



MPs for hire:

KICK OUT CORRUPT POLITICIANS

For workers' MPs on a worker's wage

Claire Job
Swansea Socialist Party

What has changed in the two decades since parliament's first 'cash for questions' scandal? 'Nothing at all,' is the answer. Former ministers Jack Straw and Malcolm Rifkind have been caught by reporters from Channel 4's Dispatches programme offering to sell the influence of their public position to a fictitious Chinese company.

Labour's Jack Straw said he "worked under the radar" when be-

ing paid to influence decision making on behalf of private business. His rate is apparently £5,000 a day!

Tory Malcolm Rifkind said he was "self-employed" and "had a lot of free time" when negotiating with the undercover reporter. This will come as a surprise to his Kensington constituents as he draws an annual MP's salary of £67,000 pounds paid for by all of us.

But Rifkind reckons MPs' pay is too low. He thinks it would mean "a substantial reduction" in some people's "standard of living"!

The Nolan commission review set seven standards for public life: selflessness, integrity, objectivity,

accountability, openness, honesty and leadership. You'd have to look pretty hard to find even one of those qualities in many of our MPs. And there's no fundamental difference between Labour and the Tories - they're all in it for themselves.

Rotten

This scandal is yet another example of how the parliamentary system is rotten. Corruption is as easy as ABC, leaving capitalism and the role of parliament starkly exposed.

These politicians are completely removed from the people they have been elected to represent - they

may as well be in another universe. They have no idea of the problems that face ordinary working people on a day to day basis. Problems that are generated by their capitalist system, that punishes the poor in order to benefit the rich.

An MP is supposed to represent the people who elected them! They should not have any 'outside interests', directorships, advisory or consultative positions with big business. In fact they should receive a worker's wage in order to ensure they are in touch with the real world.

It is hardly surprising that working people have lost faith in politi-

cians. Low turnout at the ballot box is a predictable consequence of the actions of MPs like Straw and Rifkind, which decay further the trust ordinary people have in the motives of politicians.

There is an alternative! The Socialist Party is part of the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC) which is standing 100 parliamentary candidates in this year's elections. Socialist Party members, if elected, will only take an average worker's wage, donating the rest of the MP's salary back to the trade union and anti-austerity movement.

See more on page 5 and at www.tusc.org.uk



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what we think

Councils at breaking point: the strategy to fight back

Councils up and down the country are setting budgets, once again forcing through tens of millions - in some cases hundreds of millions - of pounds of cuts.

The headline figures, regularly exposed in the pages of the Socialist, are bad enough. They come on top of similarly savage cuts since 2011. Graeme McDonald, director of the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives and Senior Managers has said that cuts "will push some authorities to breaking point".

These cuts have appalling human consequences. As well as the 'obvious' results - library closures, roads full of potholes, no one answering the phone at the council offices - there are devastating results behind the scenes.

For example, recent newspaper headlines have highlighted the numbers of young people being stabbed in some areas. What they don't mention is the complete stripping out of youth services, including the destruction of youth offending teams. When social work teams

dealing with early intervention in families are expected to take on work with young people up to age 19 and troubled families, with no extra resources, it doesn't make the headlines.

Jobs

Hundreds of thousands of people have lost their jobs, and those that remain have faced big pay cuts. The public sector pay freeze applies to council workers. Councils also administer the cuts to housing benefit and council tax rebate, and drag people through the courts to enforce payment of council tax.

Disgracefully, these cuts are the case no matter which capitalist party runs the council. The tragic case of the man in Newham, East London, who committed suicide because of cuts to his housing benefit and demands for impossible payments from the council, was the result of a Labour local authority carrying out the Tory/Lib Dem demands.

The first austerity cuts budgets

under the Con-Dems in 2011 were met by big protests. Hundreds of people marched in each town and borough, and even invaded council chambers in the hope of persuading Labour councillors not to vote for cuts.

Scandalously every single Labour council pushed through the cuts.

Then, Labour councillors said they were opposed to cuts but it was the Con-Dems' fault. Now, the excuses have run out. At one recent anti-cuts meeting in Haringey, north London, a local trade unionist who is also a Labour Party member asked: "Why is this Labour council voting for a three-year cuts budget when they expect a Labour government in May?"

Why?

Why indeed. The Socialist Party has argued that councils should, instead of making cuts, use their reserves and prudential borrowing powers, in the first instance, to give them time to mount a mass campaign. Now, with the general elec-



Prison teachers striking in support of Liverpool Council photo Ben Eastop

tion only two months away, why not use that stopgap and demand that an incoming Labour government underwrites any debt?

What this betrays is the reality of the new government in May - whoever wins. Labour councillors know full well that if Labour wins in May the cuts in local government will continue.

Ed Miliband, Ed Balls and shadow local government minister Hilary Benn, have all been explicit - there will be no more money for local government.

In May, at the same time as the general election, there will be council elections in the majority of England. While the main press attention is on who will form the next government, in fact councils will be one of the main battle grounds over services, jobs and pay.

Principles

But as austerity intensifies, and as British politics begins to break up, with more voters looking for alternatives, a few Labour councillors are starting to feel that they can stomach what is being demanded of them no longer, and that the possibility of changing Labour has gone.

The principled stand of the Socialist Party and Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC - see page 5) candidates, in arguing that councillors should not vote for cuts, has helped this process along.

The TUSC conference in January this year brought together rebel councillors from Leicester, Warrington, Hull, Southampton, Harrow and Walsall.

Councils should follow the road of Liverpool Labour council in the 1980s, led by supporters of the Militant, the forerunner of the Socialist Party.

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.

Strike

The campaign involved thousands of local people in mass demonstrations, a city-wide strike, and real consultation on the services they needed. They attempted at all times to link up with other councils to fight against the government's cuts.

Even just one rebel council, acting in this way, could spearhead a national campaign. The number of rebel councillors could snowball.

This May, as well as 100 general election candidates, TUSC will be standing up to 1,000 council candidates arguing for this approach. Rebel councillors and councils, joining up with community campaigns and linking up with vital national coordinated trade union action, could defeat austerity policies - no matter who wins the general election in May.



Liverpool's Militant-led Labour council defied austerity and built 5,000 new council homes photo D Sinclair

Socialist Party election appeal

Funded by you - not by big business

The Socialist Party is standing election candidates as part of the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition. We are asking you to donate to our campaign.

All the big capitalist beasts lurking round Britain's political establishment are waking from hibernation and subsidising the parties of the rich in this year's general election. The Tories' rich donors give most, though all the pro-austerity mainstream parties are building piles of cash.

Take Ukip, the reactionary anti-immigration party that occasionally paints itself as an anti-establishment outfit. It wants rich people's

money and is proving that it is basically a very right wing, pro-austerity Tory party.

Richard Desmond, who made his fortune from porn magazines before taking over Express group newspapers (his firm still owns 'adult TV' channels) says he will give Ukip hundreds of thousands of pounds. Multi-millionaire Patrick Barbour backs Ukip because he wants a much 'flatter' tax system, which would hit his bulging wallet far less!

We, however, are funded by donations from working class people like you! As articles in this week's Socialist show, TUSC fights for the millions not the millionaires and

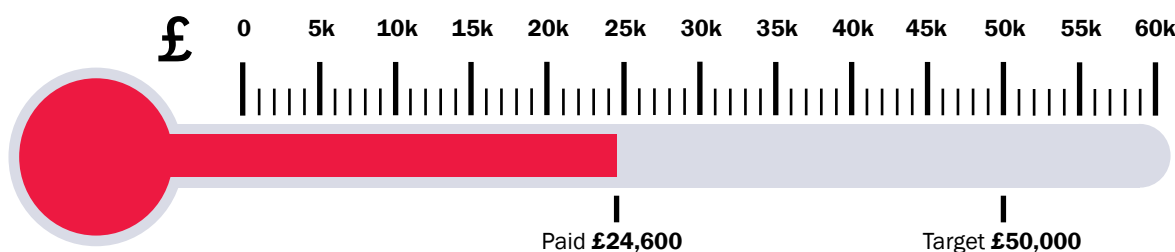
puts forward a real alternative to the politics of austerity.

Please give generously. You can donate on www.socialistparty.org.uk/donate, phone 020 8988 8777 to make a card payment, or post a cheque made out to "Socialist Party" to PO Box 24697, London E11

1YD. Please mark your donation "election appeal 2015". All donations should be in by 30 April 2015.

Thanks this week to, among others, Mick Whale who donated £400, Gerry McGinley (Huddersfield) £25, Neil Adshead (Rotherham) £10, Ross Saunders (Cardiff West) £100,

Helen Jones (Cardiff West) £50, Adrian O'Malley (Wakefield) £100, Margaret Trotter (Hackney) £50. Delia Hazrati (East Kent) £200 and Kerry Brier (Leicester) who donated £20 and said: "Good luck to all comrades standing for a better society for the masses."



Put the bankers in the stocks!

Simon Carter

It's bankers' bonuses week! The public can expect a slew of media stories detailing how these capitalist parasites have once again stuffed their pockets with fabulous sums of money, while we ordinary mortals continue to suffer falling living standards.

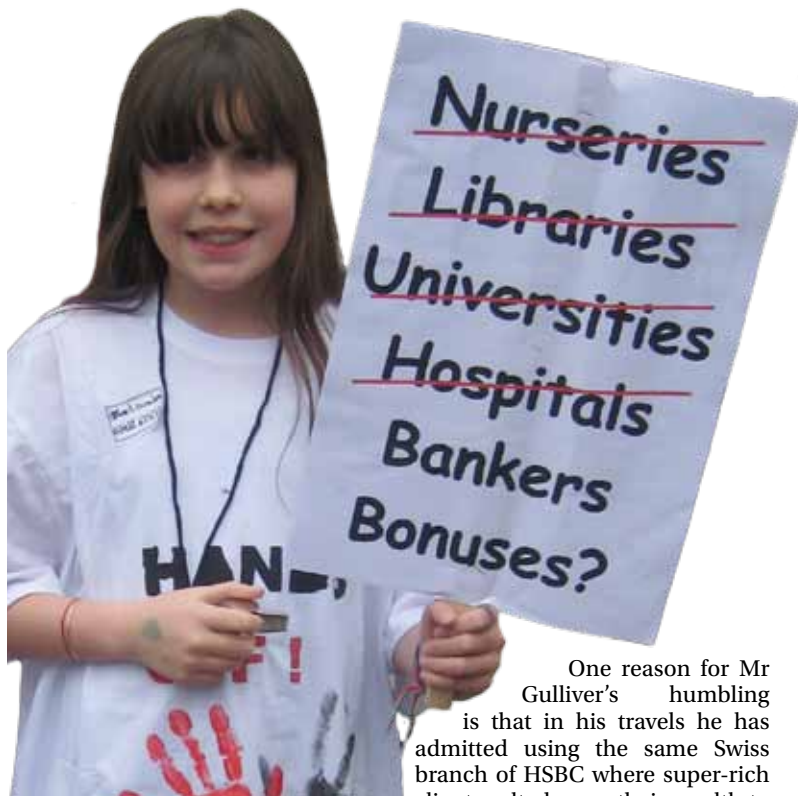
But should these 'masters of the universe' forget, the banking system, and indeed capitalism, was only saved after the 2008 crash by several trillion pounds in bailouts and 'quantitative easing'. These subventions came from public funds, courtesy of Labour and Tory/Lib Dem governments.

This year, corporate banking chiefs are subject to a bonus cap. However, with the bonus limit set to a maximum of 200% of their pay, stumping up the cash to pay the electricity bill shouldn't prove to be a problem for them!

Establishment

But while most people would gladly see top bankers placed in medieval stocks and pelted with rotten fruit, these fat cats continue to enjoy the support of establishment politicians. (Not exactly surprising as the Tory party is largely funded by these rich financiers.)

The latest defence of the indefensible comes from Wales Tory MEP



Kay Swinburne - herself a former corporate banker - who appeared to encourage bankers to get around the bonus cap.

Meanwhile, the disgraced HSBC banking group announced a fall in its profits (to a 'mere' \$18.7 billion), with chief executive Stuart Gulliver accepting a drop in pay. He may even waive his expected £1.3 million bonus.

Interestingly, HSBC blames its profits fall among other things on a series of fines and legal settlements, as well as the costs of reimbursing UK customers for mis-selling.

One reason for Mr Gulliver's humbling is that in his travels he has admitted using the same Swiss branch of HSBC where super-rich clients salted away their wealth to avoid (and in some cases to evade) paying UK taxes.

'Non-dom' Mr Gulliver has £5 million in the account which he controls using an offshore Panamanian company.

This latest example of reported tax avoidance comes only days after HSBC took out newspaper adverts apologising for the tax dodging advice given to its super-rich clients.

The government is under public pressure to initiate legal action against HSBC. But, even at best, the bank will only face another fine. It's high time the entire banking system was brought to task for its murky dealings and blatant profiteering on the backs of public bailouts.

The best way to achieve this is to nationalise the major banks under democratic workers' control and management, as part of a socialist plan of economic production geared to meeting society's needs, not the wealthy's greed.

The adage 'He who pays the piper calls the tune' is amply illustrated by recent revelations at the Daily Telegraph - owned by the tax-avoiding Barclay brothers.

Long serving Telegraph journalist Peter Osborne resigned after complaining that the newspaper had ditched any critical coverage of the HSBC tax dodging scandal in order to keep the bank's advertising. It also emerged that the Telegraph owners had obtained a sizeable loan from HSBC in order to keep its loss making parcel delivery company afloat.



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Defend the right to protest

Daniel Celardi

As the general election approaches, even though the result may be hard to predict, one thing is clear: the victory will be with big business as austerity continues.

However, it's also clear that these further cuts will provoke a fightback from trade unions, activists and community campaigners.

Already we have seen the ability to challenge austerity thwarted with the likes of the 'gagging law' (aka Transparency of Lobbying Bill, Non-party Campaigning and Trade Union Administration Act) and the government's attacks on trade unions (see page 4).

Recently, the Metropolitan Police has said that it will no longer police many demonstrations within London - forcing campaign groups to employ, at considerable expense, private companies to formulate their traffic management plans and steward road closures.

Local authorities already make



Protesters would be silenced
photo Senan

organisers jump through several hoops before they can go ahead with a protest. This is yet another bureaucratic attempt to curtail the struggle against austerity.

Organisers will be expected to present their road traffic management plan to local authorities and then ensure that stewards marshalling road closures are trained in chapter eight of the government manual of traffic safety measures.

This is way beyond the skills of

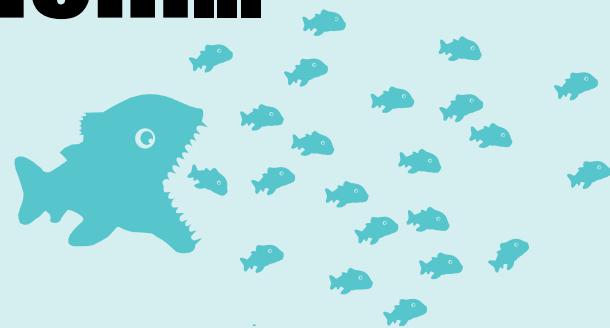
most organisers forcing them to use private companies that they simply can't afford. Local authorities will no doubt use this to pressure groups away from demonstrating.

'Million Women Rise' has estimated, after the Met police refused to steward their International Women's Day demo, it would cost them £10,000 to implement. The Campaign against Climate Change has also been told to pay for its own traffic plans on the 7 March 'Time to Act' demonstration.

This is another attempt to silence any opposition. At the same time the Irish police are arresting activists who are fighting the water charges, a deliberate shift towards political policing (see page 9). Last year the police shut down student occupations using brutal violence, notably in Sheffield and Warwick universities.

These actions are a powerful reminder to activists that the state will clearly use anything within its powers to prevent attempts to challenge the capitalist austerity agenda.

Them...



Monopoly money

With daily revelations of tax dodging scams by the super-rich it's of little wonder then that millionaire Tory Chancellor George Osborne is keeping a low profile. Not least because of the latest expose of fat cat private equity bosses who are avoiding up to £700 million a year in tax - using a loophole which Osborne repeatedly failed to close.

The 'Mayfair tax loophole' scam allows them to treat profits as investment gains instead of personal income, thereby paying capital gains tax at 28% instead of the higher 45% rate of income tax. The 28% can be further reduced to just 10% by using another tax break designed to help 'entrepreneurs'. Campaign group 38 Degrees has also found out that 16 of these millionaire executives belong to the elite 'Leaders Group' of major Tory donors, having given over £7 million to the party since 2008.

during the year - 115 a day. This was the highest figure since records began in 2000.

Interesting times

0.5% - Bank of England base lending rate (last six years).

18% - average credit card rate (15.5% in 2008).

MP for hire

Before the latest outing of Labour's Jack Straw as an MP for hire, the former foreign secretary had become a £12,500-a-year advisor to the Eurasian Council on Foreign Affairs set up by the Kazakhstan dictatorship of Nursultan Nazarbayev. This regime was responsible for massacring striking oil workers in Zhanaozen in 2011.

Subsidising landlords

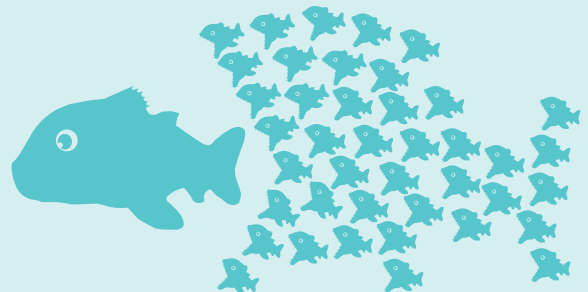
£26.7 billion - the annual subsidy private landlords receive from the UK taxpayer, or £1,011 for each household.

Taking the pee

Did you hear the one about the Labour shadow cabinet meeting? It had been a long day and shadow chancellor Ed Balls gets up and says he is going to spend a penny. Ed Miliband looks worried and asks if he can wait till the new financial year!

Thanks to Pete McNally

...& Us



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

What we saw

"Rats in the mess room, what are you gonna do?"

(With acknowledgement to UB40)



Workers at the Exxon Fawley site, near Southampton, have no hot water, heating or toilets in the mess rooms, but plenty of rats! Talks with management have delivered nothing so Unite union

members recently massed at the gate with their own inflatable rat. "What kind of world are we living in when we're asked to work under these conditions in the 21st century?" the Fawley workers demanded to know.

It was suggested that the biggest rat at Exxon is the chief executive on \$28 million a year!

Left scares Usdaw leadership in elections

Usdaw Activist editors

The first two months of 2015 have been a stressful time for retail and distribution workers. Tesco, Morrisons and Sainsbury's have all announced job cuts and/or store closures, while the Co-Operative is still reeling from its financial crisis last year. These companies are the 'big



Amy Murphy (left) received 45% in the Usdaw presidential election

four' that make up the bulk of the Usdaw shop worker union's membership, with almost half of the union's 430,000 membership concentrated in Tesco.

Yet Usdaw Tesco members were kept in the dark about store closures, job cuts and pension cuts until they were announced in the media.

Socialist Party members standing in the Usdaw executive elections put a fighting response to the crisis in the main supermarkets to the fore of their election campaigns. This was a breath of fresh air compared with the union leadership's timid response, which many reps feel equates to Tesco saying 'jump' and the union asking 'how high?'

Top of the poll

Socialist Party member Amy Murphy topped the poll to be re-elected in the Southern region with a whopping 2,263 votes - 559 votes more than last time on a turnout that was down by over 1,000. In the presidential election Amy finished a close second with 9,529 votes (45%).

Socialist Party member Scott Jones, standing for the first time in



First time candidate Scott Jones was within 113 votes of winning a seat

the South Wales and Western region, was just 113 votes short of winning a seat on 871 votes. Fellow Broad Left activist Sue Perridge also won a respectable 617 votes in the Eastern division.

These results should be a call to arms to the left in the union and any Usdaw member who wants to see a fighting union. There is a growing appetite among Usdaw members for a more militant union with a leader-

ship that isn't attached to pro-big business New Labour and doesn't slavishly follow 'partnership' agreements with the employers.

Read the Activist:
usdawactivist.wordpress.com

South East Unison activists challenge New Labour

Paul Couchman
Surrey County Unison branch secretary (personal capacity)

On Saturday 21 February, around 75 delegates from across south east England - including trade union activists from local government, health, schools, colleges and universities - attended the Unison regional council AGM.

A motion (originally from my Unison branch but since adopted by the regional Local Government group) called for support for the £10 an hour minimum wage campaign. This was supported unanimously and enthusiastically by delegates and it was agreed to take the motion to June's national conference to get Unison nationally to take up the campaign.

A motion from West Sussex branch condemning the attacks on trade union rights - in particular the Tories' proposals for new strike ballot thresholds - was also passed unanimously and will be taken to national conference.

The most challenging motion

was from my branch 'on political representation.'

It condemns Labour councils that are making cuts, talks in detail about the disconnect between ordinary people and the mainstream parties

I got a rousing cheer when I said I would rather vote for a representative who stands firm on principle than one who has already thrown in the towel

and urges the trade unions to tackle the growth of Ukip by offering bold socialist policies in the forthcoming election.

When I moved the motion, I introduced myself as a Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC) general election candidate. Four other

TUSC candidates came into the discussion and did the same - to loud cheers.

Some Labour Party members incorrectly said that no-cuts budgets are 'illegal'. I got a rousing cheer when I said I would rather vote for a representative who stands firm on principle than one who has already

thrown in the towel.

The motion says Unison branches should organise election hustings meetings, inviting all local progressive, anti-cuts candidates - so that our members can decide for themselves. The motion also "calls on all prospective local council candidates to stand as real public champions

against austerity and cuts. [They should] refuse to make cuts in jobs and services or in the pay, terms and conditions of council staff".

Originally, one or two key Labour Link activists had said they would oppose the motion but in the end they voted for it 'with reservations'. Only one delegate voted against.

Socialists in Unison call for solidarity with PCS

Socialist Party members and other lefts on the Unison executive have challenged the union's leadership over aiding the government's attacks on the PCS civil servants' union. The government's tactics to weaken the PCS include slashing facility time and ending the check-off system of collecting union membership subs. But the government has also granted Unison bargaining rights in the civil service without the consent of PCS and other unions in the National Trade Union Council, contrary to a Memorandum of Understanding signed between the two unions in

2010. In response, the PCS has complained to the TUC.

In recent weeks Unison leaders have endorsed government proposals to significantly water down protection to workers facing redundancy - protection that was won through PCS strike action.

At the February Unison executive meeting, Socialist Party members questioned Unison's actions and called for open solidarity with PCS. The unprecedented attacks PCS is facing could easily come next to Unison. The Tories won't just stop at attacking socialist-led unions like

the PCS.

Unison general secretary Dave Prentis denied that the union had done anything wrong and attacked the PCS union over the issue. But Socialist Party members and others in Unison will continue to challenge the actions of the Unison leaders and look to build the necessary solidarity with the PCS.

Read PCS national vice-president John McNally's article about the attacks on the civil servants' union and the role of Unison at www.socialistparty.org.uk/articles/20080



PCS members working at the National Gallery in central London started their second five-day strike against privatisation on 22 February
photo Paul Mattsson



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NSSN conference: Saturday 4 July, Conway Hall, Holborn, London WC1R 4RL

How to strike against privatisation

Greenwich Unite members

It is a mistaken but honest belief held by some trade union activists that workers cannot take legal action against privatisation. But there are also right wing trade union leaders who have deliberately spread the myth in order to stop strike action. However, recent strike campaigns have shown that it can be done.

The Socialist Party-led Greenwich local government Unite branch in south London has taken strike action over privatisation. Back in 2012, library workers went on strike against privatisation proposals. While the campaign did not stop the transfer, it secured protection of pay and conditions far in excess of that within the 'Tupe' legislation.

The myth has been spread because the Thatcher government had

made political strikes illegal - and a strike against privatisation has long been held to be a political strike. However, the legal issue is avoided by making the strike about the identity of the employer and protecting pay and conditions, rather than about the principle of privatisation.

Notice

The law requires that, prior to a ballot, notice is issued to the employer making clear the issues in dispute. To comply with the law, unions can state in this notice that the identity of the employer is a contractual term and that it believes pay and conditions are safer with the current employer than the proposed one.

Greenwich Unite has recently balloted members working in the 'cash in transit' section on these issues. In nearby borough Bromley, where the

council is implementing privatisation on a mass scale, authorisation has been sought from the union for a ballot using the same principles.

Tupe is supposed to protect pay and conditions for transferred staff, but only gives protection at the point of transfer. Once transferred, employers have been using all sorts of mechanisms to attack workers' pay and conditions. Recent legislation waters down Tupe further by removing the protection of national pay-bargained agreements.

Far more effective is the strike weapon, as shown by the Greenwich Library strike. Not only do pay and conditions remain protected, but last year further strike action won 17 new jobs and also a commitment from the employers to stick with national pay bargaining, something they had threatened to withdraw from.

Bristol Greens back 'shocking' austerity policies

Robin Clapp

Socialist Party South West region

In its 2012 Bristol mayoral manifesto, the Green Party unambiguously set out its opposition to cuts: "We do not agree with the logic of cutting public spending at a time of recession."

The following April, one candidate argued that "we are activists who are willing to speak up to protect public services, oppose the cuts and make sure local voices get heard".

Fighting words, but completely at variance with their deeds on Bristol City Council. The six Green councillors are indistinguishable from the other cutters and careerists who sit in the chamber axing jobs and services.

Rainbow cabinet

Independent Mayor Ferguson, elected by just 12% of Bristolians, dangled an assistant mayoral cabinet seat before the Greens. He hoped to entice them into his "rainbow cabinet" of the talentless - and they stampeded to his door.

Councillor Hoyt "gladly accepted" the £32,000 post, a decision unanimously endorsed by the local Green Party. Later, the same councillor brought public ridicule upon himself by whining the salary was too low.

£91 million was cut from the council budget between 2011 and 2014. Hoyt's conscience wasn't troubled too much at being associated with this butchery. On behalf



Green Party leader Natalie Bennett photo Paul Mattsson

of the Greens he explained there was "no alternative but to accept the financial situation" and that "with power comes responsibility".

The Green Party has not only endorsed austerity in Bristol, but has been happy to associate itself with some of the most shocking manifestations of it.

Most disturbing, Hoyt - as assistant mayor with responsibility for housing - has appeared alongside the mayor in an attempt to force

the council to drop its no-eviction policy for those affected by the bedroom tax.

When challenged by the Lib Dems and Labour to uphold the no-eviction policy, another Green councillor attacked them for a 'nakedly political' attempt to publicly deride an assistant mayor!

In November, the faithful Councillor Hoyt appeared in a YouTube video alongside the mayor as part of the council's library cuts pro-

gramme. The cuts have been described as "an exciting opportunity to create the 21st century community library".

This was a step too far for several ordinary Green members who rebuked Hoyt for either an astonishing show of naivety or deliberate dissembling. Even council officials acknowledge when pressed that this exercise is about making substantial cuts to the existing service.

The Green Party in office has also

performed disgraceful u-turns in relation to its supposedly core policies. When plans were unveiled to build a new 15-storey luxury housing development in south Bristol, their councillors correctly opposed the move.

Five months later, while lamenting the absolute lack of commitment to affordable housing contained in the scheme, one performed a somersault of Olympian quality. He wrote to the architects withdrawing his opposition. It is still not clear why Green councillors have become such converts to this multi-million-pound property development.

Silence

At last week's budget-setting meeting - which is a year into a three-year cuts package of another £83 million - the Green councillors once again stayed silent while voting for it. Their behaviour continues to be a shocking slap in the face to those who looked to them to bring a fresh approach to local government.

TUSC will contest every seat this year, going head to head with Green councillors in some cases. Our message to Bristolians yearning for an alternative is: a vote for the Greens is a vote for the same old tired status quo that has decapitated jobs and services.

Their anti-austerity rhetoric has been rumbled. Only TUSC councillors will oppose cuts and refuse to take more than the average wage of a worker.

Warrington 'vanity project' youth service cuts

Councillor Kevin Bennett

TUSC prospective parliamentary candidate

Warrington's Labour council is pumping millions into a new 'Youth Zone' recreation centre. This is at the expense of professionally trained and paid youth workers - and without listening to the needs of young people themselves.

The borough's youth workers, organised by trade union Unite, lobbied the council's executive meeting on 16 February. Labour cut the already-modest youth service budget by £150,000 last year, and will now slash a further £168,000.

Over the past three years, dozens of youth workers' jobs have gone. Now even more could be under threat.

While it is right for the council



photo Warrington TUSC

to support better provision for our young people, the Youth Zone is not the answer. Labour councillors should engage with young people in a meaningful way about the service

they would like to see, and then work to deliver those.

Instead, they are throwing £3 million at charity Onside to build the Youth Zone. It will be based in the

more affluent part of the borough, further isolating the most vulnerable. Many youth workers agree it is nothing more than a vanity project for youth services executive member Cllr Jean Carter.

The difficulties that young people face are complex and wide ranging. Youth workers are in regular contact with them for a fraction of the cost of the Youth Zone. Young people constantly tell our youth workers that they want local community venues they can get support from.

It is well known that Labour councillors are divided on the project - but will likely be 'gagged' by their leadership. TUSC supports greater funding for local youth services, and campaigning to win more funds from central government. This is the only way Warrington young people and youth workers will get the support they need and deserve.

With friends like these, who needs enemies?

Kent councillor Harriet Yeo is now backing Ukip. She was - until recently - a member of the Labour Party.

Incredibly, she is a previous chair of Labour's ruling national executive committee. More incredibly still, she is a former president of transport union TSSA.

Yeo, who will now sit as an independent, has said she will not be joining Farage's party. She claims to back Miliband as leader, and that she is supporting Ukip for a referendum on EU membership.

The Socialist Party is also opposed to membership of the EU. It is an undemocratic bosses' club. The treaties it is based on hardwire austerity into member states' policy. We want European unity based on workers' solidarity, not exploitation.

But Ukip is an anti-working class party whose leaders stand for austerity on overdrive. Yeo's decision restates what most ordinary people already know: Labour's leading figures don't fundamentally disagree with this.

James Ivens

• Elsewhere in Kent, Councillor Rozanne Duncan has been expelled from Ukip after a BBC documentary crew filmed her saying "I really do have a problem with people with negroid features." Duncan has refused to accept that her statement was racist

The Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC) is an electoral

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

TUSC AGAINST CUTS

Major boost for Warrington TUSC

Councillor Kevin Bennett hammered Warrington's Labour council at the borough's first TUSC meeting. Labour's Tory-lite pro-austerity actions and undemocratic bullying of opposition are why he now sits as a TUSC councillor. Kevin is running for Warrington South in the general election, and explained why:

"Warrington South is now a four-way marginal seat - TUSC is here and TUSC is going to stay. Look at Greece and Spain, it's coming here. Voters feel disenfranchised and that politicians are detached from real life.

"TUSC and I will be talking

about what kind of services we need - like the youth service, and saving our health service. I'm making five pledges: to fight against cuts in public services, against cuts to the NHS, for a living wage, against welfare cuts, and for renationalisation of the railways."

Contributions from the floor by residents, trade

unionists and activists from across the region were unanimously supportive. Several are now thinking of standing for TUSC in the local elections.

We will be carrying out weekly activity, especially on weekends.

If you can help, contact Kevin on 07480 840 487, kevin-bennett396@btinternet.com or Facebook.

Hugh Caffrey



50 YEARS ON: THE ASSASSINATION OF MALCOLM X

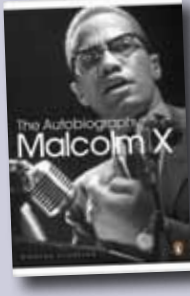
21 February this year marked the 50th anniversary of the assassination of Malcolm X. As anti-racist protests continue across the US following last year's high profile police killings of two black men - Mike Brown and Eric Garner - the lessons of his life and struggle should be examined.

Here are extracts from three articles by members of Socialist Alternative (co-thinkers of the Socialist Party in the US).

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Malcolm X and the fight for black freedom

Toya Chester

“In my opinion, the young generation of whites, blacks, browns, whatever else there is, you're living at a time when there's got to be a change. People in power have misused it, and now there has to be a change and a better world has to be built, and the only way it's going to be built - is with extreme methods. And I, for one, will join in with anyone - I don't care what colour you are - as long as you want to change this miserable condition that exists on this earth.” Malcolm X, 1964

I am part of a generation of young African Americans that is beginning to rediscover Malcolm X. We know who he was and what he stood for. We wear T-shirts with his face and quote his most famous words. But my generation did not hear him speak on television. His death is not something we can remember.

However, we are a generation that is becoming radicalised through the same struggles that Malcolm fought in his day because so many of the conditions have not changed. We are searching for ideas and a way forward.

Changes

Malcolm's ideas and philosophies went through many changes in his short life. Radical thinking was something that was introduced to Malcolm at a very young age. He would go with his father to hear different political activists. When Malcolm was six, his father was killed by white supremacists.

Malcolm's mother wound up in a mental hospital when he was 13, and his life continued downhill. After he was put in prison at 20, his siblings introduced him to the Nation of Islam (NOI), which was a tiny black nationalist sect at the time.

Being part of NOI was crucial for Malcolm's development as a leader. While in prison, he truly began to question the world and took the opportunity

to explore different ideas. But the NOI also gave him something to fight for and gave him hope for a better world. It is this hope that drove him to be so passionate.

Malcolm X spent ten years in NOI as a prominent preacher who played a key role in bringing its membership up to 100,000 by the early 1960s. He had devout faith in the group's leader, Elijah Muhammad, for many years. But over the course of time, Malcolm found it harder and harder to agree with the decisions made by the leader.

Disagreements

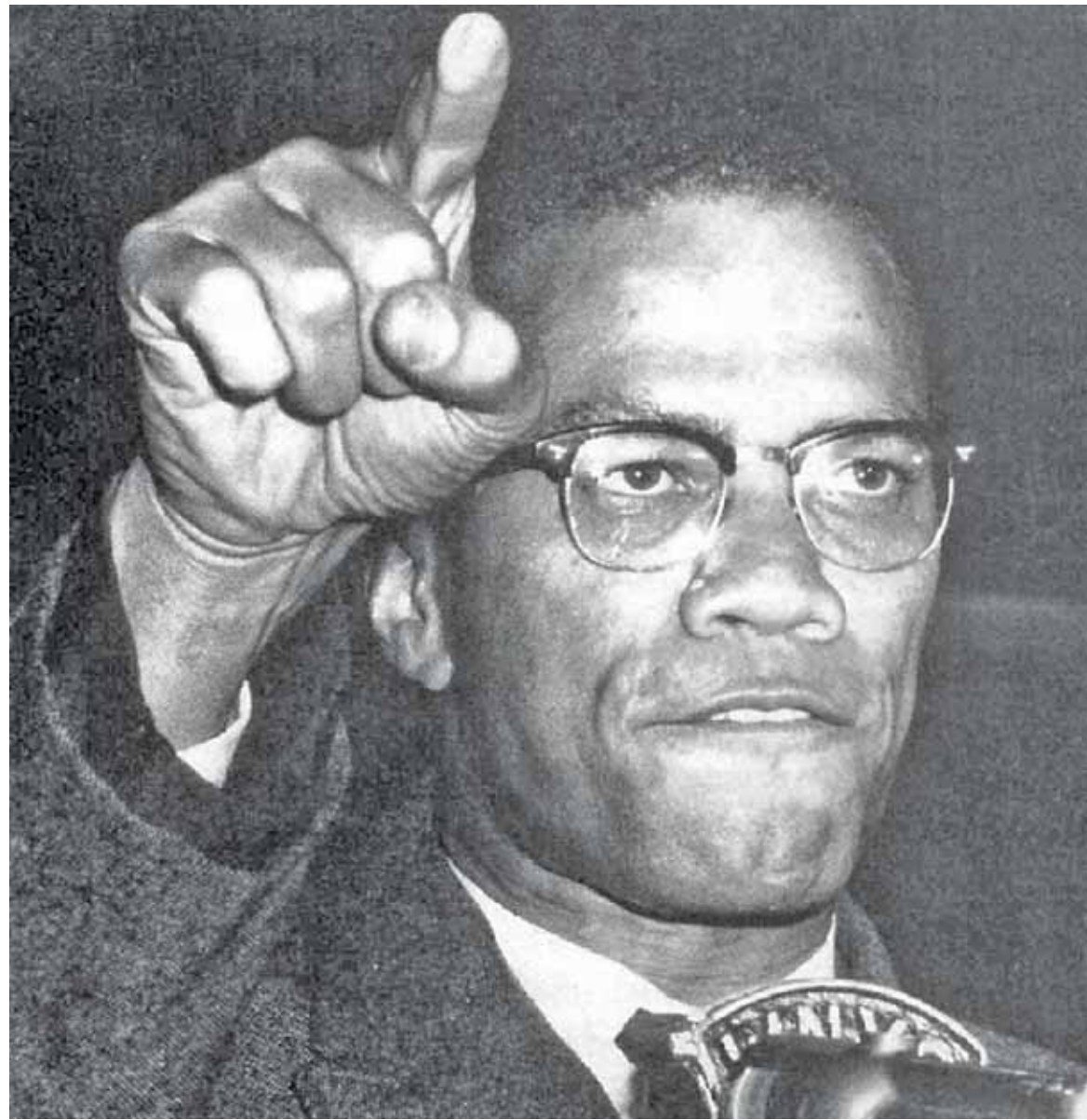
In 1962, a fight broke out in a parking lot in southern California between some police and members of Mosque Number 27. One member of the mosque - like so many young black men today - held up his hands in the “don't shoot” manner to surrender to the police, and was shot dead.

Malcolm tried to organise NOI to go and demand justice for the dead brother, but Muhammad would not allow it. Malcolm went anyway and participated with civil rights organisations in a rally, educating people about how this was not about religion but rather about skin colour.

While Muhammad was living an increasingly lavish lifestyle, Malcolm was living paycheck to paycheck. Muhammad's jealousy of Malcolm's abilities and charisma created tension between the two men.

But it wasn't until Malcolm was suspended from preaching for publicly stating that the assassination of President John F Kennedy was a “result of the climate of hate” that he decided to leave NOI and start his own organisation.

Malcolm rightfully called out JFK - and the whole Democratic Party - for blocking Cuba and waging war in Vietnam in the name of ‘freedom’ and ‘democracy’ while not “correcting injustices against Negroes” here in the US. Malcolm could not keep silent any longer about what



was so obvious to him, namely that black people would not be liberated without a political and economic fight.

What was happening in America during this time was not happening in isolation.

We are becoming radicalised through the same struggles that Malcolm fought in his day because so many of the conditions have not changed

tion. Malcolm learned this through his travels in Africa and the Middle East, in countries that were colonised by Western powers. He saw the misery of colonisation and the fight in these countries that black men and women alike were putting up for independence.

Malcolm X saw the need to unite with his black brothers and sisters in Africa. But then he went to Algeria. The people there did not have black skin, and this was something that Malcolm struggled with. He knew the oppressor to be white and the oppressed to be black, but in Northern Africa that wasn't quite the case. This was crucial for Malcolm's understanding of who the enemy truly was.

He finally developed the analysis that: “It is incorrect to classify the revolt of the Negro as simply a racial conflict of black against white, or as a purely American problem. Rather, we are today seeing a global rebellion of the oppressed against the oppressor, the exploited against the exploiter.”

We are currently seeing the same evolution in the movement for racial equality that Malcolm went through. But why

reinvent the wheel? Malcolm learned through his travels around the world that it was not about black and white, Muslim and Christian, man and woman. It was about capitalism and what the ruling class would do to remain in control over the economy and the world's resources.

Internationalism was a key concept that helped Malcolm draw anti-capitalist conclusions. Malcolm sought to learn from the anti-colonial struggle by drawing international attention to the plight of African Americans.

He saw the need for independent political action by African Americans. He completely rejected the idea that the Democratic Party had anything to offer black people, stating: “With these choices, I felt the American black man only had to choose which one to be eaten by, the ‘liberal’ fox or the ‘conservative’ wolf - because both of them would eat him.”

He also began to see the need for economic action by poor people, such as rent strikes, although he did not see clearly the strategic role of black workers in industrial production and the power they could wield alongside white workers in fighting for a better life.

Strengths

Malcolm's greatest strengths were his fearless search for answers, his honesty about his own failings, and his willingness to learn from experience. Toward the end of his life, he had discussions with the US Socialist Workers Party, a Trotskyist organisation, though he never became a Marxist. Unfortunately, despite a proud history, the SWP had capitulated to black nationalism.

Malcolm's acknowledgement that it was not just an issue of black and white but of oppressed and oppressor points toward the need for a racially integrated workers' party to lead the fight for system change. Working people have the social power to change society. They can bring the production, distribution, and sale of goods and services to a halt.

Black people still face segregation and special oppression, but racial division only truly benefits the bosses. Black people cannot be liberated through a struggle on their own, especially considering that they are less than 20% of the US population. Workers need to unite together no matter what colour they are, as the ruling class will always try to find a way to divide us.

Malcolm X was clearly on the correct path. My generation must continue where Malcolm ended. We do not need more black capitalists to liberate black people - Obama has proven that quite well. We shall not mourn the death of Malcolm X but rather commemorate him and continue fighting for an equal society and a socialist world.

For more analysis see ‘The political legacy of Malcolm X’ by Eljeer Hawkins at www.socialistworld.net

My generation must continue where Malcolm ended. We do not need more black capitalists to liberate black people - Obama has proven that quite well

Uniting fight for \$15 with Ferguson fury

Ty Moore

For those demanding justice for Mike Brown and Eric Garner, the connection between economic injustice and state violence couldn't be clearer. Just a few miles from where police murdered Eric Garner, a low-income black man selling loose cigarettes to scrape a living, the white collar criminals on Wall Street remain free to continue their corrupt, illegal financial schemes.

Tens of thousands are searching for a way to take the momentum forward in the movement against police racism. A potential strategy emerged when the week of action for a \$15 an hour minimum wage and trade union rights coincided with the national surge of protests against the lack of indictments for the police who killed Mike Brown and Eric Garner.

With the victories for \$15 in Seattle and then San Francisco, combined with escalating strikes and actions by low-wage workers, the demand has gone mainstream. Much like the eight-hour day galvanised workers in a previous era, so too has \$15 emerged as a rallying cry for today's vast, multi-racial army of low-wage workers.

There is widespread understanding that racism is structurally embedded into the economy and political life of American capitalism. Demands for living wage jobs and quality public services can also unite wider numbers of workers in the struggle for racial equity. Alongside demands for full employment, affordable housing, and quality services, the fight for \$15 offers a clear path forward, especially given the concentration of people of colour into low-wage jobs.

Unions

The potential exists to further transform the national conversation. Educating millions of workers that solidarity against racism is crucial if we are to build a broad, multi-racial mass movement capable of overcoming corporate domination of our economy.

If union leaders fail to mobilise their resources to offer active solidarity with Black Lives Matter protests, and extend a serious invitation to fight together for



Tens of thousands have taken part in Black Lives Matter protests

\$15, this window of opportunity could pass.

Unfortunately, the union leaders' ties to the Democratic Party at the national and local level - where Democratic mayors oversee racist police policies in most major cities - undermine their ability to win the trust of youthful protesters. These same Democratic Party leaders have played a generally conservative role in the fight for \$15.

Anti-capitalist

Polls show half of all young people have a negative view of capitalism, and anti-capitalist consciousness is highest in black communities. The same youthful, combative, and radical moods expressed in the Occupy Wall Street protests of 2011 are present today in the Black Lives Matter movement, with the crucial difference that today's movement is bringing a more oppressed, working class section of youth to the forefront.

However, like Occupy before, the new movement against police racism will quickly face tough decisions. There

is a burning desire to see fundamental changes. Yet many liberal leaders make the mistake of limiting demands to what they believe the current system, the current government, can ‘realistically’ deliver.

This so-called ‘realistic’ approach fails in two ways. It fails because, as Malcolm X famously explained: “you can't have capitalism without racism.” This means there is no way to meet the expectations of the movement for fundamental change without challenging the whole rotten system.

It also undermines our strength to even win those small reforms! Mass movements are the only power that can win meaningful reforms for working people, but to inspire the level of energy and self-sacrifice needed to sustain mass struggle, activists need confidence that fundamental changes are within reach.

How can this confidence be built when our fighting demands remain limited to what this rotten capitalist system and deeply corrupted two-party political system is prepared to deliver?

Socialist programme

In contrast to liberal leaders, socialists urge movements to link up demands around immediate small-scale reforms with bigger transformative demands.

The movement will be strongest if, alongside demands for police accountability, outrage at the racism embedded in the capitalist economy can be mobilised into combative, grassroots campaigns for a \$15 an hour minimum wage, union rights, jobs for all, affordable housing, and taxing the rich to fund education and other basic services.

15 Now was launched in early 2014 to create space for a broad grassroots movement for \$15 to develop. To win \$15 nationally, and other transformative demands for millions living in poverty, it's going to take a truly mass movement imbued with the same spirit of resistance we've seen on display since Mike Brown and Eric Garner were murdered.

New independent grassroots organisations with deep roots in communities of colour will be needed. Let's surge forward toward mass campaigns for \$15 in 2015!



Campaigns news in brief

Leicester
Do people want councillors who implement cuts, or councillors who are willing to fight the cuts? On 21 February, Leicester's prospective and current Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition councillors (TUSC - see page 5) balloted passers-by to find out.
Over the course of an hour, 75 stopped to cast their vote. Every single one ticked the "no cuts" box. Leicester's Labour council is planning to top up their reserves by seven million pounds. Meanwhile, residents are told that swingeing cuts are necessary.
TUSC councillor Wayne Naylor said: "The council say they're saving the money for a rainy day. Well, I say it's already raining!" As we go to press, Leicester TUSC councillors will be moving a budget amendment to this effect.
Caroline Vincent
Leicester Socialist Party



The image used on Leicester's campaign stall photo Leicester SP

Coventry
Around 300 people marched through Coventry on 21 February against enormous cuts to local services. This was organised by Coventry trades council and Coventry



photo Coventry SP

Against the Cuts. Socialist Party members play leading roles in both groups.
Speakers included an official from firefighters' union FBU (due to strike as we go to press) and a library worker representing local government union Unison. A lively youth contingent included students from local universities and sixth forms. Many wore bright pink '£10 Now' t-shirts to back the campaign for a higher minimum wage.
Campaigning by community groups and unions, especially Unison, means Coventry's Labour council has already been forced into some concessions. These include a one-year delay on cuts to libraries and disabled children's transport.
Protest clearly works!
Dan Crowter
Coventry East Socialist Party

Newcastle
Bakers' union BFAWU launched their new online video campaigning for a £10-an-hour national minimum wage in Newcastle on 19 February.
It was hosted by the Northern region of the TUC. The video addresses challenging issues such as food banks, sky-rocketing transportation costs, and the reverse welfare of in-work benefits that in reality benefits the bosses - socialism for big business!
The panel included BFAWU president Ian Hodson, Labour MP Dave Anderson, Tim Roach of general union GMB and Paul Phillips from Youth Fight for Jobs.
There was a spirited discussion with many angry criticisms directed at Labour. The mood right

across the audience was one of support for the campaign and defiance of the austerity measures crippling workers.
William Jarrett
Newcastle Socialist Party
BFAWU's campaign animation can be seen at <http://goo.gl/VOQM7H>



The Socialist May Day greetings appeal 2015

Implacable resolve of the lowest paid



Whipps Cross workers marching in 2013 against 'downbanding' pay cuts photo Paul Mattsson

Len Hockey
Unite branch secretary, Whipps Cross Hospital (personal capacity)

The need for an organised, independent, political expression of the will of the 99% and our demands for health, homes and decent jobs has never been greater.
This is the explanation over the years for the increasing financial support from Whipps Cross Hospital workers for the Socialist's May Day greetings appeal.

Generosity
These health workers are often on the lowest incomes. It has been precisely they who have shown the greatest resolve, through generosity

of donation, to change society.
Anger is rising among health workers. At the effects of an economic crisis not of their making. And at unbearable conditions of work and falling real pay. At the same time, the benefits of a one-sided, so-called 'economic recovery' go to booming CEOs' pay and bonuses - and 11% pay increases for their MPs.

Search
This is fuelling workers' search for a political solution to an NHS made worse year on year by the policies of the Con-Dem coalition government and its Labour predecessors. Destabilising and fragmenting reorganisations, privatisation and cuts have ravaged our health service.

May Day is a reminder of the historic memory and implacable resolve of the mighty working class movement in Britain and internationally. It is this resolve that the Socialist articulates: to make crisis-ridden capitalism history, along with its wars and poverty, by making socialism our future.

■ **Support the Socialist: buy your May Day greeting now.** Prices start from £20 for a small box, ranging to £500 for a full-page message. Save 25% off the list price by paying before 8 April (final deadline 15 April). To order your greeting, and for more information including rates and model motions, contact James Ivens on jamesivens@socialistparty.org.uk or **020 8988 8781**.

Nine-fold growth for Grimsby Socialists

Val O'Flynn
Grimsby and Scunthorpe Socialist Party

At Christmas 2013, our branch had four members. In little over a year we've recruited an additional 33.
Geography and demographics have something to do with our success. We are isolated at the end of a motorway. Recently, Grimsby came bottom in a survey of life opportunities for youngsters. There is little employment other than low-skilled, low-paid, zero-hour contracts.

This year we are standing in all 15 wards, and have a prospective parliamentary candidate for Grimsby. We are talking to the local Fire Brigades Union in the hope it will stand in Cleethorpes.
Local Labour MP Austin Mitchell is alleged to have said that "even

After hearing him say it was wrong his kids are paying for what the bankers did, we approached him to stand in the council elections. Unfortunately his wife wouldn't let him as, at 72, he has been promising to retire. But he is supporting TUSC and will be speaking at a public meeting.
We are also fortunate in the press coverage we receive. Lack of resources at the local paper means they are often happy for us to fill their space!

We are very ambitious.
Enthusiasm and energy attract new members

Impact
The area provides a large enough pool for us to recruit from, but is also small enough for us to have a big impact. And we do.
Even last April, with a membership just in double figures, we decided to stand nine TUSC candidates in the local elections. To our absolute delight, this got us banned from Labour Party offices!

if we selected a raving alcoholic sex paedophile we wouldn't lose Grimsby". Labour's contempt for working class people is clear.
We never miss an opportunity to make a noise. Before Christmas, Grimsby was the subject of Channel 4's 'Skint'. It featured our last remaining youth centre, run by the Rev John Ellis for the last 42 years.

Developing
Growing this fast does mean we have to work hard at developing ourselves. Discussion is constant. Between meetings, we stay in touch and do some of our organising electronically.
We are very ambitious. Enthusiasm and energy keep everyone interested and active, and attract new members. Grimsby and Scunthorpe branch is looking forward to another year of successfully building the Socialist Party.

SOCIALIST PARTY FIGHTING FUND

| | £ received | £ target | January to March 2015 | Deadline 6 April 2015 |
|-------------------|------------|----------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| North West | 1,141 | 1,200 | | 95% |
| Yorkshire | 1,757 | 2,900 | | 61% |
| West Midlands | 1,079 | 2,100 | | 51% |
| Southern | 530 | 1,200 | | 44% |
| Wales | 943 | 2,300 | | 41% |
| East Midlands | 656 | 1,600 | | 41% |
| South East | 299 | 750 | | 40% |
| South West | 521 | 1,400 | | 37% |
| Eastern | 433 | 1,200 | | 36% |
| Northern | 192 | 600 | | 32% |
| London | 1,502 | 6,100 | | 25% |
| England and Wales | 5,216 | 3,650 | | 143% |
| TOTAL | 14,267 | 25,000 | | 57% |



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Greece: Syriza at a crossroad

Nicos Anastasiades
Xekinima (CWI Greece)

On 20 February, Greek negotiators agreed a four month extension of the current bailout programme with its creditors (the Troika - EU, IMF and European Central Bank). It is reported that the Greek delegation were subject to outright blackmail by the eurogroup (finance ministers of the eurozone). The Greek Syriza government was told they would be forced to implement capital controls within days if they did not agree.

The key elements of this deal are that Greece accepts the framework of the 'memorandum' (austerity agreement) for the next four months; Greece will get the next bailout payment only if it is evaluated 'positively' by the Troika; Greece must repay all the debt on time; Greece is committed to use the bulk of the money collected by the austerity programme to repay the debt and Greece will not take any "unilateral actions".

Retreat

It is clear that the agreement signifies a big retreat by the Greek government.

The four month deal may have stopped Greece immediately leaving the euro but comes at a very heavy price. Despite the positive spin by Prime Minister Tsipras, Athens made big concessions, including reneging on demands for a 'write-down' of its enormous debt.

Syriza claims it got the 'best' of bad deals on offer under the pressure of capital flooding out of Greece and the threat of a chaotic run on the banks. "We won time," claimed Syriza. But time for what? The deal saw Athens having to propose reforms acceptable to its creditors.

Syriza's proposals must be approved by the eurogroup and the Troika, with April set as a deadline. Unless Syriza accepts these dictats it will not get the further loans it needs to stop defaulting

on its €320 billion debt.

Does this mean that 'all is lost'? This depends on the mood for struggle of the Greek working masses. The social and workers' movements will fight to stretch their election victory over the establishment to the industrial plane, while the Troika will attempt to contain Syriza within the capitalist EU framework.

The government will be squeezed hard between these two pressures. Where this tug-of-war is going to end is something which cannot be predicted because it is a battle of living forces.

100,000
rallied in Athens in support of Syriza's initial negotiating position

Syriza should tell the truth to the Greek people. If the government has made concessions in order to gain time to implement a strategic plan to defeat austerity the people will understand and join the battle. But, failing to do so will sadly show that the path the Greek government is taking is one of class collaboration with the EU and the local elite, accepting their agenda.

Syriza does not put forward a general socialist programme. Its leaders pledge to stay within the capitalist eurozone, no matter what. This means imprisoning Greek workers within the straitjacket of the EU bosses' capitalism and accepting the logic of the 'single market' and dictats of the Troika.

Greek finance minister Varoufakis claimed that the deal allows Greece to vary its fiscal target this year, so it can run a lower surplus and that there is "creative ambiguity" about the surpluses Greece is required to run beyond 2015.

The Greek government said this will allow it to carry out some



Syriza, and its leader Tsipras, have been in negotiations with the EU since their election victory in January

'humanitarian policies'. It is true that the few billion euros could ease the terrible strains on those hardest hit sections of the Greek population. This can be seen as some progress by working people, for the moment, at least compared to the dismal record of the last government.

Wavering

But it will not be enough to pay for a series of reforms for the working class and for the sort of massive public investment desperately needed. The main parts of Syriza's 'Thessalonika Programme', which itself was a retreat on previous Syriza programmes, will be postponed, perhaps indefinitely. It will not go anywhere near undoing the damage of the loss of 25% of GDP over the last five years.

And if the Syriza government agrees to the draconian terms and conditions demanded by German capitalism it will be seen by Greek workers, sooner or later, as a U-turn and capitulation by Syriza.

Already Syriza leaders are publicly wavering on some of its policy pledges, such as on re-establishing the ERT state broadcaster. While it has claimed it will not carry out any new privatisations, Syriza has discussed the possibility of private company involvement in the 'devel-

opment' of facilities.

Over 100,000 people rallied in central Athens on 15 February, in support of Syriza's initial negotiating position. The mood was combative.

The stakes could not be higher for the Greek and European working class

The fascistic Golden Dawn and reactionary nationalism have been pushed into the background because of a new anti-Troika, anti-imperialist mood. 66% of Golden Dawn voters said they agreed with the Syriza government's stance. This shows the huge active support that could be won for a bold struggle against the Troika on a clear socialist programme, including repudiation of the debt, ending all austerity and public ownership of major banks and industries.

Even if Syriza just stuck defiantly to its 'Thessalonika Programme', workers and the poorest in Greece would enthusiastically mobilise in support of its implementation, with active support from workers across Europe, challenging their own cuts-

The Committee for a Workers' International

The Committee for a Workers' International (CWI) is the socialist international organisation to which the Socialist Party is affiliated. The CWI is organised in 45 countries and works to unite the working class and oppressed peoples against global capitalism and to fight for a socialist world. For more details including CWI publications write to: CWI, PO Box 3688, London E11 1YE. email cwi@worldsoc.co.uk

www.socialistworld.net

making governments.

If the left fails to show a way out, the middle classes and big sections of the working class could fall prey to frustration and demoralisation. This would pave the way for the return of New Democracy and other pro-austerity parties to power and even a renewed growth of Golden Dawn. The stakes could not be higher for the Greek and European working class.

The article is an extract from an interview which will appear in the March 2015 issue of Socialist Today (see page 10)

Ireland: five anti-water charges protesters jailed

Last week the Socialist reported on arrests of anti-water charges protesters in Ireland for 'false imprisonment' of the Tánaiste (deputy prime minister) by a sit-down protest in Tallaght, Dublin, in November. Those arrests, which have included Socialist Party members Paul Murphy TD (MP) and others, are continuing.

Now, for breaking an injunction compelling them to stay 20 metres away from all water meter installations, five protesters have been jailed for between 28 and 56 days each. Reports suggest that three of those jailed are being held in solitary cells for 23 hours a day and have now begun a hunger strike.

On 21 February 10,000 marched in Dublin against the jailings. Here we print an edited version of **Paul Murphy's** speech at the demonstration.

"They're jailing our people because they stood beside a water meter. They're arresting people every morning in Tallaght because they sat behind the Tánaiste's car. They're demonising, and criminalising, and shaming our protesters just for being protesters.

This is war. It's class war to impose water charges and austerity.

We're going to win. We're going to win because of working class people power, self-organisation, mobilisation - like today.

We do not live - that's clear to people - in a genuinely free or democratic society. We live in a society where the media, the guards, the courts, are all used to protect the interests of the rich and the powerful against the rest. That's the case right now, but it's been the case since the very foundation of this state.

Look at the Rosspoint Five, jailed for standing up to Shell. Look at Margaretta D'Arcy, jailed for standing up to the US war machine. Look

at the bin charges protesters. Look at all those injunctioned and jailed workers in the past for standing up to employers.

None of that is new. But what's new is that people across the country, they see it.

To win we have to mobilise all of that energy, all of that anger, all of that outrage, and then we have to focus it.

We need to keep our eye on the prize. This is happening because we're about to defeat water charges. We need to mobilise all of ourselves to convince the people in the middle not to pay. Mass non-payment will sink Irish water, will sink water charges.

But then the last point - we know, they know, everybody knows, this is no longer just about the water charges. This is about who rules in Irish society. It's about the possibility of a massive, left movement in this country for an economic and political revolution. It's about the possibility of ending the rule of the bankers and bondholders.

It's about the possibility of fundamental and socialist change and about bringing about, for the first time in this state - together with our brothers and sisters across



Paul Murphy joins protesters outside the prison where some of those jailed are being held

Europe - the rule of the majority, the rule of the 99%. We can do it. It starts now, with getting the release

of our comrades, with stopping water charges, with bringing down the government.

Worse off than our parents

Tanis Belsham-Wray
Leeds Socialist Party

With the approaching general election, many young people, like me, are looking for answers to the multitude of problems over jobs, pay, housing, and education, etc. One million fewer youths registered to vote in this election highlights how much we feel abandoned by the main parties.

Prime Minister Cameron has stated that, if he gets in again, the Tories will scrap housing benefit for 18-21 year olds. This would plunge young people into poverty and even homelessness as, for many, moving back in with their parents is simply not an option.

The Tories also want to abolish Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA) for this age group and replace it with a 'work for your dole' scheme.

Labour's leader Ed Miliband isn't far behind in also attacking young people's rights. Last summer he proposed plans to remove benefits

The new jobs that have been created in the economy are mainly low paid, zero-hour contracts

for under 21s and replace them with a 'youth allowance', at the same miserable JSA rate, dependent on the claimant taking part in 'training'. It will be means tested on the parents' income.

Youth unemployment stands at around 17% and the new jobs that have been created in the economy



photo Senan

are mainly low paid, zero-hour contracts.

Apprenticeships are also being used by employers to get away with paying young workers as little as £2.73 an hour. It's not surprising that a study by Oxford University has found people born in the 1980s are more likely to be worse off than their parents' generation.

Enough is enough. We need a new, mass party which represents us and the rest of the working class. We need a £10 an hour minimum wage now and the scrapping of zero-hour contracts.

We need to stop schemes that penalise the young unemployed, such as workfare, and instead invest resources into building much needed council homes and restoring public services to provide decently paid and secure jobs.



Fight tuition fees – support the TUSC alternative

Bridget Russell
Manchester Metropolitan University
Socialist Students

Labour's recent announcement that, given a win at the up-coming elections, they plan on reducing tuition fees to £6,000 a year would be laughable to students if it was not a complete insult. These fees would still leave many students saddled with a lifetime of debt.

It was a Labour government who first brought in tuition fees for higher education. Between 1998 and 2010 Labour tripled tuition fees to upwards of £3,000.

The current maximum tuition fee stands at £9,000 under this coalition government - after Lib Dem leader Nick Clegg's infamous betrayal of his pledge to oppose any increase in tuition fees.

Understandably, students' attitude to Ed Miliband's 'promise' is the same attitude we have towards the Conservatives, Lib-Dems, and all the establishment parties: we don't believe a word they say!

Reducing student fees by a third is of little consequence in a system designed to make university unaffordable for people from working class backgrounds.

No cuts

The shortfall to universities because of this £3,000 cut in fees will not be funded by the prospective Labour government. This will result in cuts to funding for courses. Can anyone see university chancellors offering to take a pay cut in order to cover the loss?

Once again it's students who will be asked to take the hit, not just monetarily but also in the quality of their over-priced education. The proposed reduction will not encourage more people to go to university, or help them get there. Indeed, very few current students expect much from any government after the general elections.

All of the establishment parties remain committed to pursuing austerity. Students stand among the ranks of those most affected.

The 'big three' parties have overseen a 20 year period of decline in public services for young people; everything from Sure Start centres and youth organisations having their funding slashed, to the continuation of the pitiful youth rate of the minimum wage. Even the Green Party has carried out cuts to council services in Brighton, and elsewhere. Students are beginning to search for an alternative.

In Manchester, students are finding that alternative in TUSC (the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition). Around 20 students are standing as council candidates in the May elections as part of a campaign to contest every ward in the city.

They are doing this on the basis of a no cuts agenda for both students and workers, as we understand that austerity doesn't just impact a person on one level but limits their chances from birth, through education and beyond.

We recognise that cuts are ruining the lives of the majority in this country, and we recognise that this must stop.



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TV football deal:

Reclaim the game for the fans

John Reid

The football Premier League's new TV deal with Sky and BT broadcasters offers mega-riches to the 20 Premier League teams, but little reward to the lower leagues. It will give the top tier of clubs £5.2 billion between 2016 and 2019, this is 71% higher than the previous deal.

Once the overseas rights are sold, the club finishing top of the Premier League will receive £156 million and the team finishing bottom will receive £99 million - this from TV money alone. Cash from televised matches will average out at a staggering £10.19 million a match.

It would be possible for Premier League clubs to allow fans in for free and still make a profit! However, ticket prices have gone up 1,000% since the advent of the Premier League in 1992. Working class people, especially the young, have been priced out of

the game, there has been an element of 'social cleansing' in this.

The Championship (football's second tier) is Europe's fourth largest league in terms of match day attendances, but it will not share much of this wealth. Indeed, Championship clubs will go further into debt chasing Premier League status. The 24 Championship clubs currently have debts of around £1 billion.

The 72 League clubs will receive only crumbs off the table, with the mega-rich clubs becoming even richer and the rest moving nearer to extinction.

Premier League executives and agents are paid millions of pounds a year. The average Premier League footballer is paid £2.3 million a year. Manchester United's Wayne Rooney is on £300,000 a week.

Yet, apart from Chelsea, Premier League clubs will not commit themselves to pay club staff the national 'living wage' of £7.85 an hour (£9.15 in London).

At the top level there is mega-wealth but under Labour and Tory governments over 5,000 playing fields have been sold off and those remaining are, in the main, inadequate. Investment from the Premier League in community and grassroots football is £168 million, just 3%.

Money from the new TV deal could be used to help football at every level, instead of buying up talent from all around the world.

- The money should be used to:
- Reduce ticket prices to a maximum of £20/£10 concessions.
 - Produce home grown talent - with massive investment in playing fields, school football, football academies and grassroots football.
 - Massively increase football coaches at every level of the game - male, female, able bodied and disabled.
 - Pay all football industry staff a minimum wage of £10 an hour.
 - Give a minimum of 50% to clubs outside the elite 20.



Read Reclaim the Game for more on a socialist programme for football available from leftbooks.co.uk - £3.50 including postage.

Review: Turning the Tide

When women's solidarity won the battle for trawlermen's lives

Turning the Tide by local historian Rupert Creed is a true story, detailing the 1968 tragedy that saw the loss of 58 Hull trawlermen's lives. It recounts the successful campaign for improved safety by the women of the Hessle Road fishing community. The book came out in 1998. It is also a theatre production, appearing for a weekend recently at Hull truck theatre and is promised to return next year. This story of class struggle and resistance is well worth reading.



The '68 demo photo Hull Daily Mail



The 40th anniversary commemoration



Achieving proper health and safety aboard trawlers took a bitterly fought struggle photo Creative Commons

Phil Culshaw

These days, no one would imagine boarding any ship that had no safety and survival equipment, such as adequate life jackets and a radio to alert rescue services if the ship got into trouble. But fishermen faced such dangerous work conditions until 1968, when a triple trawler tragedy united the women of Hessle Road, Hull in grief and spurred them into action.

Being a deep sea trawlerman was one of Britain's most dangerous jobs; imagine trying to haul in nets of fish when mountainous waves are crashing down upon you! The accident rate was twice as high as coal mining, and ten times that in manufacturing. Many fishermen lost fingers, hands could be crushed and men could even be dragged bodily into the winch mechanism.

Between 1948 and 1964, 757 British fishermen were killed or drowned at sea. There were no safety laws governing trawlers. The 1894 Merchant Shipping Act gave the skipper absolute authority and ruled that any criticism, challenge or disobedience was like mutiny and would lead to criminal prosecution.

The men were casually hired for only the voyage's duration. They spent three weeks at sea and it wasn't uncommon for them to work 300 hours over that period concentrated into ten or eleven days on

the fishing grounds. If the fishing was good, men sometimes worked 24 to 36 hours on deck, as their pay was determined by how much was caught.

These factors helped create insecurity and undermined the potential for solidarity, collective organisation and action.

If you became labelled a troublemaker, you could easily be blacklisted and victimised. Health and safety were way down the trawler owners' priorities. The trawlermen even had to purchase their own oil-frocks, and knives and mattress for the bunks on ship.

Hardship

For the women of Hessle Road, life on shore was also a struggle with the men away for three weeks, then only back for a 36-hour turnaround. The women were, in reality, single parents bringing their families up on the minimum deck hand wage issued at the dock office. Their husbands only received their share of the profit after the landing of the catch.

During the voyage women feared that their husbands, brothers, fathers may not be seen again, or return crippled and unable to work. If a ship was wrecked wages stopped immediately. If the ship was lost and the trawler men died, widows only received 13 weeks' pay.

Proving the trawler owners negligent was hard - most accidents at

sea were deemed acts of god! Resilience and solidarity helped the community through hard times but the trawler owners took the lions' share of profits from the catch.

By 1968 very little had been done to improve safety; with a non-unionised workforce Hull trawler owners put profits first. In January 1968 two Hull trawlers, the St Romanus and the Kingston Peridot, were lost with all hands: 40 men in total. The mood in Hull turned to anger and with the help of the Transport and General Workers' Union a meeting was organised.

Six hundred, mostly women, met on Hessle Road on 2 February 1968, the day the trawlers should have returned. Outside were prams, inside the women held children and babies; the outpouring of grief was said to be unbearable to watch. The union had secured an agreement by Labour prime minister Harold Wilson to meet a delegation of wives.

The meeting elected Lillian Bilocca, Yvonne Blenkinsop, Christine Jenson and Mary Denness. The mood was so strong they resolved to march down to St Andrews Quay and confront the trawler owners at the dock office.

Disgracefully the St Romanus and Kingston Peridot's owners refused to face the wives, but the Hull Fishing Vessel Owners Association agreed to meet a small deputation. Dissatisfied with their response, 'Big Lil' Bilocca, as she was known, proposed more militant direct action.

Next day she led a group of women to St Andrews Quay dock gates resolving to stop any trawler leaving port without a radio operator aboard. When the St Keverne entered the lock the crew told Lil they had no operator.

At risk of life and limb Big Lil launched herself at the trawler to try to board, and was only prevented by several police officers. Although unsuccessful in preventing the trawler leaving, the vessel's owners - with the world's press watching - hurriedly arranged for a radio operator to be taken to the ship in the Humber.

The women's action had given confidence to the trawlermen. The crew of the St Andronicus refused to sail due to the poor condition of

their life jackets, demanding that union officials investigate their grievances.

The news of a third trawler, The Ross Cleveland, lost with only one survivor, was announced on 5 February, the day before the delegation was due to meet Wilson. This brought the lost trawlermen to 58. As the trawler was swamped by

If you became labelled a troublemaker, you could easily be blacklisted and victimised. Health and safety were way down the trawler owners' priorities

mountainous waves, the last message from skipper Phil Gay was "Help me. I'm going over. Give my love and the crew's love to the wives and families". Three crewmen made it to a life raft but only one, Harry Eddom, survived the bitter cold.

In one traumatic fortnight, three trawlers had gone down! Next day the women boarded the train for London armed with 10,000 signatures.

The tragedy and protests made national headlines and the solidarity of the working class was stirred with petitions organised in Fleetwood, Lancashire, another fishing community. The women met the Labour government ministers with a fishermen's charter! They demanded:

- The provision of full-time radio operators on all crews
 - Trawlers to report every 12 hours and if no contact for 24 hours, search and rescue services to be alerted
 - Improved safety equipment, adequate training, the prevention of young boys being allowed to sail in winter
 - Union health and safety representatives aboard each trawler. A full inquiry into health and safety
- Lil Bilocca let the government know how determined the women were to see real change, threatening: "If

I don't get satisfaction I'll be at that Wilson's private house, until I do get satisfaction".

The women's campaign got many new safety measures introduced, including every trawler having a full-time radio operator. This helped save the lives of thousands of fishermen. Within weeks the women had set in motion changes to an industry that had seen little change or reform in a century.

The Hessle Road women's solidarity was forged through their life experience of struggle and could challenge the dominance of the trawler bosses. Faced by the united women and a community campaign involving direct militant action, the trawler owners and government conceded the women's demands.

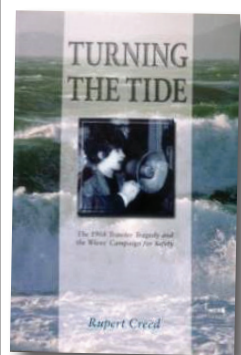
Not to do so risked the campaign escalating with the possibility of the trawlermen gaining confidence from the women and taking collective industrial action.

If the trawler owners had ignored the women's campaign they risked their workforce becoming more militant and organised like Hull's dockers. Better to concede on health and safety than risk a proposal such as the 'National Dock Labour Scheme' that would end casual labour and the trawler owners' power.

The scale of the tragedy brought sympathy and solidarity to the women's cause, exposing the terrible conditions and risks faced by the trawlermen. Facing such a militant stance and bad publicity, the trawler owners' ruthless prioritising of profit and reckless attitude towards health and safety could not be sustained.



Trawlermen's memorial, St Andrews Dock, Hull photo G Robinson



Turning the Tide
by Rupert Creed

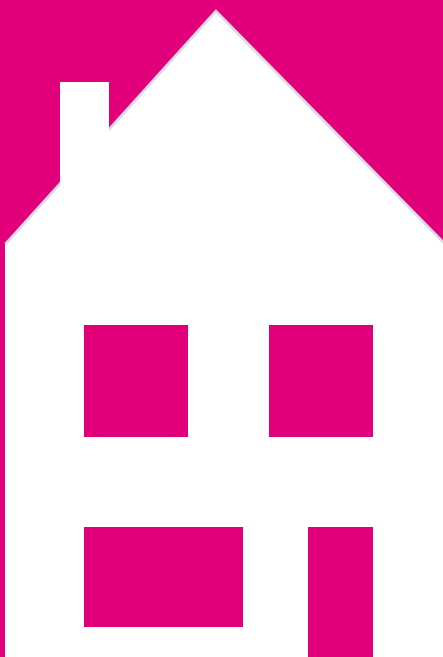
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98 pages

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Back Door Press
(1998)

END THE HOUSING CRISIS!

■ **Rent
control now**

■ **Build
council
homes**



Helen Pattison

East London Socialist Party

“Social housing not social cleansing” shout the Newham E15 mums on their regular campaign stalls. Rising private sector rents and cuts to social housing stocks makes it feel like social cleansing is exactly what’s taking place. It was over a year ago that Newham all-Labour council closed Focus E15, a homeless hostel housing 30 young mothers and their babies, along with 130 other residents.

The housing crisis shouldn’t be a shock. The Tories have been whittling away social housing provisions throughout this government. In 2013 it was reported that contractors could have their obligation to provide social housing as part of new developments waived if it would make the project ‘unprofitable’. The same obligations weren’t being met in 60% of cases anyway.

Now redevelopments of empty buildings will similarly have this requirement dropped. Add this to local council cuts and closures such as Focus E15 and the problem is set to increase. The Olympic Park was supposed to relieve the pressure on housing by bringing to the borough 11,000 homes, a third of which would be affordable. But the government’s version of ‘affordable’ (80% market rate) is well above average Newham incomes. Residents being told to uproot themselves and move to Luton, Birmingham or Belfast continue to make poorer communities feel like they aren’t welcome in London.

To add insult to injury Newham council has just passed on an opportunity to help relieve the problem. West Ham football club is moving into the Olympic Stadium and its old ground at Upton Park is being turned into an 800-home ‘village’. The council has outrageously agreed that this can be completely free of social housing.

Genuinely affordable homes (or better yet council ones) are desperately needed in Newham. With the general election around the corner you’d think politicians would push for at least some social housing to be included in this high profile development! Instead a private developer is boasting that there is none.

We need a huge fight – including standing Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition candidates – for council house building and a rent cap in the private sector. The housing crisis has been developing for decades. In that time successive government and local councils have been pitifully slow in building houses. When they have set quotas they have been minimal and still not been met. New developments are treated as investment opportunities for businesses rather than homes for local people.

We’re not willing to take this attack lying down. Local campaigns have been popping up across London. Residents are occupying social housing threatened with becoming luxury flats. In some areas teams of people have prevented evictions. Unite the Union, alongside TUSC and various housing campaigns, organised the March for Homes in January. It’s time for a concerted fight against rocketing rents and for good quality, affordable council housing.

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!