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the Socialist

Formerly **Militant**

Six million earn less than living wage

£10 AN

HOUR

NOW!



Vladimir Bortun

The Trades Union Congress reports that nearly six million workers in the UK earn less than the voluntary 'living wage' (currently £7.85 an hour and £9.15 an hour in London).

And the proportion of workers earning less than the living wage has increased in recent years.

The bosses' policy of low wages has been central in securing ever growing profits for the '1%' super-rich, while the number of working families having to claim benefits and use foodbanks has soared.

These latest figures plainly contradict the 'Tories' claim that they have raised the living standards of working people. In fact, the tax credit cuts that millionaire Prime Minister Cameron insists on

putting through will send a further 200,000 children into poverty by 2016.

The increase in the national minimum wage next year - from £6.70 an hour to £7.20 an hour (only for those over 25) - will not repair the damage that these cuts will bring about. But even this miserly increase has led bosses to threaten job cuts in order to maintain company profits.

Bonuses

Retiring Costa Coffee boss Andrew Harrison, who pocketed £4.6 million in pay and bonuses last year, said he'll increase prices to pay the raise to 34,000 of its staff who currently earn less than £7.20.

The minimum wage, which is expected to increase to £9 an hour by 2020, will not keep up with the increase in the rate of the real living wage. It means that in five years' time the proportion of people earning less than the living wage will be even higher.

That is why we need to campaign through our trade unions for a £10 an hour minimum wage now as a step towards a real living wage. Only an increase on this scale would really halt the decline in living standards of working people.



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Long hours ruining health without lifting productivity

John Vasey
Communication Workers Union
workplace rep (personal capacity)



photo Hiroo Yamagata/Creative Commons

Studies now show that working long hours doesn't just damage your health - it doesn't even get more done. Stanford University has found that productivity declines rapidly after 40 hours a week - collapsing almost entirely after 50 hours.

But longer hours are on the rise. We are burning ourselves out with our long-hours culture. There's so much work to do, and it's inefficient to grind more out of the existing workforce. So how can industry justify keeping people who want proper jobs on the dole?

Speed-ups and longer hours persecute workers for doing the job properly. Say you refuse to stack boxes in front of the fire doors to get done faster. Or you 'waste' time using a trolley for heavy loads instead of carrying them. The manager can make your life a living hell.

Sick workers force themselves in instead of taking sensible time to recover. Then they collapse, and sick absence goes through the roof. The pressure can create mental health problems.

But don't expect extra staff. Big business currently sees 'investment' - jobs, to me and you - as too great a risk after the 2008 banking disaster. Many people seeking full-time work have to settle for part-time. Even working overtime does not win them full-time contracts.

It's cheaper for most businesses not to guarantee your hours. And so there is the obscenity of plenty of work, but a shortage of jobs to match.

The Socialist Party fights for a maximum 35-hour week with no loss of income. For fighting trade unions to prevent persecution for doing the job properly - and campaign for government investment to create jobs. And for guaranteed hours for every worker who wants them.



Peter Capaldi on set as the Doctor
photo Shaun Smith/Creative Commons

■ The latest episode of Doctor Who, Zygon Invasion, reflects some of today's world events. In response to a trigger-happy government official demanding air strikes against an enemy nation, the title character says: "You start bombing them, you'll radicalise the lot." Even time lords can see that imperialist military intervention only makes things worse...

■ ... And at a Cardiff University freshers fair, one Socialist Party member took an unconventional approach - telling a student wearing a Doctor Who t-shirt: "You're a Doctor Who fan, you must be a socialist!" She replied "you're right, I am" - and joined the Socialist Students meeting later that day.
Ian Pattison

Top tweets @Socialist_party

Kshama Sawant, the socialist city council member in Seattle, USA, is up for re-election. She has a proud record of fighting for workers. Kshama is a member of Socialist Alternative, the Socialist Party's United States co-thinkers.

As well as spearheading the successful campaign for a \$15 an hour minimum wage in Seattle, Kshama has attracted more union endorsements than any other candidate. She is a real thorn in the side of the city's capitalist Democrat establishment.

The bosses have poured money into the fight against Kshama. Results are due shortly after we go to press. The Socialist wishes her campaign success in defending working class political representation in Seattle. Read more on page 14.

Jagadish G Chandra @gcjagadish

■ History is being made again in Seattle, USA, the power of the big money bags stands diametrically opposed to the forces of 99% @VoteSawant

Kshama Sawant @VoteSawant

■ We think that to rep ordinary people, you can't take \$\$\$ from corporations. Agree? #Vote4Kshama on yr way to work.



■ Every major anti-union corporation in Seattle has donated to our opponent. Our union volunteers drive our campaign.

■ State of Emergency on Homelessness is welcome. But actions speak louder than words. Will City Council fully fund budget to end homelessness?

■ We need to form more tenants unions all over Seattle! First step is expanding outreach for education & organization

THE 'TAMPON TAX' IS A TAX ON BEING A WOMAN - SCRAP THE TAMPON TAX!

Tessa Warrington

The menstrual cycle is not usually a topic of choice in the mainstream media. More it is regarded as an embarrassing secret for women to hide from the rest of society. However, the topic was forced when Labour MP Paula Sherriff challenged the "tampon tax" in parliament.

Introduced in the 1970s, the tax declares tampons a 'luxury item' subject to VAT under European Union (EU) rules. The rate was cut from 17.5% to the EU minimum of 5% in 2000. But campaigns across the world demand the removal of all taxation on sanitary products.

Sherriff's proposed amendment to Osborne's finance bill was merely to negotiate with the EU for a reduction in the rate. But even this was defeated by 305 to 287 votes - by a large majority of male MPs.

An argument over whether tampons are a 'luxury item' seems ridiculous. They are a necessity, no two



Not a luxury photo Wikimedia Commons/Creative Commons

ways about it.

When things like Jaffa Cakes and crocodile meat are taxed less for being 'essential items', you realise logic has gone out the window. The tampon tax is nothing less than a tax on being a woman.

In reality, all VAT is regressive taxation. It is a flat tax, disguised by being folded into a product's overall price, where a millionaire pays the same rate as a homeless person.

Toxic

The toxic cocktail of austerity, increasing childcare costs and decreasing wages puts sanitary products beyond the reach of some women. It shouldn't be a choice between eating, heating or wearing a tampon. It doesn't have to be.

Public service union PCS estimates over £120 billion is avoided and evaded in tax by the super-rich every year. Collecting that money would be a first step towards building a society which can meet the needs of everyone.

Tory bid to turn co-op tenants against one another in latest attack on housing

Niall Mulholland
Newham Longlife Housing
Cooperative management
committee (personal capacity)

As things stand, Thatcher's notorious 'right to buy' policy will not extend to co-ops. The bill does not repeal existing exemptions.

But most housing campaigners expect the Tories will return to impose right to buy. They could use the pretext of 'demand' from co-op tenants hit by pay to stay. It is, however, estimated that most of these tenants in London, and some other areas, could not afford even subsidised mortgages.

Threat

Faced with their gravest ever threat, housing co-ops are discussing how to avoid the bill's effects.

Tactics include deregistering from the government's housing regulator in order to exempt themselves from the bill. Even if successful, this would probably only delay Tory attacks.

To safeguard cooperative and mutual housing, tenants need to link up with other social housing campaigns and housing workers' unions. A mass movement could stop the bill in its tracks, and fight for fully funded, quality social housing and mass council house building.



photo tOrange.biz/Creative Commons

TRANSGENDER WOMAN LOCKED UP IN MALE PRISON BY SENSELESS COURTS

Brian Caton
Former prison officer and
general secretary of prison
officers' union POA

Tara Hudson, a transgender woman, was locked up in an all-male prison after her conviction for assault.

It seems the courts may now have moved her to a female prison, after national media coverage and a 160,000-name petition. But it should never have happened in the first place.

When asked to sign the petition for this woman, who has lived as such all her adult life, I had absolutely no difficulty supporting it.

Risk

Transgender women in male prisons are always at risk.

Prison managers know this. They isolate such prisoners. This prevents access to rehabilitation, ties up staff and can be severely damaging to the inmate.

Prisoners still have human and civil rights, which are not removed by the act of imprisonment.

You wouldn't put any other woman in a male prison. It is only the bureaucracy and bigotry of the judicial system which insists the decision

rests on the 'official' gender on your passport.

It also seems that, like most inmates, Tara may have some mental health problems. More than 70% of prisoners in England and Wales have two or more mental health disorders.

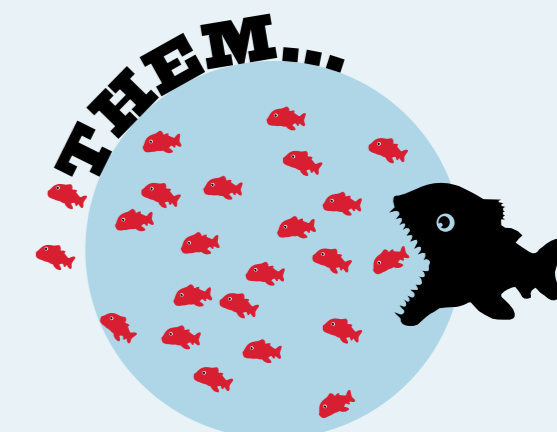
Transgender people are already more at risk of depression than others. Subjecting them to harassment and isolation only makes this worse.

It took me back in time. As a newly appointed prison officer, I faced all these difficulties. The duty of care falls not on the decision makers, but those carrying out their foolish instructions.

What should the justice system do to solve this problem? It's simple - apply common sense. When we locate transgender women in female prisons it works.

The Socialist Party calls for:

- A united campaign by LGBT people, minority communities and trade unions to end prejudice in criminal justice
- An end to transphobic sentencing
- All transgender people to have access to fully funded, readily available, gender-appropriate services and support



Drug money

Drug companies have hiked the cost of some NHS medicines by as much as 8,000%.

The Tories and Blairites often say the cure for the health service underfunding is 'the market'. If only there was more competition, everything would be cheaper.

But drugs whose patents have expired - opening them to production by multiple firms - can actually increase in price.

'Merbentyl syrup', a treatment for stomach cramps, is one such medicine. Under patent, it sold for £1.77 a bottle. After three firms were allowed to produce generic versions, the same amount cost £143.84!

One firm behind the 8,027% hike, French pharmaceutical giant Sanofi, made £3 billion in profits last year. The NHS faces a possible funding gap of around £2 billion this year alone.

Sanofi's chief executive scrapes by on a mere £3 million per annum.

We're pretty sure we could find a better use for all that cash. The Socialist says: nationalise the pharmaceutical industry to help save our NHS.

£2bn

Funding gap NHS could face this year according to 2014 estimates

£3bn

Profits made last year by racketeering French drug company Sanofi

The bosses are the dossers

1995
93% of jobless get unemployment benefit

2005
61% of jobless get unemployment benefit

2015
45% of jobless get unemployment benefit

Less than half of unemployed people actually get unemployment benefit today. Only 45% of jobless workers receive the payment - down from 93% 20 years ago.

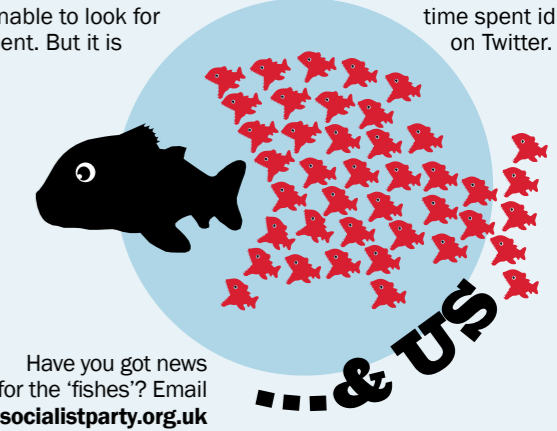
Some of this difference is made up by different benefits for people unable to look for employment. But it is

also one of many factors holding down wages for those lucky enough to be working.

Unemployment fuels desperate competition for jobs, which lets bosses pay lower wages. Trade union struggle for higher pay, and public investment in employment and benefits, can help turn this round.

But nothing frightens poverty-pay bosses so much as public ownership under democratic workers' control.

The TUC estimates Britain's workers do the longest hours in Europe. One in five works an extra day a week in overtime (more in main story on page 2). Meanwhile, social media analyst Talkwalker says Britain's bosses top Europe's charts in another area - time spent idling on Twitter.



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

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

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Socialist Party
What we think

Kill the Bill UNIONS MUST CAPITALISE ON MASS ANGER AT AUSTERITY AND ANTI-UNION LAWS

As this edition of the Socialist goes to press, it appears that the Tory Trade Union Bill will be having its third and final reading on 10 November. Cameron and co are rushing this anti-union legislation through Parliament ahead of the next wave of vicious cuts that would see £12 billion cut from welfare and a further £20 billion slashed from public services. All the dismissals of union power and influence by the Tory media - unfortunately echoed by right-wing defeatist union leaders - are recognition of the huge potential power of the unions. But only if this power is mobilised now can this bill be stopped from becoming law.

The defeat of Osborne's tax credit cuts in the House of Lords wasn't because of well-meaning unelected peers. And, while welcome, it certainly isn't an argument for the undemocratic second chamber. It is still a weapon in the hands of the capitalist establishment to block radical policies of a future left government.

But the Lords were prepared to turn over Cameron, even to the point of risking constitutional tensions because of the pressure that was building among workers, especially the low-paid. The emotional BBC Question Time attack on the government by a Tory voter from May's general election was a sharp indicator of the fury that exists on this attack and seemingly never-ending austerity.

It is this same mood that is developing in the fantastic movement of junior doctors who are now balloting for industrial action. On BBC Breakfast, a visibly shaken Health Minister Jeremy Hunt explained away his fumbled reply to the interviewer by complaining that it was too early in the morning! It cannot be ruled out that the Tories could be forced into a retreat on this too.

Common enemy

With these shocks and dangers and the divisive EU referendum coming more into view on a daily basis, from the point of view of the Tories, in some respects the anti-union bill offers the chance to unite against a common enemy. But the unions must take encouragement from the Tory difficulties to mobilise the whole union movement right now.

The election of Jeremy Corbyn has undoubtedly given confidence to those fighting austerity. But too many of the union leaders don't see the potential of this surge that can be capitalised on in the fight against the Trade Union Bill and the cuts. They still subscribe to the view that 'unions are unpopular or irrelevant'. Yet all the evidence is to the contrary.

The public see the junior doctors as defenders of the NHS and contrast their struggle against long hours and pay cuts with the Tory lies over tax credits. Incredibly however, the Union leaders missed the opportunity to mobilise their members to join the massive 20,000-strong junior doctors' demonstration in London last month, which was organised semi-spontaneously by a group of young doctors.

Despite all the right-wing media propaganda, this year's bus and tube strikes crippled the London transport network on four separate days. They had 60-70% approval ratings because, facing the relentless Tory austerity onslaught, the working class and big sections of the middle class want someone to fight back.

The anti-austerity demonstration on 20 June saw 200,000 people march through London to hear a platform organised by the People's Assembly campaign. Yet the unions were the backbone of the organisation,



Main photo: lobbying the TUC in September photo Paul Mattsson
Inset: Rob Williams speaking on the 2 November lobby of Parliament

2 November lobby of Parliament

Thousands of trade unionists came to London on 2 November to lobby their MPs as part of the TUC rally against the Trade Union Bill.

Many couldn't get into the event at Westminster Central Hall but the FBU saved the day by bringing their fire engine round to the front of the venue for the rally speakers to address the crowd.

NSSN national chair Rob Williams also spoke from the FBU platform, calling on everyone to come back to London on 10 November when the Bill gets its 3rd and final House of Commons reading before

it goes to the Lords. Rob said: "If everyone brings 10, 50, 100 people with them on 10 November, we could fill Parliament Square and really put the Tories under pressure."

The Trade Union Co-ordinating Group (TUCG) of left unions organised an evening protest later outside Parliament and announced that they have called a demonstration at 6pm on 10 November at Parliament Square.

The National Shop Stewards Network appeals to all its supporters and affiliates to join it. But if you

can't get to London, please join any protests in your local area or organise one through the NSSN, a Trades Council or your union branch.

Make 10 November #KillTheBill day!

- Demonstrate 6pm 10 November Parliament Square or near you
- See shopstewards.net

financing and mobilisation of it. The TUC demonstration outside the Tory Party conference on 4 October was 80-100,000 strong.

Up the game

The unions have to urgently up their game over the next week, including coming in behind the TUCG demonstration outside Parliament on 10 November (see box above) by explicitly linking the cuts with the bill. The junior doctors are balloting while the law could be changed under their feet! They would be open to joining the struggle against the anti-union plans as would the students who

marched through London six days before.

If the bill is passed into law, there must be an urgent discussion within the trade union movement on how to resist it. The Socialist Party would call for an emergency TUC Congress - opened up and widened to thousands of shop stewards and union reps.

Socialist Party members would raise the question of a 24-hour general strike to bring together the whole movement along with the millions suffering from the cuts. Public rallies, meetings and protests should then be called all over the country to actively organise a mass movement to oppose the cuts and defy the anti-union laws.



The socialist case for nationalisation of the steel industry

Alistair Tice

Whoops and cheers greeted Jeremy Corbyn's visit to Scunthorpe on 29 October, to show solidarity with the town's steelworkers who are facing 900 job losses at the Tata-owned steel plant.

On his visit, but in little publicised remarks, Jeremy suggested that the Scunthorpe plant and/or the steel industry should be nationalised.

Speaking to the Scunthorpe Telegraph, he said: "We're talking about state intervention and supporting the industry through public ownership or support for existing ownership."

And the BBC quoted Jeremy as saying that the intervention could include a "joint enterprise with the company concerned or taking it into ownership".

This is a welcome change from previous remarks by Labour spokespeople, which have been inconsistent and more ambivalent on the question of nationalisation.

Central demand

The call for nationalisation should now form a central part of Labour's policy and demands, for the steel industry and in other cases where job losses are threatened.

The trade union leaders involved must also press for nationalisation, which is the only solution for the workers facing the job losses and for their communities.

Socialist Party members campaigning in Scunthorpe to save the steel jobs have received an overwhelmingly supportive response to our petition calling for nationalisation of the steel industry.

Common reactions include "They bailed out the bankers so why not steelworkers?" and "It should never

have been privatised (by Thatcher in 1988) in the first place" and "Not just steel; the railways, energy, the utilities, they should all be nationalised."

Jeremy Corbyn should shout the socialist case for nationalisation from the rooftops.

Costs

Here's a national emergency with tens of thousands of jobs at stake: Redcar 2,200, Scunthorpe 900, Scotland 270, West Midlands 300, and South Wales. And for every steel job, it's estimated that another five or six jobs are lost in the supply chain and in the local economy. That's at least 30,000 jobs!

It would actually be cheaper for the government to pay limited compensation (not to the fat-cat multinational owners, but on the basis of proven need) and subsidise the industry for a period, than the costs of paying for 30,000 redundancy packages and dole payments and the loss of workers' taxes, not to mention the depression of local economies.

Not just that, if steel was nationalised then the government could use its procurement powers to secure contracts to supply the steel at guaranteed prices for infrastructure and construction projects.

Rail track, housing, hospitals and schools all need steel. A massive new windfarm is being built in the nearby Humber estuary that needs steel for the masts and blades. So not only would steel jobs be saved, but new jobs created as part of a mass programme of public works.

Steelworkers from across the country lobbied MPs in Westminster on 28 October (photo above) to demand action to rescue their industry and communities. The National Shop Stewards Network brought solidarity and the steelworkers agreed with our demand that if the government can bail out the banks it can bail out our steel industry and save thousands of jobs. Leaflets calling for action to defeat the anti-union laws were snapped up and some bought copies of the Socialist. One steelworker from Llanelli told me: "These are our factories and our communities. It was British Steel when I started working and the government should take it back."
Scott Jones (words and photo)

And if nationalisation of the steel industry breaks EU rules, then what better action to rescue their industry and communities. The local steel task force set up by the Tory government is to be headed by North Lincolnshire Tory council leader Liz Redfern, just made a Baroness by Cameron, but better known locally for previously not paying her own business rates for ten years!

As Jeremy Corbyn correctly said: "If we allow our steel industry to go we will then be forever at the mercy of world markets."

Tata, an Indian owned multinational company, likes to pride itself on its Corporate Social Responsibility and philanthropic trusts, but under the laws of the free markets, ie global capitalism, it becomes as ruthless as the next multinational in cutting costs and moving production to maintain and boost profits.

Indeed, Tata's European steel operations turned a £110 million profit last year. And where have all its profits gone that it has taken out of Scunthorpe over the last ten years? The Tory government's response to the steel crisis has been feeble. Together with Tata, it is putting up £9 million to help redundant steelworkers to retrain and apply

for jobs. "Re-train for what? To work in McDonalds on a zero-hour contract for £6.70 an hour?"

The local steel task force set up by the Tory government is to be headed by North Lincolnshire Tory council leader Liz Redfern, just made a Baroness by Cameron, but better known locally for previously not paying her own business rates for ten years!

900 steelworkers will not be reassured to learn from her that "the council has ten vacancies for HGV drivers to drive bin lorries and other such vehicles" especially as North Lincolnshire council is cutting employees' terms and conditions.

That's why, having already lobbied parliament, the local steel unions Community, Unite, GMB and SIMA (the managers association), have called for a mass demonstration in Scunthorpe on 10 November.

Demonstrate

- Tuesday 10 November, Scunthorpe 12pm Church Square, marching to meeting of North Lincs council
- Saturday 7 November, Motherwell 10.30am Dalzell plant, march at 11am to Ravenscraig



Here's a national emergency with tens of thousands of jobs at stake



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Labour Party elections: Where did the unions' money go?

Clive Heemscker Socialist Party executive committee

Over £440,000 was donated by trade unions to candidates in this summer's internal Labour Party elections, according to the official figures published by the Electoral Commission.

The largest sum, £163,000 in cash and donations in kind (premises, staff etc), was received by Jeremy Corbyn's leadership campaign. £113,000 of this came from the 1.4 million-strong Unite union but significantly the second biggest Corbyn donor was the RMT transport workers' union, which gave £25,000.

Independent

The RMT is part of the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC), an electoral alliance co-founded by the Socialist Party and the late Bob Crow. Its status as a non-affiliated union did not prevent it from making an important independent contribution to Corbyn's campaign.

The other rail unions Aslef and



The Collins Review limited what unions get for their money photo Paul Mattsson

TSSA, which are affiliated to Labour, also backed Corbyn and were able to afford £13,000 between them.

On the other hand, their annual

£100,000-plus affiliation fees - which are paid into the central party coffers - helped pay for the staff at Labour HQ who ruled out

from the leadership ballot over 50,000 individual affiliated trade unionists and registered supporters. Fortunately, on this occasion, the

pro-big business right-wing Labour Party apparatus was not able to decide the election outcome.

TSSA also made a donation to Sadiq Khan's campaign to be the Labour candidate in next May's London Mayoral election, no doubt seeking his support in the disputes with Transport for London over ticket office closures and the night tube.

Donation

But the union's donation was dwarfed by money Khan received from property developers and other companies and wealthy individuals. And TSSA's status as an affiliated union is not likely to give it any say on Khan's manifesto - the last mayoral election manifesto in 2012 was presented to a London Labour Party meeting with no plenary debates and no votes.

Lastly, the figures show that Unison, the 1.3 million member public sector union, despite formally backing Jeremy Corbyn, made just one donation in the summer contests - to the anti-Corbyn Scottish Labour leadership candidate Kezia Dugdale.

Unison general secretary election - vote Roger Bannister

A FLEXIBLE POLITICAL FUND THAT WORKS FOR MEMBERS



photo Senan

Roger Bannister Knowsley Unison branch secretary and general secretary candidate

Recently, in my campaign to be elected Unison general secretary, I have been accused of 'misleading members' by campaigning for a more flexible Unison political fund. The argument is that this would inevitably result in a break with Labour and weaken Jeremy Corbyn's position as Labour leader.

But in fact the current arrangements governing Unison's political funds help the right wing opponents

policies, could not have been imagined a year ago.

His campaign became a conduit for anti-austerity views that had little opportunity for expression in the general election. North of the border it was the SNP that was able to channel this mood, opportunistically it is true, to Labour's great cost.

But the Labour Party as a whole has not moved to back Jeremy Corbyn's political position. He faces hostility from the majority of MPs, Labour councillors, and party officials, nationally and often locally too.

Local government

Right-wing Labour in local government is viciously pursuing austerity policies, as thousands of Unison members know only too well. Even during the course of this campaign, events in South Lanarkshire, Hull and elsewhere have provided further graphic detail of this (see issue 876).

In Labour-controlled Warrington the only councillor that supported Corbyn was Kevin Bennett, forced out of the party for opposing cuts and now a supporter of the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC).

Against these realities the demand for flexibility with the political fund

remains important - the flexibility to back candidates who support Unison policies and our members. In Warrington, for example, the alternative would mean backing a right-wing Labour candidate, committed to making cuts, against Kevin Bennett.

Unison members are ultimately responsible for Unison's rules, not the Labour Party's, and our priority should be our members' interests, and certainly not the interests of Labour's right wing.

I am more than happy to be the only candidate in this election too.

photo Paul Mattsson



challenging the political fund status quo, and backing candidates that actually back Unison.

If you are a Unison member and agree that Unison needs a fighting strategy to beat the cuts and win victories for members, we urge you to vote for Roger Bannister.

Ballot papers will be hitting doormats from 9 November and voting closes 4 December.

Follow the campaign at:
 ■ @Roger4UNISON
 ■ facebook.com/roger4gensec
 ■ roger4gensec.wordpress.com

DLR STRIKERS "TO FIGHT ALL THE WAY"



Picket line at Beckton depot photo Scott Jones

The Docklands Light Railway in London was shut down for 48-hours on 3 and 4 November as over 300 workers took strike action. At the heart of the dispute is the abuse of the use of agency staff by DLR operator Keolis Amey. RMT members' terms and conditions have been undermined by casualisation, there have been breaches of agreements and a creeping culture of bullying

and intimidation of staff being allowed to develop.

Socialist Party members attended picket lines at both DLR depots, brought solidarity and spoke to those on strike. "It's all about cost cutting and this is just the start," said pickets at the Poplar depot.

"Any more than eight days sick you get a warning. A heart attack or a toothache are treated the same",

explained one worker. This was reiterated by those on the picket line at the largest DLR depot in Beckton who said: "There are members who have been assaulted on the job but have faced disciplinary action for taking time off." One member is on a final written warning for taking time off after an assault.

Third dispute

Strikers at both depots made the point that under previous contractors Serco, there was only one dispute in five years. Keolis Amey have only been operating the DLR for ten months, yet this is the third dispute in that time and was voted for by massive majorities for both strike action and action short of a strike. Over 92% voted to strike with an even larger majority for action short of a strike.

Not a single train left either depot on the morning of 3 November and the strike was rock solid. RMT general secretary Mick Cash

said: "Pickets have been out in force and it's now time for Keolis Amey to recognise the sheer strength of feeling on the shop floor and to get round the table for meaningful talks that address the raft of serious issues at the heart of this dispute. The disruption caused by the shutdown of DLR this morning is entirely down to the intransigence of management."

The workers themselves concluded that "this is going to be a protracted dispute, but we will fight it all the way."

Scott Jones and Naomi Byron



London Underground rep targeted for trade union activity

Glen Hart, RMT activist and a station supervisor on the London Underground Northern Line, is facing disciplinary action allegedly for not being deferential enough to a manager.

The RMT and Glen's co-workers, however, believe the real reason he is facing a charge of gross misconduct is because he has been at the centre of defending jobs and supporting London Underground strikes.

Glen was the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition candidate for Croydon North at the general election and has fought tirelessly in defence of jobs and terms and conditions in the workplace.



photo RMT

He has previously faced disciplinary action, and was stood down for almost a year, over strike

action taken to defend jobs and ticket offices. The strike action was complemented by an overtime ban.

Glen had notified his managers that there was no break cover at his station.

The cover failed to arrive and Glen shut the station rather than work overtime during his lunch break, simply acting within the democratic mandate the RMT had secured when it balloted for strikes and 'action short of strikes' (work to rule).

Disciplinary

The disciplinary action eventually collapsed, despite it being held in his absence, but the most serious

charges were dropped including the charge of 'putting passengers in danger'.

However, Glen has now been stood down a second time for allegedly being rude to a manager. There were no witnesses to the incident and Glen himself has not been interviewed.

He is being disciplined on the word of a single manager.

Following a resolution submitted earlier this year by Morden and Oval RMT Branch regarding possible disciplinary action against Glen, the General Grades Committee took the decision to prepare for a ballot for strike action if Glen Hart receives a disciplinary warning for carrying out trade union activities.

SOLIDARITY ACTION FOR VICTIMISED UNISON REP



Lunchtime walkout by staff and students photo Socialist Party

Unison activist Sandy Nicoll was suspended on 28 October by SOAS, University of London (the School of Oriental and African Studies) management which led to an unofficial walkout by staff and students.

The charge is of 'gross misconduct' relating to a student protest that briefly occupied the director's office. Sandy has clearly been targeted as an activist who supports the fight for justice for staff and students at SOAS and beyond.

There were protests involving hundreds of staff and students at lunchtime on both 28 and 30 October condemning his victimisation

and calling for his reinstatement.

Unison general secretary candidate Roger Bannister (see opposite page) has said: "This provocative move by management comes at a time when students are protesting against their bullying behaviour. I would like to send my full support and solidarity to Sandy and those workers and students at SOAS who have walked out in his defence. As a member of the NEC and Industrial Action Committee I stand ready to offer any assistance needed."

Send messages of support to:
 ■ an2@soas.ac.uk
 ■ unison@soas.ac.uk



[News in brief]

POA strike action

The Prison Officers Association (POA) have sent a notice to Merseycare Trust informing them that a 24-hour strike will take place from 7am on 13 November to 7am on 14 November after members in the trust voted overwhelmingly for strike action. This follows the dismissals of workers Kevin Gregson and Peter Hilton following the restraint of a violent patient. POA general secretary Steve Gillan has said: "This issue will not go away, management have a duty of care towards their employees and in the case of Mr Gregson and Mr Hilton it was sadly lacking."

Barnet walkout

Hundreds of council workers in Barnet, North London, took strike action for the seventh time on 3 November against another wave of privatisation by the Tory council. Social workers, school escorts, refuse workers, librarians and school catering staff were among those on strike who voted by almost 90% to walkout. The council plans to make £90 million of cuts with proposals to also outsource jobs including in adult services, school meals and children's services, which will be decided on later this month.

University dispute

UCU members at the University of Manchester are balloting for strike action after the union accused managers of ignoring agreed procedures and pushing staff into redundancy. The ballot will open on 2 November and closes on 20 November. The row was originally sparked in April when the university said all staff who had been on its redeployment register for a period of three months or more would face redundancy. UCU has accused university managers of riding roughshod over agreed procedures, because the redeployment policy was in the process of being revised. Instead of waiting for that process to be completed, university managers simply went ahead and issued 37 at risk of redundancy notices.

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the Socialist: A FIGHTING ANTIDOTE TO THE MAINSTREAM MEDIA'S LIES

Sarah Wrack
Editor of the Socialist

In the last decade the world has been transformed. A global economic crisis shot down the idea that boom and bust had been eradicated and that capitalism could ever provide stability for the majority. Austerity implemented by governments of the rich against the poor across Europe has exposed the lie of 'we're all in it together'.

Nobody can any longer claim that people are apathetic and accepting of the fate assigned to them by this chaos. We've seen mass movements from Greece to Scotland, and even junior doctors balloting for strike action here in Britain. In the 'belly of the beast' of capitalism - the US - a socialist was elected to the city council of a major city and led a successful battle for an increase in the minimum wage to \$15 an hour.

All this and yet, if an alien had visited in 2005, read a newspaper and left again, would they see a difference on a return visit now?

In 1917, Lenin, one of the leaders of the Russian Revolution of the same year, wrote that "Freedom of the press" in bourgeois society means freedom for the rich systematically, unremittingly, daily, in millions of copies, to deceive, corrupt and fool the exploited and oppressed mass of people, the poor."

Contrast

The mainstream media does its best to unchangingly echo the same lies as it always has, lined with anti-working class (and often sexist and racist) propaganda. Any struggle by workers and young people is either ignored or disparaged. The blame for poverty, unemployment and division is laid on the victims of this cruel system rather than the super-rich 1% and the politicians who represent them.

Compare this to the Socialist. After the fantastic 61.5% 'No' vote in the Greek austerity referendum earlier

this year (later sold out by the Syriza government) we announced "Greek workers show the way." The front page of the issue that came out a few days after the victory of Jeremy Corbyn in the Labour leadership election boldly declared "A New Era for the 99%".

Our articles have expressed the growing discontent and rebellion among working class people.

5

super-rich individuals control the majority of media outlets in the UK



The Socialist explains life as it really is for working class people not how the ruling class and the media would have us believe it is - a life of struggle against a system incapable of providing a safe, secure future for the vast majority in society
John McNally, PCS civil servants' union vice president

The pages of the Socialist have recognised the huge potential shown by the Corbyn victory. We've reported on all developments, from impressive election rallies to the panicked manoeuvrings of the right wing.

We've also issued warnings and a call to political arms. We have pulled together the lessons of past experience to explain that the Corbynistas need to get organised to fight the right wing and secure the legacy of the Corbyn campaign and the radical demands it raised.

Voice of the 1%

The pro-capitalist press reflects none of this - at best its reportage of Corbyn has been surface-deep, and at worst it's been pernicious sabotage.

The media is one expression of the conflict that exists in society between the super-rich 1% and the working class and middle class, the 99%. The majority of media outlets in the UK are controlled by just five individuals. They have their press. So we need ours.

The media world is changing. People gather information in ways that most people couldn't have imagined thirty years ago, let alone when Lenin wrote about the importance of workers having their own press.

And socialists need to adapt and keep up with technological develop-



Young Socialist sellers marching against austerity photo Senan

ments and communicate with working class people in every possible way.

But while mainstream newspapers are in crisis - imposing staffing cuts and the resulting 'churnalism' - the Socialist is going forward.

We're launching our sales and subscriptions campaign from Socialism 2015 on 7 and 8 November, and good plans are already in place in lots of areas (see article on right). In recent years we have gone to full colour and increased our number of pages. More and more people are writing for the Socialist.

'Journalists'

That's because we are not a paper like any other. Trotsky, another leader of the Russian Revolution, criticised one socialist paper by saying: "You do not hear at all how the workers live, fight, clash with the police or drink whiskey... The task is not to make a paper through the joint forces of a skilled editorial board but to encourage the workers to speak for themselves."

Our journalists are not professionals - they are the Socialist Party's members and supporters: workers, trade unionists, young people, community campaigners. Our 'health correspondents' are doctors and nurses.

Our writers on wages and benefits are working class people struggling to survive on the pittance afforded to them.

They give us a taste of the struggles of daily life in austerity Britain, of what makes them angry, of films and TV programmes they've enjoyed.

When they've written the article, they go out and sell the paper to others. When they've sold it at a protest or wherever else, they write back and tell the editors and readers how it went. From start to finish the process of writing, producing and distributing the Socialist is a political task carried out by working class fighters.

The Socialist isn't just for updating people on news - though much of what's reported in our pages can't be found anywhere else! In our pages Socialist Party members and supporters share their experiences and ideas.

During the campaigns against the bedroom tax

Follow us on Twitter @Socialistpaper

In 2013, the Socialist carried news on what the government was doing and analysis of what it would mean for ordinary people.

But we also dedicated a lot of space to organisational articles. We gave legal advice on what councils would do to collect debts and how to challenge it. One issue included a week's diary of a bedroom tax campaigner to show how a local campaign could be organised on a day-to-day basis.

Recently we have included details of how Socialist Party members in different areas are involved in the campaigns that have sprung up following the Corbyn victory. When something is a success in one area, the report in the Socialist can be inspiration to people elsewhere to try something similar.

Every day, up and



The Socialist manages to both have an international and local focus-illustrating we are not alone, we are not small in number, we are the 99%, we can fight and we can win!
Claire Job, health worker, Wales

The Socialist campaign BUY IT, SELL IT - READ IT, WRITE IT

Ian Pattison
The Socialist campaign organiser

Become a 'journalist' for the Socialist
Send your story : editors@socialistparty.org.uk

For just £1, a fraction of the cost of a pint or cup of coffee, you can get a paper unlike any other. And many people are willing to donate a lot more to support a workers' paper. 12 year old Harry Job from Swansea sold a copy of the Socialist for a £10 donation at the 100,000 strong anti-austerity demonstration outside the Tory Party conference in Manchester last month.

We need sellers of the Socialist like Harry. How can you help? Do you sell the socialist at the moment? If not, will you start? Why not carry a few copies of the paper with you, ready if the conversation arises? Do you sell to friends and family? Burning anger at the Tories is never far from people's thoughts.

Len, a London NHS worker, regularly sells the paper to colleagues in his hospital. "I send a text to workmates with the most pertinent points of the current paper as soon as it is out. I approach colleagues with the paper in the tea break, start a discussion, and recommend a particular article or news feature."

"Over time the paper has enabled me to win support for important fighting industrial strategies. It also helped gather a small group of health workers to stand as Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition candidates in the 2014 local elections." If you are already a seller of the Socialist, can you add in an extra sale once a week?

Sellers of the Socialist in the Southern region have set themselves the target of increasing the number of papers they sell to 100. They want to start with 10 campaign activities across the region in a week. They've already kicked off to a great start - they sold 150 copies of the Socialist at the Tolpuddle Martyr's festival in the summer.

Swansea Socialist Students members sold 50 copies of the Socialist to students at the university freshers fair. The topics



The paper has been amazing in supporting the protests against the junior doctors' contract. Especially good have been those articles linking the protest to the wider struggle against austerity
Zoe Brunswick, medical student, Manchester

hotly debated on university campuses are covered in the Socialist. One student that becomes a seller of the Socialist can help reach the tens of thousands of young people enthused by Jeremy Corbyn's call during his election campaign to bring back free education.

Last week's edition of the Socialist included a full page review of new film, Suffragette. Sellers of the Socialist could offer the paper to cinema goers to read about the real history of working class women's fight for the vote. We carry articles like this every week.

The Socialist doesn't take a penny of funding from big business or give up a single column inch to corporate advertising. We rely solely on the donations of working class people like you. To help us better plan our finances and maintain a 16 page colour weekly newspaper, why not take out a subscription?

Every week, the Socialist will be delivered straight to your door. Due to Royal Mail privatisation our postage costs have increased. So we are increasing subscription costs by 50p to £4.50 a month for the paper, £6.50 combined with Socialism Today magazine.

If you take out a subscription you can request an extra copy is sent to you at no extra cost, so you have one to read and another to sell! You can download a subscription form online at www.socialistparty.org.uk/subscribe.

If you're already a subscriber, what about asking an interested friend to take one out, or helping your local Socialist Party branch chase up lapsed subscriptions? Can your union branch subscribe? There's loads of potential and everyone can play a part in helping make sure the campaign is a big success.

Socialism Today

The Socialist Party's magazine

The July/August issue includes:

■ Sanders challenge - Sanders has shaken up the US political order
by Tom Crean

■ Get Corbyn - Anti-Corbyn plot poses the need for a new party
by Clive Heemskerck



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Hands Up! Don't Shoot!

US: #BLACKLIVESMATTER MOVEMENT CHALLENGES RACISM OF THE SYSTEM

Hugo Pierre
Tower Hamlets Socialist Party

The US civil rights leaders of the 1950s, 60s and 70s couldn't have foreseen a 21st century black US President.

But the struggles of Martin Luther King, Malcolm X and the Black Panthers for an end to poverty in black communities, democratic rights and equal treatment in the workplace and by the state would have hoped that a black President would have decisively acted in their favour.

Further, they would have expected the US to act as a beacon of what could be achieved worldwide to end discrimination for improving the lives of blacks.

Barack Obama

Instead the presidency of Barack Obama has reminded blacks, in particular young blacks, that they still face the same repression from the state and discrimination. They face impoverishment that in many ways is on a level far worse than that of the civil rights generation.

The August 2014 murder of Michael Brown at the hands of the police in Ferguson, Oklahoma, brought to the fore the deep seated

Hugo Pierre will be speaking on #Black Lives Matter at Socialism 2015 on 7&8 November in London

institutionalised racism of state police forces throughout the US.

Black youth in particular have responded with a mass protest movement right across the US. The #blacklivesmatter movement (BLM) has overtaken the traditional 'civil rights' campaigners.

New generation

This older generation, such as Rev Al Sharpton and others, are identified as too close to corporate business and media interests. They are often tied to many in the 'black establishment' particularly the black Democratic Party city mayors who have failed to act in the interests of black youth.

Instead, young people have adopted the tactics of youth in the civil rights movement with direct action: blockades of bridges, freeways and even railway lines.

They continued mass street protests when the unjust decisions not to indict the police in the cases of Michael Brown and Eric Garner (another black man killed by police) were announced. BLM has also taken inspiration from the Occupy movement.

The militarisation of the police, especially since 9/11, and increased racial profiling have come under attack. The 'War on Drugs' and various 'zero tolerance' approaches have increased the prison population since the 1970s by a massive 700%.

Police militarisation

Blacks make up 50% of prisoners for drug offences (drug offences account for roughly half of all those imprisoned) even though they make up 13% of the population and surveys show they are less likely to use drugs!



It's urgent the struggle against police murders and racism is linked up with the 15Now movement and the hold of big business on society

Black men are 21 times more likely to be killed by the police than white men. This is in a country with an epidemic of police killings.

404 suspects were killed in 2011 alone. This is just the number of 'justifiable homicides' and not every death as there is only a voluntary reporting system. In the same period six were killed in Germany, two in England and Wales and six in Australia.

Hands up, don't shoot!

In many poor communities the police's 'shoot to kill' policy is a key factor. This contrasts sharply with the arrest of Dylan Roof after the murder of nine black churchgoers in Charleston, Mississippi.

He has white supremacist views and was known to be armed. The arresting officer described how he was treated to a burger meal when he complained of being hungry.

On the streets young people face the hated 'stop and frisk' policies of many police forces. Under pressure to end this programme, Obama pledged \$260 million dollars for police uniforms to be fitted with body cameras.

But these still did not to reduce the incidence of police violence. The murder of Eric Garner was filmed as was the brutal arrest of Sandra Bland for traffic offences, who later died in police custody.

On top of all this the economic crisis has hit blacks harder than the rest of the population. The median income gap between blacks and whites has more than doubled since the recession.

It is also estimated that African American communities would lose \$194 million in property values. This is driving BLM on but also leading to the drawing of political conclusions. BLM activists have disrupted political rallies during the presidential primaries and forced the issue of policing and the social issues facing blacks onto the agenda.

Ferguson

Obama, however, has moved to defend the state and not black lives. Following the anger that spilled over into rioting during the Ferguson events, Obama implored that it "requires we listen, and not just shout. That's how we're going to move forward together - by trying to unite with each other and understand each other, and not simply divide ourselves from one another."

The protest movement is demanding radical action to defeat racism. This movement could move fast to learn the lessons of the 1960s and 70s.

The need to link up the struggle against the police murders, police racism and black imprisonment with the 15Now movement (fighting for an end to low wages) and the struggle against the stranglehold that the big corporations have on society, is urgent.

The movement will only get victories against the perpetrators of police racism if the police are forced to report all cases of police homicide and then face an independent labour movement inquiry. These should be presented not in front of closed grand juries but in open juries

selected from local communities and trade unions.

Independent

BLM must demand the end of the increased militarisation of the police. The methods, accountability and policies of policing must be brought under democratic working class control.

Millions are spent on arming the police and imprisoning young black and poor men in particular. This could be spent on ensuring decent living conditions, the right to a free education and public services that are failing black families in particular. The 'War on Drugs' and zero tolerance programmes must end.

The movement must join up with campaigns such as 15Now and demand a real change in society. The 60s and 70s showed the importance of the trade union movement for blacks.

But unionisation must be linked to the struggle to change the unions into democratic organisations fighting for their members.

Unions also have to break with the cosy relationship with the Democratic Party and fight to change the dominance of corporate America in running society in its interests.

Socialists

Fighting black leaders like Malcolm X and Martin Luther King were drawing conclusions about the nature of capitalism and the integral part racism played in maintaining it. Today's black youth have the distinct advantage.

While socialists and communists were witch-hunted from a generation in the 1950s and 60s, socialist ideas are finding a new voice in the US. The role of Seattle City Councilor Kshama Sawant (see page 14) shows what socialists can achieve and how important they will be to the fight to end racism.



Police violence during the civil rights era

Struggle for solidarity with refugees must be anti-austerity

March for Homes in Waltham Forest on 21 November



Waltham Forest residents turn out against the racist EDL in May 2015 photo Sarah Sachs-Eldridge

Isai Priya
Waltham Forest Socialist Party

War, poverty and dictatorial regimes are among many reasons why innocent people risk their lives fleeing their country to have a chance to live.

According to the United Nations High Commission for Refugees there were 59.5 million refugees worldwide by the end of 2014. This figure has grown four times over in the last four years - it is now equivalent to one person in every 122 on the planet.

Latest figures released by the UN show that more than 218,000 people made the dangerous journey across the Mediterranean to Europe in October 2015. This is a record breaking figure and nearly the same as the whole of the last year. This year alone, more than 3,440 people have died or gone missing during the journey.

Solidarity

Particularly after the picture of Aylan Kurdi, the toddler drowned on one of these trips, went viral on social media, ordinary people showed solidarity with the refugees in their thousands. Tens of thousands of people have marched through the streets on "refugees welcome" demonstrations.

Under huge pressure Cameron has agreed to take in 20,000 refugees over the next five years. That is 4,000 a year. Not only is this pathetically low, but there is no attempt to offer a decent life for those who do come.

They will need homes, jobs, and access to services such as the NHS and schools. The resources exist to do this and much more, but it needs a fight against austerity.

Working class people of all backgrounds, but disproportionately ethnic minorities and migrants, are struggling. The huge housing shortages, sky-rocketing rents and low wages means that for the majority of us every day is a battle.

These cuts are affecting the most vulnerable in our society. More than 3.6 million children in the UK are living in poverty.



Establishment politicians and their media are using the lack of services, jobs and homes to fuel anti-immigrant propaganda. Socialists can't ignore this, we have to tackle it head on

The homelessness charity Shelter has estimated that there are more than 70,000 homeless children in England living in temporary accommodation. All this is in the sixth richest country in the world.

Some activists try to separate out the struggle against racism from these austerity issues. But establishment politicians and their media are using the lack of services, jobs and homes to fuel anti-immigrant propaganda. Socialists can't ignore this, we have to tackle it head on.

They are trying to divide communities. But we, as ordinary people, whether we are black, Asian or white, have more in common with

each other than the establishment politicians and millionaires.

For example, there has been huge support for the alternative anti-austerity policies that Jeremy Corbyn stood for in his election campaign among all communities.

39% of Ukip voters liked Corbyn most in the campaign compared to 38% of Labour voters. Some of these Ukip voters will now have joined Labour hoping to defend and implement the policies Jeremy Corbyn spoke of.

Jeremy Corbyn

Ukip is a racist party but not all its voters are racist. Many have voted for Ukip as a protest vote - we need an anti-racist, working class alternative to appeal to them instead.

Only an anti-austerity programme is able to unite working class communities and to fight all forms of discrimination. It is through this that we will be able to build a fightback against the right wing and media anti-migrant propaganda.

The same struggle is the only way to guarantee real victories that can make life better for migrants and those who are already here. Part of this battle will be to fight for decent affordable homes for all.

This is a big focus of the Socialist Party's campaign work in Waltham Forest at the moment. Waltham Forest Trades Council is organising a rally and demonstration demanding decent affordable homes for all, rent control, council house-building and solidarity action to stop evictions - which we are helping to build for

If you live in east London, please join us on the housing demo on 21 November, assembling in Abbots Park, E10 at 12pm



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

Phantom of the Lords



Lord Andrew Lloyd Webber - worth £700 million - flew into London on 26 October from his home in the USA. Why? To vote with the Tories in the House of Lords. To cut working tax credits and reduce the incomes of the lowest-paid workers in the UK. What a greedy, selfish, mindless, moronic cretin. They were outvoted for the time being. But they will continue their attacks on working class people. The very rich will continue to get even richer.

Wally Kennedy, west London

Witch hunt farce

Karl Marx once said: "history repeats itself - first as tragedy, then as farce." The witch hunt against Labour's left in the 1980s is being repeated today against Jeremy Corbyn's supporters.

Corbyn should firmly stick to his guns. The only way to build a genuine party of labour rooted in the working class is through accountability to a mass movement - including deselecting right-wing MPs.

If the Tory infiltrators don't like it, they are free to stand under their own banner, whatever that is.

Tony Mulhearn, Liverpool

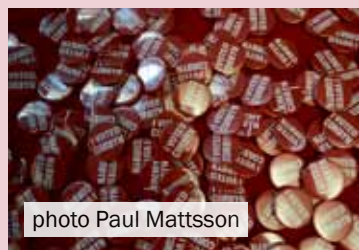


photo Paul Mattsson

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

WRONG: OWEN JONES TELLS LABOUR "ABANDON ANTI-AUSTERITY"

Sarah Sachs-Eldridge
Socialist Party national organiser

Owen Jones is completely wrong to say it's time to "abandon anti-austerity". He wrote Labour should stop using the term in the Guardian (Labour can't just gloat over Osborne's mess - we need a positive alternative, 28 October).

Austerity is planned poverty for the working class and, as Jeremy Corbyn said, a political choice. There isn't a lack of wealth. It is in the wrong hands.

Jeremy Corbyn

While the obscene fortune of the richest 1,000 grows by half a billion pounds a week, food banks are set up at hospitals to stave off a malnutrition-driven readmissions crisis.

It is wrong to claim 'anti-austerity' is "a term that has never really resonated with the public".

But hundreds of thousands are marching and campaigning. It was Jeremy Corbyn's explicit anti-austerity message that won him the Labour leadership.

This was despite the establishment's campaign of poison against him. And thousands are engaged in battles to defend the jobs, homes, services and benefits the austerians seek to deny us.

Owen's right, we need to be "pro



Owen Jones
photo Paul Mattsson

something". The Socialist Party campaigns for free education, a £10 an hour minimum wage now and massive investment in council housing.



The problem is most Labour MPs are still pro-austerity!

These measures would have a big impact on the lives of those suffering austerity. But that won't be delivered without a mass working class movement - and a government that breaks with austerity and commits to taking the wealth off the 1%.

But he is utterly wrong to put forward capitalist Germany as a model. Capitalism has the exploitation of

the working class at its heart.

And as for abandoning 'anti-austerity' - the problem is most Labour MPs haven't even adopted it! At best they are austerity-lite. Getting rid of them is part of the task of forming a party capable of leading the anti-austerity movement.

Labour councils

A key part of that is the call on Labour councils to refuse to implement cuts, as the socialist-led Liverpool council did in the 1980s. Instead they built 5,000 council homes and created well-paid jobs and real apprenticeships.

Owen rejects this. He proposed in his blog on 29 August that councils instead "protest cuts and emphasise they are imposed by the Westminster government". This will not stop workers being sacked by Labour councils or save services.

You abandon 'anti-austerity' if you want, Owen. But we won't!

Film review: The Program

Cycle cheat Armstrong's hypocrisy and bullying

Chris Newby
London Socialist Party

The Program is a biographical drama about Lance Armstrong, the disgraced former professional cyclist - and the efforts of investigative journalist David Walsh to expose him.

Armstrong developed a programme of performance-enhancing substances, and blood transfusions to hide them, for him and his team. He became famous for overcoming testicular cancer to finish first in the Tour de France seven times in succession, a feat never previously matched.

The Tour de France is a brutal,



Lance Armstrong

three-week cycle race. It takes very high levels of fitness just to complete it, let alone win.

Armstrong consistently denied taking drugs. He only made his infamous confession on the Oprah Winfrey show when the evidence became overwhelming. And, particularly, when former teammate Floyd Landis testified against him.

Tour de France

It is a well-made film. It intersperses original footage with cycling shots of Ben Foster, the actor playing Armstrong.

Foster's extremely thorough preparation included intensive cycling training - as well as taking performance-enhancing drugs to see how it feels.

The story highlights Armstrong's hypocrisy. At the same time as doping, he buys professional cycling's governing body a new drug-testing machine.

It also shows him bullying other cyclists during races who have spoken out against drug taking. He even



Ben Foster as Lance Armstrong

gets Walsh's fellow journalists to turn their backs on him.

One scene that stands out is Floyd Landis, part of the programme, discovering team bikes missing during the Tour de France. He confronts the team's director about it. The director reveals he has been selling bikes to buy drugs so it does not show up on the books.

Landis replies: "So we're a

professional cycling team that's selling bikes to pay for drugs."

Damage lives on

The story also shows the enormous following Armstrong achieved through showing what cancer survivors can achieve. This was based on a massive lie.

The film's end suggests Armstrong had some sort of religious cleansing

after the scandal. In reality, it is clear he still feels he has done nothing wrong. And it could have shown more the extent of Armstrong's character assassination of challengers.

Nonetheless, the Program is well worth watching.

The damage Armstrong did to cycling lives on, highlighted by the continual questioning of Chris Froome, the 2015 Tour de France winner.

Fire service cuts put people at risk



photo Paul Mattsson



The fire service admitted they wouldn't be putting these plans in place if they did not have budget cuts

Joy Taylor
Southampton Socialist Party

At a recent Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service (HFRS) Review consultation meeting firefighters and ex-firefighters in attendance were initially prevented from speaking.

This, despite the proposal being to cut 225 fire crew around the county under the dubious title of 'Planning for a Safer Hampshire.'

Public Safety

A member of the audience rightly argued that she wanted to hear the firefighters' view. After all they are in the best position to know what is necessary to carry out their job in a manner which will ensure the safety of the public, and also to minimise risk to their own safety.

When the discussion was finally

allowed to open up questions were still avoided or not answered fully. It became evident that they had done no proper trials of their plans.

There were concerns about emergency cover arrangements, which would result in the possibility of two firefighters attending incidents in a 'first response' vehicle, which is much smaller than a traditional fire engine.

HFRS kept repeating that two firefighters could deal with 70% of fires, but brushed over the fact that the remaining 30% would be the most serious fires that involve casualties.

The meeting was only attended by around 30 people, and concern was immediately expressed by those present that about the lack of advertising and poor location.

The final straw for me was when HFRS were repeatedly asked if they



Firefighters on strike
photo Naomi Byron

would be putting these plans in place if they did not have budget cuts. Eventually, after much prevaricating, they admitted that they would not.

Emergency

Clearly, given that response, they are not 'Planning for a Safer Hampshire' at all. They are simply responding to budget cuts, and potentially placing the people of Hampshire at greater risk.

Socialist Party joins campaign against NHS bullying

Worcester Socialist Party

Socialist Party members have joined others in forming a group in Worcestershire called 'Betrayed by Their Trust', to document reported cases of bullying in the NHS. The group offers support to those involved and has led calls for open and transparent investigations into bullying.

No trust

In February 2015 a report commissioned by the Worcestershire Acute Hospitals Trust found that 72% of staff think that the Trust does not treat bul-

lying seriously, 92% of staff believe managers will not take action on their concerns and 99% that the Trust views those who complain as "difficult."

The report though did not focus on claims that a nurse was driven to suicide by malicious allegations and that Redditch A&E staff were abused to ensure targets were met. Ominously however none of the NHS trade unions have had anything to say about the report.

To any unbiased observer this would have the same impact as a bolt of lightning but there is clearly a crisis of confidence by the staff in their management and leadership.

The Trust has a £48 million deficit

and a group of consultants resigned en bloc earlier this year.

Abuse

The response of the Trust has been to reach for the 'Responding to Bad News' phrasebook: "Lessons have been learned" and "We have already taken steps." But these hollow phrases do nothing to convince.

For bullying to be defeated in the NHS, trade unions must take up the issue. There must be democratic accountability at all levels so the public knows what is going on in our hospitals. An NHS open to scrutiny and challenge is needed.



Junior doctors in Leeds were joined by nurses, cleaners, GPs, consultants, students and members of the public to protest new contracts. The idea of voting Conservative was booed by the 2,000 strong crowd while every doctor Socialist Party members spoke to said they would be voting to strike. Over 40 NHS badges were sold.
photo Iain Dalton

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Socialist Party Fighting Fund

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North West	1,500	1,339									89%
Southern	1,200	548				46%					
Yorkshire	2,900	858				30%					
Northern	600	166			28%						
South West	1,400	346			25%						
East Midlands	1,600	387			24%						
Wales	2,300	521			23%						
South East	750	152			20%						
London	6,100	1,103			18%						
West Midlands	2,100	350			17%						
Eastern	1,200	148			12%						
England and Wales	3,350	69			2%						
TOTAL	25,000	5,986			24%						

Super Southampton fighting fund campaign

Jane Ward
Southampton Socialist Party

Southampton Socialist Party branch raised over £1,000 for the fighting fund between July and September to smash our quarterly target. The majority came from public stalls.

It definitely helped to have a campaigning issue which directly affects people, for example cuts to libraries, swimming pools or youth services. Our campaign concerned the attempts by the NHS to close the Bitterne walk-in centre (see issue 863).

Save our NHS

On our stalls we had petitions for people to sign and leaflets which simply stated the main points we wanted to make and importantly, gave people the information to get more involved. The response was



photo Joy Taylor

overwhelming; people could not understand why the NHS would even contemplate removing such a well-used and much needed service.

After the petition had been signed, we asked a direct question; can you afford to make a donation to our campaign funds?

If people had the money, most of them would willingly do so, especially after we told them that the money would be spent on campaigning materials and for the cost of public meetings. At the end of the day, the worst thing that anyone can say when you ask them for a donation is no.



USA: Socialist Alternative step up campaigning

As the Socialist goes to press, elections to Seattle City Council will take place. Socialist Alternative (SA, co-thinkers of the Socialist Party) members and supporters have been campaigning, all-out, to re-elect Kshama Sawant.

Kshama and SA have championed the introduction of a \$15 an hour minimum wage in the city as well as fighting for affordable housing for the working class.

This has meant organising alongside workers and tenants to take on the city's entrenched Democratic Party machine with its corporate and landlord backing.

Election results will be published after 3 November on www.socialistworld.net



Russia: Kremlin enters the Syrian quagmire

Rob Jones writes from Moscow on how the effects of the wars and armed conflicts in Syria and Ukraine pursued by Putin, along with Russia's economic crisis, are merging to deepen the country's worsening poverty, corruption and despair.

However, if the working class was to move into action to prevent wage cuts, jobs losses and budget cuts, it would also inevitably lead to opposing the authoritarian policies of the ruling elite.

See article on www.socialistworld.net



Polish ruling party loses election amid workers' anger

Poland's recent general election resulted in defeat for the eight-year rule of the neoliberal Civic Platform and victory for the conservative opposition Law and Justice party.

As Kacper Pluta, Alternatywa Socjalistyczna (CWI, Poland) explains, despite receiving huge funds from the European Union, the government failed to solve the deep crisis in infrastructure and public service delivery.

However, notwithstanding months of workers' struggles before the election, the trade union leaders left the electoral field clear for Law and Justice to capitalise on the discontent.

Turkey: ERDOGAN'S ELECTION VICTORY BASED ON FEAR AND INTIMIDATION

The recent Turkish election took place against a backdrop of deepening economic and political insecurity in the country - a situation engineered by the ruling class.

Society has become further polarised as a result of the state's resumption of military attacks on the Kurdish PKK guerrilla group, both inside and outside Turkey. The authoritarian clampdown on opposition media outlets and social media, along with the faltering economy, also ramped up this 'strategy of tension'.

This includes October's terrorist bombings in Ankara which devastated a peace rally by left-leaning trade unions and the pro-Kurdish rights HDP (People's Democratic Party).

The AKP blamed the bombings on Isis (which has benefitted from the Turkish government's strategy in Syria). But why were known terrorists not stopped earlier and why was only an HDP event targeted? **Mike Cleverley** examines the election results.



Thousands of workers and youth poured onto the streets of cities in Turkey in protest at the deadly bombing attack in Ankara on 10 October photo Mike Cleverley

Following my recent visit to Turkey, and experiencing the horror of the Ankara bombing on 10 October, the Turkish general election on Sunday 1 November 2015 was an event I have followed with great interest. This was especially the case after meeting a comrade of Socialist Alternatif, the sister organisation of the Socialist Party in Turkey.

The conservative AK Party won a decisive majority in the general election, securing 316 seats in the 550 seat parliament. The result satisfied the capitalist class, with the

Turkish currency and stock market surging upwards.

The main capitalist opposition, the CHP, only slightly increased its vote since the June elections while the far-right MHP's share fell from 16% to 12%, losing out to the AKP.

The AKP's menacing nationalist rhetoric and brutal military campaign against the Kurds undoubtedly managed to attract significant votes from a layer of MHP supporters.

The pro-Kurdish HDP (People's Democratic Party), whose June election vote had been boosted by votes from young, radical Turks,

Various intimidation tactics were directed at voters, critical journalists and election observers

also lost out with 21 fewer MPs, just crossing the undemocratic 10% threshold needed to secure seats in parliament.



Turkey's 'strongman' Recep Erdogan will renew his attacks on workers and democratic rights following the AKP's election victory

The loss of support for the HDP will be a disappointment for the left, but many will rightly question the idea of 'free elections' taking place when Kurdish towns and villages have been under military siege. Many HDP supporters have been arrested in the last few months, and HDP offices have been physically targeted by mobs associated with the AKP and the MHP.

This result is a boost to President Erdogan but not enough to allow him to press ahead with changes to the Turkish constitution which would have consolidated the powers of the presidency.

Interference

The election was held against a backdrop of massive scaremongering, rampant violence and clamp-down on opposition voices - including interference by the president in the run up to polling day, against the constitution he is supposed to uphold.

Prior to the election there were rumours, emanating from a whistleblower within the government, that the AKP had installed its own supporters in positions to rig the ballot results.

Growing reports of electoral fraud and polling disruption are now emerging, especially from the Kurdish areas where the HDP secured high votes in the June election.

Various intimidation tactics were directed at voters, critical journalists and election observers. Some international electoral observers were taken away by the police, and

polling stations closed down or deprived of access by the army.

In a number of areas ballots disappeared, while in Izmir, for example, there were 700,000 more votes than the number of registered voters!

Just days before the election Koza Ipek Holdings group, which publishes media linked to opponents of

the loss of support for the HDP will be a disappointment for the left, but many will rightly question the idea of 'free elections' taking place when Kurdish towns and villages have been under military siege

Erdogan, was taken over and senior editors replaced by AKP supporters in both papers and TV channels. The Turkish Bar Association condemned these measures as unconstitutional.

Undoubtedly these actions and the general climate of crisis helped to secure the AKP's victory on Sunday.

The losses by the HDP will also have been affected by its decision to cancel planned rallies following the bomb attack in Ankara on 10 October.

All these factors contributed to a totally biased election in which the voices of the opposition could hardly be heard, while the voices of the ruling party were magnified.

The election result itself will not mask the deep divisions within the ruling class, reflected not only in the existence of both the AKP and its more secular rival the CHP but also in the uneasy balance of power between president Erdogan and prime minister Davutoglu.

All three of the opposition parties will be examining these election results for evidence of fraud. This includes the loss of over 650,000 votes from the voters' lists

between the June and November polls and the appearance of over 400,000 new voters onto those lists. These 'anomalies' appear to be concentrated in districts where the margins between the main two parties were close back in June.

For the organised working class in the trade unions this election came at a time when they are gaining in confidence.

General strike

The two-day protest general strike immediately following the October bombings in Ankara (blamed squarely on the AKP's policies), indicates the potential power of united working class action.

Unfortunately, this strike was not followed up by any call to escalate the mobilisation, leaving the movement without a clear strategy, and the AKP to dominate the public discourse again in the run-up to the election.

The general strike came after a sustained period of workers' struggle. In May 2014, following a mining disaster, workers struck to protest against the appalling safety record of Turkish mine bosses.

In May 2015 a strike at the Renault factory triggered action at other factories in Turkey's industrial heartland.

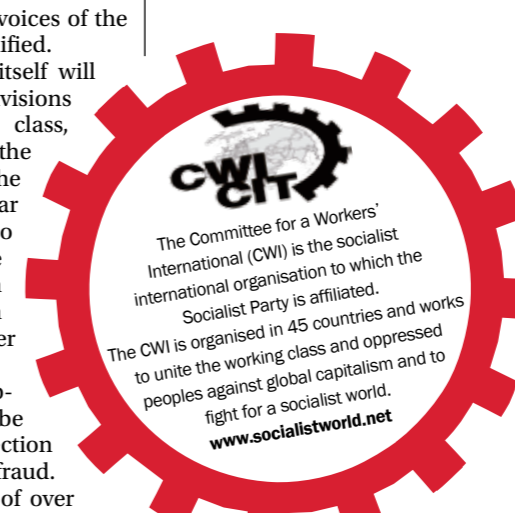
This in spite of extremely harsh anti-union laws in Turkey where "authorised unions" frequently fail to protect workers' interests resulting in Turkey having the lowest proportion of unionised workers in the OECD (the 'developed countries'). Turkey has even seen doctors on strike, in May 2015, protesting against excessive workloads.

Socialists in Turkey organised around Socialist Alternatif, (sister organisation of the Socialist Party), will continue to campaign for worker's unity and for an independent mass workers' party.

The HDP could potentially provide a stepping stone to this - if it turns towards workers from all communities with a bold programme of action and democratises its internal structures.

Such a party should embrace a socialist programme of public ownership and democratic workers' control of major industries; the right of self-determination for the Kurdish people and an end to the attacks on Kurdish national rights under the guise of fighting terrorism.

Updates and background articles see www.socialistworld.net



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. www.socialistworld.net



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.

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, gender, 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.
■ Keep 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. 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!

WORK AND INCOME
■ Trade union struggle to increase the minimum wage to £10 an hour without exemptions as an immediate 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.

Join the fightback! Join the Socialists!
www.socialistparty.org.uk 02089888777
@Socialist_party Text 07761 818206 /CWISocialistParty

ACTION GETS RESULTS

STRIKE

TOGETHER TO

KILL THE BILL

John McNally

PCS civil servants' union vice-president (personal capacity)

The trade union bill being rushed through Parliament aims at removing any effective opposition to the Tories' austerity agenda by placing huge obstacles to organising legal strike action. It also amounts to state-sponsored blacklisting and criminalisation of union activity.

Tories

The Tories fear the potential power of the six million-strong trade union movement, the biggest democratic force in society. With effective fighting leadership, it would be capable of uniting working and middle class people against the Tories' destruction of our public services.

More than anything the Tories fear strike action, the most effective weapon we have to defend our interests. This assault reflects their concern that the trade union movement could

mobilise and lead the anti-austerity movement.

This bill is not separate from all the other attacks against our class. Public sector-wide coordinated strike action would be the best and most effective response against the public sector pay freeze and the bill.

In 2011 millions of public sector workers glimpsed their collective strength only to see it squandered by leaders in a deal that sold their pension rights.

Union leaders should not be some kind of diplomatic corps shuttling between the government and their members, concession bargaining away jobs, services, conditions and our rights. This bill must be opposed in its entirety; there can be no last minute 'concessions' from the Tories that could justify a line of it becoming law.

Union leaderships who have fought back have been singled out - the Tories have tried to smash PCS through a whole range of attacks including withdrawal of the check-off system. But they failed and our union is emerging even stronger.

Campaigning works and action gets results.

National Gallery

This was demonstrated by the achievement of National Gallery strikers who saw their jobs privatised but won the London living wage, guarantees on terms and conditions and the reinstatement of their sacked rep.

If the TUC and union leaders had organised effective collective action against cuts and privatisation then the Tories wouldn't have the confidence to table the legislation at all.

United action can defeat austerity and can make this legislation unworkable if it passes through parliament - if there is effective determined leadership across the movement and not just in individual unions.

Protest the final reading of the Tory's anti-trade union bill - 6pm Tuesday 10 November Parliament Square

See page 4 for more on the trade union bill

NSSN lobby of the TUC
photo Paul Mattsson



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