

**SOCIALISM2014**

See page 5 for details and  
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After the \$15 victory in  
Seattle, hear  
socialist  
councillor  
Kshama Sawant



# the Socialist

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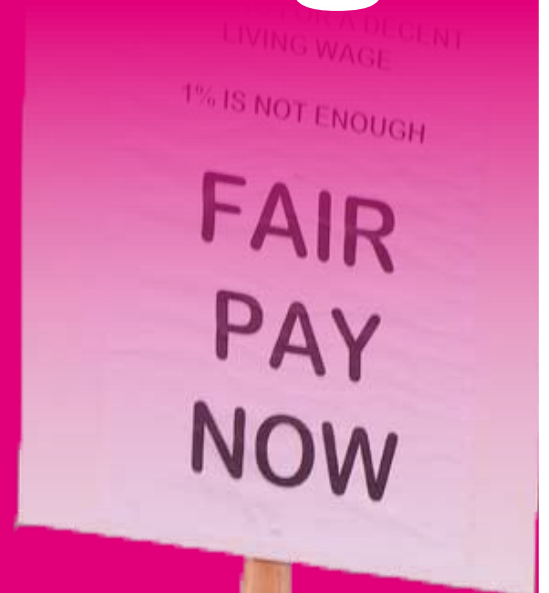
16-22 October 2014

Issue 829

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# the Socialist

The paper of the Socialist Party. Issue 829.

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## We need YOU to join the Socialists!



**The trade unionist**

photo Serena Cheung

### Why I joined

“The Socialist Party, more than any other party on the left, has aligned itself with the rank and file.”

“I know my generation is not going to have the future promised to our parents unless we fight for it.”



**The student**

photo Senan

**Sean Warren**  
Secretary, GMB Bolton 23 Branch

I became involved with the Socialist Party over a period of time. It became obvious to me that the system does not work for most people. What is offered to voters as a ‘choice’ does nothing to address the real problems people face.

Coming from a typical working class background, I voted Labour and was always in a trade union, organisations we used to be taught would protect our interests.

But I felt that mainstream politicians and many union officials did not represent me. They weren’t even concerned with helping working people improve their conditions. Instead, the vast majority seemed to be preoccupied with their own careers, and would do

anything not to rock the boat - lest it harm their prospects.

The Socialist Party, more than any other party on the left, has aligned itself with the rank and file. What I find most refreshing is the Socialist Party’s willingness to engage directly with people, and through direct action and organisation work to empower the majority disregarded by the main parties.

#### Trust

The party has won the trust of workers in countless industrial disputes, as well as campaigns such as opposing cuts within the NHS or public services. I am proud to be a member of an organisation fighting as part of the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition for the political representation of ordinary people’s interests.

**Hannah Zucherman**  
UCL student

February will mark a year since I joined Socialist Alternative (co-thinkers of the Socialist Party in the United States). Like many people, I had heard of Kshama Sawant in Seattle and the campaign for a \$15 an hour minimum wage.

One afternoon, in a fit of panic as to what I was going to do with my life after I graduated from university, I came across the Socialist Alternative website and asked to find out more. A few weeks later, without knowing that much about what Socialist Alternative was, I met with others in the San Francisco Bay area where I was living at the time.

I had never thought of myself as a socialist, but always had views that leaned left. Let’s just say, at that

moment, I finally found a place where my voice mattered. What I had always thought about the political system and the current economic crisis was all on point with the views of Socialist Alternative - and now, living here in London, the Socialist Party.

I know my generation is not going to have the future that was promised to our parents unless we fight for it. As a recent graduate, and now as a master’s student, this harsh reality really hits home. What I was taught my whole life - that getting an education is key to a successful future - is now a lie. My peers who hold degrees are working in coffee shops and at the shopping mall.

I refuse to let this be my future. That is why I joined Socialist Alternative, and am now a proud member of the Socialist Party.

### Contact the Socialist Party

Want to join or find out more?  
Call the Socialist Party national office on  
**020 8988 8777**, or email  
[join@socialistparty.org.uk](mailto:join@socialistparty.org.uk)

For information on meetings and events in your area, call one of our regional organisers...

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Visit [socialistworld.net](http://socialistworld.net), or call **020 8988 8777** for more on our sister parties around the world.

#### Demo follow-up meetings

Branches up and down the country will be discussing the next steps for the movement. Visit [socialistparty.org.uk/whatson](http://socialistparty.org.uk/whatson) for further details.

## Help us fund the fightback

**Ken Douglas**  
Socialist Party national treasurer

We are appealing to all readers of the Socialist to make a donation to help support a workers’ paper - an independent voice for the working class for 50 years since 1964.

Throughout that time the Socialist (and its forerunner, Militant) has been at the heart of the struggles to defend all the gains the working class fought for. A free education system, the NHS, decent affordable housing, comprehensive public services, decent pensions and more.

#### Support

We depend solely on the support of ordinary people - the Socialist party has no rich backers. Our placards, banners and leaflets for the 18 October TUC march have cost over a thousand pounds. We think this is well worth it in order to build support for the fightback against aus-

terity and socialist ideas but we need your help!

Can you donate £5, £10, £50, £100 or more? We can guarantee that every penny will be used in the fight for socialism.

The three main capitalist parties have no answers - they promise decades of cuts for us while the super-rich get even richer. But the days of these corrupt, self-serving capitalist politicians are numbered.

#### Anger

As the referendum in Scotland showed, there is a burning anger against austerity and the political parties implementing it. In the pages of this paper we put forward a strategy to fight cuts and privatisation, and build a new mass workers’

party that can harness that anger to end austerity.

#### Alternative

We say that there is an alternative - a socialist alternative. Where the enormous wealth in the world is democratically owned and controlled by the majority, by the 99%. And where it is used to build a society based on meeting the needs of everyone, of looking after the environment and creating a sustainable future.

If you agree with us, support us with a donation!

**You can pay through our website at [www.socialistparty.org.uk/donate](http://www.socialistparty.org.uk/donate), telephone 020 8988 8777, or send a cheque or postal order payable to the Socialist Party to PO Box 24697, London E11 1YD.**



## Subscribe to the Socialist!

**Steve Score**  
Editor of the Socialist

This year, we celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the Socialist and its predecessor Militant. We are proud of our record of reporting on the struggles and views of workers ignored by the rest of the press. We have a massive advantage, though. We have thousands of potential



writers, all experts in their fields: the ordinary workers and socialist activists who support us. We believe our rigorous analysis and concrete demands also set us apart. That’s why you should subscribe to the Socialist today.

“The Socialist is a campaigning newspaper that offers an alternative view to the one the mainstream media offers. It deals with issues that are really at the heart of our communities and our society. It offers hard hitting stories based on real people and real issues. If you want to get closer to the truth on events, the Socialist offers an independent view to the establishment controlled media that is keen to maintain its hold on our society and serves in the interest of its owners.”

**Ian Hodson**  
President, bakers’ union BFAWU

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# Tories and Labour in crisis after Ukip win

Urgent need to build genuine working class alternative

Claire Laker-Mansfield

Cameron and Miliband woke up on 10 October with a common sense of dread. Both their parties have been left reeling at the results of byelections in which Ukip has dealt them a hefty blow to the face. Both party leaders are now facing calls from some of their MPs to stand down before the 2015 general election.

For the Tory party, a landslide victory for their defector, Douglas Carswell (who won 60% of the vote), has no doubt left more backbenchers tempted to jump ship. But it's perhaps Labour that has been the most visibly shocked. Ukip can no longer be written off as a 'Tory problem'.

In Heywood and Middleton, a former Labour stronghold, Ukip came within inches of taking a seat. Just over 600 votes separated Farage's party from a second (and potentially even more significant) victory.

These results have sent shivers down spines - including those of many ordinary workers and young people. But the three main parties all bear responsibility for the rising tide of the populist right. The trade union leaders who have held back from acting to build a new party have actually furthered this process. Five years of austerity have devastated the lives of already hard-pressed communities in Clacton and Heywood alike.

The cowardly 'opposition' of Miliband's Labour offers nothing close to a coherent alternative, while competing with the Con-Dems over spending cuts.

Ukip enjoys playing on the fears of working class people - particularly those about immigration, while diverting blame over collapsing living standards from the bankers, big business and the super-rich.



Ukip is playing on the fears of working class people photo Karl Lang

But underlying these fears is a deep sense of insecurity. It's insecurity about jobs, stretched services, a race-to-the-bottom in pay and working conditions, and a dearth of (actually) affordable housing.

There is an overwhelming need for a new, mass party for the working class - a party which could offer people genuine hope.

## Pro-cuts

This would be a party which, like 72% of Ukip's voters, supports measures such as re-nationalising Britain's railways. A party which, rather than aping the reactionary sentiments of ex-city slickers like Carswell, would offer an end to cuts and a minimum wage of £10 an hour; a party that would stand with workers as they fight to resist the onslaught and secure better wages and conditions.

The anti-establishment image that Ukip has worked so hard to adopt needs to be shattered. This is the same Ukip that helped organise a minuscule 'pro-cuts' rally designed to counter 2011's trade union anti-austerity march, which attracted more than 500,000 people.

It's the same Ukip whose deputy leader - Paul Nuttall - wrote in comments now deleted from his website

that "the very existence of the NHS stifles competition".

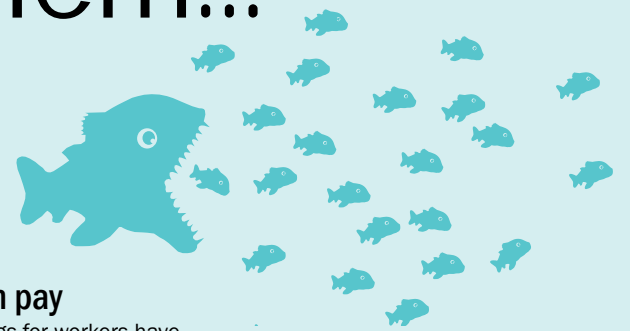
Ukip leader Nigel Farage may enjoy the odd pint but, as a privately educated ex-banker, his ordinary bloke act is pretty superficial. Ukip is a pro-cuts party for 'the 1%'.

In the week following this humiliating by-election result for Labour, millions of workers were on strike against low pay. If Miliband had any backbone, he would respond to this electoral setback with bold support for the strikes, announce measures that would take some of the enormous wealth concentrated in the hands of the 0.1% super-rich and use it to fund wage increases, job creation and investment in our public services.

Instead of fighting for socialist policies to solve the economic and social crisis facing workers, Miliband and Labour continue to shift to the right and echo Ukip's divide and rule, anti-immigrant agenda - the politics of despair.

Those who prefer the politics of hope should get involved with Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC - see below), and help build a vibrant, democratic, mass party based on struggle and the organisations of the working class - a real alternative.

## Them...



### Victorian pay

Real earnings for workers have slumped by a massive 8% between 2007 and 2014 according to the TUC, ahead of its Britain Needs A Pay Rise demo on 18 October. The pay squeeze represents the worst earnings slump since the financial crisis of 1865-67.

George Osborne. Osborne argues that the working age benefits bill is spiralling out of control because "too many young people... have fallen into a culture of welfare dependency."

True, the welfare bill has increased from 4.5% of GDP (total output) in 1997 to 5.7% today, but the biggest recipients of this £100 billion pot are rip-off private landlords (£17 billion in housing benefit), and low-paying employers (£29 billion in tax credits). Jobseeker's Allowance accounts for less than 5% of the total.

### Up and away

Meanwhile bosses' pay continues rocketing skywards with a 21% increase last year. Income Data Services says the average total earnings for a top company executive is £2.4 million, while the figure for a chief executive is £3.3 million. Their pay has increased 278% since 2000.

### Vested interests

The Unite union says that private healthcare companies linked to Tory politicians have been awarded NHS contracts worth £1.5 billion over the last two years. Unite reckons that 24 Tory MPs and peers who voted through the government's Health Act, which opens up 80% of the NHS budget to outside tenders, have links with private companies awarded contracts.

### Young scapegoats

'Beating up on the poor' - while dispensing more tax breaks to the super-rich - is a favourite pastime of millionaire Tory MPs like Chancellor

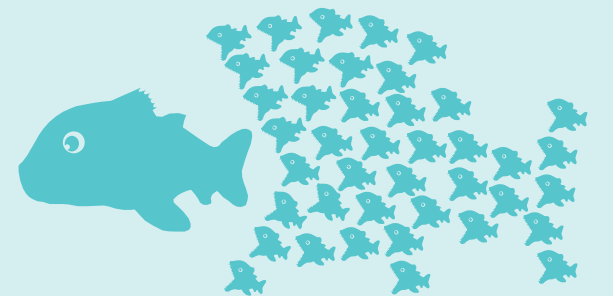
### Budget deficit

The government could easily reduce the welfare bill through rent caps and substantially raising the minimum wage. Instead, the Con-Dems are aiming to axe another £25 billion (likely to be nearer £38 billion) from public spending to generate a budget surplus by 2018-19.

### Carjacking

Hard pressed disability benefit claimants will be demanding to know why the chief executive of not for profit Motability Operations was paid more than £1 million in bonuses and pension benefits alone last year. The company which operates car fleets for disabled people through the Motability charity is owned by the major UK banks.

## ...& Us



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

**Join the fightback! Join the Socialists!**  
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## 'We need a new party'

In losing thousands of votes in the Heywood and Middleton byelection, Labour has nobody to blame but itself.

Labour has spent the last 20 years assuming working class voters had nowhere else to go, so their problems, and they themselves, could be safely ignored. That attitude lost Labour four million working class voters between 1997 and 2010.

Now Ukip is harnessing the anger of those who feel you can't get a fag paper between the establishment parties, and that specifically Labour is part of the problem, not the solution.

But Ukip itself is not the answer. It's run by a public school educated ex-banker, staffed by people who worship Mrs Thatcher, and funded by multimillionaires who think the Tories have gone soft.

We urgently need a new party, but one that is rooted in the communities and organisations of the work-



Dave Nellist photo Paul Mattsson

ing class, with a programme of socialist demands to answer working people's problems.

The Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC) is helping to build such a new party

**Dave Nellist**  
**National Chair, TUSC**  
[www.tusc.org.uk](http://www.tusc.org.uk)

## TUSC

The Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC) is an organisation involving socialist and trade unionists (including the Socialist Party, which plays a leading role) created to start the work of filling the political vacuum that Ukip is cynically attempting to fill.

As the late Bob Crow, former general secretary of the RMT transport union and a real working class representative, put it: "Ukip is neither in favour of workers' rights, public services or welfare. If people are looking for an alternative, Ukip isn't it."

Over 100 years ago his union was one of those that helped found the Labour party as part of the fight for working class political representation. Now, as Labour has abandoned ordinary people, the RMT is a part of TUSC, starting to build a new workers' party for the 21st century.

See page 11 for more on TUSC

The Socialist Party's magazine **Socialism TODAY**

The October issue includes:

- **Scotland**  
The referendum marks a dramatic turning point
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After the slaughter
- **Israel/Palestine**  
A history of Israeli occupation, reviewed by Judy Beishon

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# First NHS pay strike for 30 years

On 13 October, NHS workers in six unions - Unison, Unite, GMB, Royal College of Midwives (RCM), Ucat and British Association of Occupational Therapists - went on strike for four hours, the first NHS pay strike for three decades.

**A midwife from Shropshire** told the Socialist why her union was striking for the first time ever.

The RCM voted 82.2% to support the action. Usually the last thing on our minds is to withdraw our labour. However, many of us feel that if this stand is not made, maternity services will be thrown into chaos.

Many women have reported they have not received one-to-one care when they are in labour due to a chronic shortage of midwives, which has continued for over a decade.

There's an estimated national shortage of 2,300 but the RCM say the real figure is closer to 5,000 as many midwives are close to retirement.

Morale of midwives is so low that a third with less than ten years' experience are planning to quit within the next year. Many have to work overtime to make ends meet. Pen-

sion contributions have increased, with the retirement age going up to 65 or over.

The RCM estimate midwives work an average of at least eight hours unpaid overtime a month, working through breaks and after the shift has ended to ensure women receive the care they deserve.

To follow the strike, the RCN has withdrawn for one week all the unpaid overtime that we would normally do.

All midwives are asking for is a 1% pay rise, as recommended by the pay review body. We are not asking for anything like the 11% pay rise that has been recommended for MPs. If midwives were given pay rises in line with inflation since 2010 our annual pay would be £4,000 higher.



Bristol Royal Infirmary photo Matt Carey



Leeds General photo Tanis Belsham Wray

The NHS strike has seen well supported pickets of up to 150 workers - for reports see [www.socialistparty.org.uk/articles/19483](http://www.socialistparty.org.uk/articles/19483)



St Leonards hospital in Hackney, North London photo Paul Mattsson



St Peters hospital in Chertsey, Surrey photo Paul Couchman



Royal Victoria Infirmary, Newcastle photo Elaine Brunskill

## Local government pay: reject offer, reinstate action!

The decision of the Unison, Unite and GMB unions to call off the local government strike on 14 October has been met with anger by rank and file workers. Some are asking if it was called off to ease the pressure on Ed Miliband?

**A Unison local government worker** gives their response.

More analysis of the strike postponement will be carried in a future issue of the Socialist.

When I found out the 14 October local government (LG) strike had been suspended, I was on my way to meet support assistants in a special school.

It would be hard to find a group of LG workers upon which there is more pressure not to go on strike. But they had been solid in July alongside their teacher colleagues and were again now, wishing the teachers were still with them, but with added confidence that academy school staff were now joining the fight.

I had to inform them that the ac-

tion had been suspended without even a firm offer on the table. Never mind the pay rise that they quite rightly assumed they had won! Our unelected negotiators don't have to do that bit.

### Build not blame

When they should have been building to make 14 October a massive strike day, it seems some Unison, Unite and GMB tops have instead spent two weeks looking to call action off without wanting to take the blame. Though the suspension also

seems to have caused splits inside the union officialdom.

The strike was suspended not even for an offer but for a 'proposal' - ie the hope of an offer!

This actually leaves us worse off this pay year (2014-15) than the "derisory" 1% offer from the employer we took action over in July.

### We won't shut up

In January 2015, 2.2% will be added to all pay spines to last until 31 March 2016. It's a cunningly presented two year response to a one year pay claim, to shut up low paid LG workers in the run up to a general election.

It would allow a Labour government - if elected in May 2015 - to spend its first year free of an unsavoury LG pay dispute. It cannot be consulted on as a proposal, rather than an offer, under Unison's own

pay consultation procedures!

The 'improvement' now reportedly appears to be a further unconsolidated (taxable) lump sum of 0.45% paid on 31 March 2015, which is just enough to make sure no one is getting less for 2014-15 than the 1% we went on strike against.

The campaign to reject this excuse for an offer, with its measly and insulting pre-Christmas bribe, and to get the determined coordinated action that Unison members need back on the road, begins here.

**The National Shop Stewards Network will have a stage at Speakers' Corner in Hyde Park at the end of the 18 October TUC demo. If you're angry about the local government strike being called off and want to rebuild coordinated action, come to this rally!**

## 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)

leftbooks.co.uk 020 8988 8789



## Care UK workers mark 81st strike day

**Alistair Tice**

Doncaster Care UK strikers celebrated their 81st day of strike action on Friday 10 October with an overnight sleep-out outside the company offices followed by an indoor solidarity rally.

Several solidarity protests were organised on the day including by the National Shop Stewards Network (NSSN) outside Care UK's London office.

Strikers were pleased to hear that Unison is finally making Care UK a prime target for their recruitment and organising team, a strategy Socialist Party members have been urging for six months.

The strikers' determination for a decent pay rise (after a 35% pay cut being imposed through privatisation) was reflected in a unanimous vote to take further strike action after the current three week strike ends on 19 October.

A delegation of strikers will meet

Doncaster MP, Ed Miliband, on 17 October.

They will demand the Labour leader publicly supports constituents on strike to defend the very NHS he says is central to Labour's election strategy.

Unison area officer Jim Bell finished the rally with a warning to Care UK: "Your time is up. Pay Up!"

Donations can be posted to Jenkinson House, White Rose Way, Doncaster DN4 5GJ (cheques payable to Doncaster Unison 20511).

## In brief

### St Mungo's Broadway

Unite members at the homelessness charity St Mungo's Broadway will strike for an initial seven days from Friday 17 October.

A new executive, installed following a recent merger, has imposed changes to staff terms with what they call "retrospective consultation".

They have announced their intention to stop negotiating with Unite on pay while the new boss talks about working with notorious private contractors such as Serco. A packed members meeting voted unanimously for the seven day strike following a ballot where 95.8% voted to strike on a 68% turnout. There are just under 600 members of the St Mungo's Unite housing.

Please donate to the campaign by BACS (account: Unite Housing Workers Branch LE1111, account no: 20040639, sort code: 08-60-01) or by cheque (made out to the Unite Housing Workers Branch LE1111 and send to PO Box 66701, London E11 9FB). Mark all donations 'St Mungo's Broadway Campaign Funds'.

Please send solidarity messages to [smbunite@gmail.com](mailto:smbunite@gmail.com).

The Unite LE1111 website will carry updates on the dispute: [www.housingworkers.org.uk/page/5/news.html](http://www.housingworkers.org.uk/page/5/news.html)

### Green Company?

Thirty GMB union members at Sheffield's five recycling centres took four days' strike action from 10 October. They are in dispute over pay, welfare facilities and the way the contract is managed.

The Green Company, owned by a 'charity' Salvaire, run the sites as a sub-contractor for multinational Veolia, who run Sheffield council's waste management service on a thirty year contract.

The strikes shut down two of the five centres. Sheffield Socialist Party members answered the union call for support by joining picket lines and have blocked and turned round several waste haulage wagons.

**Alistair Tice**

### Severfields engineers

One hundred engineering workers at Severfields (formerly Watsons) factory in Bolton, Greater Manchester took their second day of rock-solid strike action on 9 October.

Management want to get rid of the £1,200 annual bonus received by workers for minimising sickness absence, and tried to push this through by making it a condition for granting a pay rise. Workers have refused and after months of talks have taken two days strike action this month.

**Hugh Caffrey**

### College strikes

The UCU Further Education strike, planned for 14 October, was called off due to interference by the courts.

• **Read more about these disputes at [socialistparty.org.uk](http://socialistparty.org.uk)**



# SOCIALISM 2014

IDEAS

TO CHANGE

THE WORLD

## SPEAKERS INCLUDE ...



### Mark Serwotka, PCS general secretary

"In the aftermath of the Scottish referendum, given the attempt to fight austerity, given some of the massive mobilisations that we've seen, **there is a need for people to be radicalised more than ever.** People getting together, particularly young people, to discuss socialist ideas, resistance and fighting back, can only strengthen our movement." **Interview on page 15**



**Ruth Coppinger, Socialist TD (Irish MP)**



### Ian Hodson, bakers' union BFAWU president

"The current political system is broken and is failing to deal with ordinary people's needs. Time to find out what society could be like. **Come to Socialism 2014.**"



...and after the historic **\$15/hr victory**, transferring \$3bn from bosses to lowest paid, **don't miss Seattle's socialist councillor Kshama Sawant**

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10% discount for advance bookings

For tickets:  
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## WHY SHOULD I COME?

"We all read about struggles taking place up and down the country, and internationally. Socialism provides an opportunity to discuss with the people involved in them. **I just wish it was longer so I could fit more sessions in!**" — Richard Neville, shop worker and Usdaw member

"The only way to truly defeat racism, prejudices and xenophobia is through socialism. Kshama Sawant's victory should inspire black and Asian workers to become fighters for our class. **The struggle for socialism must include all workers regardless of race, age or gender.**" — Marvin Hay, local government worker and Unison member (personal capacity)

"I am going to Socialism 2014 and I encourage you to do the same so we can engage with the roots of our movement, educate ourselves and organise." — Cat Cray, transport worker and RMT member

"I'm going to Socialism 2014 to hear Kshama Sawant tell us how a mass campaign can win on pay. Young workers and union members need to listen, join the debates and then join the fightback!" — Dave Semple, DWP worker and PCS member

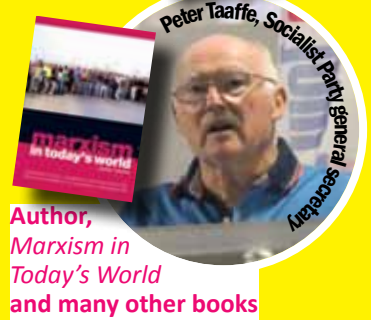
"My union has given around £6 million to Labour since the Con-Dems took power. Labour has repaid our generosity with attacks on our jobs, services and wages. So I'm looking forward to hearing real workers' representatives at Socialism 2014, who not only take only the same wages as the people they represent, but fight for and alongside trade unionists and working class people." — Claire Job, nurse and Unison member (personal capacity)

THEME	SATURDAY 3-5PM	SUNDAY 10AM-12NOON	SUNDAY 1-3PM
Introducing socialism	Q&A: Everything you ever wanted to know about socialism	50 years of the Socialist Party: socialism in action	Is there a way out of the crisis for capitalism?
Trotskyism today	Trotskyism in the 21st century 	Debates on Trotsky's idea of permanent revolution 	What happened to the USSR?
A century of war	Is an end to conflict in Israel-Palestine possible?	What is Isis and how can it be defeated? 	WW1: 100 years since the great slaughter
Miners' strike anniversary	Forum: the heroic 1984/85 miners' strike 		Trade unions today: zero-hour contracts and the general strike
Preparing for the 2015 elections	Rebel councillors can fight back	In defence of the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition	Can the Greens provide the working class with its political voice?
Perspectives for Britain	Scotland: the struggle against austerity after the indyref	What will a Labour victory in 2015 mean for the 99%?	Ukip, Europe and immigration
Ideas to change the world	Marxist economics – a user's guide 	Marxist philosophy: dialectics 	The Marxist view of history
Revolution in our time?	Are we too selfish to change society?	Reform or revolution? 	Could the US turn socialist?
Fighting austerity	Renters rise up: for rent control and council housing 	Women in the front line 	Forum: can the privatisation bulldozer be stopped?
Change the world	Caste, race and class – what socialists say	China, Hong Kong and 25 years since Tiananmen Square	Latin America: upsurge in struggle
Change society	Care crisis: Don't get old or sick in Austerity Britain	Ebola and Big Pharma	Forum: Frack off How can we stop the destruction?

## OTHER PARTICIPANTS INCLUDE



Harriet Seal, Socialist Party deputy general secretary  
Author, *Socialism in the 21st Century*



Peter Taaffe, Socialist Party general secretary  
Author, *Marxism in Today's World* and many other books



E15 Mothers fighting housing crisis



Senan O'Connell, Rebel councillor Keith Murrell



Author, *History of Resistance*

Programme subject to change



Meena Karakasamy, author and poet  
Author, *Gypsy Goddess*





## £££ BRITAIN NEEDS A PAY RISE: HOW CAN WE GET IT?

# FIGHT FOR MASS ACTION TO END CUTS AND LOW PAY



**Rob Williams**  
Socialist Party trade union organiser

When the TUC first organised their 'Britain Needs a Pay Rise' demonstration on 18 October, it is hard to believe that they saw it as an integral part of a campaign of co-ordinated strike action. The first mention of it on their website was 11 February. Surely unbeknown to them, eight months later that date is days after hundreds of thousands of public sector workers have taken industrial action to break the ConDem pay freeze.

More than likely, the TUC and the Labour-affiliated unions saw the march as an opportunity to assist Labour in the protracted pre-election period by exposing the anti-working class policies of this Tory-led government, although Labour agrees with the pay freeze!

The fact that starting on 10 July and continuing into October, unions have called out members in local government, education, civil service and now the NHS is a reflection of the pressure that they have been subject to because of the grinding misery that the continuing fall in living standards has represented for millions of workers and their families.

### Suspended action

However, the decision of the unions in local government to suspend their strike on 14 October is a major setback to the type of mass co-ordinated action needed to push the government back on pay. But activists in these unions and the NUT teachers union, which had already suspended action will be determined to get them back into the pay dispute.

The symptoms of the growing catastrophe facing working-class families are everywhere. The Trussell Trust, the largest food bank provider

in the UK, says it has handed out 913,000 food parcels in the last year, up from 347,000 the year before. It added that there was a "shocking" 51% rise in clients to established food banks. The charity said that more than 30% of visits were put down to a delay in welfare payments but the second biggest reason, given by 20% of food bank users, was low income.

**A child said: "We say to my mum make sure you eat but she says she's not hungry...she's just making sure we eat first."**

This is despite the social stigma attached to using them. In a recent survey by the University of Manchester, a 55 year old described how she had collected a food parcel on behalf of her grown-up daughter who was too embarrassed to come. She stated: "My daughter doesn't want to be seen as a scrounger." A child said: "We say to my mum make sure you eat but she says she's not hungry...she's just making sure we eat first." A survey by the NASUWT teachers' union revealed that a quarter of teachers have brought food into school to feed hungry pupils and a fifth have bought them lunch.

There are similar figures about payday loan companies, who are the suited and booted loan sharks

as food banks are modern day soup kitchens. Last year, the charity StepChange handled £110 million-worth of payday loan debt, up from £60 million in 2012.

The so-called respectability of these vultures has now been exposed by the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) - forcing leading payday loan company Wonga to write off £220m of debts for 330,000 people who couldn't afford to repay it. No wonder, when they charge interest rates over 5,000%!

In his speech to Conservative Party conference, Cameron again tried the Tory 'divide and rule' tactic of targeting benefits. But it was estimated that over half those who would suffer would be low-paid workers or the 'working poor', who earn so little that they qualify for in-work benefits and tax credits.

### Pay

A report by the Office for National Statistics revealed that pay dropped by 0.2% in August in absolute terms. Yet incomes have been falling in 'real terms' for most of the period since the financial crisis of 2007-08. The Bank of England governor Mark Carney was invited to address this year's TUC and admitted that incomes had fallen by 10% since the crisis.

He also thanked the unions for the sacrifice made by their members in "doing their bit" during the crisis! But on closer inspection, the ONS figures reveal a generation gap with those under 25 suffering a loss of 14%! This is hardly surprising when younger workers face the full brunt of zero-hour contracts, tem-

porary work and lower rates of pay for new starters. They will be on worse pensions, if they exist at all. Yet graduates are expected to repay student debts inflated by £9,000 a year tuition fees!

The downward pressure on pay started under the last Labour government. The economic crisis was used by the bosses in the private sector to lower workers' wages and terms and conditions to literally get us to pay for their crisis. Many workers paid the price to retain their jobs by pay

**To most workers, the so-called economic recovery is an utter myth that is only happening for the employers and the politicians, with MPs in line for an 11% pay increase!**

freezes or cuts and short-time working. However, the recovery of incomes has been very slow. To most workers, the so-called economic recovery is an utter myth that is only happening for the employers and the politicians, with MPs in line for an 11% pay increase!

Bosses, whether they are private sector employers or the government, have been quick to play off workers against each other. This was attempted in the public sector

pensions dispute when they contrasted the so-called 'gold-plated' pensions of these workers with their counterparts in the private sector. In reality, this was a myth, with the average public sector worker receiving £7,000 a year in retirement. Similarly with pay, the fact that the squeeze in the private sector, where union density and organisation is inferior, was greater than the public sector, has been used as justification for the government attack.

### Deep recession

The austerity offensive that was unleashed by Osborne in the autumn of 2010 has in effect been a deep recession for public sector workers, as well as working-class communities who rely on their services. The first two years saw public sector pay frozen absolutely, followed by two years of a limit of 1%.

Infamously, even this paltry rise isn't guaranteed in the NHS where up to 55% of workers will get nothing. Yet in the four years from 2010, RPI inflation rose by 4% a year on average. But even this price index, which, by including mortgages, is almost always higher than the CPI index now more commonly used by the government, is an underestimate of the real cost of living, particularly those facing huge rents.





Socialists explain that workers in the public and private sectors have to be united to resist the attack on all workers' incomes. Just as those in the private sector made concessions to keep their jobs in the depths of the recession, many public sector workers have been the victims of 90-day redundancy and re-engage notices. These have removed or worsened hard-won elements of their terms and conditions, such as car fuel allowances, that they have relied on as their pay has stagnated.

### Pensions

On top of this, the defeat of the pensions struggle as a result of the capitulation of the right-wing union leaders and the TUC, after the mammoth 2-million strong strike in November 2011 (N30) has meant that public sector workers have had their monthly pension contributions increased. In many cases, this has amounted to an effective cut in wages of anything up to £100 per month.

In addition, the vicious programme of cuts which have also been passed on by Labour councils have seen many public sector workers outsourced and privatised which has been a platform for swingeing wage cuts. The incredible strike by Care UK health sector workers in Doncaster, of over 80 days so far, was triggered by cuts of 25% as a result of being pushed into the private sector.

As the reaction to the London tube workers strike earlier this year showed, when the unions act in a decisive way they become a reference point to all workers

However, the N30 strike does point the way forward for all workers. That mass strike shook the ConDems, forcing Cameron into a

volte face over his comments on the morning of the walkout that it was a 'damp squib'. Actually it was a massive show of strength by millions of workers in, arguably, the biggest single day of strike action since the 1926 General Strike.

In almost every town and city, there were mass strike rallies that revealed that any idea of a division between workers could be torn down, as the strikers received tremendous public support. As the reaction to the London tube workers strike earlier this year showed, when the unions act in a decisive way they become a reference point to all workers and others suffering from the brutal cuts and employers' offensives.



On the morning of N30, hundreds of 'The Sparks' - electricians in the construction industry - went from their weekly protest to a number of public sector picket lines. The Sparks were fighting against the imposition of a new BESNA contract that would have cut their wages by up to 35%. But through militant action and an official strike ballot by their union Unite, they were able to defeat the attack.

Undoubtedly, the sight and sounds of workers in the public sector throughout 2011 on strike and on the march, gave confidence to many other workers that it was possible to fight back. In return, victories such as that won by the Sparks and the London bus workers in 2012, who won an Olympic bonus, showed that it is possible to fight and win.

The setback of the pensions battle

after the N30 strike has undoubtedly taken its toll on the confidence of workers, especially in the public sector. It opened the door still further and emboldened what is a weak and divided government. The result has been hundreds of thousands of redundancies, many of them would have been workers who strongly identified with the union. Many workers will have asked when contemplating action over pay: "Can we win?"; "Will the union go all the way?"

But despite this, the July 10th pay strike of over a million was the biggest strike since N30 and showed that there are big layers of workers who realise that they have to fight to stop the slaughter of their incomes. Despite how anaemic this 'recovery' seems to workers, the fact that the economy has stabilised, at least for now, with perhaps the immediate threat to jobs lessened, can give workers confidence that it's possible to fight on pay. Sometimes in the midst of a deep crisis, workers can feel helpless.

Following the recent impressive action from NHS workers and civil servants on the one hand, and the calling off of the action in local government on the other, it's clear the pay struggle is at a crucial stage. These paltry offers must be rejected. The campaign must be continued and escalated. More strikes must be called before Christmas and into the New Year, with all the public sector involved.

The Socialist Party and the National Shop Stewards Network (NSSN) have been to the fore in building pressure on the TUC and the unions to call a 24 hour general strike. This could unite all workers in every sector to defeat Cameron's austerity and the employers' offensive. It would have huge support from the majority of people who are the victims of the cuts.

### Labour

A significant breakthrough by a sizable group of workers would have a huge effect in raising the sights of all workers. It would not only shake the ConDems but also lay down a marker to all the mainstream parties, including Labour, who refuse to back the pay strikes because they have accepted Tory austerity.

Scandalously, the leaders of the Labour affiliated unions whose members have been on strike in the councils and the NHS against the pay freeze, accepted Miliband's spending plans at this summer's Labour Policy Forum. They wrongly believe that to go along with this is to protect their members because easing off Labour best ensures their victory at the general election next May.

The passing of the £10 an hour minimum wage by the TUC is an opportunity to appeal to the millions of low-paid non-unionised workers

In reality, they are only maintaining the idea that workers have to accept the cuts. They are loosening the pressure on Labour and disorientating union members and activists who cannot understand why the unions, the paymasters of Labour, are rolling over and being humiliated.

### Struggle

But history won't stop at the election. The incredible energy of the Scottish Independence campaign was a political mobilisation of the working-class and poor for an alternative to the austerity consensus of all the main parties on the bidding of the capitalist establishment. It was the first chance that many would have had to vote in a decisive manner for what they saw as a clear alternative idea.

It is an anticipation of the next months and years in the rest of the UK, as workers struggle politically and industrially to take on and defeat the attack

Rob Williams will speak at "Trade unions today: zero-hour contracts and the general strike" - one of the sessions at **SOCIALISM2014** 8 & 9 November in London See page 5 for more details



on their incomes and all the other gains won by the working-class, but now are in mortal danger from the cuts and privatisation.

Striving for mass strike action by the unions, whoever is meting out austerity, is a critical element of this. The passing of the £10 an hour minimum wage by the TUC is an opportunity to appeal to the millions of low-paid non-unionised workers to become part of what is still the biggest organised force in society.

But side by side with this is the need for a real political alternative that fights for a more equal, socialist future. The Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC) is best placed to fight for such a mass political vehicle and be a powerful attractive force for those workers in unions that are still affiliated to Labour to break them from that grip.





# BRITAIN NEEDS A PAY RISE: HOW CAN WE PAY FOR IT?

**Peter Taaffe**  
Socialist Party general secretary

“Britain needs a pay rise” is the demand of the TUC’s demonstration on 18 October. The first question to ask is “Which Britain?” The bosses don’t need a penny more – they are gorging themselves, accumulating greater and greater piles of wealth through the sweated labour and poverty wages of working people.

It is the majority, the working class, which urgently needs immediate wage increases to compensate for rocketing rents and mortgages, escalating food prices, massive energy and utility bills. The evidence for this is not the invention of ‘wicked socialists and Marxists’. It is there in the bosses own newspapers, on their TV, in what working people see with their own eyes in the workplace and their neighbourhoods.



“342 yrs for minimum wage staff to earn their bosses’ annual salary”

One Daily Mirror headline read: “Staff on minimum wage will take 342 years to hit bosses’ salary.” The article sets out some of the irrefutable facts about the shameful level of poverty pay for the mass of workers, while the share going to the rich has reached stratospheric levels. The UK’s top executive salaries have soared by 243% while the minimum wage rate has risen by just 81%, since it was introduced 15 years ago. The local government unions have been forced to call a strike for £1 an hour rise!

The founder of the Independent, Andreas Whittam-Smith, writes about “the situation facing the nation’s poor. About 5.5 million adults go without essential clothing. About 2.5 million children live in homes that are damp. Around 1.5 million children live in households that cannot afford to heat their home. More than one in five adults has had to borrow in the last year to pay for day-to-day needs.”

### Least bad alternative

There you have it; out of the mouths of the defenders of capitalism themselves comes a crushing condemnation of their system. They used to claim that the ‘free market’ was the best possible system for delivering goods and services to the peoples of the world. However, since the economic collapse in 2008 and the mass unemployment and dislocation which followed in its wake, it has become difficult for the ideologues of capitalism to repeat the old song. Now capitalism is, for them, the ‘least bad alternative’.

They claimed that the collapse of the ‘Soviet Union’ marked the decisive triumph of this system over ‘outmoded central planning’. What collapsed in 1989-91 after the Berlin Wall was brought down was not ‘socialism’ but a gross caricature of democratic, liberating socialism. Yes, a planned economy existed, which had shown its superiority over the chaos of capitalism, in terms of rates of economic growth of the productive forces and a certain increase in living standards. Russia – a byword for backwardness and economic failure under Tsarism – was transformed from the India of Europe into an industrialised country.

But this was presided over by a one-party, totalitarian Stalinist bureaucratic regime, the direct result of the isolation of the Russian people, now highly educated and demanding elections, democratic control, freedom of expression, the right to demonstrate and hold meetings. The possibility of a political revolution through workers’ democracy on the basis of a democratically-planned economy clearly existed, as the Hungarian revolution of 1956 and other movements in Poland and Czechoslovakia showed. But when this movement was suppressed by the Stalinist regimes, the working class, confused and desperate at the stagnation that existed, turned to the model of capitalism. The capitalist economies of Western Europe and the US, with the economic fireworks of the 1990s, growth, seemed to offer a way out.

The masses of Russia and Eastern Europe were dazzled with the capitalists’ promises of achieving US or West German living standards if they opted for the ‘market’. We pointed out at the time that it would not be developed capitalism that they would experience but conditions more akin to Latin America: mass unemployment, poverty, etc. Yet even this proved to be optimistic as the productive forces, through the return to capitalism, experienced their greatest economic collapse in human history, even worse than capitalism’s Great Depression of the 1930s.

### Scarecrows

We see the same kind of mass opposition movement in Hong Kong and tomorrow Chinese workers and youth, with a new, more culturally-developed population, will be demanding democratic and social rights. This struggle does not have socialist aims as yet but, in the process of the movement, workers and youth will see the need for such a change, not just in Hong Kong but throughout China. The scarecrow of Chinese Stalinism will not prevent the inevitable movement of workers in this direction.

What lessons can be drawn from this by British workers, particularly in relation to the prospects of a real alternative to capitalism, which is democratic socialism?

Capitalist representatives can no longer point to the alleged ‘superiority’ of their system, as it collapses – through the ‘Great Recession’ – around their ears. This does not stop them from seeking to dissuade workers and youth from embracing socialism as an alternative. They say that the experiences of Russia show that any attempt at ‘planning’ will inevitably end in dictatorship, one-man rule like North Korea!

A bureaucratic degeneration along the lines of what happened in Russia and other states that broke with capitalism is not possible in Britain. We live in an advanced industrial country, with a high level of culture, access to computers, social media, etc. Moreover, we have a strong and educated working class with their own organisations, the trade unions and in the future new mass political parties.

Once working people in Britain or any of the advanced industrial countries carry through such a big social change, socialism, they will not allow a repetition of Stalinism, with a monopoly of political power and privileges concentrated in a few hands. It will be the working class and poor through democratic workers’

Capitalist representatives can no longer point to the alleged ‘superiority’ of their system, as it collapses around their ears



control and management that will be the real power.

Some workers, however, dispute this idea, particularly when they witness the vice-like control presently exercised by right-wing, undemocratic leaders of some trade unions. The latter increasingly appear to be incapable of defending their members’ interests and energetically frustrate these members’ desire for a fightback against the ravages of capitalism. “If this lot become the new guardians of a socialist society – no thank you,” is often the worker’s view, naturally reinforced by the capitalist media.

This is even more the case in relation to their experiences of right-wing Labour politicians who, when in power, seek to manage capitalism better than the capitalists and when deprived of office seek to out-Tory the Tories. Witness Ed Balls at the recent Labour Party conference promising that if Labour was elected the pension age will actually be raised, resulting in him being roundly booed by even this completely sanitised body.

They have abandoned the socialist perspective upon which the Labour Party itself was built in the early 20th century, once summed up in Clause 4, Part Four, of Labour’s constitution. This stood

for the nationalisation – public ownership – of the commanding heights of the economy. Many trade unions stood, in their constitutions and inscribed on union banners, for the long-term aim of socialism. This was not mere tokenism but expressed the accumulated experience of workers, embattled in day-to-day struggles, but also convinced on the need to change society and establish socialism

### Drive for profit

Capitalism is a system which cannot utilise the full productive potential of its own system. The wheel of history has been turned back during this crisis. Production during an alleged ‘recovery’ is barely above the level prior to the crisis. Why? The defenders of the system are completely silent when it comes to explaining this. Yet it is very simple to understand, if you follow the analysis of Karl Marx. He showed that capitalism is a system based upon production for the profits of the few – a handful of monopoly capitalists – at the expense of the social needs of the many, the working class and poor, as well as the increasingly impoverished sections of the middle-class.

Profit is the “unpaid labour of the working class”, as Marx showed. There is much talk today, quite correctly, about ‘inequality’. Yet inequality is woven into the very fabric of capitalism and will exist so long as the capitalist system still lives. The capitalists’ exploitation of work-

ers means that each one receives only a portion of the value he or she creates in the form of wages. The surplus is divided into rent for the landlords, interest for the bankers and what is left is the profit for the capitalist owners of industry. Capitalism manages to go ahead by ploughing back part of the surplus into production which in turn can lead to a spiral of growth until the inevitable onset of crisis.

£18.89 what the minimum wage would be had it kept pace with the chief executives’ pay

Even a stern defender of capitalism like Martin Wolf of the Financial Times is compelled to write: “It is increasingly recognised that, beyond a certain point, inequality will be a source of significant economic ills.” What ‘ills’? Martin Wolf understands what they are when he recognises “huge increases in the relative pay of executives, together with the shift in incomes from labour to capital”. He then goes on: “Up to the time of the crisis, many of those who were not enjoying rising real incomes borrowed instead. Ris-

ing house prices made this possible. By late 2007, debt peaked at 135% of disposable incomes.” In other words, the growth of capitalism worldwide before 2008 was debt fuelled, as we had always argued, and would inevitably collapse at a certain stage.

### Them and us

People like Martin Wolf are ‘concerned’ for the system that he defends because this inequality is itself becoming a barrier to the further development of capitalism. By cutting the ‘market’, the incomes of the working and middle classes contract, plunging capitalism into stagnation. That is why some of the capitalist strategists – like the German central bank, the Bundesbank – actually urge the trade unions to fight for higher wages, which they envisage could ‘stimulate’ the economy. However, the individual boss, primarily concerned with maintaining his profits and even increasing them, can resist increases in wages. They are more concerned about the fate of their company and income than about the general health and development of capitalism.

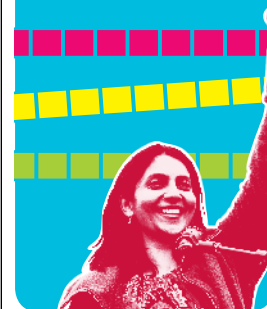
Inequality has already reached ‘eye-watering’ levels, particularly in places like London which has now overtaken Hong Kong as the most expensive city in the world. There are more so-called ‘Ultra High-Net-Worth’ individuals (UHNW) in London than anywhere else on the planet. These are defined as people with \$30 mil-

A planned economy would use all the resources which now lie idle, as well as cutting out the colossal waste from unnecessary advertising, duplication of production, etc

Peter Taaffe will be a key speaker at SOCIALISM2014

8 & 9 November in London

See page 5 for more details



lion or more in assets. 4,224 UHNW families live in London: These, together with a few thousand more, exercise the real power in society. After a crackdown in Switzerland, London is the new preferred tax haven for ultra-rich global capital. But if the national minimum wage had kept pace with a FTSE 100



Chief Executive Officer’s salary since 1999, it would now be £18.89 per hour instead of £6.50!

We would support all measures to lift workers out of poverty by fighting for at least £10 an hour. This and more will be possible if the full power of popular opinion and the labour movement is mobilised.

This was shown by the tremendous victory in Seattle in gaining a \$15 an hour minimum wage. But it was only through the campaign and pressure of Socialist Alternative, the US co-thinkers of the Socialist Party in England and Wales, that this was achieved.

### Class warfare

The colossal chasm between the rich and poor will remain, and will grow so long as capitalism continues to exist. The representatives of rich are quite clear on this. Warren Buffet, one of the richest men in the world, once put it bluntly: “There is class warfare all right, but it’s my class, the rich class, that’s making war and we are winning.”

Margaret Thatcher carried this out to the letter in her brutal attacks on the working class in the 1980s. Now, the Guardian has published the speech that she didn’t make to the Tory party conference in 1984 but wanted to. She was only prevented from doing so by the Brighton bombing. It was full of bile and hatred for those who were prepared to stand up against her and the government of rotten British capitalism, which she represented. The miners, the heroic Liverpool City Council, the labour movement as a whole were condemned as “the enemy within” and part of an “insurrection” against democracy. They were to ‘thatcher’ as dangerous an enemy as the Argentinian dictator General Galtieri had been over the Falklands.”

She wrote in the intended speech: “Enemy without – beaten him and resolute strong in defence. Enemy within – Miners’ leaders ... Liverpool and some local authorities – just as dangerous ... in a way more difficult to fight ... just as dangerous to liberty.” For good measure, then Labour leader Neil Kinnock, who stabbed Liverpool and the miners in the back, is condemned as a ‘puppet’ leader of a Labour party that had been ‘hijacked’ by the ‘enemies of democracy’.

In order to reverse the defeats of the past, workers need committed fighting trade unions with the same kind of re-

lentless leadership that the boss class has. But we must also have a socialist vision of what is possible on the basis of changing society. There is no mystery in how a socialist planned economy would be organised and show in practice its superiority over outmoded capitalism.

### Socialist alternative

Four years ago we wrote: “The output of the world economy is back to the levels of 1989.” In the 17 countries formally making up the eurozone, joblessness amongst young people totals over 25% with levels above 50% in Greece, Spain, and Italy. In Ireland and particularly Spain, ‘ghost estates’ exist while millions lack even basic shelter.

Homelessness is on the increase while there are 11 million dwellings lying idle throughout Europe. One billion on the planet go to bed hungry every night, an increase of more than 150 million compared to 19 years ago. Half the population of India lack even a toilet – a basic requirement of a civilised existence. 800,000 people worldwide commit suicide each year – many of them like poor farmers in India, crippled by debt – who despair of any solution on the basis of rotten capitalism.

Capitalism has shown that it not only worsens global warming but is incapable of arresting the world’s looming environmental disaster. The Observer recently reported that unprecedented high temperatures will become the norm worldwide by 2047: “The best place really is Alaska. Alaska is going to be the next Florida by the end of the century” one geographer is quoted as saying.

70% of world trade controlled by the top 200 companies

But these kinds of conditions can be ended very quickly. A planned economy would use all the resources which now lie idle, as well as cutting out the colossal waste from unnecessary advertising, duplication of production, etc.

A few figures to illustrate what would be possible: of the hundred largest economies in the world, 52 are corporations and 48 are countries; the top 500 companies control 70% of world trade; the top 200 companies’ combined sales are equal to 28% of world GDP but only employ 0.82% of the world’s workforce. A handful of billionaires control what are, in effect, monopoly concerns, which determine what will and will not be produced.

The very minimum required is to take over these giant monopolies, giving compensation to those who require it on the basis of proven need. Then we can begin to organise production through a socialist, democratically planned economy for the benefit of all.

Socialism in the 21st century The way forward for anti-capitalism

by Hannah Sell

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photo Jim Jepps

## Young workers say: decent jobs now \*(without the small print!)

### Youth Fight for Jobs

Millions of workers are 'on the breadline'. That was the damning picture painted in a recent episode of the BBC documentary series Panorama. The programme gave us the story of Jason - a fast food worker on a zero-hour contract and minimum wage. He is one of the 'hard working people' politicians all claim to be on the side of. But like millions more, he regularly goes more than a day without eating. For fear of losing his job, he wouldn't reveal the name of the company who pay his pathetic wages.

### Main parties

Conference season has given the main parties an opportunity to outline their answers to the growing nightmare of poverty pay. The Tories have a clear response. Millionaires' chancellor George Osborne is sure of the medicine people like Jason require. If re-elected they will tighten the screws - scrapping Jobseeker's Allowance for 18 to 21 year olds after six months unemployed and replacing it with a work-for-you benefits scheme.

This, they apparently believe, will encourage the 'feckless' to work

their way out of poverty. For the Tories, the blame for hardship lies squarely with those suffering it. Companies like McDonalds, whose pressed workers are run ragged for pennies, deserve a pat on the back and a tax cut. It's only fair.

Labour, on the other hand, is keen to present a kindlier face. Their pledge to raise the minimum wage to £8 an hour will have been welcomed by the many people hoping a Labour government might bring a little relief. But the small print (not until 2020) quickly puts an end to any such hopes.

For workers on zero-hour contracts and the minimum wage the only real option they have is to struggle. Fast Food Rights, the campaign initiated by the bakers' union BFAWU and supported by Youth Fight for Jobs, is organising to unionise workers in this dire situation and to help lead a battle for an end to poverty and insecurity.

**Protest: SCRAP ZERO-HOUR CONTRACTS!**  
21 November  
Horse Guards Parade,  
Westminster  
See [youthfightforjobs.com](http://youthfightforjobs.com) and [fastfoodrights.wordpress.com](http://fastfoodrights.wordpress.com) for up-to-date details

For workers on zero-hour contracts and the minimum wage the only real option they have is to struggle. Fast Food Rights, the campaign initiated by the bakers' union BFAWU and supported by Youth Fight for Jobs, is organising to unionise workers in this dire situation and to help lead a battle for an end to poverty and insecurity.

### Super-exploitation

Unlike Osborne and Miliband we're clear on where the blame lies: with the bosses who make mega-profits from super-exploitation and the politicians who back them up.

Our campaign is boldly demanding a minimum wage of £10 an hour with no exemptions. It's not a goal we'd like to see reached only in 2020 - ending mass poverty can't wait.

From the start, we've been clear that, far from being about 'flexibility' for employees, zero-hour contracts are about giving maximum power for the bosses. That's why we're adamant that these should be banned. All workers deserve a basic sense of security.

Our next major action is taking place on 21 November when a private members' bill, arguing to scrap zero-hour contracts, will be heard in parliament. Fast Food Rights will be outside protesting, demanding the MPs who supposedly represent us take a stand.

We are inviting all trade unionists and supporters of the campaign to join us for this lobby. This is about what kind of future young people have waiting for us. Let's fight to make it a better one than that outlined by Cameron, Miliband and co.

## The myth of 'self-employment'

**Mike Cleverley**  
Waltham Forest Socialist Party

If, like me, you have friends or relatives in the construction industry, you will know exactly what the Tories mean when they boast about the number of workers they have got "off benefits and into work" or the rise in the number of 'new businesses' created under the Coalition.

My relative works as a 'hoddie' - an unskilled labourer who carries bricks, mixes 'muck' or mortar and keeps the site tidy. He will be working alongside up to four 'brickies' keeping them supplied with materials. He is 'self-employed'.

### No rights

This means he is paid by the day and has no holiday or sick pay. He gets no payment for bank holidays unless he works, and then no premium rates. I look forward to Christmas. The self-employed 'hoddie' doesn't - he will have up to two weeks with no pay at all for the days the sites are closed!

Building workers are required to wear safety boots, gloves, helmets and hi-vis jackets. All of this must



Construction is one of the most dangerous industries

be bought by the worker before he can even start the job. Many workers who have been out of work have no choice but to borrow from the likes of Wonga to afford this essential equipment.

Construction is one of the most dangerous industries, not merely accidents but exposure to dangerous chemicals and dusts. Sites are required to keep 'incident books'

where accidents and near accidents can be recorded.

Every building worker on these kind of contracts knows that when the job is finished they will be thrown back to seek work elsewhere, unless they get moved to a new site. So it is essential that your name doesn't appear in that 'incident book'. The industry can boast about better safety mainly because

the paperwork paints a rosy picture. But the reality is very different. Workers struggle on with back pain, cuts and bruises which should get attention but often don't.

The self-employed 'hoddie' doesn't look forward to Christmas - up to two weeks with no pay at all for the days the sites are closed

Building workers need strong fighting unions to defend them and representatives at every level who know the hardships of the job. They also need a planned economy which would build the homes we all need so desperately and where building workers' safety and regular incomes could be assured. Only a socialist society can even begin to provide homes and decent working conditions for those whose labour will create them.



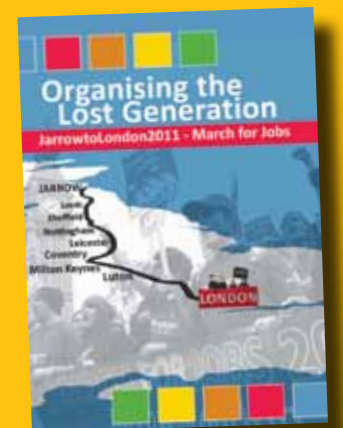
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# How a mass campaign stopped the cuts

## The lessons of Liverpool's socialist council 1983-87

Despite crying crocodile tears, Labour-run councils throughout Britain have implemented devastating government cuts in jobs and public services - in some cases with enthusiasm, alienating many working class Labour voters. But as former councillor **Tony Mulhearn** explains in the following article (first published in the Socialist in 2012), the example of Liverpool's Militant-influenced socialist council in the mid-1980s shows that a fighting alternative is possible.

Liverpool's socialist-led council of 1983 to 1987 showed that things could be so different. In the two years before the 49 Labour councillors (reduced to 47 by the death of Bill Lafferty and Peter Lloyd) were elected in May 1983, not a single house for rent had been built by the Liberal/Tory alliance which controlled the council.

Council rents were the highest in the UK outside London. 5,000 council jobs had vanished. Youth unemployment in some areas of the city was in excess of 50%.

The defeated Liberal/Tory alliance had left behind a financial gap of £10 million of unallocated cuts, and £30 million had been slashed from Liverpool's budget by Tory minister Michael Heseltine.

This was the nightmare inherited by the newly elected council in which Militant (predecessor of the Socialist) supporters played a prominent role.

Unlike Liverpool's current New Labour neoliberals led by Joe Anderson, we did not use that scenario as an excuse for implementing draconian cuts but as a reason for carrying out the 47's election promises. Adopting the slogan "better to

break the law than to break the poor", we launched a programme of action that included building houses, creating jobs, expanding services and freezing rents.

This was backed up by a mass campaign involving huge protests by public and private sector trade unions, community organisations, youth organisations, party constituencies and party branches, led by the Liverpool District Labour Party and the 47 councillors.

### Lessons

This campaign aimed to resist any further cuts and to claw back the funds that Thatcher had slashed

#### Elections showed backing

The Liverpool 47 attracted the highest Labour vote in history; higher than in any election since the war, even though the city's population had declined from 700,000 in 1945 to 460,000 in 1983.

Clearly, if policies which correspond to the needs and aspirations of the working class are implemented then the support will be forthcoming.



Liverpool's socialist council enjoyed mass support photo Paul Traynor

from the city's budget.

The result was a resounding success. 6,400 jobs were created in the private sector because of the house building programme, on top of thousands of local authority jobs created and saved.

If the other Labour councils had emulated that struggle Thatcher would have been forced to retreat. Other results included six new nurseries, and five colleges. Over 5,000 council houses were built.

This lesson is completely lost on the current Labour crop. They bleat that they have no choice but to cut public services that provide support

for those in greatest need.

With the ascendancy of the neoliberal right, disaster has followed disaster. Privatisation, job losses and no more council housing, with a local authority trade union leadership ready to comply with every reactionary demand of the council.

When the 47 were undemocratically removed from office by Thatcher's district auditor 30,000 workers were employed by the Liverpool city council. Today there are less than 10,000.

The 47 recognised that there was no guarantee of victory when you

fight, but if you do not fight defeat is assured.

#### The city that fought

In 1984 Liverpool's battle - and its widespread support - forced Thatcher's government into a retreat worth up to £60 million. The biggest of many demos, on the council's budget day in March 1984 (when a one-day strike took place) was backed by 30,000 local authority workers. They joined a 50,000 strong march in support of the council's deficit budget.

### Liverpool

**A City that Dared to Fight**  
By Peter Taaffe and Tony Mulhearn

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## Challenging the austerity parties

Britain needs a pay rise. It also needs a new mass party that stands firmly on the side of working people and their families, argues **Dave Nellist**, national chair of the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC).

The Tory-led coalition government has inflicted savage austerity on working class people over the last five years. Whatever combination of establishment parties make up the government after next May's general election, none of them intend to reverse that. May 2015 promises not a change of government, but merely a change of management style.

Such is the overlapping agenda amongst all the main parties now that, when Labour met at its Policy Forum in June, only 14 out of the 198 constituency and trade union delegates could be found to support a call opposing Ed Miliband and Ed Balls' plan to match Tory cuts pound for pound in the first year of the next parliament.

Meanwhile, reactionary Ukip is beginning to successfully harness people's anger, disillusioned by the establishment parties including Labour. But how do we stop that support for Ukip growing?

Working people urgently need a new party, but the one we need is one that is firmly rooted in the communities and organisations of the working class.

We need a party with a programme of socialist answers to working people's problems, not one that misdirects working peo-

ple's anger towards recent arrivals to these shores.

We need a mass party, for example, that stands for public ownership, not private profit; opposes all cuts and fights for quality public services; would fully nationalise the banks and end tax avoidance by rich corporations and individuals; that would immediately scrap the bedroom tax and zero-hour contracts, build the homes we need to end waiting lists and bring in a £10 an hour minimum wage.

### Alternative

Above all we need a party that does not merely ask how best to impose austerity on behalf of the interests of big business - but challenges the domination of major companies



and banks over the economy and believes that, in order to properly plan production and services to meet the needs of all, a democratic socialist society is needed run in the interests of people not millionaires.

In the last four years TUSC has enabled nearly 1,200 trade unionists, community campaigners and socialists to stand as candidates against the establishment parties in a common electoral campaign promoting opposition to austerity and campaigning for a socialist alternative. But we need to up our game.

TUSC is aiming for 1,000 anti-cuts council candidates and 100 anti-austerity parliamentary candidates in the May 2015 elections. This would be the biggest left of Labour challenge for 60 years, and would mean that in over 100 of the largest towns and cities a socialist alternative would be heard.

TUSC does not claim to be the final form of a new political voice for working people. It is, however, by far the best vehicle available at the moment for those trade unionists who recognise the establishment parties offer no answers, and who don't want to see disillusioned and dispirited former Labour voters haemorrhaging down the Ukip blind alley.

Ukip is a danger - but the bigger danger is not challenging the establishment parties and their overlapping agenda of austerity. See [www.tusc.org.uk](http://www.tusc.org.uk)

## The first line of defence

**Pete Mason**

Hundreds of low paid Barking and Dagenham council workers facing a £2,000 cut to their annual income protested outside Barking town hall on Tuesday 7 October.

Joining them were a number of Labour councillors who face suspension and potential expulsion from the Labour Group if they carry through their declared intention to vote against the proposed cuts - which include closing care and homeless centres - at the 1 December council meeting. Labour took all 51 seats on the council in May this year.

The question posed to the rebel Labour councillors is whether they will unite around a bold 'no cuts' alternative budget proposal on 1 December and publicly campaign for it. Such a proposal could initially draw on the £27 million of reserves, but must ultimately campaign for more funds from central government.

With the support of the trade unions in the council, the rebel councillors would be seen as the first line of defence by the wider working class in the borough if they campaign around clear anti-austerity policies.

See [www.socialistparty.org.uk](http://www.socialistparty.org.uk) for full article and video

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## the Socialist postbag

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**But not Tristram!**

Labour's Shadow Education Secretary Tristram Hunt's failure to significantly challenge government education policy has already disappointed many teachers. But his statement calling for teachers to make an 'oath' declaring their commitment to the profession has generated real anger.

However it's dressed up, the proposal insultingly suggests that problems in education can be blamed on lack of commitment from teachers. To make such an insulting statement just a week after the NUT revealed the damning results of its workload survey is quite incredible.

In response, even Tory education secretary Nicky Morgan was forced to acknowledge that workload needed to be addressed. But not Tristram!

**Martin Powell-Davies**  
NUT executive member

**Corporate welfare**

Since 2007 multinational Disney got £170 million from the government for creating films in the UK - £50 million in tax credits last year alone! By contrast the Con-Dems scrapped a £347 million crisis fund in April that provides emergency cash for families on the verge of homelessness or starvation.

Kevin Farnsworth from the University of York has produced an 'audit' of the British corporate welfare state. In the financial year 2011-12 these corporate benefits add up to over £14 billion - almost three times the £5 billion paid out in income-based jobseeker's allowance.

When added to the corporate tax benefits, cheap credit to banks and business, insurance schemes etc, Farnsworth calculates that this costs £85 billion a year! That dwarfs money paid out in tax credits, housing and council tax benefits to people in work but who don't earn enough to live on.

We need to take into public ownership the top companies and banks dominating the economy. They should be run under democratic working-class control in a socialist plan of production based on the interests of the overwhelming majority of people.

**Carl Harper**

**Undeserving rich**

I'm sick of hearing how the unions held the country to ransom in the 70s and that governments had to concede defeat because the consequences of not giving the workers what they deserve were too severe for the economy.

The Tories think of the working class as the 'undeserving poor'. What about the undeserving rich? The bankers held the country to ransom and the consequences of giving them what they don't deserve were too severe for the economy. There is a major difference - the unions protect the people who create the wealth while the Tories protect those who squander it.

**Eric Thorpe**  
Salford

**Scottish inspiration**

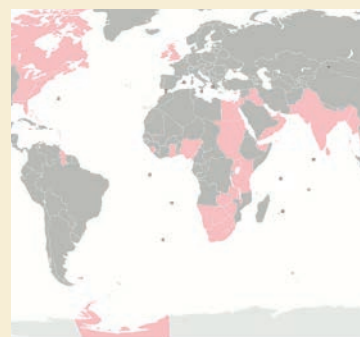
In the recent referendum Scotland's workers saw independence as a way of rejecting the consequences of capitalist governments' attacks on wages, benefits, and massive cuts to public services.

A writer in a local Derby paper says he can't 'fathom' why people in Scotland are entitled to free prescriptions and free university places as are the people of Wales. We should all be entitled to them and at one time we were! Can the writer 'fathom' why just 85 people on earth own a combined wealth equal to that of the poorest 3.5 billion people?

Only by using the powers that independence would have brought to take the wealth out of the hands of the minority, by nationalising oil companies and banks and using this for the benefit of the majority could people's doubts have been answered. The establishment SNP will not do this.

These policies would have inspired a vast majority to vote yes. If implemented it would also have inspired the workers and middle class of England, Wales and Ireland to follow suit.

**Charlie Taylor**

**Lessons of WW1**

The Liverpool Echo recently published heartbreaking letters from butchered servicemen to their families in World War One. They brought out the essential element of the conflict, capturing the horror, not the glory, of the 1914-18 slaughter.

The issues in 1914 are similar to that today: thirst for control over the planet's resources. Germany sought to extend its territories and markets at the expense of France and the British Empire, which controlled 25% of the world's resources.

I recall sitting in my classroom in 1946 as a seven-year-old. The teacher pointed at a map of the world saying 'those pink parts are all ours.' It didn't occur to me to ask 'if they're all ours why are my shoes letting in?'

Unbridled international capitalism unleashed WWI and, as always, it was the poor workers in uniform of all nations who died in its interests. Only when society takes control of the world's wealth and harnesses it for the common good will we see the end of the horrific conflicts that have plagued society since the 'war to end all wars' ended.

**Tony Mulhearn**

# Obama's strategy to beat IS lies in tatters



Air strikes on the Turkey/Syria border

**Tony Saunois**  
Committee for a Workers' International

Obama and his western allies such as Cameron argue that a policy of air strikes alone could defeat the advances made by 'Islamic state' (IS) forces in Iraq and Syria. Now with the possible defeat of Kurdish forces fighting IS for control of the city of Kobane, this policy lies in tatters.

IS forces have advanced in the city and could be on the verge of another victory. Amidst reports of horrific scenes of brutal slaughter in the city by the crazed forces of reactionary IS, US air strikes on IS forces failed to halt their advance. Those trapped in Kobane are waging a courageous fight to defeat IS or face certain slaughter.

Obama and Cameron's air strikes policy is also at risk in Iraq with major IS gains in the western province of Anbar (nearly 25% of Iraq). All Anbar's major towns except Haditha and one military base have fallen to IS.

Again the Iraqi army offered little effective resistance. In yet another humanitarian catastrophe, an estimated 750,000 people have already fled Anbar province - up to 180,000 fleeing as IS forces overran the military base near Hit.

**Rapid advances**

IS may now launch a further offensive to try to take the Sunni western part of Baghdad. Anbar province was the centre of the 2003 Sunni uprising against the US occupation.

A crucial element in the IS victories lies in the amount of heavy weaponry and arms they captured from disintegrating Iraqi armed forces. The rapid advances they made over vast areas of Iraq and Syria also show that the IS uprising has become a generalised Sunni uprising.

The brutal response of Shia militias near Baghdad, which have not distinguished between IS fighters

and ordinary Sunni people, have driven the Sunni population under the IS umbrella as there is no other force to defend them. Shia militias in Baghdad speak openly of driving the Sunnis out from mixed areas of the city. IS has been able to gain support because of the oppression of the Sunni population under the western installed government of Maliki in Iraq following the US-led occupation.

**Turkish regime**

The Turkish regime of Erdogan consciously held back from intervening against IS forces advancing on Kobane. They fear the consequences that a Kurdish victory would have on the 15 million Kurdish population inside Turkey.

Most fighting in Kobane is led by the PYD - the Syrian branch of the Kurdish PKK in Turkey. The Erdogan regime would be more comfortable with an IS victory over the PYD rather than vice-versa as indicated by the agreement reached for the release of Turkish hostages held by IS. Now Turkish warplanes have cynically bombed PKK bases in Turkish Hakkari province near the Iraqi border.

There can be no trust in any of the regional leaders or western imperialism to resolve this crisis in the interests of all the region's peoples. Western imperialist intervention is only worsening the catastrophe.

The origins of the current slaughter can largely be found in the legacy of western imperialist interventions into the entire region.

No trust can be placed in the Sunni or Shia elite and rulers of the region's countries which aim to use the conflict to gain for themselves. Turkey is looking to strengthen its expansion into Syria and seeking to establish a new mini form of the Ottoman empire.

Obama speaks of assembling a coalition of such Sunni powers as Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and the UAE to oppose IS. However, while these countries' ruling dynasties may not fully support IS's actions, sections of them have been backing IS and

all have their own regional interests and their own agendas.

Defeating IS is not their main priority. They can use the fact that IS in the short term can cause more problems for the Shia regimes in order to bolster their own interests.

**United movement**

To combat the horrors of IS and other reactionary sectarian forces in the region, a united movement of Sunni and Shia masses together with the Kurdish, Turkish and all other peoples must be built. To combat the reactionary threat of an IS slaughter in Kobane, such democratic committees need building to form mass militias.

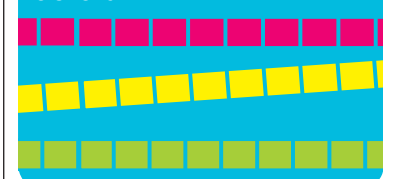
In Turkey, committees of Turkish and Kurdish workers need to be formed and come together in a united way. There must be a struggle to lift Turkey's arms embargo to allow for the arming of such militias. The way forward is to build non-sectarian committees of the Arab Sunni and Shia masses together with the Kurdish people in Iraq in opposition to sectarian forces on both sides.

Such committees could form the basis of a government of workers, peasants and all those exploited by capitalism and imperialism that would guarantee the democratic, national and ethnic rights of all peoples of the entire area based on a democratic socialist federation of states.

What is the IS and how can it be defeated will be one of the sessions at **SOCIALISM2014**

8 & 9 November in London

See page 5 for more details





# Ireland: Stunning byelection victory for Socialist Party in Dublin

**Eddie McCabe**  
Socialist Party (CWI Ireland)

11 October 2014 will be a day that's remembered for years to come in Ireland. An estimated 100,000 marched in Dublin against the hated water charges. And on the same day, Paul Murphy, Socialist Party member and Anti-Austerity Alliance (AAA) candidate, won the Dublin South West byelection by leading the call for a mass campaign of non-payment and active resistance to this double tax.

Paul joins Socialist Party members Joe Higgins and Ruth Coppinger in the Dáil (Irish parliament). Ruth won a byelection in Dublin West five months ago.

## AAA

Just over one year ago the campaign against the Property Tax was defeated, which undoubtedly demoralised many working class people. But out of that campaign the AAA was formed, on the initiative of the Socialist Party, to contest the elections in May 2014. It received a warm welcome from the working class with the election of 14 councillors nationally.

Those elections were an indication of a turning point in people's understanding of the potential to resist austerity after seven years of onslaught. 11 October was a social explosion based on that sentiment.

A delivery of posters arrived at Sinn Fein HQ in Dublin South West on the morning of Friday 3 October, one week before election day. They carried the slogan that had served Sinn Fein so well in the local and European elections just over four months prior, in which they had made an historic electoral breakthrough. They read simply: "Make the change".

This was part of their plan for a

## The Committee for a Workers' International

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

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

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

last big push to secure victory in one of their heartland constituencies.

But as teams of determined Sinn Fein activists set out across the constituency they suddenly became dejected and frustrated. They were met with a sea of red, black and yellow AAA posters carrying a response to the posters they hadn't even erected yet: "Make the REAL change - vote 1 Paul Murphy".

This was symbolic of how the election overall played out from beginning to end. The AAA set the agenda and was one step ahead in the cut and thrust of the political battle. AAA made the election not just about being against water charges, but about how to beat them, and crucially about who working class people can trust in this fight.

The choice was made clear: should people put their hopes in another political party, like Sinn Fein, to form a government that may abolish water charges (as many had done with Labour previously) or should they rely instead on organising in communities, on mass non-payment and protest, and on building political pressure that no government can ignore.



Above: Paul (centre) on the announcement of his victory Below: the We Won't Pay section of the demonstration

**Ruth Coppinger, Socialist Party TD will be speaking at the Saturday rally of SOCIALISM2014**

8 & 9 November in London

See page 5 for more details

In keeping with the revolt that is emerging against water charges throughout the Irish state, a majority chose the latter and voted for the AAA.

All of the political analysts and commentators in Ireland agreed that this election was Sinn Fein's



'to lose' and nobody thought that the AAA could win. The bookies put Sinn Fein at 1/25 to win going in to the election and the AAA at 16/1. The local and European elections in May of this year were characterised by a swing to Sinn Fein, particularly in working class communities in Dublin where the Labour Party was turfed out on the back of their betrayals and broken promises.

But they underestimated the AAA and its ability to convince people of the need for an active fight on the issue and to expose the weaknesses of Sinn Fein's own approach.

The Irish Times newspaper on the day after the election wrote that the AAA campaign was a "master stroke in political tactics and timing". The result was a major upset, which would have been impossible without a correct political assessment and an ability to give expression to an underlying anger. It also took a huge amount of hard work from many dedicated activists and supporters.

The lesson that must be taken is that the time to build a new movement to represent working people and against the water charges and all austerity, is now. That will be the focus of the AAA from here onwards.

## Master stroke

A nationwide opinion poll published by the Irish Times two days before the election put Sinn Fein level with Fine Gael - the main right-wing party in government - indicating a continuation of that swing. Sinn Fein were extremely confident.

## 'Political awakening' continues in Scotland

**Matt Dobson**  
Socialist Party Scotland

Over 10,000 participated in the Hope Over Fear pro-independence rally called by Tommy Sheridan in Glasgow's George Square on 12 October. The event showed the depth of the newly awakened political consciousness in Scotland with mass mobilisations still a possibility even after the result of a No vote.

## Clear strategy

Socialist Party Scotland (SPS) member and Glasgow Unison branch secretary, Brian Smith, was the only platform speaker to put a clear strategy for a mass movement against austerity. He got one of the loudest cheers of the whole afternoon when he called for the major parts of the economy to be brought under public ownership. He pointed out that if the SNP government and local councils in Scotland refused to make the cuts they would receive mass support.

Unfortunately this is not the case at the moment so Brian called for people to attend the conference called by the Scottish Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition on 1 November



One of the Generation Fightback stalls at the rally photo GF

to discuss standing anti-cuts candidates May's Westminster election.

Hundreds of young people signed up to Generation Fightback, a new youth organisation that fights for demands including a £10 an hour minimum wage without discrimination, the immediate introduction of votes at 16 and an

independent socialist Scotland.

SPS distributed our open letter to SNP members calling on SNP leaders to stand up and fight austerity which was mostly warmly received. We had seventy applications to join SPS and two new members joined immediately and then helped us on the stall.



Socialist Alternative (co-thinkers of the Socialist Party in the US) members took part in a week of action in Ferguson, Missouri, to continue protests against the racist police murder of Michael Brown in August. As part of this more than 70 people attended a meeting of Socialist Alternative in Ferguson (inset) photo Socialist Alternative



# On the road to higher wages



Waltham Forest trade unionists fire up their engines photo Tim Roedel

**Linda Taaffe**  
Secretary,  
Waltham Forest Trades Council

Workers in Waltham Forest are amongst some of the poorest in London. So the call for an immediate, big pay rise that rang out loud and clear from the Waltham Forest Trades Council motorcade really resonated.

Ten vehicles, representing local trade unions in dispute with the government, wound their way slowly through the main roads on 4 October to advertise the TUC's "Britain needs a pay rise" march.

Horns blared. People stopped and came out of shops. They waved and gave signs of support; they got the message. Enough of austerity and poverty wages, we can join together and fight back against a government that only represents millionaires.

One young woman said "Yes, all my family needs a pay rise" and

grabbed a bundle of leaflets to give out. The lead vehicle carrying the trades council banner was emblazoned with Unite slogans, followed by vehicles, all decorated up with TUC 18 October demo posters.

## Easy riders

There were Unite and Unison local government, Unite and Unison at Whipps Cross hospital, teaching unions NUT and UCU, and the firefighters' union FBU complete with flags and motorbike rider. Then came the bakers' and food workers' union BFAWU, and lastly campaign group Youth Fight for Jobs.

Groups of leafleters at four sites along the busy route handed out nearly 2,000 leaflets - despite the rain. These included translations into five languages, urging all to join together to stop this race to the bottom that the bosses want - and to make a start by coming along to the demo on 18 October.

**From Militant's past to modern Palestine**, the Socialist party has been packing rooms in Leeds. A rally to celebrate 50 years since the launch of Militant, the Socialist's predecessor, saw 75 attend (below right). The meeting on 9 October raised £650, plus hundreds more from sales of prints by Militant cartoonist Alan Hardman. Students in Leeds discussed the struggle for Palestinian liberation with a socialist from Maavak Sozialisti (Socialist Struggle Movement), sister organisation of the Socialist Party in Israel-Palestine (below left). The meeting on 30 September took place via video link.



Maavak Sozialisti banner in Hebrew and Arabic picture Maavak Sozialisti



Clare Doyle, standing, was expelled from the Labour Party for her work with Militant photo Iain Dalton

## Coventry fans stung by Wasps

**Dan Crowter**  
Coventry Socialist Party

After spending a year playing in Northampton, 35 miles outside Coventry, the recent return of Coventry City Football Club (CCFC) to Coventry's Ricoh Arena was welcomed by football fans across the country. But issues around the ownership of the club and stadium continue.

A recent bid from London Wasps Rugby Football Club to purchase ACL, the company which runs the Ricoh, was accepted by Coventry council. This puts the future of CCFC and Coventry Rugby Football Club in doubt.

There was no real public consultation, and the people of Coventry do not know the details of the deal. Wasps chairman Derek Richardson now owns 100% of ACL, having paid nearly £20 million to the firm's owners and creditors.

The council claims this deal is the best for the club and the people of Coventry. But how do we know if they don't give us the details? Our money built the Ricoh, now it's being stolen from us by a rich businessman who couldn't care less about us or our clubs.

### Socialist councillors

In 2003, when the council was debating building the Ricoh, there were three Socialist Party councillors who held the balance of power. They forced a full public consultation and debate. The views of Coventry residents and CCFC fans were sought, and as a result the Socialist councillors voted to build the new stadium.

The current council of 43 Labour members and 11 Tories has now decided unanimously that the sta-

dium will be leased for 250 years!

Coventry already has a rugby club and a football club - London Wasps relocating here threatens both of them. CCFC fans can also sympathise with Wasps supporters whose own club, already moved 30 miles away from the capital in 2002, is now to be moved a further 80!

CCFC owners Sisu and the council have shown repeatedly that they don't have the club's best interests at heart. The business-people who own Wasps don't either. They'll keep on selling us down the river. All the clubs should be owned and run by the fans.



## Johnson's housing crime scene

**James Ivens**  
Lambeth and South West London  
Socialist Party

If you believed a word from London's Tory mayor Boris Johnson, you might think he was committed to building affordable housing. Events in Raines Park, in the south west London borough of Merton, show exactly the opposite.

"Raynesfield" is a development of 28 homes owned by the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime. Originally it housed police officers, but when this ceased, the homes were offered to other public sector workers. Many tenants have been there for twenty years or more. From 28 October onwards, the housing association that manages it will be evicting them.

Selling the site to one of his developer chums is more important to Johnson than housing key workers. And the money will be useful for buy-

ing water cannon and other extravagant repressive equipment to boost his Tory leadership credentials.

### Hijacked

Johnson has hijacked affordable housing funding in London. Rather than providing homes with permanent tenancies at affordable rents, the funding is used to subsidise developers' over priced, exclusive schemes. So called affordable housing requires household incomes of over £60,000!

As one of Johnson's supporters said, "Even City solicitors need affordable housing."

People with a housing need, including police officers, will find they need to look elsewhere. The Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC), which includes the Socialist Party, has committed to a mass house building programme - at genuinely affordable rents.



# Interview with Mark Serwotka, PCS general secretary



The socialist-led Public and Commercial Services civil servants' union is due to have an election for the post of general secretary. Bob Severn spoke to the current general secretary, Mark Serwotka, who is standing for re-election.

### What has changed in the PCS since you were first elected general secretary in 2000?

I would say the union is unrecognisable from the one that existed when I became general secretary.

It's now a union that respects its activists as its lifeblood rather than an inconvenience. It has democratised massively in terms of electing its senior full time officers, of giving much more power to the groups, the branches and the regions, where decisions can be made at a level nearer the grassroots.

It's a union that supports disputes, always. It will always put members first and is never shy in not just supporting strikes, but arguing for strike action. And it's a union that when I took over hadn't had a national strike in a generation. We have now had numerous national strikes and group disputes.

But the other big change is that the union is stable. The relationship between the elected officers, myself as general secretary for example and the national executive, particularly with Janice Godrich as president for 13 years, means that there's a stability in the union from top to bottom.

We're now one that recognises what matters, fights back when it needs to and is one that I think people are proud to be part of.

### The government says the cuts have to be made. What's the PCS's alternative?

We start by saying that analysis is a deliberate lie, pedalled by the mainstream parties. They want people



Mark speaking at Socialism 2013 photos Senan

to think that they shouldn't fight, so allow them to dismantle much of what we have fought for in this country for years, in terms of the welfare state, decent education, decent pay and conditions, a decent social security system.

We say not only is it not inevitable, there's a much better alternative. That's based on growing the economy by putting people back into work with decent pay rises.

But we also say - apart from putting people back to work who can contribute to tax - there's an inequality that needs to be addressed. The rich get richer, the poor get poorer, and therefore there needs to be a real crackdown. The richest should pay much higher levels of tax.

We need to clampdown on all the evasion and avoidance of not just rich individuals but multinational companies. The tax gap is currently

£123 billion unpaid or uncollected under the tax system now. Imagine if we got some of that in, plus we were also taxing people at more appropriate levels higher up the scale. We would have billions of pounds that we could be spend on improving society.

### So how can the cuts be stopped?

The PCS analysis is the cuts can be stopped. To do that we need to mobilise millions of people in Britain. The best way of mobilising them is first of all recognising the importance of strikes.

It's obvious the more people that strike together the stronger we are. We will continue to put the maximum case forward for coordinated industrial action between public sector unions definitely, but also private sector unions where that can be achieved.

In the week that will see the TUC demonstration, we thought at one stage there were potentially millions of people going on strike across most parts of the public sector and indeed the tube drivers in London. Now we have a health strike on, we have PCS members out on strike on Wednesday. It's not as big as we were hoping, but it is still significant.

We need to see more industrial action properly coordinated, so the government takes us seriously rather than think that every now and again there might be a bit of a protest and nothing more.

We need to supplement those strikes with demonstrations. We've recently seen occupations by single mothers in East London to highlight the housing crisis. We've seen

extended strikes like the Doncaster care workers. Our job has to be to unite all of these actions, whether it's direct action, demonstrations, or whether it's campaigning in the community, but it has to be headed by industrial action.

While all of that could transform things, we also need clearly to recognise that as long as we've just got the established political parties, the choice before the electorate is invariably just austerity or a worse form of austerity.

Therefore we need to supplement direct industrial action with building a real mass movement that can actually provide a real alternative to argue for a fairer society.

### So the PCS has debated the question of political representation - where is that process at now?

After four years of debate we balloted members and they voted in favour of a political strategy that says in exceptional circumstances we would field or support candidates in national elections.

But I think that's a small part to what is really needed. I think it's not just a coming together of those who believe an alternative is required, but it is ensuring that that idea is backed up by as big organisations as we can get. The root to success is more trade unions recognising the need for an alternative.

### Attempts by some civil service departments have been made to end check-off membership subs collection. How is the PCS responding?

A system that means our finances

Mark Serwotka will speak at the Saturday rally of **SOCIALISM2014** 8 & 9 November in London See page 5 for more details



are dependent on the employers collecting, leaves us vulnerable. The government recognised that and decided to attack us, in a very petty and vindictive act.

It doesn't cost them any money. It's been in place for over 50 years and it is common practice throughout public and private sectors.

Our response is to defend check-off, to politically campaign to get these decisions overturned. But all the time being prepared to try to get to move people from check-off on to Direct Debit. Where we've got that right, where there's been a lot of activity, not only are people signing up but new people are joining the union.

### Why should PCS members vote for you as general secretary in the upcoming election?

If there's a choice in the election it will be between a collegiate leadership that works well together, that is a left, socialist leadership, that believes that defending members must come first, second and third.

The alternative to that would be to fall for the right-wing lies that we've seen put forward in other unions - that strikes don't work, that better relationships mean all our problems will go away.

It's a very fundamental choice really: a union that is strong enough to defend ourselves and go on the offensive when the time is right, against those who want to fly the flag of surrender and just accept that nothing can be done.

In my view, I hope and believe that members will recognise when times are as difficult as this, you need the strongest union possible, not one that is weak at the top.

► The deadline for PCS branch nominations for general secretary is 23 October. If there is more than one candidate, the election ballot will take place from 20 November to 11 December.



photo Warrington TUC



## Socialist victory in Ireland

# WORKERS NEED A NEW PARTY



### Come to Socialism 2014

[www.socialism2014.net](http://www.socialism2014.net)

Paula Mitchell

Hundreds of thousands are striking and marching for better pay. The thorny question of a political voice for this struggle is also on thousands of minds.

The victory of ex-Tory Douglas Carswell for Ukip in Clacton, and the narrow shave for Labour in Heywood, have set many workers' thoughts racing.

But a brilliant byelection result in Ireland has shown the potential for political earthquakes when a bold anti-austerity programme is put

#### Victories

Socialist Party member Paul Murphy has been elected to the Irish parliament for the Anti-Austerity Alliance. This 'shock' result, a rejection of all the main parties, makes Paul the third Socialist Party TD (Irish MP)!

This follows victory for Socialist TD Ruth Coppinger, and the stunning election of Socialist Alternative member Kshama Sawant to Seattle city council in the United States. These victories were the political expression of mass battles: against water charges in Ireland, and for a \$15 an hour minimum wage in Seattle.

In Britain, who can strikers and marchers vote for to champion their fight against low pay? Who will break the pay freeze? Who will fight for a £10 an hour minimum wage, as demanded by the TUC?

#### Tories

We all hate the Tories, the millionaire representatives of the super-rich and big corporations. With austerity ruining masses of lives, and the Tories so damaged after the Scottish referendum, any opposition worth its salt ought to romp home next May. But instead the election hangs in the balance. Why?

Labour has promised to continue austerity if victorious. Instead of standing up to the Tories, Labour councils have gleefully slashed pay and sacked workers. And nationally, Labour promises there will be

no more money.

We understand many trade unionists will grit their teeth and vote Labour through sheer desperation to get rid of the government. But, utterly disillusioned, many working class people won't vote at all. And the risk is that many will vote Ukip in protest.

The media's ceaseless promotion of Ukip has gone into overdrive, with the incredible decision to give Farage a platform in leaders' debates. Not other small parties with longer standing MPs - or the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC), which will be fielding a record number of candidates on a unique anti-austerity programme.

#### Alternative

The Socialist Party argues that a new, mass workers' party is desperately needed. We say union leaders need to bite the bullet. Instead of pouring millions of members' hard earned pounds into Labour coffers, for them to use only to attack us, they should fund the launch of a new party.

TUSC, co-founded by Bob Crow, is appealing for people to come forward and join a real people's army: a thousand council candidates and a hundred MP candidates for 2015. This could be a precursor to the new party we need.

Do you want to stop Ukip in its tracks? Then join the campaign for a new, democratic, anti-austerity political organisation - based on the organisations of the working class.

#### SOCIALISM2014

The struggle for workers' political representation

8 & 9 November  
in central London

See page 5 for details



#### What we stand for

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

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

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

#### Our demands include:

##### PUBLIC SERVICES

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

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

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

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

##### WORK AND INCOME

- Trade union struggle to increase the minimum wage to £8 an hour without exemptions as an immediate step towards £10 an hour. For an annual increase in the minimum wage linked to average earnings.

- All workers, including part-timers, temps, casual and migrant workers to have trade union rates of pay, employment protection, and sickness and holiday rights from day one of employment.

- An immediate 50% increase in the state retirement pension, as a step towards a living pension.

- Reject 'Workfare'. For the right to decent benefits, education, training, or a job, without compulsion.
- Scrap the anti-trade union laws! For fighting trade

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

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

##### ENVIRONMENT

- Major research and investment into replacing fossil fuels with renewable energy and into ending the problems of early obsolescence and un-recycled waste.

- Public ownership of the energy generating industries. No to nuclear power. No to Trident.

- A democratically planned, low fare, publicly owned transport system, as part of an overall plan against environmental pollution.

##### RIGHTS

- Oppose discrimination on the grounds of race, sex, disability, sexuality, age, and all other forms of prejudice.

- Repeal all laws that trample over civil liberties. For the right to protest! End police harassment.

- Defend abortion rights. For a woman's right to choose when and whether to have children.

- For the right to asylum. No to racist immigration laws.

##### NEW MASS 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 mass 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!