

## Osborne's budget:

# THE BITTER PILL OF CUTS

### Step up the fightback now!

Nick Chaffey

With angry voters to face, Tory hopes that Chancellor George Osborne could deliver significant budget tax cuts as pre-election sweeteners are off the menu. With the government deficit and debt growing, and tax receipts falling, the chancellor is less Master Chef and more Master Chump!

Fear of a revolt on the National Health Service (NHS) crisis and public support for striking healthworkers has forced the Tories to find some NHS money. But this is recycled cash, too little and too late.

Prime Minister Cameron's attempts to rebrand the Nasty Party won't wash as millions have suffered from their austerity cuts since 2010. So who will believe this is genuine care for the NHS? Especially as the latest £1 billion privatisation deal for

the contract to manage medical records has the sticky fingers of Tory MP Stephen Dorrell all over it - in his part-time role working for contract bidders KPMG.

The Tories can't find a grain of sugar to sweeten the bitter pill of more cuts. Yet neither can Labour, who meet every Tory cuts pledge with the meek cry of "me too!" What a woeful betrayal of many people's hopes that the general election next May could bring an end to cuts. No wonder criticism grows towards "Miliband" even among his own MPs!

The critical state of the NHS and continued threat to council services will mean growing pressure on all Westminster parties. Talk of a recovery that fails to touch the 99% has added to the mood of "enough is enough!"

The pre-election months could be a turbulent time, with firefighters continuing their determined strikes in defence of jobs, pensions and fire

stations, and healthworkers possibly taking more action to break the government's imposed pay freeze. If the healthworkers' unions called and led a national NHS demo, this could draw all the latent anger over austerity to the surface.

Labour's "me too" message to reassure fat cat City bankers will do little to inspire hope among the majority of people. Labour councils sending thousands more workers to the job centre by voting through Con-Dem cuts could face growing opposition from council unions and the community.

Slavish devotion to 'responsible' cuts budgets will drive more trade unionists towards the conclusion that a clean break with Labour is necessary and, instead, to join the growing ranks of anti-cuts election candidates standing as part of the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition. Turn your anger into action and join us!

**Editorial on budget - see page 2**



### Election Appeal

**Ken Douglas**  
Socialist Party national treasurer

The Socialist Party is launching an appeal for £50,000 to help fund our candidates in the 2015 elections. We are standing as part of the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC - see page 7) - working towards over 1,000 council candidates

and 106 parliamentary candidates.

We aim with this historic challenge to help prepare the basis for a new mass workers' party. TUSC will provide the only alternative in May, based on implacable opposition to austerity and the self-serving capitalist politicians who promote it.

**Continued on page 8**





The paper of the Socialist Party. Issue 836.

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

# £50 billion cuts still to come Osborne's solution deficit

On Wednesday 3 December, after we go to press, Chancellor George Osborne will make his autumn budget statement. These events are about party politics as much as economics. Especially this one: six months before the general election.

Normally such a budget would be stuffed with 'election sweeteners' to try to convince voters that this Con-Dem government isn't so bad after all. But this time there will be very little, because the government's own strategy of 'eliminating the deficit' is failing.

In fact all the main parties are committed to repeating the same bankrupt strategy of austerity. For many people it is further proof that the main parties have no solutions.

The best Osborne has been able to come up with in advance of budget day has been £2 billion 'more' to the NHS, £15 billion on road building and £2.5 billion on flood defence. This infrastructure spending, previously announced anyway, is in the context of overall cuts, for example in road maintenance and local government.

The NHS spending turns out to be £1.3 billion taken from other services and £700,000 'reallocated' from within the NHS. Yes they say they will use £1 billion from banking fines over the foreign exchange scandal to put into GP surgeries, but these are really just a sop. They are totally inadequate to cover the £30 billion deficit in the NHS expected by 2020. So called "efficiency savings", ie £20 billion cuts, and in particular the massive bill for Private Finance Initiative (privatisation), are devastating the NHS.

## Growth?

Osborne will make a big deal of the fact that the economy is growing - with 3% predicted for this year. But it took until 2014 for it to get back to 2008 pre-recession levels, the slowest ever post-war recovery. The neoliberal strategy of slashing public services did not in fact revive the economy in the way the government expected: it merely further depressed demand.

This recovery is very fragile. When he said: "red warning lights are once again flashing on the dashboard of the global economy", Cameron was already preparing his excuses. He listed the Eurozone crisis, slowdown in emerging economies, international tensions and



Above: TUC demonstration against cuts photo Paul Mattsson; inset: George Osborne

Ebola as potential triggers for further crisis.

It is clear to everyone that the benefits of this recovery are only going to the super-rich. Wages have fallen dramatically in real terms. Over the last year average wages have risen by 0.1%, well below living costs. This has been a 'low wage and low hours' recovery. There has been an increase in the number of jobs, but many of these are zero-hour and minimum wage, with a big increase in low income self-employment. Three million workers are 'underemployed', not getting the hours they need.

This fall in living standards doesn't just make workers angry, but also has an impact on the budget deficit. The government expected economic growth to result in more people paying more tax, so they could close the gap between government spending and income. But this has not happened, to a large degree because wages are so low.

The Con-Dem plan originally was to clear the deficit by this general election so they could show how 'prudent' and good at managing the economy they are. But the deficit is now expected to rise to around £100 billion this year. The more they cut, the bigger it gets.

The gap between spending and income is plugged by borrowing. This adds to a debt pile of £1.45 trillion, equal to 80% of national income. The interest we pay on this 'national debt' is £1 billion a week.

But the government strategy to deal with this failure is more of the same! The Finan-

cial Times (FT) estimates that we are only half way through the cuts previously announced. The government has talked about a further £25 billion needed in the next Parliament, but the FT has calculated there will actually be £50 billion more cuts needed to reach its target. A lot more pain for working class people is to come if they get away with it.

The poorest have of course suffered the most, and this will continue. Welfare in particular has been targeted, with a further £12 billion of cuts planned. The government has already announced a freeze (real cut) in working age benefits, with no guarantees that it wouldn't be extended. Under 25s are to be excluded from housing benefit.

## Balanced budget

Now the government even wants to introduce a law to enshrine the idea of a 'balanced budget', to be realised by 2017/2018. This is partly meant to be a trap for Labour, who while agreeing with the aim of obtaining a balanced budget by the end of the next parliament, just wanted to do it marginally slower. Osborne wants to expose Labour as being anti-business, but far from it, they have been at pains to pledge they will stick to Tory spending plans.

Labour will not come to the rescue of public services or living standards, they fully accept a capitalist approach. This why the Socialist argues for co-ordinated strike action to fight back against the cuts, we cannot 'wait for a

Labour government'.


But it is also why the Socialist Party takes part in the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition in elections (see page 7). What is missing at the moment is a mass organised expression of the anger that exists to fight for an alternative. This anger will not remain under the surface forever; it could erupt at any time.

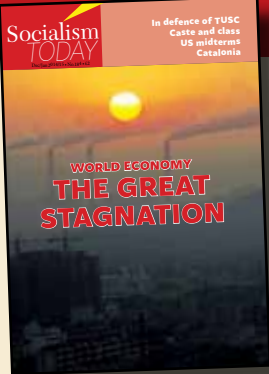
## Socialist alternative

A socialist alternative would fund the services we need. We would reverse the cuts and use the vast wealth that does exist in society to properly develop health, education, infrastructure, welfare etc. Osborne is also claiming to be 'cracking down on tax evasion'. But any steps they take are cosmetic; they wouldn't want to upset their big business mates. The figure, publicised by the PCS union, of £125 billion uncollected in tax due to evasion and avoidance by the rich, shows a glimpse of what is available.

To access that a socialist government would democratically nationalise the banking system, abolish the national debt and also bring into public ownership the top 150 companies that dominate the economy. Then a democratic plan to use that wealth for the benefit of the whole of society would be possible.

Cuts in public spending, or even easing those cuts under capitalism, will not deal with the underlying problems. Only a socialist alternative can.





- **World economy**  
The world is stuck in the great stagnation, writes Peter Taaffe
- **TUSC**  
Clive Heemskerck defends a working class alternative to mainstream parties
- **Caste discrimination**  
TU Senan reports on caste-based oppression and the class struggle

£2.50 including postage:  
**Socialism Today** PO Box 24697, London E11 1YD.  
 Subscribe for £18 a year at [www.socialismtoday.org](http://www.socialismtoday.org)

## More socialists needed!

Can you help the Socialist Party grow by 100?

To paraphrase Marx, many people become so disturbed by the effects of capitalism after reading the news that they give up reading. Groucho that is - not Karl.

Whenever Osborne and his ilk appear, it's more bad news so it's no wonder some people want to turn off and tune out.

But socialists explain that it doesn't have to be like this - that cuts and low wages are not inevitable. We say: plan how we use the huge wealth that exists to meet society's needs - a £10 an hour mini-

mum wage, decent housing and the NHS for starters - by taking it out of the hands of the super-rich 1%.

As we go to press our 'recruitometer' is showing almost half red as we count 45 new members since Socialism 2014.

But every Socialist Party branch knows people who are thinking about signing up. Make sure that organising to talk to these people - about how we need them, their experiences, energy and determination to fight to change the world - is the top priority in the last weeks before Christmas.



## New Era estate campaign

# Angry tenants take their protest to Cameron

Chris Newby

Around 500 angry New Era estate tenants and supporters marched from Westbrook (multinational owners of New Era estate) headquarters in Mayfair, central London, to hand in a nearly 300,000 signature petition to David Cameron.

For months, tenants of this small housing estate in Hackney have been waging a high-profile battle against rip-off rent increases and the consequent threat of eviction.

The normally sedate streets of Mayfair and Piccadilly were echoing to chants such as: "What do we want? Westbrook out!" and "We don't need your social cleansing - hey Westbrook leave our homes alone"

A large crowd had gathered outside the Westbrook headquarters by the time the two coaches from the New Era estate in Hackney arrived, bringing tenants and supporters, including celebrity Russell Brand. After a few speeches the march moved off towards the prime minister's residence in Downing Street.

Tenants are incensed that Westbrook want to increase the rents still further to an astronomical £2,400 a month, higher than even



Taking to the streets photo Paul Mattsson

the already high average rent in Hackney of £2,100 a month.

Many tenants have lived on the estate for decades and there is a real community spirit there. They are proud of their estate and are angry at being faced with either eviction or paying £2,400 to increase the super-profits of Westbrook partners.

Jean Eaton told me: "We've been here seven years but we've lived in the area all our lives. Our rents are

£200 at the moment, they've been put up. In June of next year it's supposed to be £600 a week, which we can't afford. It might be more. We're likely to be evicted."

"We've had the council people come down to our meetings. They can't offer us anything until we're evicted! There's so many on the waiting list they're saying"

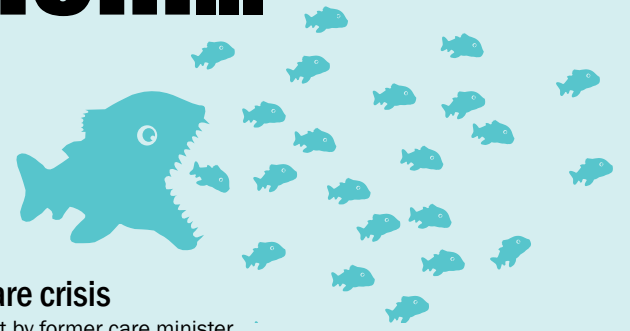
The campaign has built up good support organising regular meetings of tenants and campaign stalls. The Socialist Party fully supports the campaign of the tenants to stop any evictions and reduce the already high rents.

We call on Hackney Council to refuse any cooperation with Westbrook partners, to oppose any evictions, and make it clear it would refuse planning permission for refurbishment preparations for "market level" rents.

We also call on Hackney Council to start a process of compulsory purchase of the estate, introduce borough-wide rent controls and rent caps. Leaflets putting these demands were snapped up on the demo.

**Hackney Socialist Party is holding a public meeting on Tuesday 9 December at 7pm at the Stag pub, 55 Orsman Road, London N1 5RA. Speakers include Lindsey Garrett, chair of the New Era campaign**

## Them...



### Home care crisis

A new report by former care minister Paul Burstow has slammed the home care system in England as putting people at risk because of underfunding and the exploitation of care workers.

The report found that 60% of care workers were on zero-hour contracts and a third effectively earning below the minimum wage because they are not paid for travelling between clients.

Some 500,000 elderly and disabled people rely on council and privately run services but rubbish pay and working conditions are causing an annual 20% turnover of staff.

to £10,000 a day on top of his Commons salary as a City investor and a consultant, as well as owning four properties which includes a £3 million pad in Islington, north London.

### No conflict of interests

Before Tory Stephen Dorrell quits as an MP at the next general election, the former chair of the House of Commons Health Select Committee will take up a lucrative post as an adviser to accountancy giant KPMG. Coincidentally, KPMG is expected to bid for a £1 billion NHS contract - the largest in the health service's history.

The privatisation of NHS services has accelerated following the government's 2012 Health and Social Care Act (England) which opened up the multi-billion pound health budget to for-profit companies to exploit.

### Cash for peerages?

£39 million has been donated to political parties by members of the House of Lords since records began in 2001. Of these, a mere eleven ermine-clad peers gave nearly £14 million to political parties before being enobled.

Tory Lord Fink handed over £2.4 million before getting his peerage in 2011. According to the Sunday Times, Fink runs an offshore investment firm and "has lobbied (Chancellor) George Osborne to ease tax on wealthy foreign hedge fund owners".

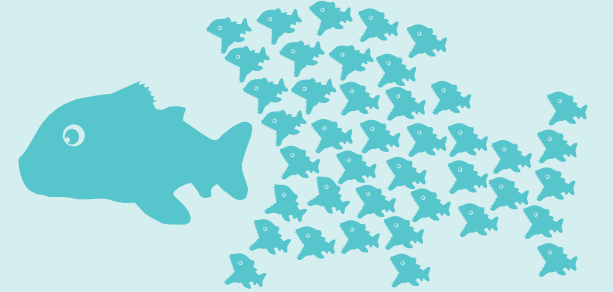
On the opposite red leather benches, Labour's Lord Haughey donated a cool £1.3 million to the party before his ennoblement last year.

### Haves and have nots

With the general election just months away Tories, Labour, Lib Dems and Ukip are all promising to slash income tax in order to woo voters. All these establishment parties pledge to ease the tax burden on the low paid. However, an analysis of their tax plans by the Resolution Foundation shows that the main beneficiaries will be the top income earners.

Ukip's package, costing £13 billion, would benefit the richest 10% of households by £1,143 a year but only by £35 for the poorest. The Tories would boost the richest by £649 and the poorest by a paltry £17. Even Labour's plan benefits the better off, while five million of the lowest paid workers will gain nothing at all from any of these parties.

## ...& Us



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

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

# Terrorism Bill: May continues the job started by Tony Blair

Ben Norman

The government's latest attacks on civil liberties, masked as anti-terrorism laws, are not only dangerous for trade unionists, socialists and social justice campaigners; they reinforce the very causes of 'extremist radicalisation' they aim to stop.

The new powers are touted as a reaction to an unknown number of British Jihadis who have travelled to Syria to join the Salafist terrorist group Islamic State (IS). Those suspected of travelling to Syria could be effectively rendered stateless by plans which Amnesty International warns breach international laws.

Suspects who cannot be prosecuted may still face forced relocation, with the evidence threshold lowered to "reasonable balance of probabilities". Internet use and travel will also be monitored, while court orders will be used to prevent university groups from inviting speakers deemed 'extremist'.

Theresa May can expect nothing but feigned opposition in Parliament. Labour's front bench includes Andy Burnham, who championed ID cards during his time at the Home Office. And although Nick Clegg pledged only

last year that there would be no 'snooper's charter' while the Liberal Democrats are in government, he has already voiced support for the new measures.

The new laws merely extend the anti-terrorism laws passed by Labour. This package is the seventh such set of laws since 2000. The first six didn't prevent the 7/7 London bombings, nor protect Lee Rigby, nor prevent radicalisation by IS supporters. More repressive laws are also unlikely to stop terrorist acts.

### Threat

May claims Britain faces an unprecedented terrorist threat. However, the intelligence agencies are by design inherently undemocratic and largely unaccountable. It is impossible to claim that today's 'threat' is comparable to the terrorism campaign waged by the Irish republican Provisional IRA.

In the Middle East, as in Northern Ireland, the Tories are reaping what British foreign policy has sown. But unfortunately it's ordinary people who pay the price.

In Ireland, atrocities such as Bloody Sunday in 1971 thrust Catholic youth into the arms of the Provisional IRA. Today, across the Middle

East, social media allows us see the carnage from aerial bombings and other military operations by British armed forces unfold in real time.

Such laws also reinforce a poisonous culture of Islamophobia. The result is that many Muslim communities feel under siege, in which isolated youth are easy prey for those who peddle Salafism by pointing to British imperialism's bloody wars and invasions.

These laws also set a dangerous precedent for the workers' movement. Once a framework for 'tackling extremism' is created, it is left to the government to interpret who is considered extreme.

This new legislation is in parallel with Tory plans to impose even harsher anti-trade union laws.

London Mayor Boris Johnson has made plans to attack the unions central to his campaign for the Tory leadership, while the PCS union has uncovered plans from senior HM Revenue and Customs officials to undermine the union.

Socialists must campaign to unite the community to defend civil liberties and defeat the Tories' divisive laws.

**See also: 'Portsmouth jihadis: austerity and alienation to blame', on [www.socialistparty.org.uk](http://www.socialistparty.org.uk)**

### What we saw

#### On YouTube St Louis Rams US football players giving a 'Hands Up' show of solidarity with Ferguson protesters before game



Five Rams players came out of the tunnel with their hands up in a demonstration related to community anger in the St Louis suburb of Ferguson - after a grand jury decision not to indict a white police officer who fatally shot unarmed black teenager Michael Brown.



# Hull city council: a tale of two surveys

Mike Whale

Chair, Hull city council trade unions

Hull City Council senior officers have provocatively sent out a staff survey clearly designed to give them authority to slash council workers' terms and conditions.

Under the industrial relations framework, officers should have properly consulted with the trade unions about issuing the survey. Instead they sent an email out to union convenors an hour before the document was circulated to staff.

The first question gives workers the choice between losing their job completely or losing some terms and conditions. Most workers, given that choice, will opt for a job.

The council unions responded immediately by urging members not to complete the officers' survey and instead complete a trade union one which includes the 'option' of fighting against any cut to terms and conditions.

The unions' alternative survey has touched a raw nerve with some senior officers. A Unison full time organiser has received a letter threatening a disciplinary investigation against Adrian Kennett, Unison branch secretary and joint council union secretary, for circulating the survey.

This threat follows management's

attempt to hear two grievances taken out against Adrian relating to the 10 July public sector pay strike. The letter goes on to threaten any steward promoting the union survey with disciplinary action.

All of the unions understand this is not just an attack on Adrian but on the council unions as a whole. The officers are still smarting because, throughout the period of austerity, they have not been able to smash council workers' terms and conditions due to our determination. In the past, the workforce has responded magnificently when balloted to take action.

## Unions' resolve

The council officers and some of the Labour cabinet understand that breaking the resolve of the unions is central to implementing savage cuts and privatisation.

That is why they are attacking Adrian Kennett and threatening stewards. They want tame 'company' unions to work with management to implement the cuts.

A very successful lobby of East Hull Labour Party took place on Saturday 29 November. According to reports from within the meeting, most Labour Party members, including some councillors, were appalled at the proposed cuts and supportive of the trade unions.

The council trade unions will be

The image shows two survey forms. The left form is from Hull City Council, titled 'Tell us what you think' and 'Tell us what you value'. It asks for agreement with various statements and lists aspects of a job to be ranked. The right form is from the unions, titled 'Tell us what you really think' and 'Value Workers'. It asks for agreement with statements about council spending and working conditions.

The council survey (left) and the unions' response

rolling out a programme of lobbies of councillors and meetings in the next few months.

The real alternative for council workers and councillors who really want to fight the cuts is to launch a

campaign involving service users and all parts of the community.

Councillors should refuse to implement any cuts, using reserves and borrowing powers for any immediate shortfall while demanding

the needed funding from central government.

A determined struggle from a united city could force concessions, stop the cuts and protect jobs and services.

## Reports from the NSSN bulletin

### Firefighters block Tory minister



photo Neil Cafferky

Over 200 firefighters and supporters blockaded the entrance to West Norwood fire station, south London, on 25 November to prevent the entry of Tory fire minister Penny Mordaunt.

The protest was organised by the FBU firefighters' union to greet Mordaunt for the opening of the new station. The union wanted to highlight the hypocrisy of the government coalition's attempt to set up a feel-good publicity stunt while closing ten fire stations in London.

Despite a heavy police presence, the minister's car was unable to enter the station as it pulled up

to the entrances. The driver was forced to roam the streets while police pushed back the firefighters, slipping in twenty minutes later to a din of whistles and jeers.

The minister's misery was further compounded when rank and file staff on duty at the station refused to meet with her.

**A 24-hour national FBU strike over pension cuts is planned to start on 9 December at 9am. A national demo will take place the same day in Buckinghamshire, where FBU executive member Ricky Matthews has been sacked by the Tory fire authority**

### Construction workers lobby parliament

Hundreds of construction and transport workers attended a lobby of parliament on 26 November in opposition to sub-contracted 'umbrella' companies that ignore nationally agreed pay, terms and conditions.

The protest was jointly called by the Unite and Ucatt unions and supported by the RMT and GMB. There were also protests around Britain, including at the Scottish Parliament.

Before the London protest, workers protested outside the office of building firm JJ Rhatigan in solidarity with locked-out Irish construction workers who have been fighting poverty pay.

**Sign up to the National Shop Stewards Network mailing list to get weekly updates: lists. riseup.net/www/subscribe/shopstewardsnet www.shopstewards.net**

## Barnsley College contract strike

University and College Union (UCU) members at Barnsley College began a two-day strike on Wednesday 26 November against the forcing through of a new contract that means some teachers will end up on worse pay and less holidays than others.

The contract was proposed in May. UCU rejected it and requested extended talks. Instead management forced it through in June without agreement, on the back of a restructure that saw job cuts as well as huge downgrading.

The college principal making these cuts has seen his pay increase 40% since 2009 to £142,000 a year! In the same period, Further Education

pay has fallen nationally by 15%. Some teachers at Barnsley College have seen their pay cut by a further

33% due to restructures and downgrading.

**Alistair Tice**

### Lambeth College strike dates named

A walkout at Lambeth College is due to take place on 4 December following an 83% 'yes' vote for restarting action. UCU members are in dispute over new contracts. More action is planned for 9-10 and 15-17 December, with further strikes possible after Christmas unless management proposals change. New contracts include two weeks less holiday, massive sick pay

reductions and extra teaching time for no extra pay.

The principal has now said the new contract will not apply for existing staff – a result of the five week long strike in June and July. But members believe further action can win a victory for all staff.

**Send messages of support via branch secretary Mandy Brown: mandybrowncow@yahoo.com**

## Northern line RMT stoppage over sacking

2014 started with a strike on London Underground's Northern line, part of a system wide strike against ticket office closures, and it's ending with another strike on 1 December. This time it's over the dismissal of a train operator allegedly in breach of procedure.

Morden can be pretty soulless at five o'clock in the morning, but there was already a determined picket line. The heavy management presence and needless British Transport Police visits underline the high stakes in this dispute.

The Morden and Oval RMT branch has a strong tradition of defending victimised members and this won't change. The next step may be a ballot for a strike across the network in the new year.

A message of support was received from Unite members at Putney Bus Garage.

And it won't stop at industrial action. Branch members stood as TUSC candidates in the May local elections and are planning to stand in the general election.

**David Maples**



photo Neil Cafferky

## Trelleborg engineering pay victory

Unite members at Trelleborg engineering in Leicester have won a two-year pay deal following two strikes.

The deal includes:

- A back paid 1.7% increase on all rates of pay for 2014
- A one-off payment of £300
- 2% pay rise for 2015 plus a yearly bonus of up to £900 a year
- Enhanced bank holiday and

Sunday rates

- One week's bereavement pay
- Long term service awards reduced from 25 years to ten years then every five years

When asked by the Socialist about the strike action, Unite steward Mark Potter said: "We identified the business' weak points such as delivery schedules and bottle necks in production. Our members informed

us that they prefer 48-hour strikes not one or two hour stoppages. This was arranged and supported by 99% of the members.

"We also made all our members aware that Unite paid strike pay for full days of strike action. Most pickets stayed for around six hours with some doing around twelve hours. At times we almost had a party atmosphere on the pickets."



**Ophelia**  
Young worker

I worked on a zero-hour contract at a bar in a major airport. It reminded me of my early school days. Collecting a green pass, the badge of responsibility at work, took about three months. Until that time you're stuck on a yellow pass. This meant you had to be escorted everywhere, including the bathroom. I broke this demeaning rule on my second shift.

I finished my first shift at 6pm. I then discovered that I'd been put on the rota to start at 4am the next day. With my alarm set for 2am, I managed about an hour's sleep. We were promised at least one break every four hours.

Until three months working there, you had to be escorted everywhere, including to the bathroom

I was set to work - an endless cycle of collecting glasses, loading the dishwashers, sweeping and mopping. The bar was very busy.

I was working with Jimmy who had been there for 20 years and yet still earned the minimum wage, just like me. Despite the metal plate in his leg, he had the extra task of waiting on tables.

Three hours in, I asked the 'team leader' - sat in his office looking at spreadsheets - if I could have a drink (we were meant to ask permission). He told me I could only have one once the floor was clean. An entirely clean floor is one of the bar's official targets - one we couldn't possibly achieve with the bar so busy.

Every half hour, trolleys packed



# A day in the life of a zero-hour contract worker

## Demeaning rules and poverty pay

with glasses and coffee cups had to be wheeled through the bar and cleaned. The dishwashers never worked well, so when the cups came out dirty I was told to dip them in a bucket of bleach and wash them off by hand.

Six hours into this constant monotony, I was told I could go on my break once I'd finished mopping. I broke down in tears and rushed to the bathroom. When I returned to the bar I was ordered never to leave unescorted again.

### Sick of your boss? Enough is enough!

- Give us proper contracts, guaranteed hours and full employment rights
- £10 an hour minimum wage now!
- Decent tea and lunch breaks
- Stop the bosses' fire-at-will attitude
- We won't be used as cheap or free labour
- We have the right to get organised at work
- Scrap anti-trade union laws
- Build democratic campaigning trade unions
- No to benefit cuts



### Join Youth Fight for Jobs:

- ▶ [www.youthfightforjobs.com](http://www.youthfightforjobs.com)
- ▶ Text JOIN plus name and postcode to 07749379010
- ▶ [youthfightforjobs@gmail.com](mailto:youthfightforjobs@gmail.com)
- ▶ @youthfight4jobs



## BUY NOW FOR CHRISTMAS!

We have many good book presents for your family, friends and comrades both political and less political. Several on the subject of art and culture were advertised in last week's the Socialist. Here is another selection. Many more titles are on our website or we can mail you our booklists.

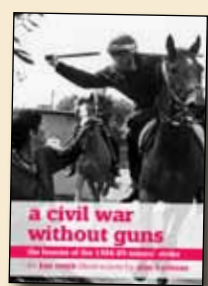
Postage: add 10% for 2nd class delivery and 15% for 1st class delivery. Order by 12 noon 17 December for 2nd class and 12 noon 19 December for 1st class delivery. Christmas wrapping service available. Please make cheques payable to Socialist Books. Order by number.

**Socialist Books**  
PO Box 24697, London E11 1YD  
020 8988 8789 [bookshop@socialistparty.org.uk](mailto:bookshop@socialistparty.org.uk)  
[www.leftbooks.co.uk](http://www.leftbooks.co.uk)

### Bargain packs

#### B6 Workers' struggle bundle £15

1926 General Strike: workers taste power by Peter Taaffe £7.50; Civil War Without Guns: 1984-85 Miners Strike Lessons by Ken Smith, illustrated by Alan Hardman £7.00; Organising the Lost Generation: Jarrow to London 2011 March for Jobs £9.99; Unison Bureaucracy Unmasked: witch hunt of the four £5.00 (value £30)



#### B18 Introduction to socialism bundle £7

The Case for Socialism: Why you should join the Socialist Party £1.00; Socialism in the 21st Century: the way forward for anti-capitalism by Hannah Sell £5.00; Marxism in Today's World; answers on war, capitalism and the environment by Peter Taaffe £8.00 (value £14.00)

#### B19 Classics bundle £4

Value, Price and Profit by Karl Marx £2.00; The April Theses: Task of the proletariat in the present revolution by V.I. Lenin £2.00; The Transitional Programme - the Death Agony of Capitalism and the tasks of the Fourth International by Leon Trotsky £4.00 (value £8)

#### B20 Women in struggle bundle £7

Women: Fighting Austerity, Fighting for Equality £1.00; It doesn't have to be like this: women and the struggle for socialism, by Christine Thomas £5.99; Helen Keller: Her Socialist Years £5.95 (value £12.94)

#### B17 International bundle £9

The Masses Arise: the Great French Revolution 1789 - 1815 by Peter Taaffe £10.00; 1917, the year that changed the world by Peter Taaffe and Hannah Sell £3.00; Empire Defeated: Vietnam War lessons for Today by Peter Taaffe £6.00 (value £19)

#### B21 Latin America bundle £20

Ernesto Che Guevara: The Bolivian Diary £8.99; The Cuban Missile Crisis 1962: Kennedy Documents 61-62 £6.99; The Motor Cycle Diaries £8.99; Companero: The Life and Death of Che Guevara by Jorge Castaneda £9.99 (value £34.96)

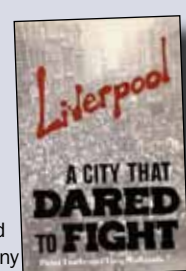
#### B1 Defend the NHS £2

#### B2 Marx and Engels on the Trade Unions £8.95

#### B3 Trade Unions in the Epoch of Imperialist Decay by Leon Trotsky £12.00

#### B4 Revolt on the Clyde by William Gallacher £16.99

#### B5 Liverpool: A City That Dared to Fight by Peter Taaffe and Tony Mulhearn (hardback) £14.95



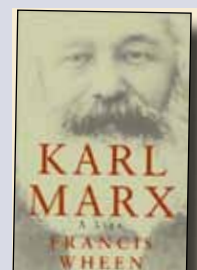
#### British history

#### B7 A History of British Socialism by Max Beer (A4 format, every page illustrated) £15.00

#### B8 God's Englishman: Oliver Cromwell and the English Revolution by Christopher Hill £16.99

#### B9 The Levellers: The Putney Debates, presented by Geoffrey Robertson £8.99

#### B10 Revolution & Counter Revolution in England, Ireland & Scotland 1658 -60 by Brian Manning £8.99



#### Biographies

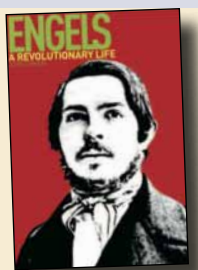
#### B12 Karl Marx: The Story of His Life by Franz Mehring (The original Biography, Digi Printed) £27.99.

#### B13 Engels: A Revolutionary Life by John Green £10.00.

#### B14 Leon Trotsky: My Life; An Attempt at an Autobiography £17.99.

#### B15 Victor Serge: A Political Biography by Susan Weissman £20.00

#### B16 Karl Marx by Francis When £14.99



#### B22 Bargain: The Letters of Rosa Luxemburg (hardback) was £24.00 our price £11.00

#### B23 Bargain: Stalin's Nemesis: The Exile and Murder of Leon Trotsky by Bertrand M Patenaude (hardback) was £20.00 our price £9.00



#### B24 Russian Film Posters Introduction by Maria-Christina Boerner (hardback large format) was £20 our price £14.00

#### B25 Red Star Over Russia: visual History of Soviet Union from 1917 to the death of Stalin. By David King (large format) £24.99





# Tower Hamlets: Government attacks local democracy

## HOW CAN COUNCILS FIGHT THE CUTS?

Local council services are being devastated by government cuts, with plans for far more to come. Official government auditors have suggested that more than half of all councils are at risk of financial failure in the next five years. The Socialist has argued for a strategy of local councils fighting the cuts, using the example of Liverpool City Council in the 1980's.

Tower Hamlets hit the news recently when Tory Communities and Local Government Secretary, Eric Pickles, threatened to send in government commissioners to run parts of the council for three years. This is a slap in the face of democracy for local people. However, it throws up issues of national significance, including how can councils fight the cuts and is the use of commissioners a threat to councils who do fight?

**Paula Mitchell**, Socialist Party London secretary, and **Hugo Pierre**, 2014 TUSC mayoral candidate in Tower Hamlets, explain the background.

The 'Tower Hamlets First' directly-elected mayor Lutfur Rahman was re-elected to a second term in May, amid scenes of celebration when 2,000 mainly Bengali people gathered on the streets to await the announcement. While Labour have the most councillors in the borough they do not have a majority, and Rahman leads an independent Tower Hamlets First cabinet.

Immediately after the 2014 election an investigation was ordered by Pickles into allegations of fraud. This followed a Panorama programme which claimed that Rahman had more than doubled funding to charities run by his supporters.

It appears the Labour Party have colluded with the government to send in inspectors.

Rahman was originally Labour's candidate for the newly-created mayorality in 2010 but was expelled. When he was elected as an independent mayor he offered to run the council together with Labour, but they refused.

The report, conducted by PriceWaterhouseCooper (PwC), the auditors that can be guaranteed to advise privatisation and cuts to local government services, will cost the borough £1 million.

It is clear that the fraud Pickles was looking for cannot be found. The report claims there is evidence of poor governance, financial mismanagement and a lack of transparency over the awarding of public grants and disposal of public buildings.

This relates to budget areas totaling

£20 million out of council expenditure of £1.2 billion - with the vast majority even of the investigated spending unchallenged - and the report accepts that in other services Tower Hamlets meets the government's 'good governance' and 'value for money' criteria.

That didn't stop Pickles making incendiary statements in parliament, referring to 'cronyism and corruption', calling Tower Hamlets a 'rotten borough' and the mayor a 'medieval monarch', which have been gleefully taken up by Labour opponents of Rahman in the borough.

A big community meeting of 1,000 people heard pledges of support from former Labour London Mayor Ken Livingstone and the former Bethnal Green and Bow Respect MP George Galloway.

The Socialist Party completely opposes the imposition of unelected commissioners by an anti-working class 'millionaires' government in place of local accountability in Britain's poorest borough.

How can the people of Tower Hamlets take lessons in propriety from a man who was a close associate of the disgraced Tory leader of Westminster council, Shirley Porter, who in 1996 was surcharged £27 million for directing public funds to secure the Tories' electoral base in Westminster?

### Mayoral system

Pickles has been used by the Tories to wield a big stick over local government. He has presided over a 27% cut in local government finance, and it is predicted that by the end of the newly-announced austerity

programme in the next government, council funding could have been cut by 80%.

As Lutfur Rahman correctly says, he will "not take lectures on 'the politics of division' from parties that bash immigrants and those on welfare benefits, or from politicians disgraced

by expenses scandals, discredited by lies told to justify war, and intent on scapegoating the vulnerable in our society for an economic crisis caused by the most powerful". Communities Minister Tariq Ahmed says Pickles' intervention "is entirely to do with protecting local taxpayers from an abuse of executive power and the systematic breakdown of local democratic checks and balances". But that is the nature of the undemocratic mayor and cabinet system, brought in by Labour and now being vigorously promoted by the Tories even without the pretence of a democratic vote, as in the Greater Manchester authority where a mayor is being imposed.

The report itself shows that Rahman has only taken the control the law allows him to do. "We note the mayor has retained decision making power over all grants in excess of £1,000 and therefore over the majority of the Authority's grant making activities, as the Authority's Constitution and the law entitle him to do".

The mayor "also proposed the replacement of the existing Grants Panel (which was an open forum with decision making powers) with a Corporate Grants Programme Board,



Directly elected Tower Hamlets mayor Lutfur Rhaman and Tory Secretary of State, Eric Pickles



A mass rally of trade unionists in support of Liverpool's defiant socialist council photo D Sinclair



A 24-hour general strike would be a serious step in a campaign to defeat the cuts photo S Beishon

which is only empowered to make recommendations for approval by the mayor and whose proceedings are not open to the public... the shift of decision making is consistent with the

mayors' lawful retention of decision making".

While PwC say that this "has led to a loss of transparency," it is actually not fundamentally different to how the

other 14 directly-elected mayors in England operate.

When George Galloway campaigned for a directly elected mayor in Tower Hamlets in 2010 we said it

was a mistake. We argued then that "it is far easier in such a system for one person to take unpopular decisions to cut or privatise services, or to favour business interests, than to win support for such policies amongst a wider group of councillors who know they will have to justify themselves to a specific ward area of local voters...."

The real route to local democracy is to argue for elected councillors, who are fully accountable and subject to recall by those who elected them".

In this attack on Tower Hamlets council there is undoubtedly a whiff of racism against a mainly Bengali-run council, although many of the accusations are of discrimination in funding against Bengali community groups run by Labour supporters.

measures. But we have always said that best way to defend such steps is to go further and resist all the government's attacks. We were part of the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC) challenge in the borough in May, which stood 14 council candidates and a mayoral candidate (in a transferable vote election where second preferences count), precisely to make that point.

In reality the council has made significant cuts. £125 million has been stolen by central government and now another £70 million is proposed.

Mayor Rahman has run roadshow consultations on the cuts - like many Labour councils, in effect asking the community to choose the cuts themselves - which have only sown confusion and division locally.

Recently four day nurseries were threatened with closure and the council unions are lobbying against further cuts to home care, mental health services to children, mental health and elderly day care centres and more. The council even saved money in the last budget to put into reserves to be able to pay redundancy for staff cuts in this budget.

A vibrant campaign of parents has forced the mayor to reconsider the closure of three of the nurseries, and he has also instructed the withdrawal of cuts to mental health services. These successes give a glimpse of what would be possible if a serious campaign to withstand all the cuts was mounted.

Lessons of Liverpool

But Tower Hamlets First has effectively taken a similar approach to the Greens in Brighton - ameliorate the cuts but essentially still implement them. And Pickles' intervention will raise the question again, is there really any alternative to passing on this government's cuts?

"The government will send in the commissioners" has been the bogeyman held up by Labour councils and the Greens to justify their position that nothing else can be done. Some will seize on Pickles' announcement to say this proves it.

Actually the Tower Hamlets experience so far shows that it is not easy for the government to just take over a council. Tower Hamlets is not being 'taken over'; three commissioners will oversee grants, selling council property, senior appointments, and some contracts.

Lutfur Rahman says this will only involve 1.9% of the budget. And it has taken months for this process to get underway, allowing plenty of time to build up a campaign.

But most importantly, what has happened in Tower Hamlets shows that passing on the cuts while taking some measures to sweeten the pill does not work.

The Socialist Party has always said it is necessary to make a stand and to refuse to implement the cuts. Councils should follow the road of Liverpool Labour council in the 1980s, led by supporters of the Militant, the fore-

runner of the Socialist Party. The Socialist Party supports these

ordinary people pay for the crisis caused by the bankers and the bosses. Defend the national collective bargaining arrangements for council workers.

●Reject increases in council tax, rent and service charges to compensate for government cuts.

●Vote against the privatisation of council jobs and services, or the transfer of council services to 'social enterprises' or 'arms-length' management organisations, which are first steps to privatisation.

●Oppose racism and fascism and stand up for equality for all.

●Vote for councils to refuse to implement the cuts. We will support councils which in the first instance use their reserves and prudential borrowing powers to avoid making cuts. But we argue that the best way to mobilise the mass campaign that is necessary to defeat the dismantling of council services is to set a budget that meets the needs of the local community and demands that government funding makes up the shortfall.

●Oppose all cuts to council jobs, services, pay and conditions.

●Refuse to implement the Bedroom Tax now. Councils should write off all bedroom tax-related arrears, withdraw all court proceedings and eviction orders where the bedroom tax has been a factor, and call on Housing Associations to do the same.

●Support all workers' struggles against the cuts, privatisation and government policies making

## TUSC's election challenge

The Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC) is aiming to stand at least 100 candidates in May's general election.

But in many ways the council elections are as important as the general election in deciding what will happen to the vital public services provided by local authorities.

With all the establishment parties - and UKIP too - committed to austerity, the best that will happen in the Westminster elections is that there will be a change of 'management style' at the top.

That's why it is important to have local councillors who will refuse to vote for cuts in the council chamber. And that is why TUSC is appealing to trade union members, anti-cuts campaigners, young people - everyone in fact who opposes the austerity agenda - to themselves come forward as council candidates next May.

Among other pledges, all TUSC councillors will:

●Oppose all cuts to council jobs, services, pay and conditions.

●Refuse to implement the Bedroom Tax now. Councils should write off all bedroom tax-related arrears, withdraw all court proceedings and eviction orders where the bedroom tax has been a factor, and call on Housing Associations to do the same.

●Support all workers' struggles against the cuts, privatisation and government policies making

ordinary people pay for the crisis caused by the bankers and the bosses. Defend the national collective bargaining arrangements for council workers.

●Reject increases in council tax, rent and service charges to compensate for government cuts.

●Vote against the privatisation of council jobs and services, or the transfer of council services to 'social enterprises' or 'arms-length' management organisations, which are first steps to privatisation.

●Oppose racism and fascism and stand up for equality for all.

●Vote for councils to refuse to implement the cuts. We will support councils which in the first instance use their reserves and prudential borrowing powers to avoid making cuts. But we argue that the best way to mobilise the mass campaign that is necessary to defeat the dismantling of council services is to set a budget that meets the needs of the local community and demands that government funding makes up the shortfall.

●Oppose all cuts to council jobs, services, pay and conditions.

●Refuse to implement the Bedroom Tax now. Councils should write off all bedroom tax-related arrears, withdraw all court proceedings and eviction orders where the bedroom tax has been a factor, and call on Housing Associations to do the same.

●Support all workers' struggles against the cuts, privatisation and government policies making

**TUSC  
AGAINST  
CUTS**

www.tusc.org.uk



Hugo Pierre, TUSC Mayoral candidate in Tower Hamlets photo Paul Mattsson

Liverpool council refused to make the Tories' cuts, set a budget to meet the needs of the city, and mounted a massive trade union and community campaign to win the necessary funding.

The campaign involved thousands of local people in mass demonstrations, a city-wide strike, and real consultation on the services they needed. While popularising the idea that the Tories had stolen £30 million from the city, the council never presented the struggle as a matter of 'putting Liverpool first'. They attempted at all times to link up with other councils to fight against the government's cuts.

Unfortunately, in contrast, Tower Hamlets council has not organised even one demonstration against the government's cuts to the borough or sought to mobilise a national campaign against the Con-Dems.

Lutfur Rahman has said he has replaced "national politics by commu-

nity politics", when what is needed is a different 'national politics' that could take on this government and whatever combination of pro-austerity establishment parties that comes next.

In this situation, the two biggest unions in Tower Hamlets, Unison and the NUT, whose local secretaries stood on the community meeting platform with Rahman, have a critical role to play in fighting for the Liverpool methods of organising.

Tower Hamlets First could still build a campaign to defend the borough, resist the commissioners, stave off cuts, and spearhead a national fightback. But a national strategy is needed, for example to call a conference of rebel councillors and council unions.

TUSC is in the process of arranging a discussion about the general election with Tower Hamlets First. This must include a discussion on how they see their role in building a national alternative to austerity.



Fighting the cuts in Tower Hamlets



# Help us to fund this historic challenge

Continued from page 1

A vote for any of the main parties, including Ukip, means ramping up the misery the Con-Dem government has inflicted on us. Meanwhile MPs vote themselves a 15% raise - boosting their pay to £74,000 a year when workers' wages are being cut and our living standards are falling.

Even the other participants think their parties are running a no-choice election. One Labour front bencher, quoted in the New Statesman, said: "It's a battle between a

shit Labour Party and a shit Conservative Party. The winner will be the one that's a little bit less shit."

But members of the Socialist Party are going into the elections with a different message. We can transform politics - ordinary workers, community campaigners and students can stand up and say: "enough is enough!"

## Material

45% of funds raised will be retained in areas where we stand, to help cover local campaign material. For example, it costs up to £1,500 for

an election address to be delivered to every household in a constituency. We will also need nation-

£10 from a student  
or hundreds from  
someone in work -  
it all makes a vital  
contribution

ally produced posters, leaflets and other material - for both the parliamentary and council elections.

Therefore we are asking every member and supporter to pledge a donation, redeemable by 30 April 2015. In previous campaigns, Socialist Party members have donated the equivalent of a week's income, paid over three or four months. It is that spirit of sacrifice we appeal to now.

We recognise this will be a struggle for some. But the Socialist Party has no rich backers; we can only rely on our members and supporters for finance. Your donations - whether ten pounds from a school student, or several hundred from someone in work -

all make a vital contribution.

■ Thanks to **Mick Griffiths**, secretary of Wakefield branch, who has got the appeal off to a great start by donating a week's pension payment of £75. **Like Mick, you can send us a cheque or postal order (payable to "Socialist Party") to PO Box 24697, London E11 1YD, pay through our website at [socialistparty.org.uk/donate](http://socialistparty.org.uk/donate), or over the phone on 020 8988 8777.**

## Crown drops charges against protest pensioners



photo Sharron Milsom

**Sharron Milsom**  
Sheffield North Socialist Party

A protest planned outside Sheffield Magistrates Court is now partly a celebration. Cases against pensioners George Arthur and Tony Nuttall, the "freedom riders" arrested at Sheffield railway station on 23 June, have been dropped.

South and West Yorkshire councils had withdrawn free train travel and bus fare concessions for elderly and disabled people. Freedom riders protested by catching trains in South Yorkshire and refusing to pay.

Disabled people's travel rights were restored in full earlier this year (see issue 811). But elderly passengers only won back partial reductions in some fares.

George and Tony were arrested after three months of protest rides. When around 60 of us got off a train at Sheffield, we found police and security staff blocking all exits.

George was dragged along the platform and arrested. Tony had five police and guards pressing his head down, pushing him along bent double.

## Violence

What were they charged with? "Obstructing a police officer in the execution of his duty" and "travel fraud". So it's the police's duty to assault pensioners? In addition to these violent arrests, several disabled and elderly protesters were pushed over and injured by police, with four going to hospital. A blind woman was pushed over a young man using a wheelchair.

After five months preparing their case, and finding 19 police to act as witnesses, the Crown Prosecution Service decided to drop it. Not enough evidence, apparently!

Undoubtedly they had also felt pressure from protest actions, national media coverage and the back-

ing of several trade unions. The court case would have reignited all this.

We have complained to the Independent Police Complaints Commission, which suspended investigations pending the court cases. Now we'll press them to get moving. Will police be charged with assault? They ought to be. What would happen if a protester pushed a police officer and caused an injury?

Freedom riders were clapping and cheering when Tony announced the victory at our campaign meeting. It's a great boost to us. But we're still fighting for our main aim: to win back free train travel for pensioners, and reverse the restrictions on bus pass use.

**Protest at 9am on 8 December, Sheffield Magistrates' Court, Castle Street, Sheffield S3 8LU.**

**Lobby of Transport Committee meeting at 1pm on 15 December, Regent Street, Barnsley.**

## No justice, no peace: protesters paralyse London streets

James Ivens

Pulsing with outrage, arms lifted high, they chorused: "hands up - don't shoot!"

A thousand young, loud and angry marchers paralysed parts of central London in protest at police racism on 26 November.

Anti-racist groups called the US embassy demonstration in response to American cop Darren Wilson escaping criminal charges. Wilson killed unarmed black teenager Michael Brown in August.

Vigil speakers included relatives of Mark Duggan, victim of a racist police murder in Tottenham. The rally ended with a seemingly unplanned surge onto the streets - destination: police headquarters.

## Standstill

Lively, fast-moving protesters poured onto Oxford Street. Traffic and Christmas shoppers were brought to a standstill in the prickly evening mist.

Small squads of surprised police ran up and down, desperately trying to assert some authority. Bystanders whooped and saluted with raised fists; groups of young people tore leaflets from our hands. Black and Asian drivers rolled down their windows to join in.

Marchers shut Charing Cross police station and aired their displeasure at Downing Street, before heading to fenced-off Parliament Square. Overwhelmed cops chased, tripped and shoved protesters - including

an elderly woman - for trying to enter. But they could not keep the cheering, charging crowd out.

The march stopped at New Scotland Yard, home of the Metropolitan Police, chanting "who killed Mike Brown? Police killed Mike Brown!"

Youthful demonstrators - many fresh from student protests the week before - were enthusiastic and open to socialist ideas. One young black woman giving the Socialist Party her contact details summed it up:

"Capitalism, racism: it's all about making money off the backs of others."

Vibrant and determined protests are important to the fight against police racism and violence

on both sides of the Atlantic. We say they should be organised

with stewards to defend against police attack, and linked to an ongoing strategy. We need democratic

community control of policing - and a new party for workers, youth and all oppressed groups.

Community control of policing - and a new party for workers, youth and all oppressed groups.

Community control of policing - and a new party for workers, youth and all oppressed groups.

Community control of policing - and a new party for workers, youth and all oppressed groups.

Community control of policing - and a new party for workers, youth and all oppressed groups.

Community control of policing - and a new party for workers, youth and all oppressed groups.

Community control of policing - and a new party for workers, youth and all oppressed groups.

Community control of policing - and a new party for workers, youth and all oppressed groups.

Community control of policing - and a new party for workers, youth and all oppressed groups.

Community control of policing - and a new party for workers, youth and all oppressed groups.

Community control of policing - and a new party for workers, youth and all oppressed groups.

Community control of policing - and a new party for workers, youth and all oppressed groups.

Community control of policing - and a new party for workers, youth and all oppressed groups.

Community control of policing - and a new party for workers, youth and all oppressed groups.

Community control of policing - and a new party for workers, youth and all oppressed groups.

Community control of policing - and a new party for workers, youth and all oppressed groups.

Community control of policing - and a new party for workers, youth and all oppressed groups.

**Donate to fund the fightback!**  
[socialistparty.org.uk/donate](http://socialistparty.org.uk/donate)  
 020 8988 8777  
 text 0776 1818 206 @Socialist\_party /CWISocialistParty

## SOCIALIST PARTY FIGHTING FUND

	£ received	£ target	October to December 2014												Deadline 5 January 2015			
South East	1,293	750	[filled]	[filled]	[filled]	[filled]	[filled]	[filled]	[filled]	[filled]	[filled]	[filled]	[filled]	[filled]	[filled]	[filled]	[filled]	[filled]
West Midlands	3,226	2,100	[filled]	[filled]	[filled]	[filled]	[filled]	[filled]	[filled]	[filled]	[filled]	[filled]	[filled]	[filled]	[filled]	[filled]	[filled]	[filled]
East Midlands	2,186	1,600	[filled]	[filled]	[filled]	[filled]	[filled]	[filled]	[filled]	[filled]	[filled]	[filled]	[filled]	[filled]	[filled]	[filled]	[filled]	[filled]
North West	1,517	1,200	[filled]	[filled]	[filled]	[filled]	[filled]	[filled]	[filled]	[filled]	[filled]	[filled]	[filled]	[filled]	[filled]	[filled]	[filled]	[filled]
Northern	731	600	[filled]	[filled]	[filled]	[filled]	[filled]	[filled]	[filled]	[filled]	[filled]	[filled]	[filled]	[filled]	[filled]	[filled]	[filled]	[filled]
Wales	2,563	2,300	[filled]	[filled]	[filled]	[filled]	[filled]	[filled]	[filled]	[filled]	[filled]	[filled]	[filled]	[filled]	[filled]	[filled]	[filled]	[filled]
Yorkshire	2,795	2,900	[filled]	[filled]	[filled]	[filled]	[filled]	[filled]	[filled]	[filled]	[filled]	[filled]	[filled]	[filled]	[filled]	[filled]	[filled]	[filled]
South West	1,321	1,400	[filled]	[filled]	[filled]	[filled]	[filled]	[filled]	[filled]	[filled]	[filled]	[filled]	[filled]	[filled]	[filled]	[filled]	[filled]	[filled]
England and Wales	3,330	3,650	[filled]	[filled]	[filled]	[filled]	[filled]	[filled]	[filled]	[filled]	[filled]	[filled]	[filled]	[filled]	[filled]	[filled]	[filled]	[filled]
Southern	933	1,200	[filled]	[filled]	[filled]	[filled]	[filled]	[filled]	[filled]	[filled]	[filled]	[filled]	[filled]	[filled]	[filled]	[filled]	[filled]	[filled]
London	4,128	6,100	[filled]	[filled]	[filled]	[filled]	[filled]	[filled]	[filled]	[filled]	[filled]	[filled]	[filled]	[filled]	[filled]	[filled]	[filled]	[filled]
Eastern	512	1,200	[filled]	[filled]	[filled]	[filled]	[filled]	[filled]	[filled]	[filled]	[filled]	[filled]	[filled]	[filled]	[filled]	[filled]	[filled]	[filled]
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>24,533</b>	<b>25,000</b>	[filled]	[filled]	[filled]	[filled]	[filled]	[filled]	[filled]	[filled]	[filled]	[filled]	[filled]	[filled]	[filled]	[filled]	[filled]	[filled]

## Neighbours defend disabled man from eviction

**Elaine Brunskill**  
Socialist Party Northern region

A local community in Newcastle came out to defend a disabled resident threatened with eviction on 27 November. His rent arrears had been under control - until compounded by the bedroom tax.

Neighbour Andrew Temple commented that if he was guilty of terrorising someone who was disabled there would be outrage. Yet here was the local council terrorising a disabled person.

Andrew said he'd only heard about the threatened eviction that morning from a neighbour. He thought it was "out of order" and immediately came out to defend the tenant. He also said he thought

it was great that the community was sticking together.

The man facing eviction is still recovering from a recent opera-

Neighbours thought it was "out of order" and immediately came out to defend the tenant

tion. In spite of this, he said the council came in "gung ho" - pushing the eviction through despite his surgeon saying he was unfit for work.

Although the court eventually postponed the eviction, the coun-

cil sent a joiner to change the locks and board up the door. Neighbours prevented this - showing the importance of continuing protests even when evictions aren't supposed to be going ahead.

This protest proves local communities can fight back against councils intent on bullying struggling residents. It also shows the need for councillors who will fight on behalf of local communities.

## North West TUSC is go!

Supporters of the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC - see page 7) held a successful conference on 22 November. 20 agreed to stand as candidates, and nearly £100 was raised. Full story at [socialistparty.org.uk](http://socialistparty.org.uk).

Supporters of the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC - see page 7) held a successful conference on 22 November. 20 agreed to stand as candidates, and nearly £100 was raised. Full story at [socialistparty.org.uk](http://socialistparty.org.uk).

Supporters of the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC - see page 7) held a successful conference on 22 November. 20 agreed to stand as candidates, and nearly £100 was raised. Full story at [socialistparty.org.uk](http://socialistparty.org.uk).





# World health crises show Capitalism kills!



**Ebola**

Doctor and Socialist Party member **Jon Dale** updates on the latest situation in the Ebola crisis.



The virus has shown the need for publicly funded healthcare for all

The three poverty-stricken West African countries at the centre of the Ebola crisis now face the threat of famine.

Fear among farmers has led to farms being abandoned and harvests uncollected. A shortage of labour threatens staple crops such as rice and maize. Over a million people need food aid, according to a United Nations (UN) spokesperson.

## Ebola-struck countries are now faced with famine

Food shortages will make people move, which could spread Ebola into new areas. Treatment of common illnesses like TB, malaria and dysentery has been hit as health services near collapse, with doctors and nurses falling victim to Ebola.

Despite this, governments of wealthy countries are still dragging their feet in tackling the epidemic. Although significant resources are

now being deployed, they remain a fraction of what is required.

Dr Jennifer Liu, president of the charity Médecins Sans Frontières, described the international response as like "airstrikes without boots on the ground... The military are the only body that can be deployed in the numbers needed now and that can organise things fast... You need to send people, not stuff, and get hands on, not try to do this remotely... Local doctors have been extremely brave, but we are running out of staff and that is why we are asking for a major workforce to deploy."

Military forces should not be used to strengthen the economic and strategic influence of imperialist governments. These have drained huge wealth from this region for over a century. Nor should they be used to prop up corrupt governments in the affected countries.

Instead, their trained personnel and logistical resources should be controlled by locally elected committees who know what is needed in their areas. Servicemen and women need trade union rights and their own elected committees.

Since 9/11, military and civilian biohazard teams have been developed in the USA and elsewhere. Since 2006 the US Department of Defense's Transformational Medical Technologies programme has spent \$1.5 billion researching new treatments against biological attacks. Ebola virus was identified at the start of the programme as a possible threat.

## Profit-driven

Four US drug companies received grants under this programme in 2010. Defense Industry Daily pointed out: "the hemorrhagic fever virus market ... (is) a small, \$300 million total estimated market segment. Compare this to multi-billion markets like cardiovascular diseases, Hepatitis-C, and flu. Without targeted government funding to tip the scales, it's clear that a small biotech firm will be pushed hard by investors to pursue larger markets instead."

So the champions of the 'free market' brushed aside objections to public subsidies! Taxpayers had to stump up, as profits weren't big enough for private 'enterprise'.

Big pharmaceutical companies refused to invest in vaccine research for tropical illnesses. "Because Ebola has historically been confined to poor African nations, the incentive is virtually non-existent," Dr. Margaret Chan, director of the World Health Organisation said.

But now that Ebola threatens to cross continents, causing economic and social instability, the stakes have suddenly got higher. Public money is pouring into vaccine and drug treatment research and the big companies are racing to get a slice of the action.

## Competition?

Defenders of capitalism say it's competition between rival companies that pushes forward scientific and technical advance. According to capitalist rules, the race to get effective treatments should be driven by the profit motive. But the dire situation shows this has failed utterly.

The West African Ebola crisis developed following capitalist destruction of the natural environment, together with poverty, hopelessly inadequate local health services and lack of basic services like clean water and electricity.

It has exposed the incapacity of privately owned big business to develop preventative vaccines or effective treatments. It shows the need for socialist planning, democratically controlling the resources of publicly owned pharmaceutical companies and research laboratories.

And the virus has also shown the need for publicly funded healthcare available to all. People too poor to pay for healthcare can pass infectious diseases to others. Everyone needs good quality healthcare. Big business can't be left to run it for private profit.



**HIV/Aids**

This year's World Aids Day was marked by the release of a report from a cross-party committee of the UK parliament. It highlights the continued devastating effect of HIV/Aids on the health of millions across the world.

The report shows that the impact of the virus is made much worse by profit-hungry pharmaceutical companies and by the lack of a serious and organised response by world

governments. In fact the report says: "international funding for the Aids response has stalled".

There are estimated to be 13.6 million people taking antiretroviral drugs to stem the progress of the disease. But shockingly this suggests that two thirds of those infected around the world are going without treatment.

**2/3**  
people with HIV are not being treated

Ben Simms, director of the charity StopAids said: "We are failing to reach key population groups, wit-

nessing a building crisis in middle income countries around pricing and resources, seeing trade deals threaten global access to medicines, and persisting with an approach to medical innovation that excludes billions of the world's poor."

## Women and children

Only 24% of children with the disease are being treated. This is particularly worrying as Aids-related illnesses are the leading cause of death among young people aged ten to 19 in Africa.

Internationally it is also the leading cause of death among women of reproductive age. The report highlights the slow progress on women's and gay rights as big barriers.

The report should be welcomed in terms of highlighting the

problems. But this concern is of little consequence without real and urgent action.

We need full, scientific programmes of sex and relationships education available in all schools. We need investment in public services and infrastructure, which would limit the spread and help with the battle against the virus.

Ultimately our health is not safe in their hands - we need a democratic, socialist society. The nationalisation of the big pharmaceutical companies would smash profit as a barrier to access to antiretroviral drugs.

Investment in research and technology based on need not profit could open up the possibility of better, cheaper treatments and even a cure.

**Sarah Wrack**

## 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)

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



## World Perspectives: A turbulent period in history

Signs of revival of class struggle signposts the future

*International Secretariat of the CWI*



## South Africa: Metalworkers' union expelled from COSATU

Rebuild the trade union movement on socialist principles!

*Workers And Socialist Party (WASP) Reporters*



## More powers for Scotland, but they don't go far enough

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

*Philip Stott, Socialist Party Scotland*



## 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.

**A new convert?**

An unusual anti-cuts activist has appeared in Southampton opposing library closures.

He's Royston Smith, Southampton council group Tory leader, and Tory candidate for Southampton Itchen. He emailed local residents asking for support for his campaign to Save Cobbett Library. I replied:

"Will you give your support to all our libraries and oppose the closure of them all? Or are you just an Itchen nimby? Will you call on your government to reverse the 40% cuts to local government funding that has seen so many local council services destroyed since 2010.

"As an 'anti-cuts activist', are you maybe in the wrong party? These cuts are a product of austerity, a policy your party, the Lib-Dems and Labour are all committed to.

"I am inclined to doubt your sincerity or be sickened by your utter hypocrisy. But if you are finding life in the Conservative Party not to your taste and want to consider an alternative that can save libraries, librarians and public services and revive an economy in ruins I'd be more than happy to help you understand the advantages of public ownership and democratic planning for the benefit of the many not the few.

"Till then I'm sure many in Southampton will be entertained by your political gymnastics, you seem to have learnt little since your fall from the high bar of council leadership. See you at the library protests!"

**Nick Chaffey, Southampton Socialist Party**

to members in desperation, pleading that "there are six seats still available. The meals are already paid for, so we are looking for people to eat them!" But even a free meal doesn't appeal to those let down by Labour!

**Carl Harper, Peterborough**

**TIPing over the edge**

The NHS could be privatised. The Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP), the new agreement between the EU and the USA will make the NHS illegal over time and our politicians can do nothing about it.

They say that NHS privatisation is not part of TTIP but that is how politicians work these days. Get your foot in the door and eventually the door will fully open.

The NHS may be predominantly excluded from TTIP but over time it will nibble at the situation behind our backs and more of the NHS will fall into the profit-driven private sector.

Companies like Virgin are already picking up £500 million NHS contracts and tendering for multi-billion NHS outsourced NHS contracts. The TTIP will open the flood gates for people like Branson only interested in controlling huge wealth for themselves.

It will be an absolute disaster for the people of the European Union and of America in the long-term. Oppose this deal before it is signed and too late for the people to do anything about it.

**Dr David Hill, Huddersfield**

**Childcare problems**

Royal Mail boss Moya Greene recently called for action to get more women in the boardroom. She quite rightly writes that one of the biggest obstacles to women's advancement in business in Britain is the appalling lack of childcare.

Millions of working women with childcare responsibilities in Britain would no doubt echo this sentiment but would want an increase in affordable and local childcare just to enable them to take advantage of the very limited employment opportunities available at the moment.

Many so-called improvements in work-life balance that have happened in the last few years have only been introduced to help managers.

Workers can't trust managers to improve their lives inside or outside of the workplace. That requires a strong trade union movement demanding the implementation of progressive legislation from a workers' government.

**Clive Walder, Birmingham**

**Splashing the cash**

Despite the rise of food banks, and an emergency cuts and redundancy budget rumoured to be planned by Peterborough city council, some people can still afford to splash the cash and pay over-the-odds for a 'wine and dine' experience. These include Labour Party members and activists!

In what Labour's Peterborough parliamentary candidate called a 'special deal', people were asked to pay £180 for a table at her Campaign Launch Dinner. Despite this huge sum, she informed trade union branches that she could "not compete" with "posh Tory dining clubs". But she was going to try to!

Union officials who shamefully splashed members' subs on supporting the event soon realised that the rank-and-file may have better things to do than support pro-austerity Labour parliamentary candidates.

A day before the event, one union 'sponsoring' a table was forced to write

# Sixth form students grill Grayling

**Lily Green**

Huddersfield Socialist Party

During Tory Justice Minister Chris Grayling's flying visit to Greenhead College in Huddersfield on 14 November, sixth form Law and Politics students put him on the spot on a number of issues.

Grayling only gave us information he wanted us to hear and we had no opportunity to come back with debate. He lost uncomfortable questions in a fog of his own repetitive rhetoric.

Grayling had recently apologised for listening to MPs' phone calls from prisoners, so I asked when he was planning to apologise to the mothers of those who died in prison since he had been in office.

Grayling replied. "I would say to any mother that I am really sorry about the suicides in prison, I don't like it to happen, I don't want it to happen and I don't know why it's happening. There seems no pattern to the suicides except that there's a lot of mental health problems in prisons".

He did not seem concerned that prison is a totally inappropriate environment for those with mental health problems although he said he wanted to "develop more specialist centres equipped to deal with mental health problems."

He said: "We have a system in place in police stations to divert people with mental health problems into the NHS rather than the criminal justice system."

**No explanation**

Yet this still does not explain Britain's staggering amount of mentally ill people detained in prison, some of them ironically put there for their own safety rather than for committing any crime.

Linda Davidson's 21 year old son Steven, hanged himself in HMP Glen Parva after being sent there 'for his own safety' following an attempt to cut his throat. He had serious mental health problems.

Grayling said that the majority of deaths in prison are of natural causes due to an older prison population. But this whitewashed over the disgraceful increase in non-natural deaths in prisons since he's been in post. He made vague assurances to



**Chris Grayling: maybe he prefers a one-way exchange?**

photo Policy Exchange (creativecommons.org/licenses/by/2.0/legalcode)

Grayling spent the whole session squirming out of questions he didn't want to answer

students he was making every effort to prevent prisoner deaths.

Grayling spent the whole session squirming out of questions he didn't want to answer. I asked why he denied there was a crisis in prisons when there's a catalogue of problems: a rise in assaults, prisoner self-harm, staff shortages, serious concerted acts of indiscipline etc. None of these questions would he coherently answer.

Then I asked a general question, which he definitely didn't want to answer! I said given the dominance of Etonians in Parliament would you say that class war is over and the ruling class has won?



**Government prison cuts have worsened conditions for prisoners**

# Stop academies in Lewisham

Local teachers and other supporters recently established the Stop Academies in Lewisham campaign (SAiL). At least five secondary schools in Lewisham borough are considering academy status: Bonus Pastor, Hilly Fields, Ladywell Fields, Prendergast Vale and Sedgemoor. SAiL plans widespread activity.

Lewisham Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC) stands for fully funded comprehensive education under local authority control and opposes all forms of privatisation. TUSC fully supports SAiL.

James Kerr, Lewisham TUSC organiser and teacher said: "These are further attacks on comprehensive education. Staff, parents, governors and the local community must organise to keep schools under local authority control, both to protect staff pay and conditions and ensure



photo Haringey SP

the needs of all children in the borough are met, without the increased competition and division created by privatisation".

Former Lewisham Socialist Party councillor and recent TUSC candidate Chris Flood, said: "TUSC stands with the NUT and other unions in defending education in the borough against cuts and privatisation. The Lewisham Hospital campaign showed that when people organise and campaign we can win. TUSC will be lending our full support to SAiL and to NUT members taking action against the proposals".

Martin Powell-Davies, SAiL convenor and Lewisham NUT secretary, is a member of the TUSC national steering committee. TUSC's national steering committee recently endorsed the NUT's 'Stand up for education' manifesto.



# Doncaster Care UK Inspirational struggle for entire trade union movement

**Alistair Tice**  
Yorkshire Socialist Party secretary

The campaign of the Doncaster Care UK workers has helped put the issues of NHS privatisation and cuts in social care to the top of the political agenda. They turned a local dispute against cuts in terms and conditions into a national and even international cause célèbre.

After 90 days of strike action taken since February, the Unison members voted in a ballot by 82 to 31 to accept the company's pay offer.

All staff will get a pay rise of 2% from October 2014 and a further 2% a year or the CPI inflation measure, whichever is the highest, in the following two years. In addition, the staff transferred from the NHS last year will receive a £500 bonus.

Let's be clear, this pay deal would not have been given by Care UK, which announced a zero company-wide pay rise for 2014, had it not been for the determination of the strikers.

The Doncaster Supported Living Service for adults with learning difficulties was privatised by the council last year, out of the NHS into the hands of private company Care UK. Within weeks of taking over, having won the contract with a bid that was less than the staffing costs, Care UK announced abolition of unsociable hours pay, and massive cuts to holidays and sickness entitlements. On average, staff faced losing 35% of their income through these attacks on terms and conditions. One striker, Mags, lost her house as a result.

## Ballot

Despite not having taken any strike action previously and with newly elected shop stewards, the Unison members voted by 96% to reject these swingeing cuts and to take industrial action. This forced minor concessions from the company - £1 and £2 an hour pay for unsociable hours - but nothing to make up for pay cuts of £250 to £700 a month.

What was to become the longest running strike in social care began in late February with a week long stoppage of around 120, mainly women, workers. It was given added poignancy by coinciding with the 30th anniversary of the start of the miners' strike. A few of the strikers were ex-miners as were several strikers' partners.

Over the course of the following eight months, through bold strike action and an energetic, dynamic campaign taken all over the country, the Care UK workers made it onto the front page of the Observer, onto the stage at Hyde Park at the TUC pay demonstration and even into the House of Commons.

They targeted Bridgepoint, the private equity owner of Care UK, protesting outside its London of-



Protesting outside the London offices of Care UK owners Bridgepoint photo Paul Mattsson

fices several times. Care UK offices were picketed in many towns and cities as well as its HQ in Essex. The dragging of Care UK's name through the mud forced the company to make the pay offer.

The strike became an inspiration to trade unionists in Yorkshire and nationally, including Your Choice Barnet care workers and St Mungo's housing workers. Solidarity donations poured in from trade union branches and workplace collections, enough to top up the union's strike pay to sustain the strike actions. For the strikers, the dispute became about more than pay, it was to expose the effects of NHS privatisation and cuts in social care.

## Labour's inaction

Strikers wanted to force Care UK out of the Doncaster contract. But their determination was not matched by the local Labour council. The Labour mayor (elected in May 2013) always claimed that it was the previous mayor (an English Democrat!) who had awarded the contract to Care UK. But the Labour council did nothing to bring the contract back in-house to the NHS.

In fact not a single Doncaster Labour councillor or MP openly backed the strike, let alone visited the picket line. This includes Labour Party leader Ed Miliband, MP for Doncaster North.

Miliband was lobbied twice at his local surgeries. While expressing sympathy in private, he was not prepared to come out publicly in support of the strike.

Despite not having taken any strike action previously and with newly elected shop stewards, the Unison members voted by 96% to strike

The strikers, a majority being traditional Labour supporters, were disgusted by this. Most readily backed the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC) in the May elections. Two strikers and a striker's partner stood as TUSC candidates.

Many Care UK workers questioned why their trade union Unison was funding Labour, which wasn't supporting the strikers. Nationally, Unison either wouldn't or couldn't pressure Labour to support them.

Not that Unison didn't want the Care UK workers to win. The regional officials were very supportive and played a positive role. Unison general secretary, Dave Prentis, visited the picket line on the 28th strike day. He told the strikers that they were the "pinnacle" of Unison's fight against the cuts and "you will win". But, as one shop steward remarked after a visit to Unison HQ



Sharing solidarity with Ritzy cinema workers photo Yorkshire SP

in London: "We need more than tea and biscuits!"

## National support

The union paid strike pay and did not block further periods of strike action. The strikers were acclaimed at the Unison and TUC conferences. However, Unison did not develop a national strategy to beat the company. This comes as a result of years of allowing local strikes against cuts and privatisation in the NHS and local government to remain isolated and lose, rather than being built into national action with a chance of winning.

As early as March, and again when Dave Prentis visited the picket line, in strike meetings and at Unison HQ, Socialist Party members made proposals. We said the union should organise solidarity tours, national days of action, send organisers into areas with Care UK offices and contracts to recruit into Unison and send a signal to the company that it was taking on the national union. Unfortunately these didn't

happen at all or began very late in the day.

Consequently, a real opportunity was missed to help the strikers win a big victory and to turn back the tide of cuts and privatisation. Despite the pay deal, most strikers - about 60 were left in the end - do not feel that they have got anything like what they deserve. The pay rise is less than a month's worth of what they have lost annually.

But every one of them would do it all again. What they have learned, experienced, and yes, achieved, will live with them forever. The way that new shop stewards stepped forward, the strike committee led, strikers spoke at public gatherings - including the National Shop Stewards Network conference - and all stood together, has truly been inspirational and should give all of us confidence in the ability of working class people to struggle to change society.

This battle is over but we are still fighting the war. In the words of strike committee chair Roger Hutt: "No surrender!"

**Always get the latest issue! Subscribe now!**  
[socialistparty.org.uk/subscribe](http://socialistparty.org.uk/subscribe) 020 8988 8777  
 text 0776 1818 206 @Socialist\_party /CWISocialistParty



## Tories' £2bn funding lie

# NHS:



# THE MONEY'S RUNNING OUT

### An NHS nurse

The money is running out - at Medway Foundation Trust in Kent, maybe as early as January.

Health Secretary Jeremy Hunt's additional "winter pressures" payments won't even touch the sides. Nor will Chancellor George Osborne's £2 billion nationally - much of it is already in the NHS budget anyway! And shadow chancellor Ed Balls' £2.5 billion pledge is shallow one-upmanship, not a substantial answer.

Meanwhile, the media - swarming all over north Kent last month because of the by-election - have decamped to London. Ukip's Mark Reckless retained the seat he first won as a Tory. But none of the parties who stood in November could offer solutions to the NHS crisis being borne out at Medway Hospital. The Daily Telegraph recently branded it "the worst in the country".

### Poverty

Formerly a ship building centre, Medway is plagued with poverty related health problems and industrial disease. Despite understaffing, enormous pressure on beds and rotten senior management, the hospitals regulator found care in most

make hospitals "foundation trusts" - competing businesses - means many have cut loss makers like emergency care.

Cuts by the current government and local councils have compounded the crisis. Even Hunt admitted recently he takes his children to A&E because it's quicker than accessing the family GP.

The government's rejection of even a paltry 1% pay increase in the NHS has provoked widespread industrial action. It has brought in groups who have never struck before, such as midwives.

### Strategy

Without a clear strategy from health union leaders, many workers are voting with their feet. Twice as many nurses left Medway Hospital as were recruited last month, leaving an ever decreasing pool of ever more junior staff to pick up the slack.

Hospital bosses stagger from blunder to expensive blunder. Outside the hospital, community care packages in one area fall short of demand at a rate of five to one.

So funding healthcare will be the key issue in Medway, and high on voters' minds everywhere, come the general election. The Socialist Party is part of the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition, standing candidates against all cuts in May 2015 (see page 7).

### The Socialist Party demands:

- Reversal of all cuts and closures, including emergency departments and ward beds, in Medway and nationally
- Reversal of all privatisation - cancel all Private Finance Initiative debt!
- Ending of foundation trusts and the anarchy of the internal market
- Statutory nursing and midwifery staffing levels based on patient need
- An integrated national health and social care service, publicly owned and democratically controlled - to deliver free, high quality care for all

Our A&E is equipped for 50,000 patients a year, but sees in excess of 90,000

areas to be good to excellent.

The emergency department bore the brunt of criticisms. Equipped for 50,000 patients a year but seeing in excess of 90,000, services are under strain. A&E nurses hold the fort, absorbing the emotional fallout of inhumane working conditions.

Emergency departments in surrounding areas have been cut, making Medway the nearest A&E for half a million people. Labour's drive to

### What we stand for

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

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

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

### Our demands include:

#### PUBLIC SERVICES

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

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

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

#### WORK AND INCOME

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

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

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

#### ENVIRONMENT

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

#### RIGHTS

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

#### NEW 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.
- 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!