



Anger on the march against low pay

PRICED OUT? STRIKE BACK!



photo P. Mason

Claire Laker-Mansfield

Workers need a pay rise. Even Alan Milburn apparently agrees. As 100,000 people took part in the TUC march on Saturday, this ex-New Labour minister come coalition-appointed 'social mobility tsar' released a damning report attacking all the main parties' policies on poverty. Britain is becoming 'permanently divided' into haves and have-nots, he warns.

The overwhelming mood on Saturday's demonstration was one of hot anger.

First and foremost, it was anger at the brutal Con-Dems. Years of austerity have left workers reeling.

In particular, the government's 1% public sector pay cap is worse than insulting. There's no such belt tightening for the 'haves'. Britain's 104 billionaires saw their wealth rise 20% last year.

For young workers, the low-pay crisis is particularly acute. As Milburn's report highlighted, under 30s face being 'priced out of the UK' with youth wages currently no higher than they were 16 years ago.

House prices have risen 400% in 20 years. For this generation, insecurity is the name of the game. Zero-hours employment, precarious housing and poverty wages are the stuff of life.

Demonstrators had reserved plenty of anger for Labour too. During the strike action by health

workers and civil servants, the sound of Miliband's silence was deafening.

It is a measure of Labour's utter cowardice - not to mention that of some right-wing trade union leaders - that one of the harshest attacks their party received came from one of their own.

"Nowhere near"

Milburn is a former cabinet minister and arch-Blairite. Yet even he can see that an £8 an hour minimum wage by 2020 is "nowhere near good enough".

This is contrasted to the huge enthusiasm for £10 an hour now, as called for by the Socialist Party on the TUC march. As one worker said when signing a petition: "£10? Now

that's more like it".

Determination to fight is clearly in no shortage among the hundreds of thousands who have been on strike and marched in October. But this determination has not always been matched by the leadership of the trade unions.

There was fury among many local government workers that they had been denied their chance to strike. Teachers and other groups were angry that their unions were also not part of this month's action.

Now the urgent task is to rebuild coordinated strike action as a step towards a 24-hour general strike. This could draw in unorganised layers and help bring the colossal weight of the working class to bear on an out-of-touch political elite and their crisis ridden system.

Many people enjoyed their first major trade union protest on the 18 October. It once again demonstrated the huge potential power of workers.

Now we need to get organised to make sure that strength is put to use. This is why the Socialist Party supports the National Shop Stewards Network (see www.shopstewards.net).

We need to keep up the pressure on the trade union leaders. Crucial to this is building democratic fighting left organisations in the unions and involving activists in the structures of the union. This task has never been more urgent. At stake, is the future of the 99%.

See pages 2 and 4 for demo and strike reports and analysis

the **Socialist**

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what we think

The unions' pay battle must continue

The local government pay dispute is hanging by a thread, also putting at risk the prospect of large-scale coordinated industrial action this side of the general election.

This struggle against the Con-Dems' 1% pay ceiling has been the biggest joint action since the 2011 pension dispute that peaked with the two million-strong 30 November (N30) strike. Over one million walked out together on 10 July 2014 and over half a million NHS workers and civil servants went on strike on 13 and 15 October respectively.

Three consecutive days of strike action were originally planned with up to 700,000 local government workers due to strike on 14 October in a week ended by the TUC 'Britain Needs a Pay Rise' demonstration.

However, the council workers' strike was suspended by the three main unions – Unison, Unite and the GMB in the face of a pay 'offer' from the Local Government Association (LGA). The coalition of unions had already been weakened by the mistaken decision of the NUT teachers' union to rule themselves out of the October strikes.

The TUC demonstration was a snapshot of the contradictory moods that exist amongst union members. The size of the Unison and NUT contingents seemed less than previous marches. This was undoubtedly affected by the aborted strikes. But, that around 100,000 marched shows the level of anger that still exists on pay and against the cuts in general. It also shows the huge potential for a mass movement of resistance, with coordinated strikes at its centre. In particular, the NHS strikes boosted the attendance.

Local government

The suspension of the local government action has caused a furore in all three unions, especially Unison. The so-called offer was paltry, meaning that most workers would get no more than the 1% already offered in 2014-

2015 and slightly less than 1.2% for 2015-16.

Unison general secretary Dave Prentis reportedly attended the local government National Joint Council (NJC) meeting with two of his assistant general secretaries to ask the committee to trust him that the proposal would stay on the table and there would be an improvement offered if action were called off.

Yet at the 18 October TUC rally, Prentis said: "The pay offer is not good... if our members vote against that pay offer we will take sustained industrial action." But his intervention has been to close down the strike. This has not been lost on many Unison members.

It is not clear what role was played by the Unite leadership. But members will correctly have expected general secretary Len McCluskey to have been prepared to overrule the national officer and argue that Unite should have rejected the then proposal.

Narrow vote

Actually, it was Unite and GMB who were the first unions to want to suspend action and only a narrow vote in the Unison NJC delegation prolonged the dispute until the official offer was tabled on 9 October.

Scandalously, instead of using the precious weeks before the planned strike to build the mood, the unions' vacillation and blame games against each other meant that momentum seeped away. With the offer being voted on over the next few weeks, there must now be a campaign in all three unions to reject it and re-join the joint strikes.

The reaction has been one of anger and betrayal among many Unison activists in particular. They correctly fear a repeat of the setback of the ending of the pensions dispute after N30, when the TUC along with Unison and GMB leaders signed up to the government's deal. This effectively finished what should have been a developing struggle that

could have forced Cameron and Osborne to retreat, even putting their rule in doubt.

Instead, the deal opened the door to the most brutal cuts offensive seen in this country since before World War Two. Included in this austerity attack is the continuing public sector pay squeeze after four years of pay freezes, attacks on terms and conditions and increases in pension contributions. Little wonder that the TUC now estimates that workers have on average lost £50 per week in real terms since 2008.

Pre-election strikes

That the Labour-affiliated union leaders have been forced to call action in a pre-election period reflects the huge anger and frustration among workers. Bombarded with Con-Dem boasts about the 'economic recovery', incomes of the rich are booming but not workers'. But even this anaemic improvement in the economy means they are asking 'where is our share'?

However, counter-posed to this is the utter lack of confidence from many of the trade union leaders that the organised working-class, still the most powerful potential force in society, can force the government to retreat. They see the election of a Labour government next May as the only way of defending their members, even though they are well aware that Miliband and Balls have accepted Tory spending plans. This is reflected in the Labour leaders' total refusal to support the pay strikes.

Reportedly, the local government pay offer was put together at Labour's national conference in September. The idea that their pay claim has been sacrificed on the very uncertain altar of a Labour election victory will enrage members of these Labour-affiliated unions. The great anger at Labour among workers meant pro-Labour trade union leaders had to be critical of the party at the TUC demo rally.

The struggle within local government unions to reject the pay offer is absolutely crucial. Already, Unison branches have begun passing motions critical of the leadership's recommendation. Some of them have been erstwhile supporters of Prentis and the Unison bureaucracy. But the pressure of the members on what is a lay leadership has put them on a collision course with a full-time officialdom that is freed from harsh economic realities.

Activists

This clash opens the door to militant activists within Unison to coalesce in order to provide an alternative leadership of the union in the Unison NEC elections next year and in a possible general secretary election.

In contrast to the pessimism of these union leaders, the fantastic four-hour strike of the NHS workers shows what is possible. Denied even the miserly 1% wage increase, the 13 October action was the first pay strike in the NHS since 1982 and the first by the Royal College of Midwives in its 133-year history!

The picket lines were four-hour protests, over the dismantling of the NHS as much as pay, with huge public support. Even if the wider public sector pay dispute falters, a continuing struggle amongst NHS workers that leads to a wider movement cannot be ruled out.

Whether there will be a continuation and even escalation of the public sector pay struggle, depends on whether militant union activists can win the battle in their own unions.

As seen in the Scottish Independence referendum, when workers are blocked on the industrial and political fronts, they can move behind other more immediate struggles where they can vent their sense of injustice. The movement around the Yes vote reflected the anger at the pro-austerity parties. It shows the vital need for workers to create a political party of their own.

100,000 march against cuts and for a wage rise

Bill Mullins

Around 100,000 trade unionists and supporters attended the London TUC's 'Britain Needs A Pay Rise' demonstration in London on Saturday 18 October.

Trade union contingents from all the major unions - and smaller ones - lined up along Embankment to march to Hyde Park. The protest was against the on-going erosion of wages, on average £50 a week down in real terms since 2007. Marchers were enthused by the demo and the support it had received.

At the Hyde Park rally, speaker after speaker correctly condemned the attacks upon workers by the government in both the public and private sectors.

PCS general secretary Mark Serwotka called for national trade union coordinated action and expressed disappointment that the 14 October local authority strikes had been called off. He praised the Fast Food Rights protest that took place outside McDonalds during the course of the day.

But the overwhelming impression from the Labour-affiliated union leaders was 'wait for a Labour government'. Len McCluskey at least said: "I say to Labour - stop being scared of your own shadow. Don't shrink what you offer the

British people."

He also said: "But we need to do more than just march." Unfortunately he didn't spell out how we were supposed to organise other than build the trade unions. There was nothing said about his previous statements about the possibility of a new party after the general election if Labour was to continue its 'austerity-lite' policies.

Unison general secretary Dave Prentis came onto the platform with representatives from the Doncaster Care UK strike. These workers, he said, had been on strike for 90 days and the union was proud to represent them.

He congratulated health workers for their action, especially the midwives "for taking strike action for the first time in history". But Prentis also said that further action would be taken "if needed" in November.

Perhaps in response to some in the crowd shouting "strike now" and going off his prepared speech, he indicated that maybe the local government workers should not accept the new pay offer on the table.

As one person at the National Shop Stewards Network stage at Speakers' Corner said: "Even mathematicians can't work out if the new offer is better or worse than the original offer!"

Demonstrations also took place in Glasgow and Belfast.



The TUC banner at the front of the demo, followed by the Unite Housing Workers branch photo Paul Mattsson

A Freudian slip?

'We demand a better future for disabled people'

Nick Wright

Organiser, Disabled People Against Cuts (DPAC), Leicester

"You make a really good point about the disabled... There is a group - and I know exactly who you mean - where actually, as you say, they're not worth the full wage..."
Lord Freud at a Tory conference fringe meeting

How much is a disabled person worth? According to Tory welfare minister Lord Freud it's around £2 an hour. The reaction by the vast majority of the general public to his comment has, correctly, been one of shock and dismay.

In particular, the use of the word "worth" has angered many. People instinctively know that an individual's worth is not measured in pounds and pence. And even if it were, it would certainly be a lot more than £2 an hour!

Labour shadow ministers have called on Prime Minister David Cameron to sack Freud over his derogatory comments. Yet it was Labour prime minister Tony Blair, in 2006, who appointed the City banker to produce a report on welfare reform, despite Freud admitting he knew nothing about the subject!

The mainstream political parties are doing their very best to build political headway by distancing themselves from his comment. On the radio and television we've heard a variety of responses.

But difficult questions have been raised and the establishment politicians are incapable of answering them. What if someone genuinely wants to work, but can't find an employer willing to pay them the minimum wage? Is a minimum wage preventing people from participating in work, even though it is supposed to help protect



Freud - disabled "not worth the full wage" photo Paul Mattsson

our standard of living? How can we let everyone contribute to society when many people are excluded by employers?

The politicians can't answer those questions because they are bound by the laws of capitalism. The problem is that, under capitalism, your "worth" is defined by your value to an employer. You're measured by your ability to turn somebody else a profit. Other personal qualities are irrelevant.

The bottom line on your bank statement is your life high-score. The politicians are tongue tied because they cannot properly address the issues of people's worth without also questioning the rules of capitalist society.

We can do better. As socialists, we advocate a society that's run to meet people's needs, in which everybody has the chance to work. A society where becoming disabled, getting old, or caring for relatives or children doesn't automatically mean having to endure poverty. A society where everybody can live up to their potential. We also understand that a person's disability is not defined by a specific medical characteristic. It's defined by their ability to access and participate in everyday life.

Unlike like Lord Freud, socialists fight for genuine equality. We campaign for trade union struggle for a £10 an hour minimum wage, without exemptions, as a step toward a real living wage.

Over 50 disabilities, trade union and community activists protested outside the Department for Work and Pensions in central London on Monday 20 October to demand the sacking of welfare minister Lord Freud. DPAC activists denounced the government's scapegoating of disabled people as 'spongers' and 'not wanting to work', as an excuse for cutting financial support. There was also a call to support all workers facing attacks on wages and conditions of employment. The protesters then marched to Parliament Square to join occupy protesters at the Democracy Camp.

Pat Atkinson



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Undercover cops report – a whitewash

Campaign Opposing Police Surveillance

A massive new report on undercover policing from HM Inspectorate of Constabulary was published last week.

It reveals that 1,229 officers are trained for undercover work. However the police National Undercover Index only lists 568 of them. This 'renders the database unsuitable to the task for which it was created,' says the report.

Seven types of deployment are listed, but there is no mention of the political spycops. For a report commissioned as a response to the revelation that the Stephen Lawrence campaign had been spied on, after several years' groundswell following the exposure of Mark Kennedy in 2010, this is no mere oversight. It's a dodge.

Campaigning for social justice or for the proper investigation of the death of a loved one due to incompetent or malevolent police is

left entirely unmentioned in all 206 pages.

But the report tells us that if society wants the police to identify and apprehend some of its most dangerous criminals, it has to allow individual police officers to "get their hands dirty".

The report is only critical of administration, training and support for officers, rather than the impact on citizens and the sinister intent of certain undercover operations. Essentially, it is saying that a little bit more oversight and authorisation will make everything alright.

The authors find it 'reassuring' there is apparently 'a universal understanding by the undercover officers and those managing them' that intimate relationships aren't allowed and 'there are good safeguards in place' to prevent it.

But out of the 14 spycops so far exposed, 13 had sexual relations with citizens they spied on.

There are 49 recommendations at the end of the report. None are about the known outrages of these

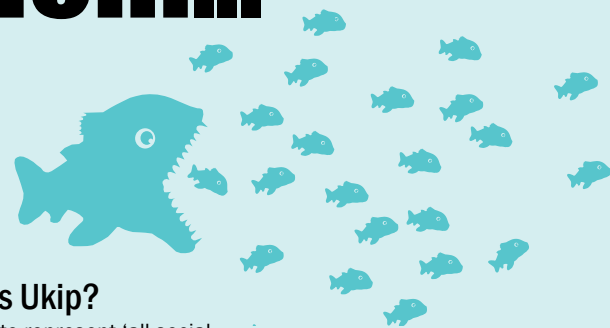
relationships, let alone others such as undermining family justice cases and political campaigns, and the police collusion with illegal corporate activity.

This report is yet another bucket of bitter whitewash written by police and their associates. It insults those who've been abused by the undercover officers from the counter-democratic political police units. Beyond that, it insults anyone who believes in the right to make a stand for environmental and social justice.

It is another decoy, papering over deep cracks in a rotten architecture. It must not distract from the need for a full, open, public inquiry that examines each aspect of undercover political policing in detail and takes testimony from all those impacted by it. COPS will continue to campaign for such an inquiry.

This response can be read in full on campaignopposingpolicesurveillance.com

Them...



Classless Ukip?

Ukip claims to represent 'all social classes'. So what is the commons voting record of Ukip's newest MP, Tory defector Douglas Carswell? He voted for: £9,000 a year tuition fees; the bedroom tax; reducing the rate of corporation tax; ending financial support to 16-19 year olds in further education and training; the privatisation of Royal Mail; restricting the scope of legal aid; capping civil service redundancy payments; privatising forests... He voted against: a bankers' bonus tax; restrictions on fees charged to tenants by letting agents; a mansion tax; equal gay rights; raising welfare benefits at least in line with prices; slowing the rise in rail fares... Not much support for the working and middle classes here then!

Private landlords in England are receiving in excess of £32 billion earnings in rents from tenants a year, or nearly £2.7 billion a month

Less is more

In the last decade, gas and electricity customers have seen their bills rise a massive 52% above inflation, adding an average £410 per household according to Which, the consumer magazine. This is despite, and probably leading to, domestic energy consumption falling by 17% over the same period.

Caring Labour

Care UK strikers in Doncaster recently lobbied local MP and Labour leader Ed Miliband for his support in their months-long pay cuts battle and to defend the NHS. Perhaps Ed could have a word with former Labour health secretary Alan Milburn - now the Con-Dems government's social mobility tsar. The Blairite ex-minister also happens to be on the European advisory panel to Bridgepoint Capital the private equity company which owns Care UK.

The world's richest 1% own nearly half of \$263 trillion global wealth

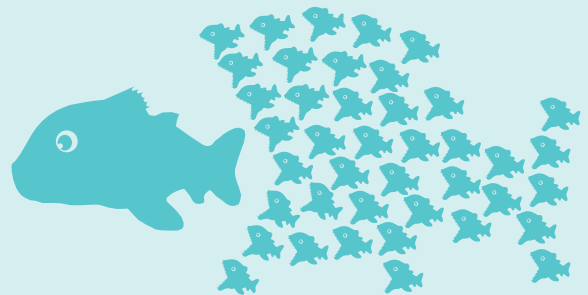
Living wage

Don't hold back when demanding a pay rise from your boss. Tyrel Oates, an employee of Wells Fargo in the US, co-emailed 200,000 fellow workers with a message sent to the company's head: "My proposal is take \$3 billion, just a small fraction of what Wells Fargo pulls in annually, and raise every employee's annual salary by \$10,000." In response, the company says its workers' wages are "market competitive". Wells Fargo made \$5.7 billion profit in the second quarter of 2014 and paid its CEO \$19 million last year.

Affordable housing

The National Housing Federation reckons workers need an £108,500 annual wage in order to buy a home across London as a whole. However, in Kensington and Chelsea a house buyer needs an annual salary of £378,380 to buy an averaged priced home.

...& Us



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

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Public sector pay strikes

Civil servants fight 20% wage drop

Elaine Brunskill, Paula Mitchell and Nick Chaffey

Civil servants in the PCS union were out on strike in force on Wednesday 15 October, taking action over pay during the week that began with NHS workers striking on Monday 13 October.

In Newcastle, PCS deputy president Kevin McHugh spoke to the Socialist: "Today's strike is to try and get a decent pay rise for our members whose incomes have effectively been cut, through pay freezes and low pay awards."

"PCS estimates that members have had a 20% cut in real terms. We have the situation where members are using food banks and are unable

"Members are using food banks and are unable to provide school uniforms for their kids"

to provide school uniforms for their kids.

"The government are trying to grind down our members with their main aim being the privatisation of the civil service if they are re-elected next year."

In central London, all the imposing government buildings, parliament and even Downing Street were decorated with billowing yellow and blue flags and the hi-viz jackets and armbands of strikers.

Well-heeled top civil servants, MPs and ministers are forced to walk past lines of low paid workers demanding decent pay.

Socialist Party members offered support to workers at the Passport Office, Home Office, Department of Transport, Ministry of Justice, DWP, National Gallery, HMRC, Department of Health, Ministry of Defence, Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, the Cabinet Office and many more.

"We should be doing this together!" was the answer from one of the group of all female pickets in Southampton when the question was raised on where the campaign

Secure hospital staff join action

Members of the POA prison officer's union who work in Ashworth, Rampton and Broadmoor secure hospitals are due to strike over NHS pay on 24 October from 7am to 11am.

POA general secretary Steve Gillian said: "Some of the people that have been affected by this are very low paid workers. Our members have shown the depth of feeling by the strength of the vote in favour of strike - 78%, and 91% in favour of action short of strike action."

should go next.

They also were pleased to hear of the work of Southampton Councilors Against the Cuts, Keith Morrell and Don Thomas, who have persistently voted against all cuts the Labour council has imposed on the city. They were united in support for Keith and Don and spoke of a need for more like them!

Radiographers: "No raise - no rays!"



Radiographer on strike in Southampton photo Nick Chaffey

Hot on the heels of the 13 October NHS pay strike by a number of unions, was a four-hour strike on 20 October by members of the Society of Radiographers (SoR), the first by the union for over 30 years. The picket lines at St James' hospital in Leeds were impressive with around 40 pickets covering both the main entrance and the entrance to the Bexley wing. They were joined by some reps from the Unite and Unison branches at the hospital. One industrial rep explained how radiographers have suffered a 15% real terms pay drop over five years. At Southampton General Hospital, pickets said there was a huge retention and recruitment crisis. When asked what the solution was, the

response was: "Stop privatisation. The sister service in Southampton at the Royal South Hants has been handed to Care UK. This means chaos, as x-rays are coded differently and go missing. Patients arriving for treatment at the SGH have to be re-x-rayed, which is in breach of legal requirements that insist patients receive the minimum radiation." Around 30 striking radiographers gathered at the main entrance of Morriston hospital in Swansea. The pickets were young, lively and predominantly female health workers. "It's ok for the MPs and their 10% pay rise but what about us?", they complained.

Iain Dalton, Nick Chaffey and Alec Thraves

St Mungo's Broadway strikers stage 19 picket lines

Paul Kershaw

Over 200 striking homelessness workers gathered outside the head office of St Mungo's Broadway on Friday 17 October, the first of seven days' strike action.

The strike follows imposed changes by a new management team at the charity. Earlier that morning workers staged 19 workplace pickets across London, with St Mungo's volunteers refusing to cross picket lines.

Speaking at the rally, Unite convenor Adam Lambert reported that, in last minute talks at Acas, management had conceded it was wrong to impose changes but did not offer to do anything about it.

Peter Kavanagh, Unite regional secretary, pledged the union's absolute support for the strike including financial assistance.

He underlined that there was no contradiction between workers getting decent conditions and a top class service for homeless people:

quite the opposite.

Speakers included NSSN chair Rob Williams, Unite national officer Sally Kosky, Unite regional officer Nicky Marcus and St Mungo's reps.

Impromptu visit

Later in the day, strikers decided to pay an impromptu visit to the nearby offices of Shepherds Bush Housing Association where St Mungo's Broadway board chair, Paul Doe, is chief executive. Setting off behind the NSSN banner, 150 strikers held a noisy protest.

On the second day, chief executive Howard Sinclair visited a picket in Hackney and told strikers he would not give in to their demands if they struck for 20 days. In an earlier magazine interview he explained that he took a wolf mask to union negotiations!

Sinclair's £5,000 pay cuts for new starters and talk of working with private contractors such as Serco point to a comparable commercialised future for St Mungos Broadway.

Strikers marched at the head of the 18 October TUC 'Britain deserves a pay rise' demonstration behind the Unite Housing Workers banner. They gave out thousands of leaflets and collected money for the strike.

Along with a massive pay-off for the previous chief executive and a new dictatorial management culture, these moves anger staff.

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

Care UK workers lobby Miliband for public support

Alistair Tice

Striking Doncaster Care UK workers finished the last week of their most recent three-week strike action with a bang.

They started the week by joining NHS workers who were on national strike in Doncaster, Sheffield, Wakefield and Barnsley and ended it on stage at the TUC's demonstration rally in Hyde Park.

Solidarity visits were organised to Newcastle again, and to Hull where an "amazing £3,000" was raised in

Miliband would still not support the strikers, as he was a "solutions man"

one night, including £300 raised at York Socialist Party's benefit night.

Three Doncaster Care UK workers met with Labour leader and Doncaster MP Ed Miliband at his local surgery to once again ask for his public support for their fight against pay cuts and to defend the NHS.

Miliband would still not commit to publicly expressing his support for the strikers, saying he was a "solutions man" and encouraged arbitration.

When he left his surgery, he was photo-bombed by the strikers!

At the strikers' rally on Sunday, day 90 of strike action, the meeting voted to continue the dispute. Pressure is mounting on Care UK.

The trustees of the Californian Teachers Union pension fund - a major investor in Bridgepoint, the private equity company that owns Care UK - will meet strikers. Unison's organising and recruitment



Care UK workers photo-bomb Miliband photo Yorkshire SP

team are beginning to target the company in other regions.

Strikers rejected Care UK's offer of arbitration but feel confident that with the threat of more strike action, especially targeting Christmas, the management will

be forced to come up with a much improved pay offer.

Keep up the messages of support and donations (cheques payable to Doncaster Unison 20511, post to Unison, Jenkinson House, White-Rose Way, Doncaster DN4 5GJ).

WEA tutors' victory

Following the threat of the first ever strike at the 111 year old Workers' Educational Association (WEA), management have withdrawn a devastating restructuring plan that included job and pay cuts. The WEA management had sought to impose changes without a hint of negotiation or consultation with Unite, the recognised union. But WEA Unite members voted by 85% to strike. WEA management has agreed to engage in full and meaningful consultation with Unite on any new proposals.

Sheffield Green workers' unofficial walkout

The recycling workers in Sheffield, who had already taken six days of strike action, upped the ante on their uncharitable 'charity' employers by staging an unofficial walk-out on Thursday 16 October, closing four of the five sites. This, along with another two days official strike over the weekend and two more days called for the following weekend has increased the pressure on charity Salvaire, which owns The Green Company that subcontract the recycling sites from multinational Veolia. The thirty GMB union members

are in dispute over pay, welfare facilities and the way the contract is managed, with serious questions about the misuse of public funds. The Labour council leader has now invited the GMB to a top level meeting. The union and workers want Salvaire/Green Co sacked and the recycling contract taken back in house or run under a workers' cooperative.

If the council don't deliver, more strikes will take place on the weekend of 25 October, then maybe indefinite action after that.

Alistair Tice

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- In defence of the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition
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century

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in our
time?



The Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC) is an electoral alliance that stands candidates against all cuts and privatisation. It involves the RMT transport workers' union, leading members of other trade unions including the PCS, NUT and POA, as well as the Socialist Party and other left and anti-cuts groups and individuals.
www.tusc.org.uk

Leicester council hits homeless hostel

Mark Gawthorpe
Leicester Socialist Party

Wordsworth House, a Leicester homeless hostel which I was a resident of for just over a year, has lost its council funding and the right to house council homeless clients.

This is because of new council funding rules supposedly designed to combat discrimination. To continue receiving funding Wordsworth House would have to stop interviewing prospective residents to decide if the hostel is capable of dealing with their needs. High risk offenders and people with serious drug and alcohol problems need very specific help and support which the hostel was unable to offer.

The council's insistence that Wordsworth House had to take in whoever the council wanted them to is highly irresponsible and shows its lack of understanding and duty of care to its own homeless clients.

The result is that residents at the hostel are now considered 'adequately housed' by a private landlord and are no longer a priority for the council to house in

independent accommodation.

This has led to a lack of applicants referring themselves to the hostel, as they would lose their homeless status and find themselves in limbo with a serious reduction in the support available to them.

Increasing problem

Now, for the first time in its history, the hostel has five empty beds – despite the fact that homeless numbers, including street sleepers, are increasing in Leicester. We need investment in services for homeless people so that there are resources to meet the many different needs that exist.

On 19 September I asked a question to the full city council meeting about this situation. After discussion on my question, Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC) councillor Wayne Naylor asked other questions regarding cuts to local services.

The Labour councillors mocked him – showing a complete lack of concern for the most vulnerable members of our local community.

I'm getting the help and specialist referrals that Wordsworth House was fundamental in ob-

taining. I'm taking the help and support that I received from some of the most life-changing local services, such as Quality of Life (now shut down!).

I'm standing side by side with TUSC to help give a real voice to the working-class and poor people of this great city. I thank Wayne Naylor for his personal dignity and strength, in helping to give a political voice and genuine representation to the people who can best run and control our city and its services – those people that work in and use those services.

That's why I'm supporting TUSC and helping to build our People's Budget conference on 25 October.



Leicester TUSC Ambrose Musiyiwa

The People's Budget Day will be hosted by Leicester TUSC and the two rebel Leicester Independent Councillors Against Cuts (LICAC) group members, councillors Barbara Potter and Wayne Naylor. The aim is to create a budget based on the real needs of Leicester's residents.

The conference will discuss, for example, how Leicester council could save the community centres it is threatening to close, keep the city's adventure playgrounds and Sure

Start centres running, and reverse the privatisation of its elderly care homes.

These and other ideas brought to the meeting by residents, trade unionists and community campaigners will then be presented to next year's council budget-making meeting by Wayne and Barbara in opposition to yet another cuts budget planned by the city's ruling group of Labour councillors.

And if – or more likely when! – the Peo-

ple's Budget is rejected by Labour, it will be the basis for a city-wide challenge in next May's local elections, on the same day as the general election.

**Saturday 25 October
11am-4pm
Bishop Street Methodist
Church, Town Hall Square
Call Tessa Warrington on
07852 559750 or email
tessawarrington@gmail.com
for more**

Local services suffer under Welsh Labour

Ronnie Job
Socialist Party Wales

In an article that would be attacked by our opponents as scaremongering if written by a Socialist Party Wales member, chief reporter for Wales Online, Martin Shipton, writes: "The local government settlement announced by the Welsh Government will mark the beginning of the end of council services as we have come to know them."

Welsh local authorities will get £145 million less in 2015-16. Councils across Wales will not be able to maintain even statutory essential services. As Shipton puts it: "It won't simply be a question of deciding whether a local leisure centre can survive, but whether there will be enough money available to provide credible social services."

Wholesale cuts to council services have been relatively delayed up until now in Wales compared to England – partly because the Welsh Government's decision not to ring-fence NHS funding in the early days of Con-Dem austerity meant that the NHS bore the brunt of cuts in Wales.

Plugging the gaps

The Labour Welsh Government hasn't baulked at passing on Con-Dem cuts – it's just divvied them up slightly differently. The BMA has pointed out the 'black hole' left in Welsh NHS finances, so now the Welsh Government is changing approach – taking money from councils and education to try and plug gaps in the NHS.

This is the problem with Welsh Labour – all they can offer is a differ-

ent way of making the same level of Tory cuts as the Con-Dems in Westminster because they are unwilling to fight for the funding that services in Wales need. Welsh Labour councils have put up no fight at all to these cuts handed down by their party colleagues in the Assembly.

There are no planned council elections in Wales until at least 2017. Socialist Party Wales members in Swansea therefore think that it is vital that we utilise the upcoming council by-election in Uplands Ward to stand a TUSC candidate on a platform of opposing and voting against all cuts to jobs and services.

We call on all trade unionists, socialists and everybody who values council services to join with us and show that there is an alternative to the Tory-Liberal-Labour cuts consensus.

**Rallies
at Camden
Centre, Judd
St at 6.30pm
Saturday and
3pm Sunday**

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

**KSHAMA
SAWANT**

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



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

Peter Taaffe
Socialist Party general secretary

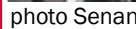
We joined in the mass demonstrations in London and elsewhere against the Russian Stalinists' occupation of Czechoslovakia, also in 1968. I and other Young Socialists led contingents of young people demanding workers' democracy in Czechoslovakia and the arming of the working class.

And it was not just Europe that was affected. The strongest power on the planet, capitalist America, was convulsed and virtually paralysed

In the 1970s, but particularly in the 1980s, we were addressing mass audiences. Militant, in terms of numbers and influence in the labour movement, was the most successful Marxist/Trotskyist organisation in Western Europe since the time of Trotsky's Left Opposition in the 1930s.

loway, a prominent, if erratic left-wing MP, first under the banner of Labour and then as an independent, belatedly chose to attack the strategy of Liver-

Over this period we have witnessed and participated in the colossal movements of the working class in some of the greatest events in history



The representatives of the ruling class, through habit and tradition, are trained to be relentless in the class war. Although Thatcher came from a lower-middle class background – the daughter of a shopkeeper – she embodied these traits, particularly when she concentrated the reins of power in her hands.

Kinnock then compounded the blow by expelling the leaders of the struggle, Derek Hatton, Tony Mulhearn and others from the party. Tom Sawyer, a full-time officer of the National Union of Public Employees, which part founded Unison, said at the National Executive of the Labour Party in February 1986: "I defy anyone to tell me how you can go to Liverpool and defeat Militant by argument."

This was a watershed in the development of Militant. We grew by leaps

Lobby of the Labour Party NEC in support of the Liverpool City councillors photo
Dave Sinclair

The National Union of Journalists in its monthly publication at this time also fed the impression that Militant was everywhere: "Central TV was filming the pilot of a new comedy series – a large group of actors holding banners and placards were holding a mock demo in the middle of the streets when a bloke turned up and tried to sell them copies of 'Militant'!"

Every attack on us, whether from the right wing of the Labour Party or from the poisonous capitalist press and other media outlets, just served to widen our support and influence.

Ted Grant did play an historical role as continuer of a Marxist tradition which helped to successfully orientate the new layer of workers and youth who came into our orbit in the late 1960s and 70s.

We steadfastly defend the general ideas of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Trotsky, but we have always displayed extreme flexibility in tactics



We refuted this arid approach in theory, but life and events prove it even more so. Indeed, following the recent Scottish referendum they concluded that Labour in Scotland was 'finished' and now they work in an 'open' fashion. They are dishonestly hiding the fact that they have been compelled to change their position completely.

different from the Tories, the Labour leaders have played into the hands of the Tories." This is a thousand times

The labour movement in Britain has been subject to the same pressures of capitalism in crisis as Europe and the world. We built a powerful position based on young people in Liverpool, through the apprentices' strikes of 1960 and 1964, and also in the Labour Party itself through its Young Socialist section.

At that stage, the Labour Party still provided great scope for workers, socialists and youth to swing the Labour Party to the left, particularly at local level. In this way, it became an instrument, in some areas at least, for working people in struggle. And, as a

However, the general shift towards the right within the labour movement compelled Militant to seek to organise workers and socialists outside the Labour Party. Even when it became obvious that this was the case, in the late 1980s and early 1990s, we still mistakenly encouraged the notion that we could possibly return to the Labour Party when it was filled out by workers moving into struggle. But under the baton of Blair and then Brown, followed by Miliband, the Labour Party has moved way to the right and is now no different to the Tories or Liberal Democrats. It is a British version of the Democrats in the US, firmly wedded to a two-party capitalist system.

The 1990s, after the collapse of Stalinism, was an immensely difficult time for socialists and the labour movement generally. This was used to discredit 'socialism' and the planned economy and shift the ideological axis to the right. However, since the collapse of the Berlin Wall we have seen the bankruptcy of capitalism, together with the seemingly endless wars – the Middle East, the Balkans, etc. – combined with the ongoing and devastating world economic crisis. These prepared the way for the convulsions that we saw in the Egyptian revolution and elsewhere.

The economic crisis is so severe in Britain that even “younger Labour wants to lose the election” [Evening Standard, 2 October 2014]. Right-wing Labour is now afraid of power, of inheriting the ‘poisoned chalice’ after next May’s general election. This, they claim, could discredit ‘Labour for a generation’. However it is already discredited in the eyes of millions of workers.

As in the past, the Socialist Party alone in Britain has successfully applied the methods of Marxism and successfully charted out the road to be taken. The direction of travel is clearly towards a new mass workers' party, which in turn can prepare the forces that can realise the goal of socialism in Britain.



"50 years of the Socialist Party: socialism in action" will be one of many discussions taking place at

SOCIALISM2014

8 & 9 November
in London

See page 5 for more details

A photograph of two men in business suits shaking hands. The man on the left is laughing, and the man on the right is smiling. They are standing in front of a large blue and yellow circular logo that features the letters 'UKIP' and a stylized 'd' or 'u' shape. The background is a light blue wall with a large, stylized 'd' or 'u' shape.

A group of approximately ten people, including several children and adults, are gathered outdoors in front of a light-colored building with arched windows. They are holding a large white banner that reads "SOCIAL HOUSING NOT SOCIAL CLEANSING" in colorful, blocky letters. The word "NOT" is in black. Several people are holding red flags; one flag features a white "G" logo surrounded by stars. One man in the center is raising his fist. The scene appears to be a protest or demonstration.



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	£ received	£ target	October-December 2014	Deadline 5 January 2015
Yorkshire	1,786	2,900		
North West	395	1,200		
Southern	329	1,200		
East Midlands	351	1,600		
West Midlands	311	2,100		
Northern	68	600		
South West	127	1,400		
London	548	6,100		
Eastern	83	1,200		
Wales	132	2,300		
South East	34	750		
England & Wales	160	3,650		
TOTAL	4,323	25,000		

Ebola outbreak: one face of austerity

Jon Dale

“We should have done so many things. Healthcare systems should have been built. There should have been monitoring when the first cases were reported. There should have been an organised response.” Dr Jim Yong Kim, head of the World Bank, unfortunately didn’t say this before the Ebola outbreak gripped three of the poorest countries in the world.

Instead, the World Health Organisation axed 300 of its 2,400 jobs in 2011. Cuts in governments’ contributions slashed its budget by 20%. Its director-general, Margaret Chan, described “a new and enduring era of economic austerity”.

Austerity has many faces – the uncontrolled Ebola outbreak is one more of them.

Sierra Leone’s iron ore mine in Marampa is one of the country’s biggest employers with 1,400 workers. Owned by London Mining, it has been building a 130-bed Ebola treatment centre. “A strengthened healthcare system is essential for safeguarding the health of our employees and our host communities,” said its managing director.

But it has just gone bust! A collapse in global iron prices has pushed the company into debt, its share price falling from £4 in 2011 to 0.75p. Private financing of health services is at the mercy of the stock market.

A nurse in Spain and two in the USA have been infected while caring for infected patients in their hospitals. The Presbyterian hospital in Dallas, “regarded as one of the finest hospitals in Texas” according to the New York Times, failed to prevent its nurses from contracting Ebola.

Private health

Thomas Duncan – the Liberian admitted to the hospital and subsequently found to be infected – did not have medical insurance, like many poor Americans. The average cost of a day’s stay in the Presbyterian is \$2,766, with extra to pay for physicians and treatments.

Without insurance or Medicare/Medicaid cover, Thomas Duncan would have had to rely on being a charity patient. Did this influence the initial decision to send him home when he first went there, complaining of fever and abdominal pain?

The USA’s health care system – the most expensive in the world – failed at its first test.

Almost \$400 million has been given to UN agencies and aid organisations, following an appeal launched in September for \$988 million. The UN is also seeking another \$1 billion for a trust fund, “to provide a flexible source of back-up money to contain Ebola.”

Despite the numbers infected doubling every four weeks, after one month the trust fund had received

The Committee for a Workers’ International

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

The CWI is organised in 45 countries and works to unite the working class and oppressed peoples against global capitalism and to fight for a socialist world.

For more details including CWI publications write to: CWI, PO Box 3688, London E11 1YE. email cwi@worldsoc.co.uk

www.socialistworld.net

Jon Dale will introduce “Ebola and big pharma” – one of the sessions at **SOCIALISM2014**

8 & 9 November in London

See page 5 for more details



Striking health workers in Nigeria

International day of action for abortion rights in Ireland



ROSA and Socialist Party TDs at a press conference about the campaign

On 28 October protests will take place at Irish embassies and consulates around the world, called by Irish campaign ROSA (Reproductive rights, against Oppression, Sexism and Austerity). The day will mark the second anniversary of the death of Savita Halappanavar – victim of Ireland’s backward abortion laws.

Two years later, despite huge desire for change from below, we’ve seen no progress. This was highlighted again recently by the case of a vulnerable young migrant woman’s battle with the system.

Presenting at approximately eight weeks pregnant, suicidal as a result of her pregnancy, the protracted process included ‘experts’ from the medical field and court orders (including one for forced hydration after her resorting to hunger and thirst strike). There was also an attempt to legally force the woman to undergo a C-section, which she eventually capitulated to. Incredibly, the ‘unborn’ was allocated a lawyer, as well as the woman.

The protests will call for a referendum to repeal the eighth amendment of the Irish constitution (the constitutional ban on abortion). The majority of the population in

Ireland support a vote on the issue. Other referenda, including on marriage equality, are planned for the spring of next year and repealing the eighth should be added to the ballot.

Life-and-death

The Socialist Party’s three TDs (MPs) are backing the campaign. Ruth Coppinger said: “We believe this is now a life-and-death issue for women in this country. This sectarian, anti-woman amendment can no longer be tolerated.”

Joe Higgins added: “Medical guidelines just published ominously make explicit reference to C-section and early induction. Is the Labour Party in government going to continue the legacy of a Catholic Church-influenced State, of Magdalene laundries, mother and baby homes and symphysiotomy [surgically dividing the pubic bone for childbirth – a procedure performed without consent on 1,500 Irish women between 1944 and 1984]? Of controlling women’s bodies and denying them health-care and rights?”

“We wish to win two ‘Yes’ votes in one day in the Spring of next year – for marriage equality, and

to lift Ireland’s abortion ban – and strike a major blow against Church insistence on dictating crucial personal choices in people’s lives. The latest poll shows that 56% support a referendum in the lifetime of this government, with only 19% against, so why does the government repeat the mantra of ‘no appetite’?”

Join the London protest
1pm, 28 October
Irish embassy, 17 Grosvenor Place, London, SW1X 7HR
(nearest tube Hyde Park Corner)

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



Hedge fund owners will never blush

Robin Clapp

All over Britain the clamour for a living wage rise is growing. Queues form at our Socialist Party stalls when we demand £10 an hour now.

Across the Atlantic, heroic fast-food workers are combating multinationals in order to obtain a living wage. The inspiring example of Seattle, where our Socialist Alternative councillor Kshama Sawant has led a victorious battle to win \$15 an hour for tens of thousands of workers, has become the template for new struggles US-wide.

But for some, the issue is less pressing. Last year a senior executive employed by Elliott Management Hedge Fund pocketed an annual salary of £38,119,707 – that's 1,337 times the average UK salary. It breaks down to £733,071 a week, or £20,944 an hour assuming he or she puts in an average 35-hour week.

Hedge Funds are private investment funds operating with a pool of largely unregulated capital. They

use a sophisticated range of strategies to maximise returns, often borrowing large sums to invest in 'derivatives' which are products that can be invested in without having to own. These allow the Hedge Fund

Hedge Funds have been called vultures. Even arch-capitalist Warren Buffet has called the derivative market a breeding ground for 'financial weapons of mass destruction'

leeches to take bets on anything from the future direction of currencies and markets to the weather.

Elliott Management was in the headlines recently for refusing to come to a deal with Argentina when its bond market toppled. Most other

bondholders agreed to restructure the Argentine debts they held, but Elliott successfully took the country to court, resulting in an Argentine default a few months ago.

Never mind that this consigned millions of Argentinians to further poverty – the sanctity of business must be upheld and compliant US courts are there to do just that!

Hedge Funds have been called vultures. Even arch-capitalist Warren Buffet has called the derivative market a breeding ground for 'financial weapons of mass destruction.'

But Hedge Fund owners never blush. Not for them any idea that we're all in this together. They hold politicians in their hands, laugh at the rest of us and believe they are gods of the planet.

So when you hear Tory health minister Jeremy Hunt say the NHS can't afford a 1% pay rise for all staff, or when you are engaging with a low-paid worker on a stall, remember that Elliott Executive as a symbol of what kind of world we live in and why we need to change it.



Capitalist politicians are in the grip of hedge fund managers

Private companies hold NHS to ransom

Hedge funds are not the only capitalist institutions wreaking havoc in society. Capitalist firms eager for massive profits are targeting vital services such as health, regardless of the consequences.

Pharmaceutical firms make fortunes at the cost of NHS patients and workers. Suppliers of essential supplies, hospital buildings and information technology charge the health service a fortune for their wares.

Socialists demand the end of PFI schemes, the nationalisation of the major drugs firms, medical supplies companies and huge IT companies, and that they should be run under democratic working class control and management.

Andrew Howe

In April, the government paid £5.5 million of taxpayers' money to multinational tech giant Microsoft, securing the public sector one year of "custom support" for Microsoft's Windows XP operating system, plus other software. These are widely used across the NHS.

An operating system runs a com-

puter's basic functions, on top of which more complex software, such as word processors or web browsers, can run. The NHS in England alone currently has over a million desktop PCs and laptops using Microsoft's dated Windows XP operating system.

Support for it ended last April. Lacking such support could put users at risk, as major security problems would be left unresolved. NHS

computers could have potentially been attacked by malicious individuals, and data lost or stolen.

So the Department of Health negotiated with Microsoft to buy a year of extra support but after that, new software will have to be bought at additional cost.

Why didn't the government take action sooner? The cut-off date for support was known well in advance. One problem facing the NHS is that it treats individual GPs, health trusts, and other health organisations independently, and expects them to maintain their own IT systems.

Many hundreds of applications are used within the NHS, such as the 'Choose and Book' appointment system, that were coded using proprietary Microsoft technology which is no longer supported.

The government and public sector is at the mercy of multinationals like Microsoft. Alternatives exist, free and open source software (FOSS). Such software is created and maintained by individuals and organisations globally and can be used, modified, and distributed for free.

The NHS could have moved to FOSS years ago as part of a structured and organised approach across the public sector, and avoided the current situation. Attempts were made to pass legislation to encourage its use in the UK, but what little legislation was passed was significantly watered down to let big business keep dominating the market.

Socialists should encourage the use of free and open software, to meet the needs of society, and not to fill the coffers of global tech giants.



Mental health - the system needs changing

Carol Richardson

Under the present iniquitous system, people diagnosed with long-term dementia (who can be in their 50s or earlier) are asked to fund their own long term care. Long term care for non-mental health conditions is provided free under NHS rules. Dementia patients are unfairly means-tested, so hundreds of thousands are forced to sell what they have to fund their care, which can last until their death.

Mental health breakdown in general has dramatically increased, mostly because the capitalist system targets the poor, youth and the helpless. It punishes people unable to cope on zero-hour contracts or to find work with sanctions or total withdrawal of benefits.

One woman, punished and broken by the bedroom tax, went on to hang herself. Another woman was talked down by ambulance workers and mental health staff from throwing herself off a bridge. These show the intolerable stress causing mental health problems brought about by capitalist injustice.

Anyone sectioned under the mental health act can be sent to the other end of the country, as hospitals are bursting at the seams. Relatives can't afford to visit so the patient is left totally

alone just when they most need family support.

Undoubtedly mental ill health can affect anyone, but it affects most those with no voice to resist the cruel system. People with mental health issues are targeted as failures but the system breaks them with stresses, producing feelings of hopelessness. It happened to me once.

The underfunded, unfair mental health system needs changing. Under socialism, the whole NHS would be nationalised and equally funded. Social justice would mean that unfair pressure would ease and poor, sick, helpless and elderly people would cease to be castigated and demonised.



Photo Paul Mattsson

the Socialist postbag

Do you have something to say?

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

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Socialist change to halt climate change

Chris Baugh, deputy general secretary of the Public and Commercial Services union (PCS), is a familiar spokesperson on platforms arguing for socialist change to halt damaging environmental change. He spoke to the Socialist about the recent mass public protests over global warming which preceded the United Nations summit in New York on climate change.



Chris speaking in New York City with Naomi Klein (middle)

Chris, you were invited to speak at a meeting in New York City during a weekend of action on climate change at the end of September, could you explain a bit about this?

The UN Secretary General, Ban Ki-moon, convened a Climate Summit in New York on 23 September. In view of the failure of world leaders to secure a global agreement on reducing CO2 emissions, expressed by the debacle at Copenhagen, trade unions and climate campaigners across the US and internationally organised a series of events to coincide with the summit.

These included the historic People's Climate March in New York on 21 September, an international meeting of trade unions organised by Trade Unions for Energy Democracy and a series of meetings and discussions with US labour unions.

PCS was invited to attend these events because it has been at the forefront of not just challenging austerity but making the case that trade unions should play a central role in the struggles for climate action.

The climate change demonstration in NYC on 21 September was a massive event and was one of a number of protests internationally. What were your impressions of this event and what were its chief demands?

With over 300,000 marching in

New York it represented the biggest climate protest in history and surprised the organisers. Even the New York Times and NYPD (police) had to admit to its vast size. What also impressed me was the strong contingent of US unions, with the healthcare workers and nurses at the forefront.

The impact of Hurricane Sandy and the failure of the authorities to provide the emergency and rescue services needed has reinforced the need for unions to take up the issue of climate change.

The march contained many organisations and banners raising a variety of demands, but it raised the issue: what next?

I found in discussions with US locals [union branches] and union activists, broad agreement that a call for climate action is not enough. We need to develop a programme of demands that bring the labour and environmental movements together around both common action and common demands.

Could you say a bit about the organisation that invited you and the composition of the platform on which you spoke?

Trade Unions for Energy Democracy is a US based and growing international community of unions who share the view that the market and political elites will not tackle the profound economic and environmental crises we are confronted



Socialist Alternative members (co-thinkers of the Socialist Party in the US) on the people's climate march

with. Instead, we will need a decisive shift towards public control of key economic sectors; among the most important is energy.

I was asked to respond to a keynote speech from radical author Naomi Klein who addressed delegates representing unions from US, UK, Canada, Brazil, Argentina, Peru, Bolivia, India, Korea, Philippines, Caribbean and a range of international union federations and across the world.

Should PCS members be concerned about what's happening to the global environment?

It's increasingly clear that climate is a trade union issue.

Over 50% of CO2 emissions come from the workplace. The flooding caused by the wettest winter on record, the obscene profits of the energy companies at a time of rising fuel poverty, the need for a clean, publicly owned transport network, the debates about a third runway at Heathrow, the threat of forest privatisation and the rush to shale gas (fracking) all show how climate is a trade union issue.

PCS is one of a growing number of unions that recognise we need to take up the issue in the workplace, through collective bargaining with the employer and in putting an alternative to the neo-liberal consensus.

There are many different agendas being promoted by a variety of well-known politicians and environmentalists about how to halt rapid climate change. What is your alternative? How can sustainable methods of production and transport be achieved?

The economic and climate crises are both the result of market failure. Resisting austerity is part of the same fight against a capitalist economic system whose insatiable appetite for profit is pushing the earth's climate ever closer to disaster.

Only those in the pay of the polluting fuel industries deny the impact of burning fossil fuels upon the earth's climate.

As Naomi Klein's book makes clear, we need action in energy efficiency and a social housing programme, for clean mass public

transport and public investment in renewable energy, a huge training programme for skilled, unionised jobs and a decisive break with a capitalist economic system that offers poverty, inequality and the growing threat of catastrophic climate change.

PCS is a signatory to the latest edition of One Million Climate Jobs which sets out a range of ideas on how we can create over a million climate jobs and take decisive action in cutting CO2 emissions at the same time.

We play a lead role in campaigning for tax justice; showing how in the seventh richest economy on the planet we can afford both decent public services and the public investment needed for urgent climate action.

But it's clear that the market and their political shadows in the mainstream parties have failed. This raises the need to bring energy and key sections of the economy under democratic public ownership and to build a movement in the UK and internationally that fights for socialist change, not climate change.

Sceptic Paterson in denial

Former environment secretary, Owen Paterson MP, has called for the scrapping of the 2008 climate change act which seeks an 80% cut in 1990 greenhouse gas emissions by 2050. Such cuts are deemed necessary by environmental scientists in order to avoid irreversible global warming and catastrophic climate change.

Paterson announced this policy last week when addressing a right wing climate change deniers' think tank forum run by former Tory chancellor Nigel Lawson.

Echoing the shale gas and nuclear energy lobbyists' arguments, Paterson said the 2050 targets will not reduce emissions and will 'fail to keep the lights on'. He went on to say that the cost of using renewables will also be prohibitively expensive and, anyway, global warming has been "wildly exaggerated".

Firstly, the atmosphere has warmed by 0.5% since 1990 and air temperatures are expected to rise quickly again when natural cycles that are currently pushing heat into the deep oceans reverse.

Secondly, any possible power outages will be due not to switching to (underinvested) renewable technologies but from a gross lack of investment in power generation infrastructure by the private profit energy companies.

Moreover, the financial cost of not tackling climate change will dwarf the cost of investment in new green technologies. Paterson also sidesteps the fact that shale gas extraction is environmentally damaging, as is the privately owned but heavily state subsidised nuclear power industry.

Paterson's charge that the 2008 act is an unworkable and damaging piece of bureaucracy is disingenuous. In reality, the 2008 act is a weak law that doesn't meaningfully address the threats to future energy production and to the environment, which are the result of the continuation of the capitalist profit system.



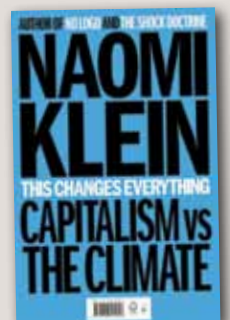
Paterson - 'scrap climate act'

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WHERE'S OUR RECOVERY?

Dave Sample

Tory triumphalism over rising employment masks the misery of millions of working class people in low pay Britain.

The Daily Mail speaks of an "eight year low" in unemployment, but this only conceals the spiralling numbers of self-employed and casual workers, and those unemployed whose numbers are hidden in the sickness figures.

Recent studies from the Child Poverty Action Group are less sanguine. Child poverty is predicted to rise to 4.6 million by 2020. In areas like Bethnal Green, east London, 49% of all children already live in poverty. This leap in poverty is being driven by the biggest slump in real wages for British workers since the Victorian age.

The average fall was 8% in the period 2008-2013. Amongst certain

groups, such as young workers aged 18-25, the fall was much steeper, falling by 14% in the same period.

Meanwhile, a new Credit Suisse report documents the consolidation of wealth amongst Britain's elite.

At the top of the pile are 4,700 individuals with wealth exceeding £31 million. The richest 10% control 54% of Britain's wealth.

In the rich G7 nations, Britain is the only one where inequality has increased in the period from 2000 to 2014.

Liberal commentators have paid this topic a lot of attention, with Observer front pages, Owen Jones articles, and the book by economist Thomas Piketty, 'Capitalism in the 21st Century', with each bemoaning increasing inequality.

But what have they said about how to stop it? Piketty, for example, recommends a global wealth tax but says nothing of how it would be implemented and by who.

Labour, firmly embedded in the

establishment, belatedly promises an £8 minimum wage over five years, which doesn't even cover inflation. Its 'mansion tax' will barely impact on the super-rich, whose main fortunes are stashed away in offshore tax havens.

We need socialist policies and mass political organisations to bring about lasting root and branch change to end the exploitative system of capitalism and its grotesque extremes of wealth for the few and poverty for the many.

That is why trade unionists, community campaigners, socialists, and indeed anyone feeling the effects of capitalist austerity, should come to Socialism 2014 (see below).

Hosted by the Socialist Party it will showcase our alternative and provide a forum for people to discuss and debate the way forward. Buy your ticket today!



photo Paul Mattsson

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8 & 9 November,
Central London

Newly elected Irish socialist TD Paul Murphy will be speaking at the Sunday afternoon rally

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

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

BOOK NOW FOR A 10% DISCOUNT!

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



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

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

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

ENVIRONMENT

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

RIGHTS

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

NEW WORKERS' PARTY

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

- Trade unions to disaffiliate from the Labour Party now and aid the building of a new 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!