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Issue 860
Date 18-24 June 2015



www.socialistparty.org.uk

the Socialist

TORY-BUSTERS



ORGANISE STRIKE RESIST

Build for a 24-hr general strike

Join the Socialists!



Demo special edition
Join the anti-cuts march in
London on 20 June:
Meet TUSC supporters at 1
Queen Victoria Street (closest
tube Bank) at 12pm

How can we beat austerity?
> Pages 8-10



Youth Fight Austerity: protest on 8 July
> Page 7



Why I joined the Socialist Party FIGHT BACK WITH THE REAL SOCIALISTS!

Mick Joyce
 Kone shop steward

The main reason I joined the Socialist Party was the support we got on the Kone engineering workers picket line. Elaine and Norman from the local Socialist Party came along and the Socialist Party gave us publicity in their paper, which gave all the strikers a tremendous boost.

Also, we were invited to address Tyneside Safety Glass's Unite branch meeting by Mark, another Socialist Party member and Unite shop steward.

I had been feeling disaffected with the Labour Party and its shift away from traditional working class values. As a trade

Socialist Party campaign stall



unionist and socialist there is nothing left in the Labour Party for me.

I believe it has completely abandoned socialism, and I was brought up to believe it should be socialist. Nobody from the Labour Party came down to our picket line!

I looked around and saw poverty and hardship. It seemed the choice was either to vote Labour, and be subject to their champagne socialism, or fight back with the real socialists. It was really as simple as that.

I also went along to the Socialist Party public meeting where I

Socialist Party members on a demonstration



listened to Hannah Sell speak. She was inspirational. I'd met her earlier in the day and could see she was a genuine class fighter.

In my line of work I come across workers from across Europe, including other socialists. It is my intention to discuss socialist ideas with them.

Now that I'm involved in the Socialist Party, I feel I'm part of a family - in political terms, a fighting unit that truly represents the working class.

Socialist Party reading group



Socialist Party on the Kone picket line



Socialist Party branch meeting



Agree with Mick? Get in touch today!

www.socialistparty.org.uk Text 07761 818206
 020 8988 8777 @Socialist_party /CWISocialistParty

Meeting/Event Details

These are just some of the meetings taking place this week. If your area isn't listed, or for future meetings, see www.socialistparty.org.uk/whatson or get in touch with your regional organiser on the contact details listed.

Eastern: 0790 516 7703

Basildon Socialist Party
 Build a movement to beat austerity
 8pm, 23 June, Room 1 at the Place, Pitsea SS13 3DU

Peterborough/Huntingdon Socialist Party
 Marxism, Stalinism and the Family
 7pm, 24 June, South Grove Community Centre, Grove Street, PE2 9AG

East Mids: 0770 335 3130

Chesterfield Socialist Party
 The role of the state in Britain today
 7.30pm, 22 June, Upstairs at the Chesterfield Alehouse, 37 West Bars

Derby Socialist Party
 The role of the state in Britain today
 7.30pm, 23 June, Brunswick Inn, Railway Terrace

Derby TUSC
 What TUSC stands for
 7.30pm, 22 June, The Quad, Market Square

Mansfield Socialist Party

Greece - how can austerity be beaten?
 7.30pm, 24 June, Railway Inn, Station Street

London: 020 8988 8786

Barking and Dagenham Socialist Party
 Russia: the rise of Stalin and the brutal dictatorship - how did it happen?
 3pm, 27 June, Rivergate Centre, Minter Road, IG11 0FJ

Hackney and Islington Socialist Party
 History of the trade unions
 7.30pm, 24 June, Star Pub, upstairs room, 35 Queensdown Road, E5 8JQ

Haringey and Enfield Socialist Party
 How do we defeat austerity?
 7.30pm, 23 June, Turk Art Cafe, 77 Bounces Road, N9 8LD

Tower Hamlets Socialist Party
 Building a new workers party - lessons from Spain
 7.30pm, 24 June, Whitechapel (call 07866438779 for details)

North East: 0191 421 6230

North West 07769 611 320

Lancashire Socialist Party
 Greece in crisis and the socialist response
 7pm, 24 June, Market Tavern, Market

Street, Preston town centre

Salford Socialist Party
 The 1949 Chinese revolution
 7pm, 24 June 2015, Royal Oak pub, 34 Barton Lane, Eccles, M30 0EN

Liverpool Socialist Party
 7.30pm, 23 June, Casa Club (cellar bistro), 29 Hope St, city centre

Manchester Socialist Party
 7pm, 23 June, Britons Protection pub, Great Bridgewater Street, M1 5LE

North West TUSC
 Regional conference
 11am, 27 June, Methodist Central Hall, Oldham Street, Manchester city centre M1 1JQ

Wirral Socialist Party
 7.15pm, 22 June, the Stork pub, Price Street, Birkenhead, CH41 6JN

South East: 020 8988 8777

South West: 07759 796 478

Gloucestershire anti-cuts forum
 8pm, 25 June, Global Footsteps Cafe, Portland Rd, Cheltenham

Gloucestershire Socialist Party
 After the march, what comes next in the fight against austerity?
 7.30pm, 24 June, The Exchange, Brick Row, Stroud

Southern: 07833 681910

Basingstoke Socialist Party
 12pm, 27 June, campaign stall in Vote street, followed by a meeting

Wales: 07935 391 947

Caerphilly Socialist Party
 A socialist programme to fight austerity
 6pm, 24 June, Pensioners Hall, park Road, Caerphilly

Cardiff East Socialist Party
 For a minimum wage we can live on - £10 Now!
 7pm, 24 June, the Andrew Buchan, 29 Albany Road

Cardiff West Socialist Party
 A socialist answer to austerity
 7.30pm, 22 June, the Grange Pub, Penarth Road

West Mids: 02476 555 620

Birmingham Central Socialist Party
 How can we stop the Tories and fight for socialism?
 7.30pm, 22 June, top floor meeting room, the Wellington pub, Bennett's Hill, city centre

Stafford Socialist Party
 The Spanish civil war
 7.30pm, 23 June, the Bird in Hand

Stoke Socialist Party
 7.30pm, 25 June, London Road

Sports and Social Club (OurBar), London Road, ST4 5AG

Yorkshire: 0114 264 6551

Bradford Socialist Party
 How to fight austerity
 7pm, 23 June, Titus Salt pub, city centre

Grimsby Socialist Party
 6.30pm, 22 June, upstairs in Cue World, Victoria Street, Grimsby

Harrogate Socialist Party
 The case for a republic in Britain
 7.30pm, 23 June, St Robert's Club, Robert Street (opposite Waitrose), HG1 1HP

Huddersfield Socialist Party
 What is racism?
 7.15pm, 25 June, the Irish Centre, Fitzwilliam St, HD1 5BB at 7.15pm

Leeds Socialist Party
 How to fight NHS privatisation
 7.15pm, 22 June, West Riding Pub, 38 Wellington St, LS1 2DJ

Selby Socialist Party
 How to fight austerity
 7.15pm, 24 June, Selby trades hall and working-men's club, Micklegate

York Socialist Party
 The Spanish civil war
 7.15pm, Thursday 25 June, New York Club, Blossom Street, York

Stop Osborne's cruel cuts



The Tories want to cut Child Tax Credit for millions of families

Having cut the taxes of the super-rich and giant corporations, Tory millionaire Chancellor George Osborne is planning to slash £5 billion from Child Tax Credit (CTC) as part of the governments extra £12 billion cut in welfare spending.

According to the Resolution Foundation, more than two-thirds of families (2.7 million) claiming CTC are in work and that families with two children will lose up to £1,700 a year as a result of the cut.

Moreover, almost two-thirds of the cut would hit the poorest 30% of households, whereas virtually none of the cut would affect the richest 40% of households. So much for the Cameron's claim that "we're all in it together" in suffering austerity!

Suzanne, who had previously been in receipt of CTC, told the Socialist why this attack makes her angry.

"The threshold for claiming tax credits is already criminally low - my low-paid one child family doesn't qualify since receiving a small wage increase.

This nasty cut only serves to demonise and plunge working families further into poverty and highlights the desperately low wages of working families.

Instead of attacking 'hard-working families' how about attacking the bosses getting away with absurdly low pay or the vulture landlords charging extortionate rents?"

Metadata matters! Fight the snoopers' charter

Steve Score

"We kill people based on metadata." General Michael Hayden, former director of the US National Security Agency (NSA) and the CIA

A government commissioned report says that UK intelligence agencies should be allowed to keep their powers to gather bulk communications data on a massive scale - records of emails, phone calls and social media (metadata).

This is in addition to eavesdropping and reading of the content of communications.

David Anderson QC, the report's author, has, however, argued that the power to authorise surveillance warrants should be removed from government ministers and given to a new judicial body. The government is resisting this proposal.

New powers

The Queen's Speech flagged up a new investigatory powers bill, a revamped "snoopers' charter". This will extend powers to collect metadata and intercept communications.

It follows the revelations by NSA whistleblower Edward Snowden (see the Socialist, issue 856) which revealed the vast scale of this snooping.

A scare campaign to justify the new bill has begun after the Sunday Times reported an 'anonymous source' that Snowden's leaked (but encrypted) information was hacked into by Russia and China, allegedly forcing US and British secret agents to be withdrawn.

Governments have claimed that collecting metadata is less intrusive than surveillance. But as NSA General Counsel, Stewart Baker, points out that: "It tells you everything you need to know about somebody's life." A former NSA director starkly admitted: "We kill people based on metadata."

Catching terrorists and criminals has been the justification, but these powers are also used against political activists, campaigners and trade unionists.

Recent revelations of police spies, such as Peter Francis, have shown how the state tracks activists. Francis infiltrated the Militant (forerunner of the Socialist Party), the Youth against Racism in Europe campaign, and spied on the Stephen Lawrence family and friends. Stephen was murdered in a racist attack in 1993.

These measures, increased under Labour as well as the Tories and Lib Dems, are more to do with the state acting on behalf of the ruling class to keep political

control. It is not coincidental that the government is ramping them up, along with new anti-trade union laws, at the same time as increasing austerity.

They see the likelihood of mass opposition as a threat to their system, and are prepared to take

73,000 police requests for communications data were made between 2012 and 2014 in the UK - one every two minutes! 93% were granted.

repressive measures to defend themselves.

Socialists oppose these attacks on civil liberties, and link the fight against them to the struggle for a socialist alternative to capitalism - which always has to find repressive ways to defend privilege.



NSA whistleblower Edward Snowden

We appeal to our readers to donate to our Fighting Fund so that we can step up campaigning against the Tory cuts. See page 5

Socialist Party Fighting Fund

	£ target	£ received	April-June 2015	Deadline 30 June 2015
North West	1,200	1,872		
Northern	600	707		
South West	1,400	1,324		
East Midlands	1,600	1,467		
West Midlands	2,100	1,885		
Yorkshire	2,900	2,150		
Eastern	1,200	663		
South East	750	314		
London	6,100	2,296		
Wales	2,300	857		
Southern	1,200	444		
England & Wales	3,650	1,314		
TOTAL	25,000	15,293		



Socialism 2015
 7 & 8 November 2015, central London

A weekend of discussion and debate on how to change the world
 Hosted by the Socialist Party

For more info

020 8988 8777

www.socialistparty.org.uk/events/Socialism_2015



Have you got news for us? DEADLINE: Friday before publication date, urgent news: Monday

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Workplace/campaign news: James Ivens
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ORGREAVE: POLICE VIOLENCE AND COVER-UP WHITEWASHED BY IPCC



A civil war without guns - Lessons of the 1984-85 miners strike by Ken Smith
Only £7 (free postage)
Available from Left Books, PO Box 24697, London E11 1YD 020 8988 8789 www.leftbooks.co.uk bookshop@socialistparty.org.uk

On 18 June 1984 thousands of riot police, many on horseback, brutally attacked a mass picket of striking miners at the Orgreave coking plant in South Yorkshire. Hundreds of miners were injured, some seriously, many arrested and 95 charged with unlawful assembly. The subsequent trial of these miners collapsed after six weeks because the police evidence was unreliable. Now, despite evidence of assaulting striking miners, and subsequently perverting the course of justice and committing perjury, the so-called Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC) has said it will not pursue a criminal investigation into the actions of

South Yorkshire police on that day 'because of the passage of time.' This decision amounts to a white-wash of South Yorkshire police and indeed the Tory Thatcher government, whose aim was to crush the strike of the National Union of Mineworkers in order to break organised workers' resistance to pit closures and privatisation. The violence perpetrated by South Yorkshire police at Orgreave, which has gone unpunished, is the latest in a string of disgraceful and potentially criminal actions which include the Hillsborough football stadium tragedy in 1989, with 96 dead, and covering up the child sex abuse scandal in Rotherham be-



The IPCC has said it will not pursue a criminal investigation into the actions of South Yorkshire police on that day 'because of the passage of time'

tween 2007 and 2010. This latest miscarriage of justice reinforces the demand of the Orgreave Truth and Justice Cam-

paign (OTJC) for a full and independent public inquiry into the 'Battle of Orgreave.' Despite frustration at the IPCC's decision the OTJC says: "An inquiry will help reveal exactly why, when the subsequent court cases took place, all of the charges, including riot were abandoned. It must inevitably lead to two things: Some officers being charged with a series of offences - assault, perjury, perverting the course of justice and misconduct in a public office. Secondly, a paper trail that would indicate that the actions of the police at Orgreave were influenced by political pressure from within the highest ranks of the government of the day."

The Battle of Orgreave - an eyewitness account

I remember that it was a beautiful sunny English summer's day. Against us were lined the massed ranks of police, in ordinary uniform at first. These officers soon stood down for those kitted in full riot gear. These storm troopers soon weighed into the pickets who fought back manfully at first but all we had were fists and feet against batons, shields and helmets. The blows were relentless, bloodied pickets were everywhere.

The memory that has stuck with me is the look on the faces of the police. They were loving the pain and terror that they were paying out to people fighting to save their communities.

One comrade from my pit was trampled by a horse and even after the end of the year long strike couldn't return to work for another three months due to the extent of his injuries. Another comrade was jailed in Lincoln prison for 'unlawful assembly'. What a price to pay for wanting to secure a future for your family.

The Orgreave Truth and Justice Campaign is doing a great job, but could we spare a thought for the men and women we have lost over the years? They will never see justice for their fight and carry the stain of the lies from the media, police and politicians to their graves.

La lutte continue!
Ian Whitehouse, Sheffield

Give us the resources to fight Tory attacks

Ken Douglas
Socialist Party national treasurer

Can you make a donation to support the Socialist Party and our struggle for a socialist alternative? We have no rich funders - our backers are ordinary working class people who want change; who want to see a society where the wealth doesn't just flow to the super-rich but is used to give everyone a decent life.

That was the message that our members took into the general election. Ordinary workers, trade unionists, students, community campaigners, stood as part of Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC) to say that austerity is a lie that just benefits the rich.

Rich elite

Even now those lying hypocrites, known as MPs, are busy debating giving themselves a £7,000 pay rise, while telling us we have to tighten our belts.

Like those candidates for the Labour leadership contest who think that the Labour election campaign didn't kow-tow enough to big business, they have no idea of the anger that is building against the profiteers and crooks that run the big companies and the banks and their representatives in parliament.

The Socialist argues a strategy



Photo Paul Mattsson

to harness that anger. The working class is the most powerful force in society but we need trade union leaders who aren't afraid to build a political movement and a mass workers' party that can put an end to austerity.

The Tories don't just want to take us back to the 1930s, they want to take us back to the nineteenth century. But just as the conditions created by capitalism then led to the flourishing of socialist ideas and posed the question of building a new society, so it is inevitable that these ideas will again gain mass currency.

That's why we are asking for your support to help build a socialist alternative.

Can you donate £5, £10, £50 or £100 or more? We can guarantee that every penny will be used in the fight for socialism. You can pay through our website at www.socialistparty.org.uk/donate Or 020 8988 8777, or send a cheque or postal order, payable to the Socialist Party, to PO Box 24697, London E11 1YD (Fighting Fund chart - page 3)

Tower Hamlets election - Labour's Mr Biggs wins

Pete Dickenson

John Biggs, long standing Labour right-winger and veteran of the witch-hunt against supporters of the Militant newspaper (forerunner of the Socialist) in Tower Hamlets, has been elected mayor of the borough with executive powers. His victory means he will try to continue and deepen the devastating cuts in services dictated by the government.

Biggs beat Rabina Khan, a supporter of undemocratically removed former mayor, Lutfur Rahman. No doubt the commissioners sent in by the previous Con-Dem government to run the borough when Rahman was deposed will be taken out, with a 'safer pair of hands' now in charge.

Biggs was elected on an alternative vote system with a majority of over 6,000, but on first preference votes he was neck and neck with Khan. He needed the second preference votes of Tories and others to win clearly. Rabina Khan's campaign was in

the face of a venomous propaganda storm from the establishment press unleashed after the court judgement. She was also disadvantaged by the fact that one unelected QC had ruled not only that the election of Lutfur Rahman was void but that Tower Hamlets First was no longer allowed to be a registered party, and so she stood as an independent.

Nonetheless, if, as the Socialist Party argued, she had campaigned on a bold anti-austerity programme, promising to fight the government if elected, this could have mobilised the community and reached out beyond her core Bengali vote.

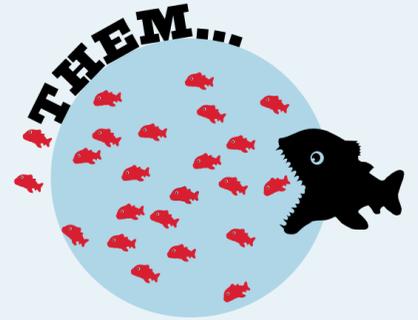
Such an approach could also have undercut the racism and division that followed the establishment onslaught on Lutfur Rahman. As it was, the turnout was sharply down on the previous mayor election with 17,000 fewer electors voting, and Khan got very few second preference votes.

A new campaign now needs to be built against the cuts, on the streets and electorally. Many of the left activists from the former Tower Hamlets First, closed down by the

Electoral Commission, who supported Rabina Khan, will now be looking for a way to fight back. The councillors now form a minority group on the council. The Socialist Party locally will be pushing in the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition to approach them to discuss building an anti-cuts opposition on the council which can help to create a new working class, anti-austerity movement.



Labour's John Biggs - favoured by the establishment



'I'm posh, gizza job'

According to the government's Social Mobility and Child Poverty Commission top UK companies are elbowing aside working class job applicants in favour of privileged, "polished" candidates.

The study conducted by University of London concluded that top companies are "systematically excluding bright working-class applicants" from their workforce. Candidates from fee paying and selective schools made up 70% of graduate trainees in the study, despite being only 7% and 4% of the UK population respectively.

schemes, before most employers abolished them entirely or switched to less generous 'career average' pensions. MPs were also supposed to switch from their final salary scheme to a career average pension, in return for this year's £7,000 pay rise. However, it turns out that under "transitional protection" arrangements 212 MPs will get both the pay hike and retain their gold-plated pensions.

RBS give-away

In the 2008 financial crash Gordon Brown's Labour government bailed out Royal Bank of Scotland (RBS), using £45.8 billion of public money to buy a 80% stake. This majority public ownership didn't stop fat cat RBS bosses continuing to pocket massive bonuses, salaries and pension payments.

Now, Tory chancellor Osborne is putting the government's remaining stake into a fire sale to partly offset the government's widening budget deficit (along with slashing welfare services). Brown's government bought RBS for £5 a share - the current market price is £3.58 a share. No wonder the sell-off is being compared to the government's botched privatisation of Royal Mail in 2013 when £1 billion was lost to the public purse. Taxpayers will be 'short-changed' by at least £7.2 billion for RBS, while grasping investors who helped cause the economic crisis will get shares dirt cheap after years of publicly funded bailouts. The greedy banks should be nationalised!

Wise words

"I do worry that we have 140 billionaires in London and yet hardly any of them are taking the trouble to ensure that the companies they lead or invest in are paying their employees the London living wage (of £9.15 an hour)." Paying a higher minimum wage above the current paltry £6.50 an hour would end the practise of "subsidising companies who are not paying their staff properly." Surprisingly these comments come from the Tory MP for Croydon South, Chris Philip. Is it a case of 'those who come to Jesus last' or, a worry that 'the pitchforks are coming'? We suspect the latter.

Gold plated pensions

Younger readers probably aren't aware, but many workers used to be on final salary pension



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

Asylum solidarity - Justice for Janahan

Alistair Tice

"You can't come in because you've had a protest," said the head security guard at Vulcan House, the Home Office building in Sheffield. Yes, Tamil Solidarity supporters in Sheffield organised a solidarity protest with Janahan, a Tamil asylum seeker, because when he signed in two weeks earlier, he was detained in Morton Hall detention centre in Lincolnshire for five days!

Myself and Steve Williams, a community psychiatric nurse, had accompanied Janahan that time, but felt useless as he was taken away in front of our eyes. We weren't going to let that happen again.

So, 20 Socialist Party members and asylum rights activists staged a noisy demo demanding "Janahan must stay", gaining lots of local media coverage.

We were delighted when Janahan re-emerged from the building, free for another week until he has to report again. His fresh

asylum claim is being heard in court on 15 July.

Janahan was only 17 when he fled Jaffna in 2009, after the Sri Lankan government-backed military genocide in which 100,000 Tamils were killed or went missing.

Janahan was rounded up, imprisoned and tortured for ten days in a secret detention centre. His sister has been 'missing' since 2008 and his father was detained as well.

Fearing him being killed, Janahan's parents paid people traffickers to get him out. In Britain, he moved from London to Stainforth in Doncaster with a Tamil friend from Sri Lanka who had also been tortured.

Janahan has been seeking asylum for five years. This has been refused but his case has never been to court. He is not allowed to study, he's not allowed to work and he gets no money. Even to get the train to Sheffield to report in every week, he is dependent on his friend paying the £6.40 return fare. Otherwise, he never leaves the house.

In isolation, he internalises the physical

and mental torture he's been through. He self-harms to relieve the pain, and sometimes thinks that it would have been better to die if that would expose to the world the atrocities that are still going on in Sri Lanka. But his death would be another 'accident' that would be covered up.



However, Janahan is a fighter. Meeting other Tamils at a protest in London, he joined Tamil Solidarity and decided that his story had to be told.

Last week, he went straight from detention in Morton Hall to speak at the Bakers' union conference in Southport. Solidarity will get "Justice for Janahan".

When organised mass action defeated the Tories

Liverpool city council's historic victory over the Thatcher government

"Two unlovely black eyes" headlined the Daily Mail in July 1984 - castigating environment secretary Patrick Jenkin for his retreat over extra funding for Liverpool. It continued: "The Trotskyites and others of the hard left who run Liverpool have had the best of the fight with him in their threat to defy the law on that city's overspending." That headline was just one of the reactions to the success of Liverpool city council, led by Militant (forerunner of the Socialist Party), in securing £60 million of funding from the Thatcher government. Socialist Party member **Tony Mulhearn** was one of the leaders of that epic struggle and one of the 47 councillors, who were later surcharged and disqualified from office in revenge for their humiliation of the Tories. Writing in 2011 Tony describes how a mass movement in Liverpool defied Thatcher's Tories, an invaluable lesson in today's fight against Tory austerity.

The victory which secured the extra funding enabled the council to carry out its electoral programme. This included the building of 5,000 houses, opening six new sports centres, creating 2,000 jobs and refusing to carry out £10 million-worth of cuts.

These cuts had been the legacy of the Liberal/Tory alliance which had ruled Liverpool for the previous 20 years, with a short interregnum of Labour rule.

This victory was particularly significant as, like now, it occurred at a time of national and global capitalist upheaval.

Record

The passage of time has not diminished the achievements of the 47, nor undermined the importance of the struggle.

In spite of the distortions of establishment spokespersons, aided and abetted by the lies of right wing parliamentarians and trade union leaders, the record of the 47 remains stubbornly intact.

The Liverpool struggle had as its background Thatcher's antipathy to locally provided

public services, an outlook shared by the present millionaires' cabinet.

The Tories' programme, when elected in 1979, included using the device of the block grant system which penalised local authorities that exceeded government's prescribed spending limits; for every £1 breach of expenditure, £2 would be lost in rate support grant.

Initially, all Labour-controlled local authorities had agreed to support a campaign against this policy. Amongst the leaders of this campaign, it is incredible to recall, were David Blunkett and Ken Livingstone.

So, the government's policies meant that in order to balance the books a local authority would either have to increase the rates, sometimes massively, to compensate for Tory cuts, or savagely cut back on jobs and services. Again history repeats itself, now on a more savage level.

The Liverpool District Labour Party's policy was to reject both of these options and instead to carry out its electoral promises.

In the elections of 1983 a key component of the party's



photo D Sinclair

electoral programme was: "No rate or rent increases to compensate for Tory cuts."

The massive financial crisis which the 47 inherited was seen as a reason for the implementation of the electoral programme rather than, as is usually the case in British politics, a reason to retreat.

Mass support

But the victory was not achieved merely by slick negotiation between the councillors and Patrick Jenkin. He was conscious of the magnificent electoral support, as well as the physical support, shown by the great demonstrations that marched through the city in support of the council's policies.

The demonstration on budget day in March 1984, when a one-day strike took place, was supported by 30,000 local authority workers. 50,000 marched through the city in support of the council's proposed 'deficit budget' (see box).

The support for the council was based on concrete changes, for the better, to people's lives. In the three years from April 1983 to May 1985 it was estimated that 6,489 jobs had been generated in the private sector as a result of the house-building programme.

Also, the Liverpool 47 attracted the City's highest Labour vote, even though the population had declined from 700,000 in 1945 to

“ ”
The demonstration on budget day in March 1984, when a one-day strike took place, was supported by 30,000 local authority workers. 50,000 marched through the city in support of the council's proposed 'deficit budget'

460,000 in 1983. And while the turnout for local elections in previous years had ranged from 11% to 20%, the turnout between 1983 and 1987 was 45% to 55%.

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

In spite of its unparalleled record of achievement, Liverpool's socialist council was left exposed by the capitulation of virtually every other Labour-run authority that had initially declared opposition to the Thatcher government. In those circumstances the power of the state eventually prevailed.

Thatcher's district auditor,

supported by the House of Lords, removed the 47 from office, cheered on by the Labour leaders. [These legal powers against councillors have now been rescinded.]

Neil Kinnock, then Labour leader, and his lieutenant, 'witchfinder general' Peter Kilfoyle, finished the job on behalf of the capitalist state by expelling the majority of the 47 from the Labour Party.

Since then many gallons of ink and newsprint, and speeches by right-wing charlatans have attempted to denigrate the 47's period of office. But the record has been written in concrete and stands as a monument to the socialist achievements of the Liverpool city council of 1983-87.

What is a 'needs budget'?

A "deficit budget" or "needs budget" strategy, which Liverpool city council carried out is, the way local councils should fight today. The Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC) local election programme describes it as: "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."

TUSC is the left electoral alliance established in 2010 and includes the RMT transport union, the Socialist Party, and other left groups and individuals
www.tusc.org

YOUTH FIGHT AUSTERITY: PROTEST AGAINST THE BUDGET ON 8 JULY!

Claire Laker-Mansfield
 Youth Fight Austerity organiser

On 8 July, Osborne plans a bonfire of welfare, jobs and services. This will be a billionaires' budget - specially designed to transfer huge sums of wealth from working class people to the very richest in society.

Bolstered by their general election victory, the Tories believe they have a mandate to go on the rampage. But with only 24% of the electorate voting Conservative, the truth is that they are a weak, unpopular and potentially divided government. And we're organising to fight them.

Stark choice

For young people, the choice we face is stark: we struggle, or we endure an ever more bleak future of austerity - Osborne's planned poverty.

On Budget day, the speeches, heckling and general pantomime taking place in the House of Commons could make us despair. But outside parliament's doors, on the streets of London,



Protest against the budget at Downing St. photo Paul Mattsson

Manchester, Liverpool and more, the thousands demonstrating and fighting back will offer hope.

That's why Youth Fight Austerity has called for a national day of action to take place on the 8 July. We are organising protests

in towns and cities around the country. Let's make sure we have mass mobilisations of young and working class people to block Osborne's billionaires' budget. We won't let the Tories rip up our futures.

Take a look at the list of protests listed on the right and on our website and come along to your local one. But if you can't see one near you, why not help organise one?

Give us a call or drop us an email and we'll help you out: youthfightforjobs.com, youthfightforjobs@gmail.com, 0208 558 7947.

Youth Fight Austerity demands:

- End austerity - no to five more years of cuts to jobs, education and public services
- Stop welfare cuts - no compulsory workfare for 18-21 year olds, defend housing benefit
- Fight poverty pay - raise the minimum wage to £10 now, scrap zero-hour contracts
- Defend education - no to cuts and tuition fees
- Democratic rights - stop attacks on the right to strike, protest and other civil liberties. For votes at 16.

See
youthfightforjobs.com

Why I will be there!

Aaron Bailey

As a young person, it can sometimes feel like the attacks that the Tory government are making right now don't affect you. But believe me, they do.

The cuts and caps to the benefit system and workers' pay that will be in the budget might sound distant threats to young people.

But these, as well as cuts in the NHS, local services and education, are just a few examples of how our entire lives will be affected.

Living Costs

These cuts will drive up living costs like rent and housing while at the same time driving down wages, making it all the more difficult for young people like me to have a job and find a place to live.

There are already over 1 million people who rely on food banks just to eat, including many workers. All the while, our services are being slowly sold off under our noses to private corporations who couldn't care less if they provide a good service.

They want to make money from services that we need to survive, the NHS springs to mind as a perfect example.

While the government is making all these cuts, they are also attempting to pass the blame onto migrants and benefit claimants.

“ ”
Our entire lives will be affected. I am protesting on 8 July to show there is an alternative to austerity

This is being used as a smoke-screen as they try to dismantle the entire welfare system and put even more pressure on people like me who are barely making through the week as it is.

All the while they reward the bankers who got us into this mess in the first place. The time has come for us to stop letting them do this to working class people.

I am protesting on 8 July be-



Hundreds of young people will be protesting around the country

cause I want to show that there is an alternative to austerity. Let's build that socialist al-

ternative, starting with fighting the cuts and opposing the budget.

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Youth Fight Austerity budget day protests around the country

Birmingham
 6pm
 Victoria Square, B1 1BB
 Call 07530429441

Coventry
 5:30pm
 Lady Godiva Statue, Broadgate Square, CV1 1LL
 Call 07530429441

Glasgow
 5pm
 McDonalds, Corner of Union and Argyle Street, G2 8TL

Liverpool
 12 noon
 McDonalds, Church Street
 Call 07769611320

London
 5pm
 Downing Street
 Call Helen on 07540189052

Manchester
 12 noon
 Queen Victoria statue, Piccadilly Gardens, M1 1AF
 Call 07769611320

Nuneaton
 12:30pm
 The George Eliot Statue, Newdegate St, CV11 4ER
 Call 07530429441

Southampton
 5:30pm
 Bargate, SO14 1HF
 Call Nick on 07833681910

Hanley (Stoke)
 4pm
 Clock Tower, Potteries Shopping Centre, ST1 1PS
 Call Liat 07900880146

Wolverhampton
 12:30pm
 The Man on the Horse Statue, Queen Square, WV1 1TL
 Call 07530429441

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HOW CAN WE STOP AUSTERITY?

Hannah Sell
Socialist Party deputy general secretary

Just six weeks after the general election - on 20 June - people are flocking to London to show their opposition to austerity. The question in everyone's mind - whether marching for the first time or veterans of the battles against the Con-Dems - will be how can we stop austerity?

There is no question about the scale of suffering we will face if the Tories are allowed to implement their plans. George Osborne's latest gimmick is to reconstitute the 'Commissioners for the Reduction of the National Debt' a body that last met in 1860. It would be laughable if it wasn't so serious. The committee may be a gimmick but the government is intent on trying to turn the clock back as far as they can to the Victorian era where there was no NHS, no state pension, no benefit system, and those that couldn't earn enough to survive starved.

The last government took us more than a few steps down the road in this direction. Public services have been privatised or shut down on a massive scale. Under the last government we suffered around £80 billion worth of austerity, coincidentally the same amount that the bankers' have received in bonuses since 2008!

Shorn of the Liberal Democrats, now the Tories want to go even further. The government claims that this is necessary for the economy, but even capitalist institutions that fully supported the austerity in the last five years now say that Cameron and co. are going too far.

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has warned against the pace of Britain's planned austerity, the Organisation of Economic and Co-operative Development (OECD) has advised it could

cause a new recession. Even the OBR (the government's own think tank) has joined in the ringing of the alarm bells, warning that the result is likely to be a further huge increase in personal debt, leading to a new financial crisis.

Behind this unease about the Tories plans lies a fear not only of the economic consequences, but also the fear of a mass revolt against austerity that could defeat the government - which is actually very weak.

Splits

It had the support of only 24.4% of the electorate, the shallowest social base of any Tory government since 1918. It has a puny majority of 12 and already it is facing public splits in its ranks over Europe.

Also, a section of the Tory party has become dimly aware of the mass uprising their plans will provoke.

The Guardian has reported splits at the top of the government on whether to go ahead with cutting £12 billion from welfare spending. To do so would mean slashing tax credits, leaving millions of the 'hardworking families' the Tories ludicrously claim to represent in dire poverty.

Some ministers are opposing this, not for moral reasons but because of the revolt it would lead to, as the brutal reality of low pay in Britain - where the big employers make huge profits by paying peanuts - would be fully felt.

The Socialist Party's policy of a £10 an hour minimum wage and the right to a secure full time job for all would, for many, reduce the need to claim tax credits while lifting millions out of poverty.

The Tories, of course, are not

only considering attacking tax credits and keeping the minimum wage at a poverty rate, but also planning to try and further shackle the trade unions with anti-democratic legislation. They are attempting to severely curtail the right to strike and make it more difficult for workers to get organised and fight for decent pay.



A section of the Tory party has become dimly aware of the mass uprising their plans will provoke

If the government's plans reach the statute book it will mean that strikes will only be legal if ballots have a 50% turnout. For strikes in 'essential services' they would also have to win a yes vote from at least 40% of the total union members balloted - whether they vote or not. This onslaught on the trade unions shows that the government understands the unions' potential power to defeat austerity.

However, just as on austerity, this savage attack can act to galvanise the trade unions. Even the right-wing Economist has warned that: "This plan could backfire. The most successful unions, such

as the RMT, usually command high enough turnouts to the new thresholds not to make much difference. Meanwhile the new law might galvanise members who have not voted before in strike ballots... rather than weakening the unions, Mr Cameron may end up strengthening them."

We can win

The potential to defeat the government is clear. Even in the few weeks since the election workers have shown that when we fight we can win. The threatened national rail strike which forced an improved wage offer, the victory of the Kone strikers in the North East, the defeat of the plans to turn schools in Lewisham into academies are all examples of that. Once we get off our knees we have enormous power!

However, that does not mean that victory is guaranteed. Without doubt there will be major struggles against this government, but

whether they are successful depends on building a determined mass united movement against austerity with the workers' movement at its core.

We need to learn the lessons of the battle to defeat the last government and fight to prevent the same mistakes being made again. Despite attempts to rewrite history, in reality we did see mass opposition to austerity.

2011

In the spring of 2011, a demonstration called by the leadership of the trade unions - the TUC - was up to three quarters of a million strong. It was followed by two million workers taking part in a public sector strike against attacks on pension rights. At that point, opinion polls showed over 80% support for a 24 hour general strike against the public sector cuts, which the TUC congress had agreed to 'consider'.

Such a strike would have terrified the government. Instead, however, the right-wing leadership of the TUC abandoned the field of battle and accepted a few crumbs on pensions, derailing the movement. Effectively trade unionists were told to put their hopes in a Labour government to save the day!

Many of those facing low pay, or hunger or homelessness are not members of trade unions. The Socialist Party supports and will strive to develop mass community campaigns against austerity. The struggles in defence of social housing and against evictions in London, for example, show the potential for such campaigns.

It should not be forgotten that Thatcher, the 'iron lady', was eventually turned into iron filings not

by the organised trade union movement but by the eighteen million strong mass campaign of non-payment against the iniquitous poll tax, led by the Militant, now the Socialist Party.

The anti-poll tax campaign was organised via the anti-poll tax unions, democratic bodies organised in communities up and down the country, and brought together in the democratic all-Britain anti-poll tax federation. Any future mass community campaigns against austerity will need to improvise similar democratic structures.



The trade union movement remains central to the battle against austerity

Nonetheless, the trade union movement remains central to the battle against austerity. It is in by far the best position to unite together the many different strands of the struggle, which unlike the anti-poll tax battle, is not against one single attack but an avalanche of different ones.

The trade unions in Britain have over six million members; making them potentially the most powerful force in society, hence the Tories' desperate attempt to hobble them.

Working class

Ultimately it is workers that create the profits which the bosses are so greedy for, and it is workers that keep society functioning. If the chief executive of national rail went on strike, it is doubtful anyone would notice. But when workers threatened a national rail strike it was clear that they could bring the whole network to a halt. As a result management had to accede to their demand for a pay increase.

If the trade union movement was to launch a determined mass struggle against austerity it would enthuse and draw around it millions who are currently untouched by the trade unions. Workers join trade unions if they see them fighting in their interests.

One of the main dangers the

movement faces is that the trade union leaders attempt to absent themselves from the struggle against austerity, giving passive support to other - less powerful organisations - rather than doing it themselves. The 20 June demonstration has been called by the People's Assembly (PA) not by the trade union movement.

However, the PA has the support of twelve national trade union organisations - including the two biggest trade unions in Britain - Unite and Unison - and the TUC itself. Of course, the demonstration is a good start to the fight, but not if that is used as an excuse by trade union leaders to tick the box 'job done' rather than to use it as a springboard for further action.

Subcontracting

The trade union movement should give a lead directly, not just subcontract the job. If the trade union leadership were to use the 20 June demonstration as a launch pad for a massive TUC demonstration against austerity and the anti-trade union laws on the day they were first discussed in parliament this would have the potential to put the government on the back foot.

This should not be just a one off protest but linked to a strategy to fight until we win. Key would be mobilising for a 24 hour general strike, with the clear warning that if the government does not retreat the trade union movement would strike again.

Undoubtedly some trade union leaders will claim that a 24 hour general strike is not possible because it would mean defying the anti-trade union laws. In fact, by co-ordinating ballots on exist-

ing disputes, it would be possible to go a long way towards a 24 hour general strike even without breaking the existing anti-trade union laws. However, the legislation being threatened by the Tories shows beyond doubt that - if the workers' movement is not prepared to defy unjust laws - the capitalist class will keep hedging it in with anti-trade union legislation until it is powerless to do anything within the law.

General strike

At the Unite conference this year the executive are correctly putting a proposal to remove the clause from their constitution which pledges to remain within the law. This is a welcome measure, but needs to be followed up by action. If it was seriously built for, a 24 hour general strike - calling on all workers to participate including those who had not been balloted - would have the potential to

not only prevent the introduction of new anti-union laws but to sweep aside those that already exist.

The last five years demonstrate beyond doubt that we cannot rely on the majority of the trade union leaders to organise this.

Trade unionists need to campaign for it from below. That is why the National Shop Stewards Network conference on 4 July will be so vital - not just for shop stewards - but for all those who want to see a serious trade union fight against austerity.

Defeating austerity also requires the creation

Continued on page 10



The Tories want to go even further with austerity in this term



Strike action must be central to the anti-austerity movement

Socialism Today

The Socialist Party's magazine

The June issue includes:

- **Britain** - Tory win will see harsh austerity but new waves of struggle by Peter Taaffe
- **Scotland** - SNP rise, Labour fall in political seismic shift by Philip Stott



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HOW CAN WE STOP AUSTERITY?

Continued from page 9

of a political alternative that is 100% against austerity. Labour lost the election not because it was too left wing, but because it swallowed hook, line and sinker the austerity myth.

The central promise in Labour's manifesto was to cut the deficit every year. Of course - with the exception of Jeremy Corbyn - the Labour leadership candidates that have made it to the ballot paper have drawn the opposite conclusion - and want to push the Labour Party even further to the right.

Channel 4 news summed up the reality when it asked the candidates, 'why don't you just join the Tory party?' Yet at this stage millions of pounds of trade unionists' money are still being handed over to the Labour Party in affiliation fees.

Jeremy Corbyn

Left MP Jeremy Corbyn making the ballot paper will be welcomed by trade unionists, but it does not reflect a significant shift left by the parliamentary Labour Party. He was 'lent' nominations by a number of MPs on the right of the party, including Jon Cruddas and David Lammy.

They obviously hope that letting him on the ballot paper will prove the party's 'diversity', but that the result of the vote will prove the right are firmly in the driving seat.

However, given the very low requirements for individuals to vote in the contest (paying a one off £3 or trade unionists registering for free as supporters) this is a high-risk strategy, as Corbyn could get a higher vote than they expect.

Nonetheless, this would not represent a shift to the left within the Labour Party, but on the contrary show the potential to build a socialist alternative which, given the right's complete grip on the structures of the Labour Party, will only be possible outside of it.

At local level Labour councils have implemented the Tories cuts. So did the Greens in Brighton, resulting in their losing control of the council in May. Councils who continue down the cuts road in this parliament will preside over the complete annihilation of the services that their constituents rely on.

The Socialist Party calls for all councillors who are opposed to cuts to stand firm and refuse to implement them. It is not



We need to build a political alternative 100% opposed to austerity photo Paul Mattsson



true that council have 'no option' but to pass on Tory cuts. If just a handful of councils used the powers they have to refuse to implement cuts the Tory government could be made to back down.

The Socialist Party calls for all councillors who are opposed to cuts to refuse to implement them

The Socialist Party is part of the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC), which brings together the transport workers' union, RMT, plus many trade unionists, anti-cuts and environmental campaigners and socialists. In the last elections we stood 135 parliamentary and over 600 council candidates, winning 118,000 votes.

We were acting as pioneers for the building of a mass, democratic anti-austerity electoral force beyond the general election. TUSC asked the PA for a speaker at the 20 June demonstration.

Unfortunately, at the time of writing, it has not had a response. Yet many of those demonstrating will have voted TUSC rather than for the pro-cuts parties who will be speaking on the platform.

The Socialist Party argues in the trade unions that are still affiliated to the Labour Party that

that can afford to pay - this is the net result of the logic of capitalism. By getting organised and fighting back, working class people can win improvements in our living conditions under capitalism, as has been shown by the recent victories on pay even against the background of endless austerity.

The only way to permanently end austerity is to fight for a different kind of society

However, as long as we live in a capitalist society any victories we win will be temporary, as the bosses will always try to claw them back when they get the chance. That is what is happening on a huge scale now.

Socialism

The NHS and the other gains our forebears won are being systematically taken away, which we can only prevent with determined mass action. That is why the only way to permanently end austerity is to fight for a different kind of society - for democratic socialism.

That would require taking the major companies that dominate our economy - about 120 in Britain - into democratic public ownership.

Only on that basis would it be possible to liberate society from the drive to maximise the profits of a few, and begin to build a democratic, planned economy that would meet the needs of all and protect our environment.

Visit the TUSC website www.tusc.org.uk

TUSC AGAINST CUTS

The Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC) is an electoral alliance involving the RMT transport union, the Socialist Party, other socialist groups and leading members of other trade unions. In May TUSC stood over 130 candidates in the general election and over 600 in the local elections.

TUSC groups are active all over the country - visit the website and get in touch to get involved, including by thinking about standing as a candidate yourself



Many trade unionists will welcome Jeremy Corbyn making it onto the ballot paper for the Labour Party leadership race



The Socialist Inbox

Do you have something to say?

Send your news, views and criticism in not more than 150 words to Socialist Postbox, PO Box 24697, London E11 1YD, or phone 020 8988 8771, email: editors@socialistparty.org.uk

Vindictive sanctions

In the Socialist issue 858, a Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA) claimant described her experience of the Department for Work and Pensions' punitive sanctions regime. BBC Radio 4 investigated these practices in January. A whistleblower, a former Job Centre adviser, recalled to the presenter that a manager demanded he 'agitate the customer' in order to stress the claimant and encourage them to sign off JSA. The manager would move claimants' appointment dates sooner without telling them of the change and sanctioning or closing the claim when they missed the appointment. The programme interviewed PCS general secretary Mark Serwotka who explained how disciplinary measures are used against staff whose 'strike rate' on sanctions was too low. It shows the cruel vindictive nature of Iain Duncan Smith's sanctions regime.



Go TUSC!

On walking into a classroom. Pupil: "Sir, I saw you rioting in town last week" Teacher: "I wasn't rioting, I was protesting" Another pupil: "Oh yeah, you do that thing with Hannah's dad, what's it?" Pupil: "TUSC" Chorus of Pupils: "Go TUSC!" A Southampton teacher

Pensioners back workers...

At a recent Merseyside Pensioners Association (MPA) meeting, discussing the press' animosity to democratically elected trade union leaders, we passed this resolution: "We condemn the attacks on Len McCluskey by the media, we recognise his contribution as a champion of pensioners and the working class. We believe he has every right to question the continued funding of the Labour Party that no longer represents the interests of his members." We fully support working people's right to make legitimate protest in the event of their livelihood and working conditions being threatened and we support union leaders who stand up for their members.

Groan

Heard the news that the general secretary of my trade union GMB, Paul Kenny, has been knighted in the Queen's Honours List. It always makes me wonder what a union leader has done (or hasn't been doing) to be 'honoured' in this way by the establishment. In fact it sets off bloody big alarm bells!

You know for sure that real class fighters like Arthur Scargill and Bob Crow would not have been 'rewarded' by the establishment, and they sure as hell would not have accepted them if they had been offered.

As my fellow shop steward posted on social media in response to the story: "Groan". A GMB shop steward, London

We reserve the right to shorten letters. Don't forget to give your name, address and phone number. Confidentiality will be respected if requested.

REMEMBERING 1985: HOW SCHOOL STUDENTS BEAT THE TORIES



A demo against the YTS photo Militant

Nancy Taaffe

A writer, preparing a book on the history of the school student movement, interviewed me recently. I was 15 when I became involved in the 1985 school students' strike movement. It was at the tail-end of the miners' strike, Liverpool's city council had beaten Thatcher in 1984 and it was battling onto round two.

Lois Austin, Hannah Sell and me recounted how a movement developed (led by supporters of Militant, the Socialist's predecessor), harnessed the anger and enthusiasm of 250,000 young people.

After the miners went down, Thatcher's government brought in a fresh assault on young people. The

Tories tried to introduce a Youth Training Scheme (YTS) which conscripted us into working for our dole money. Young people rebelled in their millions and defeated Thatcher's plan.

Young people rebelled in their millions and defeated Thatcher's plan

As we talked about those days, we agreed that the amazing thing was the speed and intensity of how this movement developed - and the fact that it succeeded! After so many de-

feats in the last 30 years even I had forgotten that the movement that was part of my initiation into politics actually won.

With this vicious Tory government's renewed assault on young people today, there are many reasons to believe that young people won't accept what Cameron and Co have in store for them. They won't just take it lying down.

A movement like this can develop out of a clear blue sky (like the one in Bristol last month) and take us all by surprise. To make such a movement victorious it has to be organised and directed to achieve its aims, it's all too serious now to be a day out to dance.

Join the Socialist Party and help us make all these movements successful.

The real health and safety 'madness'

Michael Barker

Health and safety gone mad! When I finished school (in 1994), starry-eyed and eager to join the great British workforce, the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) - the body responsible for looking after workers' health - employed some 5,545 staff.

To be honest I always thought they needed more employees to get their job done. But eleven years on, this number was 3,903 and falling.

Further reductions

"What's going on?" I asked myself. This decline was out of the ball park: health and safety insanity. By 2013 things were getting even madder, now our entire country employed only 2,769 HSE workers.

So only one in 20 major injuries are investigated by the HSE, and only one in 170 results in prosecution.

Now if that isn't health and safety 'gone mad', what is? Yet the jury is already in: health and safety regulations benefit all society, not just the workers whose lives are in danger.

"Available evidence suggests inspection and enforcement activities can stimulate innovation, have

1 in 170 major injuries result in prosecution. Only one in 20 are even investigated

no negative and a probable positive effect on job creation, support economic activity, and reduce costs to business though sickness absence and improved performance," con-

cludes one recent report. But the madness seemingly never ends. The Con-Dem Coalition coldly cut state funding for HSE by over 40% over its last term in power.

As an organisation designed to keep our employers in check, the HSE, which might have had some regulatory teeth in the past, is now as gummy as a cartoon OAP.

Trade unions

Trade unions have trained up thousands of health and safety reps - that's why unionised workplaces are safer workplaces as well as being better paid.

But with the new government, our safety appears to be even more in the hands of money-grubbing, union-hating bosses.

So get involved in the fightback and join me and many other active trade unionists at the conference of the National Shop Stewards Network on 4 July (see back page).

SCHOOL COOKS WIN LIVING WAGE

Hugo Pierre
Camden Unison schools convenor

School kitchen workers in north London have won the Living Wage. Employer Caterlink will pay Camden staff the £9.15 rate from September this year following an 18-month campaign.

The victory comes after unanimous votes for industrial action forced management to negotiate - without a single strike day. At the start of the dispute, most workers were not even part of the union.



The victory comes after unanimous votes for industrial action - without a single strike day

Camden is a Labour council. In 2011 it agreed to become a London Living Wage employer. But it excluded schools and pre-existing contracts. The Caterlink contract was issued in 2010, just before the council's decision. School kitchen workers were on just £6.60 an hour.

Digging through the council's accounts, we showed that even with four years' deep cuts, the council had at least £4 million to spare. This was ten times the amount needed to fund the increase.

Stewards and convenors in public sector union Unison launched a



"School meals work is really hard, with a lot of heavy lifting and working in hot conditions."

campaign, and took it to all the borough's school kitchens. Their first priority was to increase membership, and recruit new stewards and organisers.

Confidence

Annie-Rose Barnes, one of the first stewards, said: "When I started campaigning among staff, there was a bit of a lack of confidence that the union could do anything.

"But as the union started to explain our rights - and showed that we hadn't been paid for up to five

days a year, and got back pay that was docked for people not working those five days - it lifted everyone's confidence."

The first cracks appeared in November last year. The council committed to the London Living Wage from April 2016 - in 15 months! But this spurred stewards on. Organisers planned mass meetings to agree strikes if the increase was not moved forward.

In March, our noisy 'pots and pans' lobby of the council hit the local press. A journalist uncovered

the mansion of the company owner in leafy Berkshire. The splash in the Camden New Journal was a boost to the campaign.

When stewards launched the strike ballot, there was great enthusiasm. Meetings were held in individual kitchens - in each there was a 100% vote for action. Following the result, the council announced on 12 June it would have Caterlink pay the Living Wage.

A mass meeting of Unison members agreed the campaign was a major victory. Most hadn't even been in the union 12 months before. Now close to 50% are union members, and they have five stewards to take on management.



Most hadn't even been in the union 12 months before. Now close to 50% are members and they have five stewards

Annie-Rose said: "School meals work is really hard, with a lot of heavy lifting and working in hot conditions. You're on your feet all day long and exhausted at the end of the day. We really care about the food we produce for our kids.

"We more than deserve the London Living Wage. But being in the union and campaigning for our rights is probably even more important."

Unison local government conference FIGHTING MOOD FROM DELEGATES

Neil Cafferky

Unison local government conference on 14 and 15 June showed growing anger at leadership sell-outs and Tory attacks.

Local authority workers organised by the public sector union met against the background of a returned Conservative government, and promises of increased attacks on workers. The Tory victory led delegates to ask the question: what is the best way to fight back?

A number of motions addressed the issue of pay, and the recent unsatisfactory pay deal delivered by the leadership. Several speakers attacked the deal, getting

big ovations from delegates. Disatisfaction with the leadership was demonstrated by the tepid reception for an address by general secretary Dave Prentis.

The union now faces a very challenging period. As well as the issues of low pay and privatisation, there are also increasing attacks on trade union rights in local government.

These include withdrawing the right to pay union membership fees directly from wages - commonly called 'check-off' or 'deduction of contributions at source' (Docas).

Facility time - paid time to carry out trade union duties during work hours - is also under attack. Social-

ist Party member Glen Kelly was unable to attend conference because of attacks on facility time by his employer.

Speaking from the platform, Nottingham Unison's Sara Huntingford said: "Glen Kelly has been effectively barred from this conference by his employers, and this conference is lessened by his absence." This received big applause from delegates.

Lead needed

Despite the challenges faced by the union, and the difficult experience of activists, it was still a fighting mood. Many speakers stressed the need for a fighting lead from the union to face up to the employers.

Over 800 copies of the Socialist were sold at conference, and over 60 attended a Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition fringe meeting.



Several speakers attacked the recent pay deal, getting big ovations from delegates

Irony of victimised gardener

Matt Dobson

A gardener trade union rep has been victimised by employers - the same Glasgow venue where his union's annual conference is being held.

Robert O'Donnell, a member of public sector union Unison, was dismissed after an alleged unwitnessed incident with a supervisor. Robert has twelve years' unblemished service with the Scottish Exhibition and Conference Centre.

Labour and Scottish National Party councillors have refused to defend him.

Messages of support to: enquiries@glasgowcityunison.co.uk
Messages of protest to: peter.duthie@secc.co.uk, gordon.matheon@councillors.glasgow.gov.uk, annemarie.o'donnell@glasgow.gov.uk and graeme.hendry@councillors.glasgow.gov.uk

Bakery strikes against 'race to the bottom'

Alistair Tice

Six hundred bakery workers walked out in Derbyshire on 15 June after bosses refused any pay rise. Management has threatened attacks on terms and conditions, and tried to intimidate strikers.

"Gunstones Bakery - 150 years in the making, three years to destroy!" That's how one steward described the takeover of the Dronfield site, near Sheffield, by 2 Sisters Food Group. Up to 70 members of bakers' union BFAWU joined 5.30am picket lines for the 48-hour stoppage.

Their basic pay is £6.59 an hour. They've not had a raise for three years.

Last autumn, the company lost a £33 million order with Marks and Spencer and cut 427 jobs. Agency staff was supposed to be kept to a minimum, and it was understood there would be pay negotiations this year.

'No money'

Now the company says there's no money. Well, 2 Sisters owner Ranjit Singh Boparan has an estimated personal fortune of £190 million. And the site director recently took receipt of a new £80,000 BMW!

Since the job cuts, management has flooded the factory with agency staff. One steward reckoned 70% of night staff and 45% of day workers are agency.

BFAWU district secretary John Higgins slammed bosses. "They say they want to 'equalise contracts' - which means taking the old contracts down to agency conditions, cutting premium rates even further. It's the race to the bottom."

On the picket line, worker after worker said they'd worked at



photo Alistair Tice

Gunstones for years, one for over 20 years, but never known things so bad. They all said they'd had enough, and didn't see why they should pay for Boparan losing orders and racking up debt.

Management was out in force to get agency staff and delivery lorries in. But pickets grew bolder as more wagons stopped and drivers talked. Most were frightened for their jobs. One driver's boss drove

behind him and threatened to sack him there and then if he didn't cross the picket line!

Bosses have set up an operations tent in the car park and trained CCTV cameras on the pickets. But the strikers will not be intimidated. They will strike again next month if the company doesn't back down.

Messages of support to john.higgins@bfawu.org

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Fire service cuts a double-edged sword

Dave Murray



The picket line at Basildon photo Dave Murray

Firefighters and 999 controllers in Essex struck overnight on 13 and 14 June. The action was the latest in a long-running dispute over staffing cuts and shift changes.

The number of full-time firefighters in Essex has fallen from 958 in 1989 to about 600 today. Bosses plan a further reduction of 179. Still more cuts will come down the line as the brigade pursues "Project 2020", meant to cut hundreds more front-line jobs and "save" £15 million.

Employers are spinning the numbers. True, the number of fire appliances is the same as ever - but what use is that if there are not the personnel to take them out?

The nightmare scenario is a ma-

major incident such as a high-rise fire. What if there aren't enough firefighters to deal with it within established bounds of safe practice? On this money-versus-lives calculation, the vast majority of the public is understandably with the firefighters.

Imposed

This dispute has been going on for well over a year. The brigade has already reduced shift changes on 999 control which have forced staff into part-time work, or even off the job.

While these issues alone are contentious enough, behind them lies the bosses' ambition to undermine the union. Or as it has been put by senior figures on the employers' side, "wrestle the sword off the FBU."

Fire bosses need to be careful they don't cut themselves.

[News in brief]

TransPennine strike

Transport union RMT plans to extend strikes against an unfair firing. All conductors on the northern England to Scotland TransPennine Express railway will be balloted. The dispute centres on a conductor sacked for breaching procedures - in order to save a child's life (full story: last issue and www.socialistparty.org.uk).

Alistair Tice

Gallery rep success

A London gallery union rep dismissed on the eve of strikes against privatisation has won full pay until her tribunal. A judge decided the National Gallery's Candy Udwin, of public sector union PCS, would be likely to win an employment tribunal. A new ten-day strike begins on 20 June.

Victimised journalist

A victimised National Union of Journalists (NUJ) rep in Yorkshire is back in post. Phil Turner had been singled out for compulsory redundancy. Bosses backed down after union members at the Rotherham Advertiser threatened to strike.

Sarah Marshall

Tata 'steels' pensions

Steel unions Community, Ucat, Unite and GMB are in dispute with Tata Steel over pension cuts. As we go to press, both sides are in talks with arbitrators Acas ahead of a planned strike on 22 June. Action short of strike - overtime ban and work to rule - started in 16 June.

Hotel council protest

300 council workers and service users marched against privatisation in Bromley, south London, on 13 June. The Tory council plans to buy a Holiday Inn on the Isle of Wight - at the same time as cutting in-house staff from 4,000 to 300.

Beth Sutcliffe

Newsquest strike

Journalists for Newsquest in south London have had to delay the start of a strike. NUJ members plan to walk out against job cuts, poor staffing and low pay.



Israel: Eurovision winner at Tel-Aviv Pride
Last years Eurovision Song Contest winner, Conchita Wurst from Austria joined 150,000 others at the recent Tel-Aviv Pride march and can be seen holding a Socialist Struggle Movement (CWI Israel/Palestine) leaflet. Socialist Struggle Movement supported in the demonstration campaigning for equal rights and social justice for the LGBT community.



Ireland: Paul Murphy joins anti-cuts lobby
Paul Murphy TD (MP), Socialist Party (CWI Ireland) joined protesters outside the Dail (Irish Parliament) lobbying the government over brutal cuts to lone parents allowance. The same department attacking lone parents with these cuts is offering to hand out a bribe of 100 euros to sign up to Irish Water - a transfer from the vulnerable to the compliant!



USA: Door knocking for Kshama Sawant
As part of the campaign to get Socialist Alternative (CWI co-thinkers in the US) Seattle city councillor Kshama Sawant re-elected, trade unionists took part in a door knocking campaign with the message "we need candidates fighting for workers' rights!"

TURKEY: HISTORIC BREAKTHROUGH FOR LEFT

AKP government suffers big defeat

Sosyalist Alternatif (CWI Turkey) reporters and Michael Gehmacher (CWI Austria)

Turkey's political landscape was shaken on 7 June. On election night, the feeling of left and Kurdish activists mirrored that of the Gezi Park movement in the summer of 2013. The ruling right-wing, conservative Islamist AKP suffered a bigger blow than polls predicted, losing 2.6 million votes and 69 MPs, compared to the last elections.

The left, pro-Kurdish Democratic Party of the People (HDP) has won 13% of the votes, meeting the 10% needed to enter Parliament. The threshold is an anti-democratic measure, implemented in the wake of the 1980 military coup, precisely to prevent Kurdish parties achieving Parliamentary representation.

In Kurdish regions, spontaneous rallies and celebrations took place to welcome the HDP's electoral breakthrough as for the first time in Turkish history, a pro-Kurdish party has made it into parliament. Many female HDP activists were elected too, which is symbolic given the traditional dominance of Turkish politics by old, right wing men.

Many of the 80 new HDP members of Parliament belong to ethnic, social or religious minorities. Their presence in the Turkish parliament is a blow to the nationalist reactionary elite, as was the presence of the first openly gay parliamentary candidate in the history of the Turkish Republic.

Polarised election

The election was also polarised, with gains for the far-right MHP, whose vote rose by 3% to 16%. The election was shaken by outbursts of violence, especially against the HDP, with many physical attacks on HDP offices and activists across the country.

The MHP whipped up nationalism, blaming the AKP as "traitors" because of the peace process between the government and the Kurdish movement. But the MHP also played a social populist card.

They argued for a rise in the minimum wage, a reduction of fuel taxes and an end to the sackings in the state sector. This demonstrates that social issues

have become more important, because of the problems in the Turkish economy and the fear of job losses.

The social and economic situation was the backdrop to this election. Many Turkish people believed that their living standards improved during the years of the AKP government. This is one of the main reasons why a section of the poor has continued to vote for this party.

However, this is changing, with a deteriorating economic situation over the last two years, rising unemployment and inflation and growing difficulties for millions of working class families. This, coupled with the general sharpening of attacks on democratic rights and a reinforcement



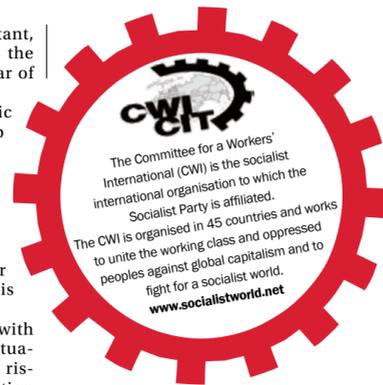
Spontaneous rallies and celebrations took place to welcome the HDP's breakthrough in an historic election result

of the regime's attack on democracy has alienated a whole layer of long-standing AKP voters and supporters.

For the left and those fighting for a better society, the HDP's remarkable electoral success opens a window of political opportunities with the HDP's popularity higher than ever.

The HDP is a coalition of left organisations and individuals and recently the party leadership has managed to engage many activists from different social and political movements, such as the LGBT movement and environmental campaigners.

The Kurdish BDP (political arm of the banned PKK) remains the dominating force inside the party. But the latter has started to attract an increasing number of Turkish voters who have drawn the conclusion that the Erdogan-led AKP and the main opposition party, the CHP, do not provide a favourable alternative. The vast majority of HDP voters are workers and young people, many radicalised by the important struggles of workers and youth in the last few years to demand better

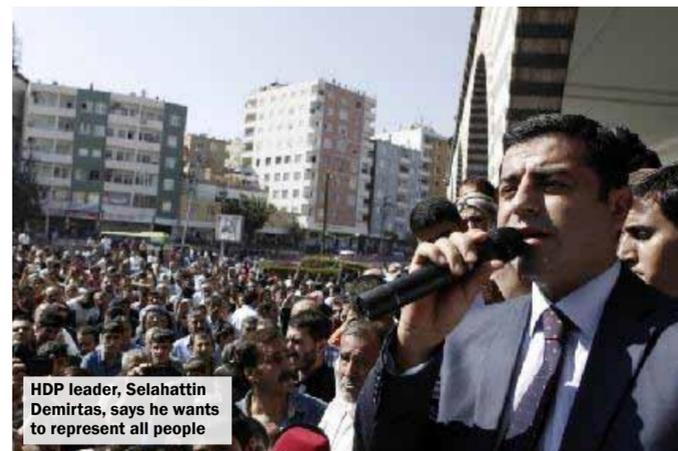


working conditions and democratic rights. Many activists consider themselves socialist.

The HDP stands for a better healthcare system, stronger state-supported education, a rise in the minimum wage and the shortening of the working week to 35 hours. Every other party demanded much less, but the fact that the HDP brought these social issues into the public debate forced the other parties to respond.

'Radical Democracy'

Overall, HDP leaders put more emphasis on vague ideas such as 'radical democracy', 'great humanity' as well as campaigning for the rights of national minorities and LGBT people. They also tried to exploit the religious feeling of some of the population. Figen Yüksekdag, co-leader of the HDP, in one of her final campaign speeches spoke about the corruption of AKP's leaders, and argued that corrup-



HDP leader, Selahattin Demirtas, says he wants to represent all people



The People's Democratic Party (HDP) made massive gains in the election

tion is an "insult to Islam".

The social and political composition of the HDP is far from homogeneous meaning there is no clear direction in the leadership. Can the HDP become a new workers' party, or will it turn into a liberal left party, like for example the Greens in most of Europe?

Worldwide, the crisis of capitalism is getting worse, and Turkey is no exception with workers and youth facing attacks.

To defend democratic rights and fight for social improvements, a militant party rooted in the working class is needed, a party that has strong links with trade unions and social movements and a party that uses parliament as a platform to defend

workers' in struggle.

If the MPs of the HDP use the first parliamentary session to launch a bold campaign to secure their demands, then they could gain a lot of support from workers and youth around the country. It would also expose the traditional "Kemalist" CHP as well as the far right MHP.

Workers party

A new left workers' party standing for workers' rights and for social change would have widespread support in Turkey. Tens of thousands of workers and youth are looking to the HDP to fulfil this role.

Yet many Turkish workers are still hostile towards the HDP. Some of them see the HDP as a manoeuvre by the PKK, a party dominated by the old PKK cadres and where the important decisions involve the imprisoned PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan. This is why the HDP needs democratic and transparent structures. It is especially important that workers and youth see how decisions are made and there is no 'hidden PKK-agenda'.

Linking Kurdish and Turkish workers is a key task for the future of the workers' movement in Turkey. The HDP, taking into account its election success, can make important steps in that direction. By taking up social issues, every strike and workers' struggle and using their position in the media and

in Parliament, the HDP could become a vehicle for the whole working class.

Positively, the HDP has ruled out any coalition with the AKP from the outset but should also exclude any coalition with other capitalist parties. Any new government will make cuts and carry out right-wing policies. So rather than calling all parties to be 'responsible' and to contribute to political stability, the HDP leadership should prepare for the coming resistance. It could, for example, use its successful campaign and newly acquired position to call for mass meetings, inviting workers, young people and social campaigners to discuss how to take the struggle forward.

The experience of new left formations around the world shows that after initial electoral success, there is a danger that such parties swing to the right. To prevent this from happening, a cohesive political programme, and democratic structures at all levels combined with a mass active membership needs to be developed.

Defending a socialist orientation for the HDP, based on support for mass working class action, and for the nationalisation of the banks and big industries, will be a key task of activists in the coming period.

Developing grassroots connections with social and trade union movements will also be crucial to ensure this formation does not end up in a mire of political compromises, coalitions with pro-capitalist forces, and cuts.



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, 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.

- 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 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!

Join the fightback! Join the Socialists!

www.socialistparty.org.uk 02089888777

@Socialist_party Text 07761 818206 /CWiSocialistParty

A STRATEGY TO BEAT THE BOSSSES



Mark Robertson
Shop steward, Tyneside Safety Glass

If you are a shop steward, trade unionist, or anti-cuts campaigner, and if you want to fight attacks on our working conditions - then the National Shop Stewards Network (NSSN) conference is the place to go.

When I'm there, I particularly want to thank the conference for all the support given to Tyneside Safety Glass workers during last year's successful industrial action.

Our strike showed that militancy works. Going back to 2009, trade union membership in our factory had fallen to around 30% of the workforce. We hadn't had a pay increase for two years, and were facing a third year with no raise.

Ironically it was the company which pushed me into the position of shop steward. They wouldn't let me attend a meeting they were having with the union unless I was an elected rep. They forced me back into activism!

This Tory government is hell bent on making it easier for bosses to attack our wages and conditions. To face down this attack we need to pull together. Whether it's finance, advice, moral support or coordinated action - it's solidarity that makes us strong.

Members at my workplace have supported disputes this year at Barbour clothing and Kone engineering.

Invaluable

The NSSN is an invaluable resource for activists. At conference, we can have an exchange of ideas and build links across the union movement.

Personally, I want to go to hear people like NSSN chair Rob Williams and Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition chair Dave Nellist. Then there's Tony Mulhearn, a former Liverpool councillor who won millions back from Thatcher.

I'm also looking forward to hearing from other workers who have embarked on struggle. Plus leaders from some of our most militant union will be on the platform (see left). The conference's speakers have a wealth of ideas.

I know this year's conference will be inspirational. The NSSN brings people together who have demonstrated their commitment to the working class.

Make sure you get along!

COME TO THE NATIONAL SHOP STEWARDS NETWORK CONFERENCE: APPEAL FROM A TRADE UNION ACTIVIST



Pickets at 2014's successful Tyneside Safety Glass strike
photo Elaine Brunskill

National Shop Stewards Network

9th annual conference
STOP THE TORY UNION BUSTERS!

Saturday 4 July, 11am to 4.30pm
Conway Hall, Holborn, London WC1R 4RL
www.shopstewards.net

Confirmed speakers include

- PCS general secretary **Mark Serwotka**
- BFAWU general secretary **Ronnie Draper**
- FBU general secretary **Matt Wrack**
- RMT president **Peter Pinkney**
- Youth Fight for Jobs organiser **Helen Pattison**
- Anti-blacklisting campaigner **Dave Smith**
- Tamil Solidarity trade union coordinator **Isai Priya**