Solidarity Day: a great success

**Akila Kumar**

Tamil Solidarity student organiser

Over 100 people from the Tamil, Turkish and Kurdish communities together with other activists and trade unionists celebrated Solidarity Day 2014 on 6 September.

Organised by Tamil Solidarity with the Day-Mer Kurdish and Turkish organisation, this very successful event heard speakers from Youth Fight for Jobs, Rape Is No Joke, and unions Unison, NUT, RMT, and the Bakers Food and Allied Workers Union.

They spoke of the many struggles faced by workers of various nationalities and showed the importance of expressing solidarity with the struggles of all oppressed people, as Tamil Solidarity was set up to do.

The Buddhist extremist group, Bodu Bala Sena, backed by Sri Lanka's government have been violently persecuting Tamil Muslims, as was detailed by Fatheek Asareeri and Fauzer Mahroof.

Keerthikan Thennavan and Manly Thain, joint national secretar-

ies of Tamil Solidarity, spoke of the campaign's local and national work since it was set up in 2009.

Keerthikan and Isai Priya, Tamil Solidarity's trade union coordinator, have spoken to thousands of union members at conferences nationwide this year.

The unions, as well as campaigning against poor working conditions and fighting for decent pay provide essential support for Tamil Solidarity.

James Ivens from Youth Fight for Jobs highlighted young people's vulnerability to exploitation and to increasing youth unemployment.

## Discrimination

Becci Heagney, speaking for Rape Is No Joke, showed that discrimination against women is still a huge problem.

Links can be found between these problems in Britain and the experiences of Sri Lanka's Tamil people, many of whom face discrimination, exploitation and abuse as a routine occurrence.

Speakers from Day-Mer de-

scribed some of the valuable work that the community centre has done in helping Kurdish and Turkish immigrants with any problems that they encounter.

In an extract from her play Rani Moorthy brilliantly tackled themes of immigration, war and nationality. She criticised the media's detached portrayal of war and brought to life the destruction it has reaped in Sri Lanka.

As a Tamil from Malaysia of mixed roots, she shone a light on the issues of identity and nationality and captured the conflicts that Tamils in Sri Lanka and elsewhere face today.

There was wonderful music from Parai-Voice of Freedom, from Tamil rap artist MC Starboy as well as Turkish music from Day-Mer members on saz, guitar, percussion and vocals.

Thanks to all who contributed to Solidarity Day, and to Day-Mer for helping us host it. Solidarity Day is now a feature in the year's calendar, a way of bringing campaigns and workers' organisations together. A great success, and a great platform for our work in the future.



Attendees listen to Unison executive member April Ashley  
photo Fauzer Mahroof

## Labour lets down NHS protesters



photo Bob Severn

**Bob Severn**

The People's March for the NHS finished its 300 mile trek from Jarrow on 6 September when over 5,000 people joined it for a demonstration in London. Among the demonstrators were many NHS workers currently being balloted for strike action over pay.

The protest ended with a Trafalgar Square rally. We heard from many of the angry 'Darlo Mums', who organised the march against the Con-Dems' destruction of the NHS. Other trade unionists and NHS campaigners spoke, including an activist from Staffordshire Hospital anti-NHS cuts camp.

But another speaker was Labour's shadow health minister Andy Burnham. He repeated, to big cheers, Labour's pledge to scrap the Health and Social Care Act, but also said that Labour would make public providers 'preferred bidders' for NHS

contracts! This is far from reversing privatisation or removing the impact of the Tory Act.

Being 'preferred bidder' does not guarantee winning a contract, especially if the cheapest service wins. Private companies slash costs through cutting corners and attacking workers' pay and conditions, as was seen when non-medical NHS services were privatised, mainly under Blair's Labour government. It would also mean millions of pounds of public money being wasted in the bidding process.

Burnham also said a Labour government would 'exempt' the NHS from the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) proposed between the EU and US, which includes watering down workers' rights and compulsory privatisation.

What about the rest of our services? Why not reject it altogether? The Socialist Party calls for the complete reversal of NHS privatisation.

## Review

# Unison Bureaucracy Unmasked: The Defend the Four Story

At Unison's 2007 conference, the union's standing orders committee ruled out of order a third of branch motions, including ones questioning union strategies and the union's link with Labour. In protest, four union branches published a leaflet calling for some of the barred motions to be debated.

They used a cartoon of the 'three wise monkeys' proverb "see no evil, speak no evil, hear no evil", to show the union wasn't listening to its members. Full time officials incredibly and falsely claimed the leaflet was racist.

This claim was used to bar four Socialist Party members from office: Bromley branch secretary Glenn Kelly, Greenwich secretary Onay Kasab, Housing Corporation secretary Suzanne Muna and Hackney branch chair Brian Debus. The charges were eventually overturned in 2011, following extensive campaigning including lobbies and legal action.

Unison Bureaucracy Unmasked: The Defend the Four Story recounts the battle against this witch-hunt and the lessons from it. A South Wales Unison shop steward reviews the pamphlet.

The pamphlet made me angry, but full of admiration for the four involved. It made me determined to make Unison the fighting, democratic, member-led union that we, its members, deserve and need.

Coincidentally, I recently read an Observer article about immigrant workers, employed in London, who joined Unison to fight for the Living Wage.

Far from welcoming these workers, who showed how even the most-exploited could organise, take action and win, Unison officials prevented them putting forward candidates for union positions.

When they protested at Unison's HQ, the police were called to disperse them! That behaviour would shock most Unison members. But it's all too familiar to 'the four' and colleagues in their branches who experienced dawn raids on union branch offices.

The book lays bare the real reason for the trumped up charges against 'the four'. Well-paid, unelected officials were determined to avoid any challenge to policies of accepting cuts to our members' jobs, terms and conditions and to the services we provide.

In Unison, we're not allowed to challenge our relationship with Labour. Our union has given £5.7 million to Labour since 2010, yet when hundreds of thousands of Unison

members took strike action on 10 July, the best Ed Miliband could say was he didn't condemn them.

## 'Our government'?

It has also been Wales TUC's official policy since 2010 to "not be seen to criticise our government", the Labour government in Wales.

The Wales TUC and its affiliated health unions, with Unison leading the way, recently put out a public statement, which essentially says that anybody who criticises the NHS in Wales is acting in the Tories' interests and demoralising staff. This would include attacking cuts to services and funding.

Being a workplace rep, when our

members face attacks on jobs, terms and conditions is hard enough, without having your own union attacking your reputation and character. Worse still: the book gives evidence of union collaboration with employers in order to try to get activists sacked!

It is a tribute to the strength of character of the four and a reflection of the analysis and perspective that being a Socialist Party member provides that they kept acting for and in the interests of Unison members while facing all these attacks.

All Unison activists should read this book. Our union can be a decisive force in defeating cuts, Tory or Labour.

Let's reclaim it for its members!

## Unison Bureaucracy Unmasked

The Defend the Four Story

How four Socialist Party members defeated victimisation within their own union

Available for £5 (plus p&p) from  
www.leftbooks.co.uk

020 8988 8789



# Abuse: Cuts have robbed us of the time to talk to these young people



The recent horrific report on the cover up of large scale child sexual abuse in Rotherham was analysed in the last issue of the Socialist (issue 823). This week we have a powerful view written from personal experience.

Ok, so here goes... I'll start with the hardest bit, for me anyway, my dirty little secret, because that's what it feels like, that's how they want you to feel. I was groomed. The friend who asked me to write this didn't know, nor do any social workers or police or my family really, but I guess I'm cheating still by writing this anonymously. I am now in my 30s, a qualified social worker and have supported young girls who were in situations not unlike those you'll have heard about in the news, and some of them will have been part of the report.

What has been reported about Rotherham has shocked everyone. The inevitable resignations have

This is not the first report about child exploitation in Rotherham or elsewhere, but its the first time that the scale of abuse appears to have been recognised

been called for, promises have been made and the news has been reflecting, regurgitating and talking to "victims." This is not the first report about child exploitation in Rotherham or elsewhere, and not the first time it's been in the news; but it's the first time that the scale of abuse appears to have been recognised.

1,400 young mostly, but not

exclusively, girls are reported to have been affected over a period of 16 years. In a majority of cases, the men involved appear to be of Asian or Pakistani origin. The professionals involved, apparently scared of the repercussions of appearing racist, did nothing that had any real effect.

Most of the young girls were white. But Asian girls were also affected, probably far more than were identified partly due to cultural ideas around honour. A girl who is known not to be 'pure' may have difficulties finding a husband, whether it was her 'fault' or not. It is seen as bringing dishonour on the whole family, to the point where girls have been disfigured with acid or killed by their own families, unwilling to accept the shame.

### Who are abusers?

The man who took an interest in me was not Asian and neither were all of the men targeting the girls I worked with. It is vital that our communities are not further divided. The right-wing media seeks to imply that, by association, all Asian men groom young girls. It worries me that if people concentrate on the racial aspect of the case, then those of us who have been, or will be, groomed by men from other ethnic backgrounds get pushed aside in the clamour to demonise the bogey man. We need to recognise that perpetrators of abuse can be anyone, even those celebrities put on pedestals.

There is a debate about class and abuse. But for me class is not a defining feature. You would probably describe me as upper middle class, yet the girls I have worked with are from all backgrounds; the children of people on benefits, of accountants, of university lecturers



Social work and young people's services have suffered huge cuts photo Paul Mattsson

and children in care. We shouldn't apportion blame to those jobless, feckless parents that the government and right-wing media would have you believe were at the root cause of all our country's ills either.

The men who groom young people know it takes time. You have to find a vulnerable young person and gain their trust. Most use alcohol and drugs or treats and presents in order to build a sense of excitement, a sense of shared naughtiness and things that need to be kept secret: "just between us".

The use of substances also helps to make the young person an unreliable witness if they do try to tell... "so you'd drunk how much?" ... "and you admit you were taking drugs at the time?" ... These things used to go through my mind as responses from anyone I told: "Can you really be sure that's what happened?" or even worse "it's your own fault for getting in that state."

I thought it was grown up and fun, to start with. It takes time. From meeting this man, to the night

he tried to "break me", was about 18 months. The "breaking" is when they think they've got enough hold over you to make you do the things they want. For me it was a gun in the face and a choice between sex (rape) and death. He made me decide on the place too. I made all the decisions that night; he made sure of that, so it felt like it was all my fault.

And on that night I didn't feel scared, I just felt so very lonely and stupid. Stupid as a whole world of realisation, of the lies, of the gift of kittens he gave me, of his mates that looked at me in that funny way, of that other girl I met and the look in her eyes I couldn't quite place. For others it's different, but usually violence or threatened violence is involved. But the one thing it always takes is time.

### Time

So what do we need to give the people working with these young people? Well I'd suggest we need time too. It's the hardest thing knowing you only have an hour or two a week to speak to a young person and these men have all the time they want. That's what cuts to services have robbed people of. As

case-loads grow and staff numbers shrink, we are losing the battle of time. As workers we have no choice but to prioritise, which is maybe the most heart-breaking bit.

There just aren't enough of us. To support someone rebuilding themselves, their self-esteem, their feeling of worth can be done, but not in 12 visits of an hour each. Even before these cuts were introduced we were still failing these young people. It seems our society is prejudiced against them: hanging around in parks, drinking, making a nuisance of themselves. They have no voice, they do not vote and the adults in their lives are often busy desperately trying to get by in whatever world they live.

It is so shocking, why would anyone want to accept it goes on? And the feelings I have towards those who have tried to cover up any kind of abuse can't be said po-

To support someone rebuilding themselves can be done, but not in 12 visits of an hour each

litlely enough to include here. But we have to get on with helping the young people still in trouble and I'm not sure apportioning blame helps with that.

I am not a victim, it was not my fault, I am not lonely anymore and I am not stupid. Although on bad days, I'm still all of those things. I hope people are shocked and appalled. I hope that this helps to change how our society depicts beautiful young things as commodities, as sex objects to sell products.

I and the other people trying to support these young people will fight for more resources and probably work ourselves into the ground doing it, in the hope we may actually be able to, just occasionally, win the war over time.

## Students:

# FIGHT DEBT, POVERTY & CAPITALISM



**Jack McLean**  
Huddersfield

Going to university is supposed to be a stepping stone to a job which you couldn't get without a degree. The reality is that, because of Westminster politicians, the only thing guaranteed for students after completing a degree is debt - lots of debt and little prospect of finding a job in which you're qualified. Capitalism is forcing the majority of young people into unskilled, low-paid jobs, yet still charging us to go to university.

Austerity has terrorised the lives of working-class people across Europe, and education has become a target for cuts. Infamously, in 2010, Nick Clegg and the Liberal Democrats betrayed their voters by backing the

Conservative's bill to raise tuition fees to £9,000 a year.

But student debt doesn't just hit you when you graduate. Student loans are nowhere near enough to live on so the number of students in desperate need of a part time job is rising while job opportunities remain stagnant.

### 'Apathy?'

University for many students has become a time shrouded in financial worries. The average debt for a graduate now stands at £53,000! The stereotype of student life being nothing more than socialising and watching daytime television is no longer true.

Because of the low turnout of students in elections, the major political parties feel that they are able to completely ignore student woes. Some are talking of further

increasing tuition fees and none of them are even considering lowering them, never mind abolishing them. Students can't trust these capitalist politicians - that's why so few of us vote, not 'apathy'.

We must fight for a socialist alternative so we can regain education as a right rather than a consumer product. Students should join the mass TUC demo on 18 October as well as supporting the public sector strike on 14 October so we can stand against the cuts that will devastate our future careers. Campaigns should also be taking place on campuses to get as big a turnout as possible to the 19 November student demonstration in London.

Join Socialist Students today to build a united student movement to fight against austerity and end the debt and poverty burdened on us by the super-rich and their capitalist system.

[www.socialiststudents.org.uk](http://www.socialiststudents.org.uk)

### What we stand for

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

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

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

#### Our demands include:

##### PUBLIC SERVICES

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

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

- A socialist NHS to provide for everyone's health needs - free at the point of use and under democratic control. Kick out private contractors!

- Keep council housing publicly owned. For a massive building programme of publicly owned housing, on an environmentally sustainable basis, to provide good quality homes with low rents.

##### WORK AND INCOME

- Trade union struggle to increase the minimum wage to £10 an hour without exemptions as a step towards a real living wage. 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!