



After Scotland vote STEP UP FIGHT AGAINST TORIES



Steve Score

The Con-Dem government is teetering. Whatever the vote in Scotland, taking place as we go to press, the government has been damaged.

A YouGov poll, in the run up to the referendum, showed Cameron as the worst performing politician, on a rating of minus 20. And that includes voters in England and Wales, in Scotland he was on minus 50! This was after he pleaded with voters not to use the referendum, in his words, as a way of kicking the "effing Tories".

The coalition is crumbling. The recent defeat for the Tories on a vote in parliament on the hated Bedroom Tax reflected the

huge pressure they are under. The Lib Dems switched sides, after backing its introduction and implementation up to now, knowing they have to face the electorate soon. Many Tories hid away and didn't vote to support the government - saving their careers being their only concern.

Knock-out punch

When your opponent is reeling, that is the time to strike the knock-out punch.

Working class people have been hammered under this government. Pay has been pulverised, services slashed, benefits battered. We want revenge!

On 14 October over a million workers in local government and public services will

be on strike to stop pay cuts. On 18 October the Trade Union Congress has called a demo on pay. These events should be used to build an alliance of action against austerity. Every worker has a grievance over pay and conditions, the trade unions should coordinate strike action across public and private sectors for the same day, as part of a strategy to defeat austerity.

They should also reach out to all other groups who have been attacked to join them: The disabled, pensioners, those on benefits, students and the unorganised.

Hoping for a Labour government to solve it all is not an option. Even trade union leaders who would normally say 'wait for Labour' have been forced, under the pressure of their members, to call action.

The Labour leaders have promised to carry on with the Tory cuts if they win next year's general election. We need a political alternative. That's why the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC) is planning to stand in those elections - raising the idea of a working class, socialist alternative to cuts.

The surge in support for the Yes vote from working class people in Scotland was motivated by opposition to austerity. Even before the final vote it had won concessions from the government on powers for Scotland. This proves it is possible to make gains. It is also possible to win against austerity!

See pages 2 and 3 for more on Scotland. Updates after the referendum result at www.socialistparty.org.uk

the **Socialist**

The paper of the Socialist Party. Issue 825.

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

what we think

Scottish referendum: "Britain will never be the same again"

"After Thursday, Britain will never be the same again," the Observer newspaper accurately declared four days before the Scottish referendum. As we go to press the referendum is on a knife edge, but whichever side wins, Britain's ruling elite will have suffered a battering which will leave it permanently damaged. If the Yes campaign wins it will be an enormous blow to the power and prestige of British capitalism.

But regardless of the outcome, the independence campaign demonstrates graphically the power of working class people - the majority - to win victories even when the whole of the establishment is straining every nerve to try and inflict a defeat on you. Even if the No vote wins, the Westminster politicians have had to promise more powers to Scotland which, when the referendum questions were set, they arrogantly dismissed. The trade union movement across Britain needs to draw lessons from this experience, and launch a serious struggle against austerity, cuts and low pay.

Project Terror

In the week before the referendum - from the moment it became clear that the Yes vote had a chance of winning - 'Project Fear' has become 'Project Terror'. An avalanche of threats from major banks and corporations has rained down on the people of Scotland, promising hell-fire and damnation if they vote for independence. Virtually the whole of the capitalist media and establishment have been united in their desperate attempts to prevent a Yes vote.

At the same time, for millions of Scots the referendum has become a means to express their anger at austerity and the capitalist politicians. Growing numbers of workers in England and Wales have also begun to urge the Scots on to vote Yes. They hear Cameron saying it would "break his heart" and grasp what a blow it would be to the same capitalist politicians who are implementing savage austerity in England and Wales.

The attempt to frighten Scottish voters is bound to have had some effect given the refusal of the pro-big business Scottish National Party (SNP) to answer workers' fears. The only way to do so is to put forward socialist policies - to respond to the threats of price rises and capital flight - by pledging that a Scottish government would take power out of the hands of the big-business blackmailers, through democratic public ownership of oil, banking and big business. This would then allow a massive public investment programme in affordable housing, jobs, public services and a living wage and income for all.

The SNP leadership, however, is desperate to appease big business. In answer to calls for nationalisation SNP leader Alex Salmond has responded by promising there would be no "day of reckoning" for "big companies drawn into the No campaign by Downing Street."

The Scottish referendum answers decisively the myth that working class people and

young people are 'apathetic' and not interested in politics. As we have always explained, falling voter turnout does not reflect apathy but the absence of any major party that represents workers' interests. The Scottish referendum shows that - if they feel voting is going to make a difference - workers will turn out in their millions. Over 97% of potential voters have registered - including 16 and 17 year olds - and well over 80% are expected to turn out and vote.

The hatred of the capitalist politicians has reached new highs in Scotland. The most recent YouGov polls show that Cameron's trust rating is minus 46% in Scotland. So hated are the Tories in Scotland (with only one MP) that the leader of the Scottish Tories publicly pleaded with Scottish voters to vote No - by promising that it is safe to do because the

across Scotland, England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Another reason some workers in England and Wales fear a Yes vote is that - without Scottish voters - they will be condemned to an eternity of Tory governments. On the contrary, however, a Yes vote is likely to mark the point at which an already weakened and divided Tory Party begins to fall apart. Certainly Cameron would be finished - held responsible by his party and class for losing a large chunk of the UK. Even if - as is possible - he clung to power temporarily, because the capitalist class could find no one more suitable to try and find some stability in the crisis that would follow a Yes vote, he would be a 'dead man walking'. Without doubt the epitaph on his political gravestone would be 'the man who lost the union'.

LATEST ANALYSIS



For the most up-to-date analysis after the result, visit:

socialistparty.org.uk

Tories won't win the general election! Cameron came close to do the same thing, saying that his government "would not be around for ever".

Establishment unpopular

As a result of the deeply ingrained hatred of the Tories it has fallen to Labour to lead the No campaign. Yet incredibly Miliband's popularity rating is only one point better than Cameron's! Nor is Alex Salmond popular, sitting at minus 20%. The Westminster politicians that have rushed up to Scotland to try and 'save the day' have not even been able to speak to the Scottish public. When they have attempted to, they have been shouted down and have instead had to speak only to hand-picked audiences at press stunts.

The most frequent chant against Labour canvassers is: "you're just Tories in disguise"! This sums up the attitude of growing numbers of Scottish workers who understand that a Labour government in Westminster would continue with Tory pro-austerity, pro-big business policies. As a result over 40% of Labour voters are planning to vote Yes.

Some workers in England and Wales are worried about a Yes vote in Scotland. This partly reflects a genuine fear it will lead to a growth of anti-English nationalism. However, the only way for the workers' movement to prevent the growth of nationalism is to fully support the rights of national minorities. This means supporting the right of nations to self-determination, up to and including independence. Only in this way is it possible to fight effectively for the maximum workers' unity

Deeper divisions

The deep divisions that already exist in the Tory Party would also be massively exacerbated. A section of the Tory Party would turn to trying to whip up English nationalism. The possibility of further splits to Ukip, already posed, would become even more likely. Even a No vote - followed as it would be by some kind of 'devo-max' or enhanced devolution arrangement - would damage the Tories for coming so close to allowing the break-up of the union, and would set in train the same processes, albeit to a lesser degree. A narrow No vote would also be likely to lead to demands in Scotland for a new referendum especially when it became clear, following the 2015 Westminster elections, that austerity was continuing, whichever of the establishment parties wins.

Although Labour has also been badly damaged by the referendum campaign, far from lessening the chances of a Labour victory in 2015, a Yes vote could increase them. At the same time it would raise the confidence of workers in England and Wales that it was possible to have an effective struggle against austerity. Even a narrow No vote would boost workers' confidence by graphically showing the scale of opposition to austerity.

New workers' party

Labour, however, with its pro-austerity programme, will not be able to win enthusiastic support from the millions who want an end to austerity. It is this - not the Scottish referendum - which threatens their ability to win the general election. The most they can expect is that many workers will vote Labour 'holding their noses' in order to get the current government out of power.

Nor does the SNP in Scotland - with its pro-big business, pro-austerity policies - have the enthusiastic support of Scottish workers. Following the referendum, whatever the outcome, there will be potential to build a

political force which actually stands for the kind of Scotland Yes voters want. A new mass workers' party, armed with fighting socialist policies and a democratic structure, could become a mass force very quickly. This would then provide a real and lasting answer to the lies, blackmail and fear of big business, the media and the capitalist parties. The Scottish Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition is initiating a conference at the start of November to discuss how to build such a party.

In England and Wales as well, the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition is working towards creating a mass electoral voice for the working class. Events in Scotland will inspire workers in England and Wales and have the possibility of speeding up the creation of the mass workers' party which is desperately needed.



Scotland independence referendum

Campaigning for a YES vote

Socialist Party Scotland members report on the intensive campaigning and politicisation around the referendum in the final week of the campaign.

At bus stops, train platforms, in pubs, in queues and everywhere you go, you see people wearing badges, the majority 'YES'.

You can overhear and get involved in political discussions about the banks and oil giants threatening to move, the currency, the bias of the BBC and whether 'yes' will win.

Working people feel that for once, as the polls are so close, and the campaign of 'terror' from the political establishment so intense, that their vote or actions in politics actually matter.

A Socialist Party Scotland member working on Glasgow's subway train asked fellow drivers in the staff room what they thought of the threats of RBS and BP to relocate and disinvest, getting the response: "Bring it on, let them throw everything at us, they have to go".

Talking socialism

A Dundee member reported that: "Today more than half the people I saw were wearing 'Yes' badges, and two shop workers in Spar in Dundee were discussing whether a yes vote would make 'socialist revolution' more likely!"

However, the 'NO Thanks' campaign is now much more visible on the streets. Last weekend both campaigns squared off in town centres. In Dundee a demonstration rallied by speakers, including members of Socialist Party Scotland, marched through the town and surrounded a Labour 'NO Thanks' bus chanting



Tommy Sheridan addresses an overflow meeting in Motherwell photo SPS

"you're not Labour anymore" and "you're just Tories in disguise!"

Whatever the result on Thursday, a feeling of rage and the need to fight back, almost of "we have nothing left to lose" has been stirred amongst a layer of the working class and youth.

Socialist Party Scotland has been out campaigning in the high streets and colleges. We have been putting forward the 'Socialist Case for Independence' and also campaigning for £10 an hour minimum wage and an end to zero-hour contracts. People crowd our stalls seeing the link

between the need to fight the bosses and campaign for a better future.

Socialist Party Scotland members have also been speaking at the large public meetings, which take place every day, including the 'Hope Over Fear - the Socialist Case for Independence' meetings with Tommy Sheridan, arguing for socialist policies and a new party to represent working class people.

This was raised from the platform, to huge applause, at an electric meeting in Paisley by Socialist Party Scotland member and prominent Unison activist, Brian Smith.

Join the fightback! Join the Socialists!

socialistparty.org.uk/join

020 8988 8777

text 0776 1818 206
@Socialist_party
/CWISocialistParty

Keep hospital services in the NHS

A Unison steward

The five board members in charge of Interserve, a private company which has taken charge of estates and facilities cleaning at three hospitals in Leicester, take home just under £3million a year between them.

The company took over the contract in January 2013, when 2,000 NHS staff transferred under a TUPE agreement - which is meant to protect workers' existing contracts. However, companies can use reorganisation as an excuse to reduce NHS terms and conditions.

Interserve is asking cleaning staff to do almost a fifth more work, in the same hours they have now, with no increase in pay. On top of this, 65 portering staff and support workers working for Interserve at Leicester Royal Infirmary have been told that they are under threat of redundancy.

This shows the logic of putting private companies in charge of services - they will want to make a profit, which is inevitably at the expense of workers and patients. By cutting the time cleaners have to do their job, this will inevitably impact on hygiene. People's lives could be put at risk, increasing the risk of trans-

mission of bacterial infections, such as MRSA.

Not left

In the run-up to the general election next year, Labour are attempting to position themselves to the 'left' of the Tories, saying they would allow public companies to compete with private companies in the railways and the NHS on a level playing field.

However, Labour encouraged privatisation when in power. Its track record shows that they can't be trusted with the NHS.

The health unions are currently balloting for action to end a pay freeze - we support a yes vote for industrial action to protect pay, jobs and conditions. Action should be coordinated with other public sector unions to fight cuts and privatisation. Across the board, public sector workers are facing similar

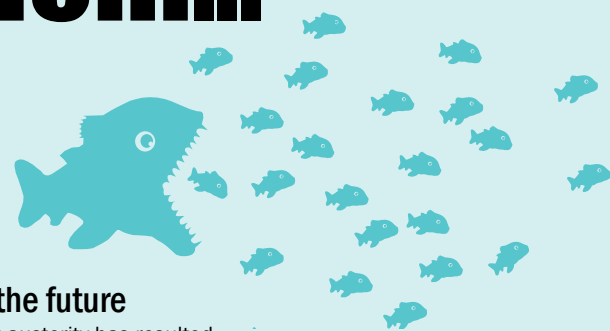
attacks.

The Socialist Party would end expensive and inefficient PFI (Private Finance Initiative) agreements. We would kick big business out of the NHS completely, bringing all services back 'in house'.

We want the workers to have a say in the running of vital services - they are the ones who are best placed to make improvements. We also campaign for a living minimum wage of £10 an hour. Join us to save our NHS.



Them...



Back to the future

Government austerity has resulted in spending on public services falling to the lowest share of national income since 1938, according to the Office for Budget Responsibility. The breakdown of these spending cuts reveals that the government will actually be spending more on debt interest (banking bailouts), and more on welfare payments (because of increased poverty). It means that public services are being pared to the bone.

What the OBR and government don't mention is that austerity hasn't actually worked and that the economy continues to flatline at the same level as before the 2008 capitalist crisis.

Fee not free

'Justice is free to all, like the Ritz hotel'. This seems to be the guiding principle behind the government's decision last year to charge workers up to £1,250 to bring case against their employer to an employment tribunal. Unsurprisingly, as a result of this fee barrier, the number of employees taking companies to such tribunals has fallen by 70% - from 8,848 to 3,792 in the three months to June, compared with a year ago. Rob Wall of the CBI bosses' organisation praised the introduction of fees, disingenuously describing the changes as a "win for employers and employees".

Poison pill

The privatisation of probation services will undermine a vital public

service but will guarantee large profits for the private consortia awarded these lucrative contracts. Chris Grayling, the Tory Justice minister, has copper-bottomed profits for ten years even if an incoming government scrapped these rip-off contracts. True to form, the Tories are extending this 'poison-pill' clause to other privatisation contracts in the run up to the 2015 general election.

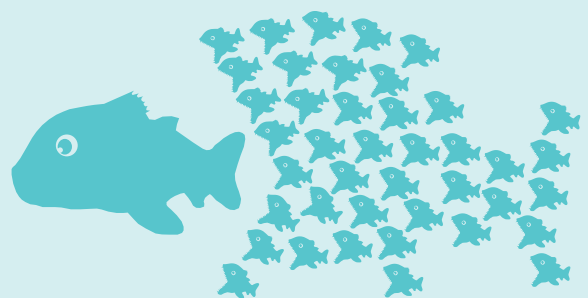
No justice

Meanwhile, the shameless Grayling has allowed G4S and Serco companies to bid for new government public service contracts despite these companies being criminally investigated over contracts worth more than £200 million. Grayling misled the public when he stated, last September, that these companies should not be awarded government contracts.

Off the beaten track

The super-rich, occupying exclusive sites in cities such as London, may one day not have anyone to service their plush homes and offices as workers are priced out of local housing. The cost of commuting from more affordable towns and cities further afield is also being scuppered as rail companies ramp up prices. Under the newly merged Go-Ahead Group franchise a limited season rail ticket from Brighton to London will reportedly rise from £3,640 to £4,304 - an 18% hike.

...& Us



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

What we heard

Striking back against pay cuts and privatisation

I recently spoke to a former work colleague now working in the NHS and asked whether he and his fellow workers had been balloted for the upcoming industrial action, he said that they hadn't.

I encouraged them to question their trade union as to why not. I said it would be a huge strike of workers against the pay cuts and privatisation. They responded - "an all-out strike, sounds good!" To that I overheard another former colleague in the office give a big cheer at the prospect! The strike ballot is our chance to build a movement capable of stopping this government of the rich. We all need it, we all want it.



photo Paul Mattsson

London bus drivers march over pay

A London bus driver

Surprised tourists saw our hundreds-strong demonstration come up to the Houses of Parliament from Victoria station on 11 September, waving Unite flags and banners, shouting: "What do we want? More pay! How do we get it? Strike!" Drivers were tooting in support, especially bus drivers.

The demo aimed to build awareness of our union's Driving Up Pay campaign.

Transport for London (TfL) runs London's bus network but services are provided by more than a dozen private bus firms. There are different pay rates, terms and conditions, even within single operators. So the capital's 80 garages see huge variations.

Unite calls for equal rates of pay across London, for consolidated terms and conditions and consolidated policies and practices.

Drivers from all over London used their day off to take part in the march.

Same job, different rate

London United workers from Tolworth said that drivers do the same job all over the capital, so why don't they get the same pay? Willesden Metrolink drivers were inspired by the march and hoped it would build the campaign.

Peter Kavanagh, Unite regional secretary, said we need to be ready for a hard fight to win our campaign. But the successful 2012 strike over the Olympic bonus showed we are up for that: Ballots returned an average 93% vote for action.



photo Paul Mattsson

Unite general secretary Len McCluskey addressed the crowd outside the Houses of Parliament, saying: "The executive is behind you. Whatever your decision, we will support you. We will provide the resources necessary for you to win".

He stressed we'll only get anything by fighting for it: "Everything working people have gained is because they stood up shoulder to shoulder."

James Mitchell, a London bus worker on the Unite executive, said

all the bus companies make huge profits from our work. TfL says it can't tell these firms what to do on pay rates.

But, argued James, if TfL can tell every firm they must all provide driver training to BTEC standard

and it can tell them all to introduce cashless buses, why can't it demand they all pay decent wages?

This inspiring start could be the prelude to industrial action across London this autumn if employers don't concede.

TUC congress: Reject Carney's 'equality of sacrifice'

Neil Cafferky

The Trade Union Congress (TUC) met on 7-10 September off the back of the longest continuous decline in working class living standards in 100 years.

But with numerous speeches about the terrible impact of austerity on workers, in contrast to the increasing fortunes of the rich, Bank of England governor Mark Carney's appearance as a guest speaker struck an odd note.

Carney claimed: "The burden of the great recession has been shared across the UK. Profits have been squeezed almost as much as labour costs. Employees have seen their real incomes reduced, but more

The congress' demands for better wages will only be won through organisation and a determination to take action until they are achieved

people are in work as a result."

Readers of the Socialist can be reassured that despite this 'equality of sacrifice', food banks and pay day lenders are yet to be inundated with

big business bosses suffering the ill-effects of falling profits.

Role of the unions

Carney also seemed to misunderstand the purpose of trade unions. Commenting on the need for economic "reforms" to boost job growth he congratulated the TUC. "There is a clear danger of a misplaced, if not lost, generation of workers in the euro area and in the US.

"Britain's labour force and trade unions deserve great credit for ensuring that this risk is much lower in the UK. By sharing the burden, our economy is better positioned for the future."

In reality, Carney was praising the TUC for holding back struggle to

defend living standards. But cutting pay does not defend jobs. If your enemy is praising you, you must be doing something wrong!

The conference was dominated by the question of workers' pay with motions backing a £10 an hour minimum wage and campaigns for a wage rise in the public sector overwhelmingly passed.

Public sector pay

Seconding the motion on public sector pay and living standards, Chris Baugh from the PCS said: "Now is the time to make the case for a pay rise."

Moving the motion Unison general secretary Dave Prentice hinted at further strike action saying: "Unless

employers negotiate we will build on the action on 14 October."

The motion on £10 an hour minimum wage was moved by the BFAWU bakers' union general secretary Ronnie Draper. Citing the \$15 an hour movement in the US as an inspiration, he argued that £10 an hour would lift five million workers out of poverty.

Union members need to be clear with the leaders of the TUC that it is not the role of trade unions to assist the bosses to make greater profits. They already have people like Mark Carney and the mainstream parties for that. The congress' demands for better wages will only be won through organisation and a determination to take action until they are achieved.

Ritzy cinema workers win 26% pay rise

Laurence Maples

Lambeth Socialist Party

Bectu union members at the Ritzy cinema in Brixton, London, have won a major victory in their fight against low pay and for the Living Wage with a 26% pay increase over three years.

Pay will increase from £7.35 to £8 an hour, backdated to October 2013, with a series of rises up to £8.80 by September 2015. There will be talks on further increases in June 2016 with a guaranteed rise to at least £9.10.

They have also won increased

employer pensions contributions and pay increases for projectionists.

They have fought a determined campaign since April. The strikes were rock solid and forced management to close the cinema on 12 out of the 13 strike days.

On the final strike day management attempted to run a scab operation, and were met by an enormous picket, including steel pan players, drummers and dancers, which persuaded potential cinemagoers not to cross the picket line, despite the miserly refusal by the bosses to refund pre-booked customers.

The cinema was showing a live stream from the Monty Python

Lambeth College

UCU union members at Lambeth College members have voted to ballot for further strike action over new contracts that cut holiday by two weeks, add extra hours for no extra pay and slash sick pay. The college lecturers took five and a half weeks of strike action last term, but management still refuse to meet the union for further talks. Instead, the bosses have started the new college year with more attacks on the workers, including over trade union rights and lesson observation.

comeback tour, but Python Terry Jones tweeted in support of the strike urging people not to cross the picket line.

The campaign has also attracted lots of support from the local community and the trade union movement. A boycott of the cinema's head group, Picturehouse, was supported by the TUC.

This victory puts the lie to the bosses' claim that they cannot afford to pay workers enough to live on. It shows that when you organise, you can fight and win. The successful dispute now serves as an opportunity to unionise cinema workers across the industry.

Unison Bureaucracy Unmasked

The Defend the Four Story



How four Socialist Party members defeated victimisation in their own union
Available for £5 (plus p&p) from www.leftbooks.co.uk
020 8988 8789



photo Paul Mattsson

Claire Laker-Mansfield
Socialist Students

For many young people, this month represents the start of a new phase in their lives – an exciting and fresh chapter. Universities will welcome tens of thousands of first-year students. But in the background, as the freshers' parties get into swing, much of Britain's political establishment will be forced to contemplate their own 'new phase' in life.

Whatever the outcome of Scotland's referendum, this will be a dramatic period in politics. As many thousands of Scottish young people vote to strike a blow against the elite, the question of how we put a stop to the austerity that's wreaking havoc will surely press itself in England and Wales too.

Nearly five years of cutbacks have caused devastation in the lives of millions. Education was among the first areas to face the hammer blows of the Con-Dem government. The average graduate now begins their working life with debts the size of a small mortgage. We face £9,000 fees alongside course cuts, wage freezes, privatisation and even the threat of university closures.

Politicians' attempts to re-assure students that the debt is 'worth it in the end' ring increasingly hollow. The truth is a zero-hour contract job, paid minimum wage is what awaits many.

Get political

But we needn't resign ourselves to accepting the lot we've been given. Securing a decent future is not simply a question of passing exams or our individual successes. If we're to avoid the label 'lost generation' then young people need to get organised collectively – and we need to get political.

Over the last year we have been

Students: fight to end austerity and capitalism

treated to a glimpse of what might come on the other side the next general election. While Lib-Dem fears about electoral wipe-out have encouraged Vince Cable to kick plans to privatise student loans into the long grass, the Tories' former universities minister, David Willetts, has given us a flavour of what may be in store.

He would like to see universities take responsibility for student loans and debt directly – a move that would probably be linked to raising or lifting the current cap on fees. Elite institutions like Oxford are already lobbying for the ability to charge students £15,000 or more.

All the same

Unsurprisingly then, thousands of young people are rightly hoping to see the back of the Con-Dems. But Labour can't be trusted with our education either. This is the party that itself introduced and then tripled tuition fees to £3,000. What's more, they have signed up to the same austerity spending targets as the Tories – meaning yet more cuts even if they win in 2015.

As for Ukip, they'd like to see us turn back the clock to an era when universities were only accessible to a narrow elite. Their youth section patronisingly asserts that most of us 'aren't suited' to degree level study.

None of the main parties offer a real alternative to the politics of austerity. That's because, on the fundamentals, they are all in agreement. Whatever colour their rosettes, the basic logic which decides their policies is that of a capitalist system in crisis.

Enormous wealth

That's why when bankers needed a bail-out, huge sums of public money were handed over in an instant. But when working class people point out that our NHS, schools or universities can't run with evermore stretched funds, we're lectured on the dangers of profligacy and told to make do with less.

The truth is there's enormous wealth in society. Sitting in the banks of the capitalist class – bankers, big business and the rich – is over £800 billion. Even a modest 50% tax on this accumulated capital would be enough to fund an end to tuition fees many times over. But the capitalist politicians won't even contemplate that.

Students have played an important part in the fight back. We took to the streets to oppose tripled fees and defend the EMA grant. Students have stood alongside workers when they've gone on strike against the cuts coalition, and have supported the fight of university staff to win fair pay and conditions.

As we approach the general elec-

tion, it's particularly vital that we build and escalate our action. For every course and service that is threatened, we need to respond with protests, occupations and strikes. At a national level we need to fight any potential increase in fees, and to boldly re-assert the demand for free education.

A student demonstration demanding an end to austerity in education is planned for 19 November. It's vital that we make sure this is fully mobilised for on every campus – to make it a show of strength and a springboard for further escalating action.

Workers' action

We also need to link up with other groups fighting back. On 14 October, public sector workers are planning co-ordinated strike action to fight ever-declining wages. This is a strike all students should support actively – attending rallies and demonstrations and joining picket lines. Four days later, on 18 October, an enormous TUC march will snake through London. It's vital that young people attend this too.

Workers have enormous potential economic power. Despite the myths, wealth is not produced by top executives, greedy bankers or high-flying entrepreneurs. It's workers who produce goods, provide services and do the jobs that keep society running. So when

they go on strike, it can force not just companies and managers, but whole governments to take notice – even to be brought down. It's this power that will need to be employed if the fight against austerity, both in education and across society, is to be successful.

The capitalist class – bankers, big business and the super-rich – have four big parties all organised to represent their interests. But workers and young people need our own party – one with politics that benefit the 99%. The Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition has been standing in elections as a challenge to the big business parties. In the US, Socialist Alternative (co-thinkers of the Socialist Party in the US) member Kshama Sawant received nearly 100,000 votes and was elected to Seattle's City council – successfully campaigning for a \$15 an hour minimum wage in the city.

Socialist ideas

These developments give a glimpse of what will be possible in the future. But all developing movements will need to be armed with the ideas of socialism – of how we change the world. Socialists fight for a society in which the big monopolies, banks etc, are owned publicly and run under democratic control. Rather than production being organised to satisfy capitalist greed, the economy would be planned to meet the needs and desires of ordinary people, without destroying the planet.

On campuses Socialist Students will be organising meetings to discuss the politics of changing the world. We will be mobilising students to get involved in the struggle to end austerity and to secure a decent future for our generation. Join us and get involved.

See www.socialiststudents.org.uk for reports from freshers fairs and to get involved

SOCIALISM2014

A weekend of discussion & debate on ideas to change the world

8 & 9 November,
Central London

BOOK NOW FOR A 10% DISCOUNT!

GOLDEN TICKET:

£50 waged, £35 unwaged/low waged.

Golden tickets include entry to the entire weekend and one night in central London hostel

WEEKEND: £30 waged, £15 unwaged/low waged

SATURDAY: £15 waged, £8 unwaged/low waged

SUNDAY: £15 waged, £8 unwaged/low waged

RALLY ONLY: £5 - Hostel space: £25

(10% discount available until 7 November)

Sessions will include:

Working class struggle today: low pay, zero-hour contracts and the general strike

Scotland: the fight against austerity after the referendum

Ferguson, police racism in the US and here

What happened to the USSR?

Renters Rise Up! The fight for rent control and council housing

And much more!

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

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



www.socialism2014.net or
020 8988 8777 for bookings/info

INEQUALITY AND FIGHTBACK IN THE RICHEST COUNTRY IN THE WORLD

A wave of strikes by fast food workers and the election of Kshama Sawant to Seattle city council are indicators of the change taking place in the US. Kshama is a leading member of the rapidly growing Socialist Alternative, linked to the Committee for a Workers' International which the Socialist Party in England and Wales is part of. **Peter Taaffe**, general secretary of the Socialist Party, reports on his recent visit.

“How the hell did Seattle elect a socialist? We used to be so nice.” This was the comment of the Seattle Weekly under a banner headline “Revolution Road”.

The stunning election victory of Kshama Sawant, Seattle's first explicitly socialist councillor in 100 years, has generated this and a barrage of similarly bemused comments from capitalist spokespersons in the US and elsewhere.

And yet rocket science is not needed to explain Kshama's victory, which in turn led to the magnificent 15 Now campaign in Seattle and the enactment of the highest minimum wage in the US.

The infectious enthusiasm which this has generated amongst workers, particularly amongst young people, was on full display at the recent tremendous National Convention of Socialist Alternative, attended by a record number of delegates, observers and friends from all corners of the US. There were intense discussions on world perspectives, on the issue of further electoral challenges from the left to the two parties as well as the very favourable situation for Socialist Alternative and socialist ideas to grow in the US. This was reflected in the huge \$43,000 collection.

A doubling of membership already this year – with further substantial increases on the horizon – was also a theme of the Convention.

American capitalism is no longer ‘nice’ – if ever it was – for the millions of its working-class victims plunged into poverty by the failures of this system. Even in Seattle, in many respects a stunningly beautiful city, this is visible with the homeless camped out downtown around City Hall.

The Seattle Weekly, through gritted teeth, concedes that it is the worsening in the conditions of working people that has provided the platform for Kshama's victory.

“There are... an estimated 102,000 workers making less than \$15 an hour in Seattle. We have the seventh highest cost of living in the nation. A one-bedroom apartment costs roughly \$1,300 a month in the city. A minimum wage increase will provide but a temporary Band-Aid. ... The white working-class is getting younger, more liberal, and more open to progressive agendas. Some 20 percent of Seattle's population is aged 20 to 29.” [19 August 2014]

Contagious effect

Big business and its front men, including in the Democratic Party, have been terrified by the ‘contagious effect’ of Kshama's campaign and are determined to stamp out ‘this socialist experiment’. Already the Seattle Weekly, along with others, is subtly promoting a prominent campaigner for the legalisation of cannabis in Washington State as a Democratic Party opponent to Kshama in her re-election campaign at the end of next year. Therefore, no effort must be spared in striving for her re-election. Kshama is a marvellous powerful voice, not just for the US working class but for workers everywhere.

Without the seething discontent of the American workers at the plunge in their living standards against the background of eye-watering inequality in the richest country in the world, Kshama's and Socialist Alternative's victory would not have been possible.

Yet words alone, a wringing of hands at the ‘unacceptable’ conditions of the working class which is the refrain of many ‘left’ organisations and passive trade union leaders in the US, were as effective as a drop of water on a hot stove. Action, the audacious decision to challenge the bosses and their representatives electorally – the ‘propaganda of the deed’ – linked to the demand for \$15, was absolutely necessary. Only Socialist

In this situation, the crucial issue is a voice for the oppressed and the working class. Kshama has shown what is possible within one city



Protesters on the 4 September fast food strike in New York City

Alternative understood that this would strike a powerful chord amongst the army of low paid in Seattle and throughout the US.

This has resulted in huge benefits to the low-paid, up to now kept in the dirt by capitalism, but who are now rising to their feet to demand a living wage and denounce the massive ‘wage theft’ of the bosses. Throughout the US a forest fire, which ultimately threatens to turn into a prairie fire, of 15 Now campaigns is raging, with similar victories gained in other cities. Without the example of Seattle this would probably not be taking place, at least at this time.

Seattle has energised the working class, particularly the low-paid throughout the US. Witness the fast food workers strike on 4 September in more than 100 US cities, including Chicago, New York and Detroit, accompanied by marches, sit-ins at fast-food outlets and offices, including McDonald's, Burger King, and KFC. Police arrested more than 400 people.

Upward move

A Chicago fast-food worker spoke for all when he declared: “We are definitely on the upward move because we feel justice is on our side... We can't wait.” McDonald's, whose headquarters is in Chicago, and sitting on super-profits declared: “Any minimum wage increase should be implemented over time so that the impact... is manageable.”

This example of flint-hearted bosses, who whine that they cannot substantially afford much more than the \$7.25 an hour federal minimum wage, is countered by none other than the capitalist mouth-

piece, the New York Times. It wrote: “In 2013, after-tax corporate profits as a share of the economy tied with the highest level on record (in 1965) while labour compensation as a share of the economy hit its lowest point since 1948. Wage growth since 1979 has not kept pace... resulting in falling or flat wages for most workers and big gains for corporate coffers, shareholders, executives and others at the top of the income ladder.” [31 August 2014]

New research from the Economic Policy Institute has also shown that from the first half of 2013 to the first half of 2014, hourly wages, adjusted for inflation, fell for nearly everyone not included in the top 10% of the population.

Demand

And this, by further depressing ‘demand’, is seriously impacting on capitalism's economic prospects. Even if Obama's totally inadequate raising of the minimum wage to \$10.10 was introduced, it “would put an estimated additional \$35 billion in the pockets of affected workers over a three-year phase in period”. Fast-food and other low paid workers are saying this is not enough; \$15 is what is required.

But if Obama's proposal was implemented, it would in turn generate ‘demand’. This is why, trapped in a ‘Bernuda Triangle’ of seemingly endless crises, sections of the ruling class internationally are urging some concessions to trade unions and workers as a means of generating this ‘demand’, which they hope could lead to an exit from the current situation.

Even Germany's Bundesbank, hitherto an implacable advocate of austerity, particularly in southern Europe, has under-

gone a volte face, and encouraged right-wing German trade union leaders by saying they would support them if they fought for above-inflation pay rises of 3% for their members. Concessions for German workers but nothing for the suffering masses of Spain, Portugal or Greece!

Some capitalists would no doubt resist such a call because of the impact this would have on them and their businesses but the strategists of capitalism attempt to look to safeguard their overall interests.

Trade unions

However, Obama's minimal proposals for an increase in the minimum wage were bitterly resisted in Congress by the Republicans. This demonstrates that the US working class will receive very little in the current situation unless it maximises its power both on the industrial and the political plane. This means a serious electoral challenge to the Democrats in particular, who do not represent the US working class, as shown by the example of Obama in power as well as the little Obamas at state and citywide level.

The renovation of the trade unions is also absolutely necessary. Too many of the trade union leaders go through the motions, lacking any conviction that they can defeat the bosses. One prominent trade union leader in Seattle asked sceptically: “You don't actually believe that you can defeat big business?” They substitute the idea of action by the working class with the mobilisation of ‘staffers’, paid trade union organisers, rather than the mass involvement of workers.

Kshama's campaign has opened a new chapter in mass involvement from be-

low of working people fighting to change their lives. So has that of Jess Spear, who received almost 20% of the vote, a splendid result, when she challenged the Democrat Frank Chopp in August's primary election for the state assembly.

Middle classes

And it is not just the working class but also the intermediate layers of society – those who previously enjoyed middle-class living standards – who are being affected: The New York Times conceded there is “collusion amongst the biggest companies in Silicon Valley [who] suppress the pay of software engineers by an estimated \$3 billion.” Moreover, public employment was once a mainstay of middle-class life, but now “evidence has mounted that outsourcing often does not save money or improve services.”

In other words, all the conditions which have generated growing anger and demands for action amongst US workers are also affecting big layers of the middle class. The US suburbs, synonymous in the past with an escape from the poverty of the inner city, are actually where most of the poverty now exists, as the book “The Unwinding” indicates.

Moreover, this is likely to intensify as the intractable long-term crisis of US and world capitalism becomes clearer and is increasingly recognised by their representatives. There is an avalanche of capitalist economists tearing their hair out, along with the CEOs of major US firms, in an attempt to find an escape route from the present economic impasse.

Alongside dire warnings from the OECD, we now find Stanley Fischer, the

vice-chair of the US Federal Reserve System, bemoaning “disappointing economic recoveries.” He says that this “may point to a permanent downshift in the potential of powerhouses such as the US, Europe and China.” This comes after Larry Summers, Treasury Secretary under President Clinton, warned of ‘secular stagnation’ for capitalism. In reality, the expected US recovery from the crisis which began in 2007-08 has not materialised apart from in the pockets of the bosses.

Fischer goes on to ruminate that future prospects are “uncertain” with “lower productivity growth and labour force participation rates... now permanent features of the US economy.” This is code for continued mass unemployment: “Over the past six years, more than 3% of the US labour force has dropped out of the economy, according to the Bureau of Labor statistics.” [Guardian 12 August]

Escape velocity

This underlines what we have consistently argued since the beginning of this crisis that it will not be easy for US or world capitalism to reach ‘escape velocity’, attaining the growth rates of the past with all this means for reduced living standards. Of course, the US economy is of a continental scale and while parts of it can be afflicted by stagnation and decline, there can be growth in other sectors or regions. But there is an overall structural crisis of capitalism, which means further stagnation in living standards.

This is clear from the current and future perspectives for US manufacturing industry, once an engine of US growth in this sector. Obama has spoken enthusiastically recently about the prospects for US capitalism. However, current jobs statistics do not back him up. While 168,000 jobs were recently created in this sector in one month, this disguises the long-term decline and hollowing out of the industrial sector.

The US private sector has created about 10 million jobs since early 2010 and yet just 705,000 are in manufacturing. For every factory job created, there were two in hotels and restaurants and two in healthcare and social assistance. In other words, the US mirrors the situation throughout the ‘advanced’ capitalist countries of protracted industrial decline. It is still the most economically advanced industrial country in overall terms of output, etc. But as Britain – formerly the workshop of the world and the dominant force in world capitalism – has shown, in the wake of economic decline comes increased social tension and an increase in class struggle.

The US will not be able to escape this, as the events in Seattle and elsewhere demonstrate. Clashes on the scale of the 1960s, including the revolt of people of colour, are also on the cards. The murder of Michael Brown, a young African-American in the town of Ferguson, Missouri, points to a possible repeat of the events of that period. The militarisation of the police has been taken to extraordinary lengths, with police departments pur-

chasing surplus military equipment from the army. A Democrat congressman compared the state's intervention in Ferguson to the US occupation of Fallujah in Iraq!

Ferguson

Powers like the stop and searches exercised by the police against black and Asian youth in Britain are being applied in Ferguson with similar results. The town is 67% African-American and yet the police department is 94% white! The police operate almost as an occupation force in cities like Ferguson. The FBI calculates that over 400 people are killed each year in shooting incidents involving local police in the US. The figure is much lower in other countries.

The result is the beginning of the politicisation of the black population, like the 1960s and 70s. Socialist Alternative's members, including African Americans, have intervened very successfully in Ferguson to further this process. Equally shameful is the persecution of immigrants by the Obama regime, which has ejected more immigrants from the country than all previous presidents put together!

In this situation, the crucial issue is a voice for the oppressed and the working class. Kshama has shown what is possible within one city, as has the Jess Spear campaign. A very interesting and full discussion took place at Socialist Alternative's convention on the need to broaden the example of Seattle onto a national scale.

Kshama has been invited to speak on a panel at the People's Climate March in New York City on 21 September, which is expected to attract 200,000 people – the largest demo on climate change in history.

Straws in the wind

There are important straws in the wind of the possibilities of serious challenges by the left to capitalist incumbents. Bernie Sanders, the self-described socialist senator for Vermont, is being pressed by Socialist Alternative and others on the left to challenge the Democrats in the presidential elections. In addition, Karen Lewis, the black teachers' union leader in Chicago, whose members clashed with the city's brutal anti-union current mayor, Rahm Emanuel, has indicated a preparedness to stand against him as a ‘non-partisan’ candidate looking towards the labour movement, in next year's elections.

Things are changing dramatically in the US, although the imprint of the previous period on consciousness of the working class, resulting in low levels of class struggle, still exists. However this is not the full picture, as the events of Seattle and elsewhere indicate.

Moreover, the world situation, particularly if there was terrorist attack on the US, could have an effect in throwing back consciousness. But even such a horrific prospect will not undermine a resurgence of the American working class over time. Seattle is an anticipation of future mighty events which will see the emergence of a powerful force for socialist change in the US.



Obama's modest \$10.10 minimum wage proposal was resisted by Congress

After the \$15 victory in Seattle, don't miss socialist councillor Kshama Sawant speaking at

SOCIALISM2014

8 & 9 November in London

See page 5 for more details



The Socialist: a tool for workplace organisers

Carl Harper
Royal Mail worker

The Socialist Party can be described as present and active in Peterborough delivery office. One of our most effective engagement tools is the Socialist.

Around ten of my colleagues regularly purchase the paper. Some pay in advance to ensure they receive it! I even have one Labour Party member who regularly buys a copy, attracted to our authentic socialist perspective.

Face to face paper sales are fundamental in making the Socialist Party a presence in my workplace. They allow me to speak to colleagues about our position on political and industrial events.

Subscribe

I encourage regular buyers to subscribe. I also identify specific topics in each week's paper for colleagues with particular interests. This is effective in advertising our perspectives on a wide range of issues, widening the audience.



The Socialist supporting posties in struggle photo the Socialist

ening the audience.

Having a socialist standpoint on issues from a range of industries has allowed union members in my workplace to assess and even adopt tactics ourselves. Seeing other trade union disputes motivates us

in this work.

Colleagues frequently enquire about our outlook on current events. Paper sales - alongside myself and another trade unionist standing for TUSC last May - have gone a long way to achieving this interest.



Liverpool car boot sale raises £135! photo John Marston



Donate today!
socialistparty.org.uk/donate
020 8988 8777
text 0776 1818 206
@Socialist_party
/CWISocialistParty

Comment: why I'm a socialist

Michael Hancock

In schools we are taught to share, respect each other and work together. This made sense. We got more done than we would have separately, giving us more time to enjoy ourselves.

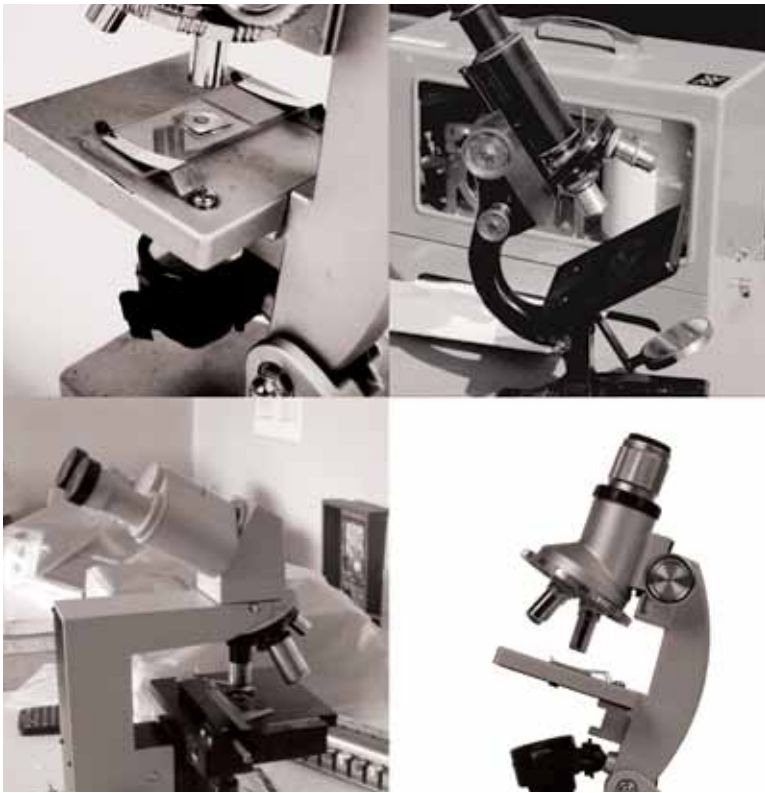
This is discarded once we leave and enter the ruthless system of capitalism. It promotes self-service and greed, slowing or even reversing the progress of society. Capitalism forces us to battle each other. Research is duplicated many times instead of being shared and benefiting all.

With public services gone or under threat some people will not be able to survive. The young, old and disabled bear the brunt of the capitalist crusades. I fear for my parents' future, and my own, and that of other family members. Will we have enough to live on at pension age?

Wrong

I have always had this feeling that something was wrong. I could never see income inequality as justifiable when people have nothing. I hear the argument that people have 'worked' hard for their money, or taken 'risks' and deserve to be rewarded. But you can't possibly evidence that bosses work hundreds of times harder than their workers.

These mass wealth accumulators should be treated like any other hoarders. They need help to rid them - and us - of this burden! To work



Research is duplicated instead of being shared and benefitting all

together is the best possible way to achieve. It is used under capitalism in smaller groups, within competing companies. But workers do not reap the benefits, business owners and shareholders profit from the work of others.

The fact that there is a need for charity to cover gaps in the state is

evidence enough that the current system is not fit for the needs of the people.

That is why I became a socialist. To ensure people are not discarded. So we can all contribute to society without being valued for our ability to generate profits for somebody else.

From the notebook

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

National Committee

The Socialist Party's National Committee (NC) met on the weekend of 13 and 14 September.

The NC discussed world perspectives, British perspectives and next May's elections.

For further details, members should contact their regional organiser.

Hackney

Our backing for a campaign by New Era estate residents against rent hikes has received huge support (see issue 822).

Half of homes on the estate have bought the Socialist.

Celebrity Russell Brand retweeted Hackney Socialist Party's leaflet, asking how he could help.

Cardiff West

Disabled member Andrew Price will complete his third annual "Cycling for Socialism" fundraiser on 21 October.

Andrew asks that comrades consider beating their donations from last year, explaining "We are all victims of the politics of austerity, and the best way to rectify this is to provide a clear alternative."

Please text pledges for his 12 mile

event on a modified bike to 07505 021 601.

Wakefield and Pontefract

Member John Gill spoke to a meeting of 25 people on the anniversary of the Featherstone Massacre.

The event on 7 September commemorated 121 years since troops fired live rounds at workers to crush a six-week colliery strike.

Nottingham

We supported the Nottingham Pensioners' Action Group rally for the NHS on Saturday 14 September.

A hospital bed was brought to the scene and wheeled around the market square (see picture below).

Clear support existed for our policies: kicking out the privateers, and healthcare free at the point of need.

Geraint Thomas

Southampton

Management has given up trying to move members Mike and Jane from campaigning at the entrance of Southampton General Hospital.

Their stall on 10 September sold multiple copies of the Socialist and raised £20 fighting fund.



Pensioners protest against attacks on the NHS photo Geraint Thomas

Fighting for fair fares

Iain Dalton

Leeds Socialist Party

Socialist Party members campaigned with transport union RMT against rail fare increases on Monday 8 September.

The protest outside Leeds train station took place on the day of the fare hikes.

Off-peak fares will no longer be valid on a whole series of Northern Rail routes. This includes Leeds to Bradford, which went up 20% from £4.60 to £6.50. It also includes Leeds to Harrogate, and many other routes across the north of England.

The protest was part of a series across the North, and follows previ-

ous protests over the government's new franchise plans for the Northern and TransPennine Express transport firms.

This now includes not replacing the ancient Pacer trains. Made from old bus frames, they were due to have a lifespan of no more than 20 years when introduced in the mid-80s.

The "Rail North" group supports these plans. Rail North is a shadowy collection of mostly Labour local authorities whose composition and accountability is unclear.

RMT members and transport campaigners must stand widely against Labour councillors prepared to cut jobs and services while making us pay more.

SOCIALIST PARTY FIGHTING FUND

	£ target	£ received	July to September 2014	Deadline 29 September 2014
North West	1,200	2,144		
Northern	600	847		
Yorkshire	2,900	2,748		
East Midlands	1,600	1,443		
West Midlands	2,100	1,585		
South West	1,400	1,053		
London	6,100	4,134		
Wales	2,300	1,372		
Southern	1,200	640		
Eastern	1,200	602		
South East	750	202		
England & Wales	3,650	914		
TOTAL	25,000	17,684		

Oppose the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership

TTIP is a multi-billion dollar agreement between the US and EU guaranteeing access to public services for giant corporations to make vast profits - irrespective of the destructive impact on these services - as **Vladimir Bortun** explains.

Multinational corporations are about to strike another major blow to the limited democracy we have and to people's fundamental rights: the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) between the European Union (EU) and the US.

Little known to the general public, the TTIP has been under negotiation behind closed doors since July 2013 and could be concluded by the end of 2014.

The European Commission (the executive body of the EU) initiated 'public consultations' on TTIP only after a draft of its text was leaked this year in March.

According to the European Commission website, TTIP "aims at removing trade barriers in a wide range of economic sectors to make it easier to buy and sell goods and services between the EU and the US".

Despite its alleged boost to economic growth, the TTIP would further deregulate finance, genetically modified organisms and fracking, and also harden copyright laws. But probably the most dangerous aspect of the TTIP is the investor-state dispute settlement (ISDS).

The European Commission defines ISDS as a system that "allows an investor to directly bring a claim against the authorities of the host country in front of an international tribunal".

Corporations could bring claims against states whenever they feel that their business interests have been affected by national laws or policies.

It means, for example, that the

Tories' NHS privatisation agenda would be accelerated as US private healthcare companies demand access to run NHS services and be entitled to legally claim against a government if denied.

As Len McCluskey, Unite general secretary, puts it: "US health companies will even have the right to sue a future UK government in secret courts if politicians try to reverse privatisation."

EU commissioner negotiator Ignacio Garcia Bercero says the NHS would be "fully safeguarded". This is probably sufficient for the Labour Party to endorse TTIP. However, Bercero adds: "Although health services are in principle within the scope of these agreements".

'Mafia'

Investor-state disputes are settled by international 'arbitrators', who have become increasingly important in the last two decades.

ISDS cases are currently carried out by panels composed of three people, who make crucial decisions behind closed doors, away from the communities ultimately affected by them, while the cases themselves cannot be appealed.

Moreover, these arbitrators tend to be a "small group of elite lawyers" that has been characterised as "an inner circle", or even an "arbitration mafia". Only 15 arbitrators have decided 55% of all 450 investor-state disputes up to 2012.

The pro-business orientation of many of these arbitrators is also quite blatant. As shown in a 2013 report by the Democracy Center. Some of these arbitrators "switch



Trade unionists from across Europe demonstrating in Brussels against EU-led austerity photo Paul Mattsson

from being (supposedly impartial) arbiters in one case, to being corporate lawyers in the next, and many also double as both corporate and government advisers".

Some actually "have been members of the board of major multinational corporations, including those which have filed cases against developing nations".

This might explain why in 2012, according to a United Nations report, in "70% of the public decisions addressing the merits of the dispute, investors' claims were accepted, at

least in part".

Even if they win, states - usually from the developing world - end up

Corporations could bring claims against states whenever they feel that their business interests have been affected by national laws

spending millions of dollars on legal defence.

TTIP could therefore constitute the fatal blow to the remnants of

'state sovereignty' in Europe.

Juan Fernández-Armesto, an arbitrator from Spain, sums it up very well: "Three private individuals are entrusted with the power to review, without any restriction or appeal procedure, all actions of the government, all decisions of the courts, and all laws and regulations emanating from parliament."

Given such dark prospects, fighting the TTIP should become a vital concern for socialists everywhere as part of our wider struggle against global capitalism.

Climate change: "We're running out of time"

Hundreds of thousands of people in the USA are expected to protest outside the United Nations climate change summit in New York on 23 September to demand serious and immediate action to avert a looming global environmental catastrophe. But the world's capitalist powers are incapable and unwilling to bring about such change as **Pete Mason** argues.



In the course of 24 hours, as it meandered towards the fishing communities of Mexico's Baja Peninsula, Hurricane Odile suddenly intensified to a life-threatening category 4 storm with 135 mph winds, enough to destroy the flimsy low-lying homes of the 30,000 people rushing to shelter. Odile is the worst storm to hit the region.

Deadly weather events are magnified and multiplied by global warming. The ocean's absorption of global warming gasses and heat, while temporarily slowing the rise in land temperatures, is "unprec-

edented" compared to 300 million years of records, the World Meteorological Organisation (WMO) recently announced. More carbon dioxide (CO2) was emitted into our atmosphere between 2012 and 2013 than in any other year since 1984, the WMO said, commenting: "We are running out of time."

Workers, peasants and rural poor of Kashmir are in the midst of the worst flooding for over a century as India and Pakistan floods, with hundreds of deaths reported. The earth's warmer atmosphere holds

more water, ultimately leading to increased flooding.

Meanwhile food-producing states in the USA like California and Texas, having conquered markets from poor farmers around the world, face extraordinary and unprecedented droughts in 2014 exacerbated by climate change, threatening worldwide food price rises, starvation and revolt.

This global economic and social catastrophe has sent heads of state, including the UK's Prime Minister, to New York for a new United Nations-backed climate summit. They will be met with the "largest climate march in history" according to organisers, with similar marches planned in London and elsewhere around the world on 21 September.

Yet despite the overwhelming evidence to the contrary, climate scepticism is still rife among Tory MPs, as a recent poll showed. What good will Cameron and his ilk do in New York, apart from feed themselves silly?

No one denies that previous summits have been failures. Nothing short of taking the oil companies, energy giants, transport companies and other industries into public ownership will even begin to lay

the ground for stopping the out-of-control juggernaut that is capitalism from crashing and burning the whole planet.

Only public ownership, under the democratic control of the workers, can provide the basis for an ecologically-minded plan of production to be democratically drawn up, agreed and implemented without hindrance.

US companies keep almost \$2 trillion offshore, hidden from tax officials. Such wealth, if utilised for the majority, could mean a decent world for every human being safe from fear of flood and drought.

Ending the anarchic, failed market system in the industries which are essential to human well-being is critical to reversing climate change. Yet who can imagine David Cameron, Barack Obama, or the rest of them contemplating such a socialist solution?

With giant companies at each other's throats, and capitalist ministers in hock to big business, all thoughts of a rapid, coordinated move to a carbon-free world are lost. The workers and poor of the world must take the initiative and tip these fossils and their fossil fuels into the dustbin of history.

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.

Subscribe now!

socialistparty.org.uk/subscribe

020 8988 8777

text 0776 1818 206

@Socialist_party

/CWSocialistParty

the Socialist postbag

Do you have something to say?

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

Johnson's jibes

Any rational person will condemn the horrific murder of an American journalist by a member of the Islamic State (IS). But Tory London mayor Boris Johnson's comments about "the sexual ministrations of 72 virgins" promised to those Muslims who die in battle smells of racism. Will Johnson admit that the illegal occupation of Iraq by USA and Britain resulted in many more deaths, mostly civilians and a substantial percentage of them were children? Not to mention the physical and sexual abuse, torture, rape and death of prisoners in Abu Ghraib by the US military?

By 2006, one study showed that 655,000 Iraqis would not have died had there been no invasion or occupation. We can see the results of all this today, a devastated country with a devastated economy, sectarian war and rise of extreme fundamentalist groups like IS.

Will this potential candidate for Britain's prime minister tell these unpleasant facts to the public? No, because his lies in the name of 'spreading democracy' and 'removing dictators' will be brought to light.

Anindya Bhattacharya

**Turkey twizzlers again?**

The Con-Dem coalition says it wants to provide free hot school meals to all five to seven year-olds. But this plan has already run into financial difficulties due to cuts that were largely brought in by them.

Local authorities up and down the country report a lack of funds. Some have had to divert money earmarked for building works and school repairs into this initiative. Many primary schools don't have on-site kitchens or purpose-built dining rooms. So meals will have to be brought in from outside caterers. Many children will have to eat their hot meal in a classroom.

Does this mean a return to the dreaded 'turkey twizzler'? What about the lingering smell of hot food in classrooms in the afternoons? Mmm... lovely. As usual the Con-Dems can't put their money where their mouths are and write their plans on the back of a matchbox.

Lynne S

Dangerous medicine

It took a 'freedom of information' request to the Care Quality Commission (CQC) to find out that over 800 unexpected deaths and nearly 1,000 people were injured in private hospitals over a recent four-year period.

Max Pemberton, a Daily Telegraph columnist and GP, commented: "Given the relatively small amount of patients treated in the private sector, this is shocking. If it was the NHS, there would be an outcry, with claims that the service was not fit for purpose."

An emergency in a private hospital usually leads to patients being rushed to an NHS facility, usually after a 999 call.

To save money, most private hospitals don't have their own ambulances. Private healthcare companies also don't invest in resources to cope with acutely sick patients. It's costly and they know the NHS will cope. As Pemberton says, "In one year, 2,600 patients were transferred to the NHS as an emergency and in all, 6,000 patients were handed over." It's time to stop and reverse privatisation.

Keith White

**Rights to be withdrawn?**

Wikipedia is preparing for Google to hide its first link from the website under the 'right to be forgotten' legislation. What will the future of the internet look like? The internet disseminates information between vast swathes of individuals'.

A free and open internet is essential to the spreading of important information. True, the 'right to be forgotten' could be useful for many who should be afforded the right to start afresh.

However, the 'right to be forgotten' could be used by society's elites to remove links to information they do not want publicised via the internet. It all leaves Europeans open to further censorship of details about the nefarious workings of 'our betters'.

Wikipedia is edited by the community which makes it the largest and most influential source of free information in existence. People's rights are being stifled in the interests of the elites.

Martyn Bailey

**Wholesale slaughter**

In recent weeks, the world has seen the wholesale slaughter of Palestinian men, women and children at the hands of the mighty, armed-to-the-teeth Israeli Army.

The inhuman bombing and shelling of schools and hospitals, bringing death and fear to innocent humans, is plain to see, but the official viewpoint, as stated by the pro-Israel media is: Hamas is the aggressor! How can this be, when Palestine has no army, no navy, no aircraft, no tanks?

How can this be, when we saw for ourselves, via the internet, the genocide unfolding day by blood-soaked day? Consider these questions carefully, and see if you still doubt that western news is false and misleading.

Julia Lynskey

Film review: Pride

How solidarity overcame prejudice



Pride shows the work of LGSM during the 1984-85 miners' strike

Michael Johnson

A new film *Pride*, released 12 September, dramatises the founding of Lesbians and Gays Support the Miners (LGSM) and shows the London group's work during the 1984-85 miners' strike.

The London branch of LGSM carried out huge fundraising efforts to support the striking miners, raising around £20,000 for families of Welsh miners as well as making several visits to the communities they were supporting. A number of groups similar to LGSM sprang up across the country.

Difficulties

The film explores early on LGSM's struggles to become involved with the strike, with worries from the LGBT community itself. Characters discuss the homophobia they experienced in working class communities. But also the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) worried what having LGBT people visibly involved might mean in light of the abuse and scorn heaped on them by police, press and scabs.

However these difficulties begin to fade when the groups realise how similar their struggles really are. *Pride* rightly focusses on the role of the police and media in the strike and struggles of the LGBT community, opening with real footage of police attacking miners on the picket lines.

There is a strong focus on shared police repression. James Anderton, Manchester police's Chief Constable at the time described people with HIV-Aids as living in "a human cesspool of their own making" and

called trade unions an "industrial mafia."

The Sun's headline 'perverts support the pits' is a key moment that as in real life leads to the single largest fundraising event LGSM is involved in.

Desperate

While a comedic film, *Pride* also doesn't shy away from the difficulties shared by both communities during the eighties. Homophobia and the growing AIDS crisis loom throughout the film (and Mark Ashton, one of the founders of LGSM, died only a few years after the strike). The mining community became more desperate as miners could no longer pay for heating.

The film emphasises the importance of solidarity. Mark Ashton of LGSM said when discussing the group's work: "One community

should give solidarity to another. It's really illogical to say: 'I'm gay and I'm into defending the gay community but I don't care about anything else.'"

It also shows the huge impact working class communities can have when they come together. Although the miners' strike was lost, we get to see miners attending *Pride* marches en masse to support the communities that supported them. The NUM played a vital role in the 1980s in forcing the Labour Party to commit to supporting the fight for LGBT rights.

Working together the LGBT community and trade unions made huge steps forward for equality. As the NUM rep says when first thanking LGSM for their fundraising: "when you're fighting an enemy so massive, to find out you have a friend you didn't even know you had; it's the best feeling in the world."

Theatre review

We're Not Going Back

We're Not Going Back is a musical comedy set during the 1984-85 miners' strike. You follow the story of three sisters, all completely different, but united by one cause, to set up a branch of Women Against Pit Closures.

When the strike starts there is conflict between the sisters. The youngest, Isabel, is conflicted over her loyalty to her partner who's training to be a police officer and solidarity with her sisters, whose partners are on strike. When this is overcome, the three sisters fight the pit's closure.

You see their struggles and achievements during and after the strikes including singing on the picket line while miners have their trade union meeting, attempting to carve a sheep and midnight cabbage pillaging.

This Red Ladder Theatre Company production shows the solidarity and strength of women in working class communities determined to fight a government that aimed to destroy their community. They are currently on tour until February 2015.

Tanis Belsham-Wray

Bradford benefits under attack

"Look for work nine to five, or face losing your benefits." That was the government's right-wing mantra for cities like Bradford, which has about 14,500 claimants for Jobseeker's Allowance, and is part of a pilot scheme to pile on more misery.

For the month of October Bradford's jobless people must go to a signing on session, then spend the whole day (35 hours a week) look-

ing for jobs that either don't exist or have low wages.

The intention, of giving applicants the ability to write a CV, may seem benign. But read the small print.

Applicants will be sanctioned with a three month suspension if any transgression is registered, pushing vulnerable people and their children, further into poverty. A first breach will trigger a four week suspension. But any further

transgressions will lead to an immediate three month suspension.

However there are few decent jobs in this city, we know this from the response we got at the Socialist Party's sales stall outside the job centre. We plan more activity and hope to build a momentum with resistance from the people of Bradford to these horrendous attacks.

Peter Robson
Bradford Socialist Party

Ian Paisley: peacemaker or warmonger?

Michael Cleary
Socialist Party
(CWI Northern Ireland)

How will hard line unionist Ian Paisley, who has died at the age of 88, be remembered? As the fire-brand preacher who stoked the fires of conflict in Northern Ireland or as a 'peacemaker' and the partner in government with republican Martin McGuinness?

Many people struggle to make sense of what appear to be entirely contradictory phases in his life. Most of the media, the British and Irish governments, and even Martin McGuinness who describes him as a friend, choose to focus on his 2007 decision to form a coalition with Sinn Féin.

Many people in Northern Ireland are less impressed by his final apparent about-turn. For decades the name Paisley struck fear into the hearts of not just Catholics but Protestant working class activists. The lauding of Paisley grates with most Catholics, who cannot forget the role he played, but also with the many Protestants who reject everything he stood for.

Paisley's initial base was not built in industrial working class areas but in the North Antrim area around the large town of Ballymena. His first following was largely rural, conservative and religiously fundamentalist.

Even in Ballymena it took time before he seized control of the council. When he did in the mid-1970s he imposed his fundamentalist ideas on everyone else, closing the swimming pool and chaining up the park swings on Sundays.

It was members of Militant (forerunner of the Socialist Party) from a Protestant background who led the opposition in this largely Protestant town, protesting against the Sunday closure policy and challenging Paisley's Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) in council byelections.

Contempt

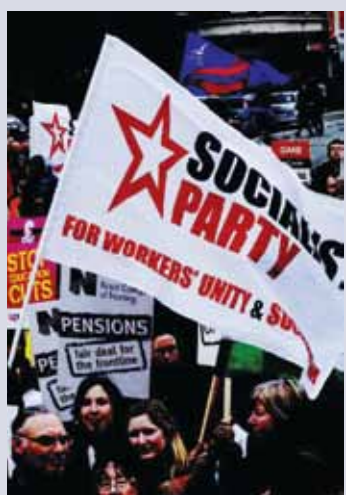
Working class Protestants gave Paisley little support in the 1950s, 1960s and well into the 1970s. In Protestant areas he was a figure of fun and contempt for anyone who was forward looking or left inclined. This changed over time.

In the late 1960s there was sense that change was in the air, represented politically by the growth of the Northern Ireland Labour Party (NILP) but as the Troubles spun out of control "hard men" on both sides came to the fore and the sense of working class solidarity

and unity weakened.

There was nothing inevitable about this development however. The leaders of the labour and trade union movement abdicated their responsibility to provide an alternative, and their responsibility to stand up to right wing and anti-working class demagogues like Paisley.

As a direct result the previous NILP stronghold of East Belfast fell to the DUP in the 1979 General Election. The victorious candidate was today's DUP leader and Northern Ireland First Minister Peter Robinson.



The Socialist Party in Northern Ireland says: "We unite workers and young people, Catholic and Protestant, to campaign in the interests of ordinary people. Our members are active within the trade unions, in the workplaces, communities and among youth, fighting against attacks on jobs, conditions and the austerity of the Northern Ireland Assembly Executive.

"We stand for the development of working class politics which unites ordinary people against sectarianism – in both communities – and the failure of the capitalist system to deliver decent living standards and a future for young people. "We are organised throughout Ireland and work closely with our sister parties in Scotland, England and Wales. We stand for replacing the anarchy of capitalism with a democratic socialist society." www.socialistparty.org.uk

The DUP gained its working class base in part by deliberately cultivating an image as the representatives of the Protestant working class, in opposition to the "big house" unionism of the Ulster Unionist Party (UUP - the party which governed Northern Ireland from partition until the imposition of direct rule in 1972).

Paisley flirted with paramilitary

organisations and paramilitary methods for decades. In 1956 Paisley was one of the founders of Ulster Protestant Action (UPA). From the start violence wasn't far away. In June 1959, after Paisley addressed a UPA rally in Belfast, some of the crowd attacked Catholic-owned shops and a riot ensued.

'Tricolour riots'

During the 1964 general election campaign Paisley fomented the so-called 'Tricolour riots', the worst in Belfast since the 1930s.

In April 1966, Paisley and Noel Doherty founded the Ulster Constitution Defence Committee (UCDC) and a paramilitary wing, the Ulster Protestant Volunteers (UPV). Around the same time, the Ulster Volunteer Force (UVF) emerged, led by Gusto Spence. Many of its members were also members of the UCDC and UPV, including Noel Doherty.

In May and June 1966, the UVF murdered two Catholic workers and an elderly Protestant widow. Following the killings, the UVF was outlawed and Paisley immediately denied any knowledge of its activities.

This established a pattern that was to be repeated over the following decades and led to many of those who became active in loyalist paramilitary organisations to hate him with a vengeance. One of those convicted for the 1966 killings was explicit in his words: "I am terribly sorry I ever heard of that man Paisley or decided to follow him."

Paisley spent most of his career playing with violence: he enrolled the help of mainstream loyalist paramilitary groups in two work stoppages (in 1974 and 1977) and established several groups of his own, including the "Third Force" in 1981 and "Ulster Resistance" in 1986.

When the Good Friday Agreement was signed in 1998, Paisley and the DUP were opposed. Over the following decade he sniped at the UUP but ensured he and his party had their hands on whatever levers of power were available.

In these years, the uncertainty and fear felt by most Protestants delivered Paisley what he wanted: majority support among the Protestant electorate. This support was built on a clear platform of opposition to Sinn Féin in government.

'No partnership'

As late as July 2006 Paisley stated that Sinn Féin "are not fit to be in partnership with decent people. They are not fit to be in the government of Northern Ireland and it will be over our dead bodies if they ever get there."

The lure of power created its own momentum however. Once the DUP were the dominant and largest party, the question of going into government was concretely posed. The rigid structures created by the Good Friday Agreement (the aim being to maintain peace by institutionalising sectarian division) made it difficult to stand aside.

Personal factors may also have played a part. Paisley reportedly had a near death experience in 2004, and younger members of the DUP such as Robinson were keen to do a deal. It was also easier for Paisley to go into government when he could credibly claim victory, pointing to Sinn Féin agreeing to support the police and the IRA agreeing to destroy its arms.

On 8 May 2007 Paisley was elected First Minister with Martin McGuinness as Deputy First Minister.



Ian Paisley in 1987 photo Dave Sinclair

ter. Ironically when he made his decision the fiercest opposition came from his original base in rural areas, especially in North Antrim. He was forced out of his positions as DUP leader and Free Presbyterian moderator and retired to snipe at his successors.

Hampered

Attempts to canonise him as a 'peacemaker' were hampered by his own words and actions. As late as 2013 he stated in a television interview that the 33 innocent civilians who died in UVF no-warning car bombs in Dublin and Monaghan in 1974 had "brought it on themselves".

Everything had changed but nothing had changed. Political theorists argue that it was necessary to bring the most extreme representatives of each community together in order to deliver a stable peace. The reality is that the most extreme representatives of each community can

only deliver division and conflict, even if for now there is less violence on the streets.

Paisley certainly stood out but it would be a mistake to see him as unique. If Paisley had never lived someone like him would have come to the fore. And while the entire generation of politicians who emerged to prominence in the turmoil of the late 1960s and early 1970s now bask in the 'success' of the peace process, all played a negative role in that period.

One day there will be an historic reckoning. Paisley won't be around to see it but his ilk and his successors will be.

The poverty and joblessness of capitalism provides fertile ground for sectarianism. A united working class will sweep away all the detritus of the past and all its rotten sectarian representatives. Remembering Paisley's real role is one step on the road to that reckoning.

The full version of this article can be read at www.socialistworld.net



Young Socialists from Ballymena marching for workers' unity in 1980

Socialism TODAY

The Socialist Party's magazine

The September issue includes:

●National rights

Ukraine and Gaza conflicts pose crucial issues for socialists, writes Peter Taaffe

●Pre-election Britain

Autumn's strikes and political instability raise the stakes, reports Hannah Sell

●Origins of the family

Christine Thomas looks at Engels's book, 130 years on

£2.50 including postage:

Socialism Today PO Box 24697, London E11 1YD.
Subscribe for £18 a year at www.socialismtoday.org



WORKERS' ACTION TO RAISE THE MINIMUM WAGE

£10 NOW



Campaigners in Leeds on a recent Fast Food Rights day of action photo Erika Sykes

Ellen White
Lambeth Socialist Party

Every day we are bombarded by new facts and figures showing that the cost of living has gone up across the country. The homeless charity Shelter found that the average Londoner spends 59% of their income on rent alone. Even London mayor Boris Johnson has admitted that the cost of living in the capital has risen so much that a wage increase must be considered!

In recognition of how dire the situation is, at its recent national congress the Trades Union Congress adopted a policy that supports the demand for a £10 an hour minimum wage. The motion was proposed by the bakers' union, which is working with Youth Fight for Jobs and others in the Fast Food Rights campaign to demand £10 an hour and an end to zero-hour contracts. The TUC vote is a great success for the campaign.

Achievable?

Given that the current minimum wage is a pitiful £6.31, some people may think that fighting for £10 is a big jump. But is £10 an hour really that much? It would mean a minimum wage worker 'lucky' enough to be on a full time (40 hour) contract would earn £19,200 a year before tax and living costs – not exactly luxurious riches. As it stands 10.5% of working adults with children say they or their partner have missed meals in the past 12 months to help pay for their home. All of this fills me with rage. We have to fight for what we need, not what the bosses and their friends in Westminster tell us they can afford!

The crucial question is not 'do we need the money?' but how can we fight to win it? The recent victory in Seattle for \$15 an hour (a more than doubling of the minimum wage won by a mass campaign led by socialist city councillor Kshama Sawant) has shown that we can fight and win. We have to convince people that £10 is obtainable. But most importantly we have to keep up the pressure on the TUC and its constituent parts for mass workers' action to fight for a wage we can really live on.

See www.youthfightforjobs.com

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!