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Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition

VOTE TUSC

For the millions, not the billionaires

Dave Nellist, Chair, Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition and former Labour MP 1983-1992

Britain is said to be coming out of recession, but it doesn't feel like that for most people. Millions of families are just a pay-cheque away from losing their home. One million people rely on food banks, many because of benefit sanctions imposed, often for the pettiest of reasons.

Millions of workers are either unemployed or under employed - and desperate for work. 1,500 people queued in Shropshire recently for three hours for one job at an Aldi supermarket.

And, under plans shared by ALL the big parties, it won't get any better. A Local Government Association report predicts money available to provide services such as gyms, parks, libraries and youth centres could shrink by 66% by the end of the decade.

That will add to the 360,000 local government jobs already cut under the Coalition. That period includes all of the next Parliament - whoever is in charge. Ed Miliband has signed up to the Tory spending plans if he's the next prime minister.

But it doesn't have to be that way. Labour councils say they have no choice, but they do - they can stand up for the people who elected them and refuse to implement the cuts!

This is still a very rich country but that wealth is in the wrong hands. The Sunday Times annual Rich List showed the seriously rich are getting seriously richer!

Them and us

While the problems of millions got worse in the recession, both the numbers of billionaires in Britain and their average wealth rocketed.

Many billionaires pay little or no income tax because 'clever' accountants find ways round the rules. Their tax avoidance is part of over £120 billion uncollected in taxes each year, mainly from the super-rich and big business. That's plenty of money that could be invested in decent jobs, social housing, the NHS, and many other things that would massively improve our standard of living, without any cuts to essential local services.

So what can we do about it? On 22 May, in many parts of the country, you can vote for who runs your local council. The Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC) is standing 560 anti-cuts and anti-austerity candidates in 87 towns, cities and boroughs. That's the biggest left-of-Labour challenge for 60 years.

Three-quarters of our candidates are active trade unionists - including 50 from the transport union RMT and almost 140 from Labour's biggest union backer, Unite.

Anti-bedroom tax and anti-fracking activists, anti-cuts campaigners and even people who 'made a little bit of history' - like Liverpool's Roy Dixon, whose heckle kickstarted the process that led to the new Hillsborough inquests - all are standing for TUSC.

Vote TUSC and send a message to all the parties that you and your family won't pay for the gambling and speculation of the bankers that got us into this mess. Labour takes ordinary people for granted. TUSC won't.

TUSC stands for a democratic socialist society to rationally plan our wealthy society in the interests of the people, not the billionaires. Vote for that alternative. And join us in building a new political voice for working people.

European elections: Vote No2EU - Yes To Workers' Rights

While TUSC is standing in local elections, for the European elections the Socialist Party is supporting No2EU - Yes To Workers' Rights, which is led by the RMT union.

No2EU opposes the pro-privatisation, pro-profiteering, anti-worker policies of the European Union.

No2EU says:

- Yes to workers' rights
 - Exit the EU on the basis of socialist policies
 - Reject EU treaties and policies that privatise our public services
 - No to public spending cuts whether they come from Brussels or Britain
 - Repeal anti-trade union rulings by the European Court of Justice and the EU
 - Yes to international solidarity of working people
-

Fight back at the ballot box on 22 May

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Candidates are drawn from members of the RMT transport union, standing to honour their former general secretary, Bob Crow's commitment to TUSC, hundreds from Labour-affiliated unions Unite and Unison, socialists, anti-bedroom tax campaigners and many more. The message is clear - there is an alternative to austerity.

Britain now 'boasts' more billionaires with more wealth, showing that Chancellor Osborne's economic 'recovery' was only at the very top. While these fat-cats' combined wealth has sky-rocketed by £56 billion to £301 billion, living standards are plummeting. 'Real wages' in Britain have dropped by 6.1% since the turn of the century, more than all the other industrialised economies in the G7.

Desire for change

Given this enormous and growing inequality there's little wonder polls often reveal a widespread desire for an alternative. A Populus opinion poll for the Financial Times found that "almost two-thirds of voters want the next government to be tougher with big business, amid widespread concern over high executive pay and ethics, according to a survey."

There are big majorities in favour of rail nationalisation. And Ipsos Mori showed that 80% of people think the NHS

should be protected from cuts. But without TUSC the aspirations for an alternative have no political expression.

Labour has signed up to this agenda of stupendous wealth for the super-rich and cuts for us. Leader Ed Miliband has pledged to maintain Tory spending plans in the event of a Labour victory at the next general election. In local government Labour shows its commitment to this programme - carrying out austerity to the letter.

In meeting after meeting, when they deign to attend, Labour councillors sympathise with those losing their homes, their jobs, the services without which they cannot live a dignified existence - but then explain that they are 'pragmatists' and can do nothing but mete out this misery. That is the big lie at the heart of the establishment parties' local election campaigns.

There is no dispute that councils face a dire financial situation. But the starting point for TUSC is that councils should not meekly accept the cuts to local authority funding made by the Con-Dem government.

By using their reserves and borrowing powers any council on the side of the working class not the 1% could buy time to build a campaign to force the government - either this one or the next - to properly fund local government. This stance is one of the core policies of TUSC.

Mobilise support

Across the country the 560 TUSC candidates are explaining that, far from being helpless to resist the Tories as Labour claims, councils already have many powers to implement policies that would positively improve the position of millions of people. That would be the way to turn back the austerity offensive and mobilise support for a campaign for more resources for public services. A fighting council could inspire enormous support if it gave this kind of a lead.

And when Labour argues that 'the money isn't there' for decent local services, it's simply not the case. True, government funding of local councils is being cut by £7.6 billion between 2011 and 2015 (with a further £2.1 billion cut planned for 2015-16). Yet Britain's top companies have an estimated cash pile of £750 billion accumulated profits which they are refusing to invest.

So the question is not 'is the money there?' but how can a campaign be won for the money to defend and improve public services. The TUSC website gives a glimpse of what could be done, providing an aggregate of policies that at least one council somewhere in Britain has implemented.

In response to the housing crisis TUSC proposes that councils use their existing "powers to compulsorily register private landlords and set-up council-run lettings agencies, as the means to tackle repair standards, high rents, over-occupancy, extortionate letting fees etc for private rented homes" and that they "Build council homes now. By using councils' borrowing powers for capital spending to build council homes, while campaigning for the government to divert its subsidy for private developers to finance a mass programme of public housing."

Punish the Tories

To stem the fall in wages, TUSC says: "Introduce the Living Wage as the minimum wage for council employees and those working for council contractors", "Use councils' powers to exclude firms that have participated in blacklisting from tendering for public contracts."

Disgusted by the corruption and anti-working class capitalist politicians, there will be many who choose not to vote on 22 May. Some will see a Labour vote as the best way to punish the Tories. Some even hope that Labour can be reclaimed for the working class.

In this feature TUSC candidate and former Liverpool Labour councillor Tony Mulhearn explains what socialists did in that city to resist Thatcher, mobilising the strength of the working class and marshalling the powers of the council to build homes, create jobs and resist Thatcher.

But instead of fighting the Con-Dems, pro-cuts Labour is today fighting its tiny number of rebel councillors who have attempted to defend jobs and services by voting against cuts. Look at Councillor Keith Morrell, TUSC steering committee member, standing for re-election in Southampton on 22 May.

When faced with a vote on slashing public services, Keith and fellow socialist Don Thomas refused. For declining to follow the whip and support Tory policies they were suspended and then expelled from Labour. The same has happened in Hull, Warrington and anywhere Labour councillors have put the working class before their careers and voted no.

Protest vote

There will be others who are tempted to use their vote in the local and European elections as a way of sticking two fingers up at Labour, the Con-Dems and the pro-big business elite by voting for right-wing populists Ukip. But Farage's party is yet another pro-cuts party of the 1%, funded and controlled by super-rich members of the establishment, including press barons as well as members of the landed gentry!

Voting for TUSC is much more than a protest vote. A strong TUSC vote could pressurise even pro-market politicians to act. The stand of Keith and Don in Southampton forced the council to reverse some of its cuts plans.

In the US, Seattle council has just voted to increase the city's minimum wage by 50% to \$15 an hour. The deal includes certain concessions and workers must continue to fight for its full implementation. Nonetheless it represents a huge achievement. The demand for \$15 was the key plank in the successful election campaign of Councilmember Kshama Sawant (member of Socialist Alternative, co-thinkers of the Socialist Party in the US). The Democrat Mayor only took it up when he saw the avalanche of support she was gaining, showing how a left pole of attraction can force change.

But what is required in the US, in Britain and in every country is an independent political voice for the working class that can be part and parcel of the struggle against the misery of austerity. The Socialist Party sees TUSC as a vital step towards building the new mass workers' party we urgently need.

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TUSC @TUSCoalition

Gove steals £400m from schools for failed #freeschools project - but don't fall for LibDems as our champions - Con/Lib/Lab cuts & privatisation #TUSC

Tower Hamlets TUSC @towerhamletTUSC

"What took you so long?" GMB member & council worker when told about #TUSC standing against cuts in #TowerHamlets

WalthamForestTUSC @TUSCWF

Told Unite member @TUSCoalition standing 560 candidates. "I'm so pleased! And can't believe they're not talking about you in the press"

TUSC Portsmouth @TUSCPompey

#TUSC candidates are not professional politicians, but ordinary working people and trade unionists. We pledge to oppose all #austerity #cuts

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-

Building Labour: when workers first formed their own party

Sarah Wrack

Throughout the 19th century it was seen as unquestionable that the Liberal Party - an alliance of industrial capitalists and the urban middle classes - should be the party supported by workers, and that this would always be the case. But in a few decades all that changed and the Labour Party was born.

At the end of the 19th century, like today, British capitalism was in crisis. The era of Britain as an unrivalled imperialist, capitalist power, was over. The ruling class faced huge competition from rival capitalist classes and the economy was struck by one depression after another.

Again like today, the bosses and governments tried to force the cost of these crises onto the backs of working class people. Half of wage earners lived in poverty. Between 1889 and 1913 real wages fell by 10%.

This situation was leading to more and more conflict between the bosses and workers. Until this point the main unions were traditional craft unions for skilled workers, which were tied to the Liberal Party and pursued tactics of 'partnership' between workers and employer. But mechanisation and industrialisation had changed the nature of work - there was now the base for mass unionisation of unskilled workers.

Eight-hour day

In 1886 a group set up by supporters of Karl Marx, the Social Democratic Federation, started organising the unemployed. There were big demonstrations, including of 75,000 in London against the closure of factories in the East End. This developed into a huge movement demanding the eight-hour day - for sharing out work without loss of pay.

The campaign was taken up by wide sections of unskilled workers. For example the Ayrshire miners had traditionally been committed to the Liberal Party and its policies.

But when the mine owners threatened to sack the workforce and replace them with unemployed workers from Glasgow,

they were forced to fight. One of these miners was Keir Hardie, a founder of the Labour Party. Similar campaigns were taking place across the country.

This rise of unionisation of unskilled workers also posed the need for a party that really represented their interests. These new unions were in constant conflict with the ruling class and so had to challenge them politically - to challenge their laws, their parties and ultimately their whole system. And the movement for an eight-hour day - which was taking place internationally as well as in Britain - became a key link between industrial and political struggles.

Socialism

There was debate about what any new party would stand for. Commenting on this, Friedrich Engels, collaborator of Karl Marx, said in the Labour Standard in 1881: "The time is rapidly approaching when the working class of this country will claim...its full share of representation in Parliament. Secondly...the working class will have understood that the struggle for high wages, and short hours, and the whole action of the trades unions as carried on now, is not an end in itself, but a means towards a higher end", the end of exploitation of workers altogether.

Not everyone in the labour movement agreed with the call for a new party. Many leaders of the Trades Union Congress (TUC, formed in 1868) were still tied to the Liberal Party and said that the time wasn't ripe for anything else. But workers were increasingly involved in bitter disputes with both Tory and Liberal bosses.

In this way, the objective need for a new independent party for the working class became clearer on the basis of workers' experience of struggle. Concerns about likely results and immediate success could not hold back what had become necessary - a decisive break from the Liberal Party.

In 1892 the Independent Labour Party (ILP) was formed. It gained some trade union backing and support from Keir Hardie and the Scottish Labour Party. But there were seven years, during which the ILP had limited electoral success, before the TUC, under pressure from the ILP and others, finally passed a motion calling for the Labour Representation Committee (LRC) to be formed.

There was no individual membership of the LRC (or of the Labour Party until 1918). At the first meeting of the LRC in 1900 less than half of the TUC unions affiliated. But in many ways there was a 'perfect storm' of conditions which gave impetus to its development.

The bosses were responding to victories won by the early new unions with a huge counter-offensive. They organised into sectional employers' federations, locked workers out and employed scab labour.

On top of this the full force of the state was used to attack organised workers. Following a court decision to allow the Taff Vale Rail Company to sue the railway workers' union for damages through strike action, affiliated trade unionist membership of the LRC increased by hundreds of thousands.

Lessons for today

In the 1906 general election, the LRC won 29 seats. At their first meeting after being elected, these MPs decided to adopt the name 'the Labour Party'.

While it had 'liberal', pro-capitalist leaders from the outset, the Labour Party was based on workers' organisations. There was a sense that it belonged to workers and that it was a mechanism through which they could organise, both politically and industrially.

This is no longer the case. But for socialists and trade unionists today, the formation of the Labour Party offers lots of important lessons about the approach we should take as we again fight for independent political representation for working class people.

For a longer article on the formation of the Labour Party see www.socialismtoday.org/45/labour

Southampton: Showing what's possible

In 2012 two Labour councillors, Keith Morrell and Don Thomas, voted against the cuts in Labour-led Southampton council. For this they were expelled from the Labour Party. They joined the Socialist Party and this year Keith is up for re-election, supported by TUSC.

Don explains how they've used their positions to raise an anti-cuts message.

In Coxford, Southampton, we have an opportunity to elect a real alternative to the main parties. An opportunity to say enough is enough, it doesn't have to be like this.

The truth is, it is all about priorities. The victory over our local pool (Oaklands), with the support of myself and fellow anti-cuts councillor Keith Morrell, the community, and the council trade unions (Unison and Unite), shows what is possible. We were told by Labour: "It's closed, get used to it." Months later the campaign forced them to do a U-turn and they found £1.5 million to refurbish the pool.

Keith and I stood for election as Labour councillors on the promise we would keep the pool open. When Labour proposed to close it, we were simply never going to vote for that. We stood by our promises.

Labour stood for election in 2012 promising to protect jobs and services and betrayed their promises. We put an alternative budget forward that would protect all jobs and services, to show what could be done.

Track record

As socialist councillors we have a long track record of standing with our community to save services. We have saved local play centres and prevented the demolition of local sheltered housing. Along with the community we collected over 600 signatories to save a local bus route. When a local supermarket tried to close a much-used public pathway, we successfully fought to keep it.

TUSC has socialist candidates in place in every corner of Southampton who will give residents the opportunity to vote for a real alternative.

We are really lucky to have Keith, to pave the way and show what councillors can do. People here understand what is at stake. On 22 May they can re-elect a fighting councillor with a track record of standing by his word. All the big business parties are creating councillors who are programmed to vote for cuts.

People know Keith won't let them down, won't back down, and will put them first. Re-electing Keith on 22 May will show the support that exists for such a stand.

Liverpool City Council 1983-87: "We had a choice"

From 1983 to 1987 Liverpool City Council was led by supporters of Militant (predecessor to the Socialist Party). When faced with cuts from central government, they refused to pass them on. Instead, with the slogan "better to break the law than break the poor" they made huge advances for working class people in Liverpool. At the same time they led a mass campaign which successfully demanded funding back from Thatcher's government.

One of the councillors and leaders of the movement, Tony Mulhearn, spoke to the Socialist.

When the council was elected big cuts were being made to council budgets by the Tory government. How did you

avoid making them?

Between 1979 and 1983 the Tories had slashed £120 million from Liverpool City Council's budget. In addition to that the outgoing local Tory-Liberal administration had left unallocated cuts of £10 million and was making 2,000 redundancies.

We had the choice of either saying there's nothing we can do and implementing the cuts or to fight all cuts. We chose not to implement the cuts and instead to set a 'needs budget', and we launched a fighting campaign.

So, we were in the position that councillors are in today, but we took an entirely different stance.

Militant supporters were not actually a majority on the council - how did your ideas get carried through?

There were probably about 13 Militant councillors. But in those days the local party determined policy. Militant and its predecessors had conducted a campaign over decades inside Liverpool Labour Party for the adoption of socialist policies. And that's what the District Labour Party (DLP) did, it adopted socialist policies.

And in those days when the party had determined the policy, the councillors had to carry it out. So the DLP concretised what was contained in Clause IV of the Labour Party constitution in relation to housing, jobs and services - all of which the council then implemented.

What were the biggest achievements of the council?

We built 5,000 houses and flats - gardens back and front in many cases. We demolished some of the worst housing in Western Europe. We then cancelled all monetary cuts and redundancies planned by the outgoing council. We built six new nursery schools. We expanded council services.

We had apprenticeships for council jobs. At one stage we had something like 16,000 workers engaged in council projects. So in effect we translated socialism into the language of jobs, the language of houses, the language of nursery schools.

How did the councillors link up with trade unions and working class people in the city?

The DLP was a fine, democratic organisation. It was made up of local authority and private sector trade unions, women's committees, the Young Socialists, party branches and constituency parties, the Co-ops - all had delegates to the DLP. And that was the spring board we used to reach out to wider and wider sections of the working class.

On that basis we were able to mobilise tens of thousands at the demonstrations - with the magnificent support (unlike today when council trade unions sometimes collaborate with the council over cuts) of the Joint Local Authority Shop Stewards Committee. On three occasions they organised 30,000 council workers in strike action to defend the policies of the council.

So this notion peddled by the right wing in the Labour Party like former Labour leader Neil Kinnock and supported by the capitalist press that it was some kind of tiny group which had captured control of the council, was nonsense - we couldn't have achieved what we did without mass support from the labour movement and wider working class communities.

How did the right wing respond to your success?

They generated a campaign of hysteria in the capitalist press.

Thatcher's minister Norman Tebbit used his position in Parliament to demand of Kinnock - 'what was Labour going to do about the Liverpool extremists?' Bowing to this pressure Kinnock launched a savage attack on Liverpool at the 1985

Labour Party conference.

Shortly after, Labour's right wing suspended the DLP, this was preceded by the unelected District Auditor's decision to fine and remove the 47 from office.

Kinnock then proceeded to conduct the most horrendous witch-hunt against not only Militant supporters but also any lefts who supported building houses and creating jobs.

They set the process in motion to reduce the Labour Party to the corpse that it is today - devoid of socialist policy and an instrument of capitalism.

What do you think were the biggest lessons of Liverpool for the 560 TUSC candidates standing in the local elections this year?

It was absolutely crystal clear that our policy was one of opposition to all cuts and of putting forward a socialist alternative - by creating jobs and building houses and expanding social services.

These things are rapidly being torn down by the current Labour council in Liverpool and of course being replicated by Labour councils around the country. With almost no exception every single Labour councillor is involved in passing cuts.

TUSC's representatives have been very clear - we won't do that and we'll conduct a campaign like Liverpool did in the 1980s - mobilise the working class in a massive movement of opposition and put so much pressure on the government that they'll either be compelled to back down or be kicked into the dustbin of history.

Liverpool: A City That Dared to Fight, by Peter Taaffe and Tony Mulhearn, £14.95

Available from Socialist Books: leftbooks.co.uk 020 8988 8789

Why we're standing as Tusc candidates

Save our NHS!

As a former committed Labour supporter and ex-Care UK worker I am standing for TUSC in Doncaster in the local elections. I was fortunate enough to get back into the NHS recently, but my wife is still employed by private contractor Care UK and is currently on a two-week strike after undertaking 20 days of strike action so far. I was also involved in this action and will continue to support my partner and her comrades.

I was disillusioned with the Labour-controlled council and local Labour MPs who are all in collusion with the Con-Dem government by implementing their cuts. This spurred me to join the Socialist Party and to stand as a candidate.

It's about time that we stood up to defend our NHS, public services and education - all of which are despised by the Tory party.

I went through a similar period in 1982 when working in the steelworks in Sheffield. I was made redundant and was unemployed for nearly three years under the Thatcher government, which went on to decimate the coal industry and the whole infrastructure of our country.

Nearly 30 years on we are seeing what the Tories have wanted to do all along. Having created a culture of fear in the

NHS through understaffing and undermining, they are now selling it off to their Tory mates. One of these is John Nash, one of the bosses of Care UK, who has donated substantial amounts of cash to the Tory party.

He was given a peerage, as well as under-priced NHS contracts.

Care UK has, after a 'honeymoon' period, shafted the NHS staff (who were covered by TUPE which should protect their existing contracts) by attacking their terms and conditions in Doncaster Supported Living Services. Three months after the contract that they bid for was awarded to them in preference to the NHS, undercutting by just £80,000, they are now saying they need to save £1.4 million.

It's a lie! They lied about the budget to get the contract and thought they would make an easy buck for their shareholders by attacking the experienced NHS staff they inherited. Well what a shock they've had! Over 90 workers have not signed their contracts and have taken firm strike action.

This is the first time this company has met resistance and it is now spreading nationally. This is the start of a fightback to defend not only pay, but the NHS as we know it, from falling into the hands of privateers.

That's why I am standing for TUSC as the only real alternative to fight this attack on the working class and the vulnerable people we care for.

Greg Beaumont, TUSC candidate for Edenthorpe, Doncaster

Decent housing now!

I am a mother of five living in Brent. I have been fighting attempts to force my family out of Brent since I was made homeless in April 2012 when our benefits were dramatically cut.

I launched the "Housing 4 All" campaign, which calls for the council to adopt a "no evictions due to benefit cuts policy, more council housing at affordable rents and rent controls" among other measures to tackle the housing crisis.

All of this has led me to the conclusion that I need to stand as a TUSC candidate against the current council and its ongoing implementation of government cuts.

Isabel Counihan-Sanchez, Candidate for Kilburn, Brent

Be the alternative

I'm not a career politician, but have a wide experience of life. Despite several disabilities I'm a successful parent, manage to paint the occasional portrait, care for my dog and fight for the things I believe in.

As an ex-nurse, and with experiences of the benefit system, I know what's important in life. I am standing as a candidate because I don't want to live in a society where the sick and disabled are killing themselves through fear of Atos. Where people are made destitute and homeless. Where foodbanks are the only growth industry, and the NHS and other vital services are privatised while the creators of the economic recession continue to get rich.

Locally I want to do everything possible to confront politicians with the real effects of their decisions, and be an alternative voice stating no to all cuts.

Teresa Stuart, TUSC candidate for Stoke, Plymouth

On the campaign trail with TUSC

Suffering austerity - standing for TUSC

Daniel Sutton-Johanson

I'm standing for the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC) in the Central Southsea ward of Portsmouth City.

Having grown up in South Wales and seeing the effects of the Thatcher period on those around me, I guess you could say my political choices were slowly being defined without me realising. I've always supported what I understood to be socialist principles, but mainly from the sidelines.

When the period of austerity began, my wife and I were severely affected. I'm a carer for my wife, who relies heavily upon Disabled Living Allowance (DLA) to pay her way in life and maintain her independence.

I was working as a coordinator for Sure Start but several of my colleagues and myself were caught up in the "efficiency measures", reducing the service down by a third, and then again six months later, by another third.

Even though David Cameron claimed the budget for Sure Start would not be cut by his government, he failed to mention that its ring fence would be removed. This left local authorities free to cut what they like.

After 12 months of applying for work, I finally secured a job as a manager in the voluntary sector, working with special educational needs children. This lasted only three months due to cuts. Since then I've been caring full time for my wife while saving what I can to re-train as a counsellor/psychotherapist, a profession not recognised by the government as important enough to qualify for any type of loan or subsidy.

In the last four years, we both have seen people affected by a string of unfair and misdirected cost 'saving' measures such as the bedroom tax, caring allowance and council tax benefit cuts. If I'm honest, although I am kept busy, volunteer up to ten hours a week in the community, relying upon benefits for such a long time has been a big challenge practically and emotionally.

The covert privatisation of the NHS and the sell-off of the Royal Mail were the straws that broke the camel's back.

The fact more cuts are still to come to those who had nothing to do with the financial crash of our boom and bust economic model, convinced me to do what I could to help TUSC.

I hope this landmark in TUSC's history will be the beginning of cementing a true alternative to the self-centred, populist political climate which has suffocated and failed the 99%.

I'm proud to be a part of such efforts.

TUSC and students

As a student I experience first-hand the strain that this government's spending cuts and agenda of privatisation has put on our lives.

Expensive, uncapped rents through uncooperative agencies who seem reluctant to carry out any repairs to student housing; jeopardising our grades by having to work part time to make ends meet and a debt that we will still be paying off well into our 40s (if not longer) are only some of the problems that today's students face. TUSC pledges to introduce rent controls, halt marketisation and privatisation and fight for a free education for all, in order to improve our standard

of living both now and in the future.

Zoe Brunswick, TUSC candidate in Fallowfield, and University of Manchester student

Lambeth deserves socialist councillors

James Ivens

Lambeth is one of London's most deprived boroughs. But we've shown we're ready to fight.

Lambeth College and the Ritzy Picturehouse are standing up to greedy bosses with strikes. Clapham Fire Station was saved by a large and vibrant local campaign. The Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC) backs the lot. But Lambeth is still blighted by high rent, low pay and gaping cuts to vital services.

Young people and low-paid workers are forced further and further out by obscene rents. But instead of responding to a social housing crisis by building social housing, Labour is selling it off and evicting the tenants! This council has offloaded around £100 million of public housing stock while welcoming luxury developments for the rich.

TUSC wants the council to use its licensing powers to control rents. Private rents should be brought in line with social rents. We also want a massive programme of council house building and renovation.

I would use a council seat as a platform to back trade union struggles. We want a £10 an hour minimum wage with no exceptions. Like all TUSC candidates, I pledge never to vote for a single cut or for privatisation.

What's socialism got to do with fighting austerity?

Each week members of the Socialist Party sell copies of the Socialist newspaper at workplaces, colleges, and working class estates all over England and Wales, as well as at meetings, picket lines and protests. Sellers are often questioned about socialist ideas.

Here, in a reprint from 2011, Socialist Party general secretary Peter Taaffe 'reports' on one such discussion as it might take place.

Socialist seller (S): Vote Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition. Use your vote to fight the cuts!

Potential buyer (B): Ok, I'm against the cuts but what is the alternative? The government says there is a massive public sector deficit and, if we don't cut it, then it will grow to unacceptable levels. Then the country will go bankrupt.

S: Well, the first thing I'd say is that we, the working people, who are the majority in this country, didn't create this deficit. The rich and their system of capitalism, particularly the bankers, are mainly responsible. The banks were bailed out to the tune of about £80 billion directly, with up to £1 trillion in loan guarantees, etc.

Also, because of the crisis of capitalism - which again we didn't create - around 2.5 million people in Britain don't have a job - including a million young people between the ages of 16 and 24.

It's the largesse handed out to the bankers and the increased cost to the state in unemployment and other benefits which accounts for most of the deficit.

B: Yes, yes - but this deficit exists. How are we going to pay for it? How can we ultimately eliminate it?

S: Did you know that the total deficit could be wiped out if the rich paid taxes like ordinary people do? Tax avoidance mostly by the rich, including the likes of Gary Barlow who put money into a scheme set up for tax avoidance purposes, comes to £120 billion a year. That's almost equal to the total government budget deficit, £143 billion, to be eliminated over four years.

But the Con-Dems are using this situation to pursue a scorched earth policy against all the historical achievements of working class people, the NHS, pay and conditions, etc.

This represents an attempt to turn back the wheel of history to the 1930s and in some senses to the 19th century. Working class people are being made to pay for rescuing capitalism in a severe crisis.

B: But if we try to make the rich pay for the deficit, won't they just take their money out of the country?

S: Yes, they might attempt that. But then they would be openly acting selfishly by seeking to flout the democratic wishes of the majority of the British people. We would therefore have every right to introduce measures to prevent them from doing so.

B: But isn't that to attack the principle of private property?

S: When socialists talk about 'private property' we're not talking about the personal possessions of ordinary people - houses, cars, fridges, etc. The private property of the rich and the super-rich comes through the super-exploitation of us, working class people.

They would argue that their profit, which is what Karl Marx called "the unpaid labour of the working class", is necessary in order to keep the system going. We should never forget that profit is achieved by exploitation - often ruthlessly so in China and elsewhere today - of the labour power of the working class.

B: Don't we need rich people to create jobs and anyway, doesn't competition drive invention?

S: There is a grain of truth in the arguments of the bosses. In the past, by investing this surplus - profits if you like - in industry, they played a role in developing society, providing jobs and increased wealth for a time.

But for the last 20 to 30 years investment in factories, in what we would call the 'means of production' - the organisation of labour, science and technique - and the actual making of real things, has dropped dramatically.

Instead they sought to boost their profits by a massive injection of credit, the building up of the financial sector at the expense of real value and the creation of jobs. This created a massive financial bubble which has now burst, resulting in the present devastating crisis.

This is a real indictment of the failure of capitalism. The International Monetary Fund has calculated that during this economic crisis, in 2008 alone, the total loss in assets devalued worldwide came to \$50 trillion - roughly equal to the value of one year's global output of goods and services! This wealth is being destroyed because capitalism is a system based on production for profit for the few and not the social need of the many.

B: OK, the capitalists failed. But you still haven't said how you would stop them from avoiding any attacks on their wealth.

S: If they tried to continue with evasion, if they tried to take their loot out of the country, then a radical socialist government should introduce state controls of all capital coming in and out of the country.

This would be accompanied by 'opening the books'. The accounts of major companies should be inspected by

committees of workers and consumers. This would be a form of workers' control, which is vital as a means of revealing the real wealth and how it is to be controlled for the benefit of the majority.

B: How can you do this in an open and free economy?

S: By nationalising the banks and finance houses.

B: Didn't the British government try this at the beginning of the financial crisis when they took big stakes in the banks?

S: Up to a point yes. But it was not complete nationalisation. And it certainly wasn't carried out in a way that was beneficial to the majority of the people of this country. New Labour left control in the hands of big business managers.

Even when the banks are nominally under our control - that is the state - they are run by and in the interests of the capitalists. Look at the tops of the majority-nationalised RBS bank - they are paying out millions in bonuses, salaries and shares to themselves!

Instead we want real democratic nationalisation, conducted in a socialist manner through workers' control and management. This would involve the workers in the banking and financial sector, together with representatives of workers in general and government representatives, as well as depositors and other users, controlling and managing the banks on behalf of the people as a whole, providing cheap loans, mortgages, etc.

B: Won't big business take fright and sabotage any efforts to rein them in?

S: It is entirely possible that this could happen or be threatened. In the past, when minimal measures were taken against them, the capitalists threatened a strike of capital. When the Labour government in the 1970s - led by Harold Wilson as prime minister - introduced a tax on capital, big business, with the help of the newspapers, conducted a ferocious struggle which resulted in 174 amendments to the bill, and effectively nullified the proposed tax increases against the rich.

B: Well there we go. You can't do anything.

S: Now, I didn't say that. If we, the Socialist Party, have majority support, we could do a great deal to counter the undemocratic defiance by a handful of capitalists, seeking to thwart the wishes of the majority.

Harold Wilson and the Labour government, because they would not go outside the framework of capitalism, bent the knee to the bosses' pressure and capitulated. We would have called their bluff and proposed to Parliament a bill to take over these big companies who were threatening to defy and blackmail the elected representatives of the people.

B: But again, would that not mean violating the age-old principles of private property?

S: To invoke this alleged 'principle' is a smokescreen to mask the colossal and undemocratic concentration of power in the hands of a handful of the rich.

A few figures to illustrate this starkly. In Britain the Rich List reveals that while we all suffer austerity measures, the richest get much much richer. In a year the number of billionaires in the UK has gone from 88 to 104!

Of the 100 largest economies in the world 52 are corporations and 48 are countries. The top 500 companies control 70% of world trade. The top 200 companies' combined sales are equal to 28% of world GDP but employ only 0.82% of the world's workforce.

In the US, 2% of companies account for almost 75% of business activity. Here in Britain, the Socialist Party points out that 150 companies control 70-75% of the wealth of this country.

In other words a handful of billionaires control what are, in effect, monopoly concerns, which determine what will and will not be produced. They control who will and who will not work, which party they would like to see elected in which government to best represent their interests.

We do not live in a real democracy. Capitalist democracy is where everybody, at least in theory, can say what they like so long as big business, a handful of monopoly companies, can decide what takes place in practice.

B: But how can you break the power of the rich and the big monopolies?

S: That's a very good question. We will propose that these companies be taken over - nationalised by a socialist government which would then organise a democratic socialist plan of production. This plan would be drawn up through the involvement of working class people, representatives of the middle class, such as small shopkeepers, small businesses etc, the users and customers of industry, etc.

B: Two questions spring to mind. Wouldn't nationalisation be, in effect, 'expropriation' of the assets of people who, through diligent work, have built up this wealth over generations?

Secondly, if you take over industry, don't you also 'nationalise' the savings of many, not necessarily wealthy, people who invested in stocks and shares - for instance trade union members who have their pensions invested on the stock exchange?

S: Firstly this wealth and power of big business has been built up, as we showed earlier, by the exploitation of the labour power of the working class.

In the past there was some justification for this - despite the horrors of capitalism in the Industrial Revolution, the slave trade, etc. This was because it built up industry and was therefore ultimately laying the basis for abolishing shortages and boosting living standards.

But capitalism is a system which cannot fully utilise the full potential of the productive forces, as has been shown by the series of crises throughout its history and particularly the present crisis.

Karl Marx pointed out that when it begins to hold back production, to destroy wealth, capitalism betrays its "historical mission", which was to develop production.

When it begins to hold back production it becomes obsolete. This does not mean, however, that capitalism will 'automatically' disappear. It needs to be 'helped' off the stage of history by the actions of the working class and the labour movement. So we need a new social system - one that involves a state acting for the majority and not the privileged minority - which is also democratic at every level both in the running of industry and society.

But we, that is the working class and the labour movement, are not impervious to the interests of the small investors. Even to the big investors we will be more generous than they are to the poor, those on benefits, etc. Compensation will be paid on the basis of proven need to all whose assets are being taken over by a democratic socialist workers' state.

B: And the ordinary people?

S: It goes without saying that, of course, trade union members and their pensions will be safeguarded; in fact, pensions will be rapidly increased from the current miserable level which the coalition government intends to cut further. All workers - as well as the unemployed, those on low wages, pensioners, etc - will enormously benefit from a socialist planned economy.

B: How can you possibly guarantee that, by waving some kind of magical 'socialist' wand, things will improve in the way you describe?

S: There will be no hocus-pocus; there is no mystery in how a socialist planned economy would be organised and will be superior to outmoded capitalism.

Capitalism is a system which cannot utilise the full productive potential of its own system. During the Great Recession the output of the world economy was back to the levels of 1989.

But in the 17 countries forming the eurozone, joblessness among the young now officially stands at over 20% (although it's much higher in many areas) alongside closed factories.

In Ireland we have the phenomena of empty 'ghost estates' while millions throughout the world lack basic shelter. One billion people on the planet go to bed hungry every night, an increase of 150 million compared to 15 years ago.

A planned economy would use all the resources which now lie idle, as well as cutting out the colossal waste from unnecessary advertising, duplication of production, etc.

Instead of the measly growth rate of capitalist economies at present - with Britain not really growing at all - a socialist planned economy could rapidly increase production on an environmentally sustainable basis and generate huge extra resources in Europe and the world.

It would increase the participation of the workforce in running society, including production, as well as consumers - through cutting the working day without any loss in pay. This would not lead to a decrease in production but give an enormous boost to it. In schools, in housing, in education, instead of the current cuts, there would be a big expansion. Undreamed of plenty is possible on the basis of socialism.

B: But didn't 'socialism' fail in Russia? Instead of democracy there was dictatorship by people like Stalin.

S: The Russian revolution, in the period immediately after 1917, when the October revolution took place, established the most democratic state in history. It proceeded to take into public ownership the land, industry and finance.

For the first time the majority - that is the working class and the poor peasantry - were in power. They ruled through a system of workers' and peasants' councils.

There were no privileges for the representatives of the people, who lived on the average wage, were subject to recall, etc. These councils, for the first time in history, raised the working class to power and allowed them to rule.

The Russian revolution was seen as just the beginning of the European and the world revolution. Unfortunately, despite favourable opportunities, this did not transpire because of the betrayal of the workers' leaders in the social democratic parties (like the Labour Party in Britain) in the West at that stage. Therefore Russia was isolated and, on the basis of scarcity, a low cultural level and a privileged elite, the bureaucracy began to emerge, personified by Stalin.

This bureaucratic caste betrayed the ideals of the Russian revolution - although the planned economy was still maintained and therefore the system which remained was still relatively progressive compared to capitalism - and gradually established a one-party totalitarian regime.

B: What guarantee is there that your British version of socialism will not go the same way?

S: This will not happen in a socialist Britain. I know this is a bold assertion but it's based on a sober assessment of the different conditions between Britain today and Russia at the time of the revolution. We live in an advanced industrial country, with a high level of culture, access to computers, the social media, etc. We have a powerful and educated working class with its own organisations, the trade unions.

Once working people here carry through such a big social change they will not allow a repetition of Stalinism, for power and privilege to be concentrated in a few hands.

B: But won't those in power just get greedy?

S: Yes, there is always a danger of a bureaucratic layer seeking to control everything. Look at the trade unions today. There are leaderships sometimes on salaries several times that of trade union members. There are leaderships who fear the active participation of the members, particularly militant fighters like members of the Socialist Party fighting to transform the unions so that they reflect the real will of working people.

The only way to check this bureaucracy is through democracy. Trade union and other officials should be elected subject to recall. Such will be the advantages of socialism, particularly implemented democratically, that there would be no possibility of going back to capitalism. This would be as absurd and as utopian as anybody today hoping to return to feudalism, to the hardship of the middle ages.

B: But do you think that the capitalists will just allow you to go ahead and expropriate them without resistance?

S: We will have a democratic majority and under the rules of democracy a minority should abide by the will of the majority. Of course the rights of minorities would be protected. Not just the working class but the intermediate layers of society can be won to socialist system.

Once the mass of working people come together in struggle, a huge social movement, all of those layers of society who are subject to attack by the system, gravitate to the workers' side. This was shown, after all, in the revolutions in Egypt, Tunisia and throughout the Middle East.

The Con-Dems are attacking the police by proposing to cut their numbers. Even servicemen, on returning from Afghanistan, could be thrown on the dole. Many of them then can be open to the idea of fighting the cuts. But also this can open up for them the vista of a new society where all the talents can be used.

Nevertheless we are realistic. History has shown that it is not the left, it is not the working class movement, which resorts to force to attain its ends. We are absolutely opposed to the methods of terrorism. But we're not pacifists; we will defend all democratic rights from any forceful attempt to take them away. We fight with democratic means for a democratic majority. But the ruling class does not always abide by even its own 'rules' when its vital interests are threatened.

B: Ok, you've made the case for a socialist Britain. But what kind of set-up will you have in relations with Europe and the world?

S: We don't believe in socialism in one country. Russia shows that there is no possibility of any one country moving towards socialism by itself. Leon Trotsky, the great socialist theoretician of the workers' movement, continually argued against this idea and he was proved right.

The development of the productive forces has completely outgrown the narrow limits of the nation state. The failed attempt of the capitalists in Europe to come together through the European Union is one expression of this.

If Egypt can detonate and assist the movement in Wisconsin, in the belly of the beast, the US itself, imagine if Britain was to go socialist.

The marvellous election of Kshama Sawant of Socialist Alternative in Seattle, where I have just visited, shows the great possibilities that exist. The whole world is ripe for socialism. We need to build the forces which can make this possible - which is why you should join the Socialist Party!

From Britain to Seattle to Brazil

Fight back to scrap junk jobs

Claire Laker-Mansfield, Youth Fight for Jobs

Britain is no country for young people. It's got so bad that journalists have invented a new term to describe a special 'phase' of life which our generation experiences.

Apparently we're all going through a 'quarter life crisis': It's that time in your mid to late 20s when you realise that your hopes and aspirations are as far away as ever.

It's waking up and remembering your piles of student debt while you wait for a call telling you whether you'll get any hours work for your zero-hour contract job. It's wondering if you'll ever be able to afford to move out of your parents' place, let alone get onto the property ladder and away from extortionate private rents. And it's the feeling of failure that comes from being constantly told that it would all have been different if you'd just tried a bit harder.

But the people responsible for the 'quarter life crisis' - just like the financial one - are not those suffering as a result of it. Our future has been snatched away by the rich 1% and their representatives in the three main parties. Bankers got bailed out while young people got sold out.

But we don't have to put up with being forced onto the scrap heap. Young people are full of skill, talent and ingenuity. If the capitalist system doesn't allow us to use all that - and won't reward us fairly when it does - then the system is what needs changing.

Youth Fight for Jobs (YFJ) is organising to demand a future for the 99%. We're not resigned to working zero-hour contract jobs paid a minimum wage. We say if we get organised we can stop this super-exploitation and fight for the dignity and security we deserve.

On 15 May, we'll be targeting the multinational giant McDonalds. International protests will be hitting them with a clear message: We won't put up with rock bottom wages, zero job security and bullying bosses.

Around the world we're drawing inspiration from the strikes that American fast food workers have taken, and especially the fight for a \$15 an hour minimum wage in Seattle led by Kshama Sawant and Socialist Alternative. We are warning that, from Britain to Brazil to New Zealand, workers are fighting back.

YFJ is working alongside the bakers' union as part of the Fast Food Rights campaign. So get involved in the fight for your future. Join us for protests around the country (and the world)!

See www.youthfightforjobs.com for details of the protest

Editorial from the Socialist issue 811

Ukip - the establishment's 'anti-establishment' party

Leader of Ukip, Nigel Farage, has declared that Ukip is set to top the poll in the European elections. A Sky News poll this week indicated what lies behind Ukip's surge. A massive 72% of voters don't trust the Westminster parties.

For some Ukip appears the most effective stick to beat them with. In reality, however, Ukip is the establishment's 'anti-establishment' party. Ukip receive wall-to-wall publicity in the capitalist media, in stark contrast to forces to the left of Labour.

The Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC), is contesting 560 seats in this year's local elections yet has

received very little mainstream media coverage.

Farage's constant presence in the news does not represent 'fair' coverage based on a measurement of a party's support. In the 2012 local elections, for example, Ukip received an average of 13% of votes where they stood, compared to TUSC receiving an average of just over 6%. Yet Nigel Farage has been on Question Time eleven times during this parliament, and 27 times since 2009, more than any other politician.

Ukip have even been given assistance by the police. When one blogger posted a list of policies espoused by Ukip candidates - including scrapping paid maternity leave, raising income tax for the poorest 88%, speeding up privatisation of the NHS and cutting education spending - he received an official police visit asking him to remove the offending post, despite it not having broken any laws.

Growing anger

As anger at the mainstream politicians has grown, the capitalist class have had a semi-conscious policy of encouraging support for Ukip as a 'safe' form of protest. Ukip's right-wing nationalist programme does not offer any way forward for working class people; its politics are to the right of the Tory Party.

Ukip is a party of bankers and millionaires, with Farage a millionaire ex-stockbroker. Ukip's big-business donations include one from the ex-chair of Lonmin, the mining company responsible for the August 2012 murder of striking workers in Marikana, South Africa.

However, using populist supposedly 'pro-worker' rhetoric (but completely opposing workers defending themselves via strikes) combined with right-wing nationalist, anti-immigrant propaganda, they have been able to partially step into the vacuum that exists because of the absence of a mass workers' party. Many workers who vote Ukip do not know - or care - what they actually stand for, but want to use them as a means to voice their protest.

In 2011, in the wake of the huge - 750,000 strong - trade union demonstration against cuts to public services Ukip supporters initiated a counter-demo which demanded 'more cuts'. A paltry few hundred turned up.

Ukip could be similarly marginalised on the electoral plane, if the leaders of the trade union movement were leading a serious struggle against austerity. This would mean strike action - including a 24-hour general strike against austerity - but also the building of a political party that opposes austerity.

Instead, at this stage, the majority of the trade union leaders continue to try to mobilise behind Labour, despite its support for austerity and now Miliband's threat to increase Britain's already repressive anti-trade union laws.

TUSC, however, is starting to take the fight against austerity onto the electoral plane. It is supported by the transport workers' union, the RMT, and many prominent trade unionists. Its candidates are trade unionists, anti-cuts activists and community campaigners.

But TUSC is operating in this election on a financial wing and a prayer. If it had the resources of the trade unions behind it - even just the £1.5 million that Unite has reduced its affiliation fee to Labour by - every person in this country could have a leaflet with an anti-austerity message and every town and city could have a billboard with a clear anti-cuts, pro-working class message.

Real alternative needed

Only a genuine workers' party is capable of cutting across Ukip. All the establishment parties are concerned by Ukip's growth but they are incapable of stopping it.

How can the axe-men and women of the pro-austerity parties attack Farage for posing as standing up for 'the little man and woman' when actually supporting an extra £77 billion worth of cuts in public services which would devastate lives? It is mistaken and counter-productive for socialists to organise joint anti-Ukip campaigning with the pro-austerity

parties.

How can the big three parties, all up to their necks in expenses scandals, effectively answer Farage - who himself has claimed over £60,000 worth of expenses? A debate with Dave Nellist - the national chair of the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition - who for nine years was a workers' MP on a worker's wage, would be a very different proposition.

It is not possible to say how long Ukip's surge will continue. Certainly they will see a new swathe of councillors elected on 22 May, and do well in the European elections. It is possible they will be able to use this as a springboard to increase their vote in the general election. It is vital to counter Ukip.

This should include exposing the blatant racism, sexism and homophobia of many of their candidates. However, central to undermining Ukip will be revealing them to be just one more party for the 1%, and more importantly beginning to build an electoral voice that really does stand for the millions not the millionaires.

European elections: Vote No2EU - Yes To Workers' Rights

While TUSC is standing in local elections, for the European elections the Socialist Party is supporting No2EU - Yes To Workers' Rights, which is led by the RMT union.

No2EU opposes the pro-privatisation, pro-profiteering, anti-worker policies of the European Union.

No2EU says:

- Yes to workers' rights
- Exit the EU on the basis of socialist policies
- Reject EU treaties and policies that privatise our public services
- No to public spending cuts whether they come from Brussels or Britain
- Repeal anti-trade union rulings by the European Court of Justice and the EU
- Yes to international solidarity of working people

Housing evictions - main parties to blame

Mary Jackson, TUSC candidate Stainforth and Moorends ward, Doncaster

Evictions in Britain have reached a ten year high. Disgracefully 31,000 possession orders are being applied for by councils, and it's mostly Labour councils that are carrying out this appalling act.

Another 6,500 are being evicted by private landlords but we can expect no better from them; they are letting properties to make profit. Our elected councillors are supposedly providing a service.

This housing crisis is a nightmare for families, but also a growing social problem for us all. Cuts to housing benefit, the bedroom tax and the benefit cap are making it impossible for people to keep their homes. None of these measures were designed to save public money or ease the housing crisis (as was the excuse of this unelected government) but simply a measure to take government money (our money) to use for tax breaks for the super-rich - £8 billion this year alone.

The only answer to this crisis is a massive council house-building and regeneration programme which would not only create the desperately needed homes for the two million families currently on the waiting lists for social housing but would cut the dole queue, create apprenticeships for young people and put money in people's pockets.

The money is available in council coffers from the sale of council houses over the past 30 years. Councils are saving

this for a 'rainy day' but haven't they noticed its pouring down!

But neither Labour nor the Con-Dems plan to invest in homes and jobs in this way. These parties are too busy putting the interests of the fat cats first. Housebuilder Telford Homes, for example, expects to double its profits on the back of Osborne's 'Help-to-buy' scheme, which is also fuelling a housing price bubble.

Fortunately, there is an alternative to the establishment parties and their slavish devotion to 'market' policies.

On 22 May, Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition candidates are contesting council elections in the biggest left of Labour challenge since World War Two.

TUSC councillors will refuse to vote for any Con-Dem cuts to our services and will fight for the creation of millions of council houses. Don't waste your vote. Use it!

- Tackle the housing crisis by mass building and renovation of council houses
- Cap all rents in the private sector at council rent level
- Scrap the bedroom tax. Reverse all welfare cuts
- For a £10 an hour minimum wage for all
- Nationalise the house-building companies
- Fight for a socialist alternative to capitalism

Gove robs education budget to fund divisive 'Free Schools'

Martin Powell-Davies, NUT executive

Tory Education Secretary Michael Gove is an easy target for comedians. A tweet from David Schneider - "Free Schools to be renamed £400m-From-Budget-For-Other-Kids-Schools" - succinctly summed up the latest news. Unfortunately, Gove's policies are no laughing matter.

Reports suggest that these millions are being diverted from the Basic Need budget, urgently needed by local authorities to provide additional school places, into his pet Free Schools project instead.

'Free Schools' are newly-opened privatised academies, 'free' of those cumbersome regulations like having to staff classes with qualified teachers and having to use recognised school buildings.

They are a key part of Gove's ideological mission to accelerate the break-up of state education, replacing accountable local authority schooling with privatised academies. As with the rest of the public sector, education can then also become another avenue for big business to make money, especially if staff pay and pensions can be cut.

Gove appears to have an ideological belief that 'the market works'. The history of privatised services, and the recent history of free schools, tells a different story. Several Free Schools have been hit by high-profile scandals over financial mismanagement and poor educational provision. One of the first to open, Discovery New School in Crawley, has already been forced to close. Yet £3 million was spent on this failed project. In Sweden, the policy has proved disastrous.

Altogether, 174 Free Schools have opened so far but many in areas where there is no pressing need for additional places.

However, in areas like London, where the place shortage is becoming critical, councils aren't being allocated the 'basic need' funding they urgently require. £400 million could help fund about 30,000 much needed places.

Even if funding is allocated to Local Authorities, Gove has changed legislation to prevent them opening new community schools where they are needed. Instead, new places have to be provided by Free Schools.

The cross-party Public Accounts Committee has started to question Gove's profligacy and both Labour and the Lib Dems have used the issue as an opportunity to knock government policy. Unfortunately, while both parties might want to show opposition as we approach a general election, their education policies suggest that, if in office, they will follow a very similar path.

Instead of leaving school provision to a chaotic and inefficient free-for-all of private providers, elected local authorities should be given the job of planning and providing well-resourced new schools - and be given the investment needed to do so.

The Free Schools fiasco exposes the madness of the free market ideology that forms the agenda of all the main political parties. Trade unions have a responsibility to lead a community struggle to defend public services and to win the resources needed to meet public needs.

- Martin is standing for the NUT general secretary in the forthcoming elections. See electmartin1.blogspot.com
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Them & Us

Garage sale

Hardly a week passes without another example of crazy property values generated by the government-fuelled housing bubble. If readers thought the recent £550,000 sale price of a large garage in Camberwell, south London, was bonkers then prepare yourselves for this: six dilapidated garages in Fulham Road sold at auction for £700,000 - ten times their guide price!

No relief

Perhaps the most outrageous example of profiteering private landlords comes from an advertised one-bedroom flat in Earls Court, west London. At only £170 a week you might be tempted to think this is a bargain. However, the 'fully furnished bedsit' is actually little bigger than a single bed and is so tiny that there is no toilet!

No interest

In the debate on the forthcoming independence referendum hundreds of people have packed meetings in Scotland to hear the case for socialism. At the other end of the political spectrum, however, generating interest is proving harder. Conservative Future Scotland, the Scottish Tory Party's youth wing, had to cancel its national conference on 10 May - "due to lack of interest and declining youth membership numbers". Only 12 tickets to the event had been sold!

Low ratings

So desperate is the Labour Party leadership not to alienate big business that Miliband and Co continually reiterate their support for spending cuts while refusing to offer meaningful policies to improve the lives of the majority of the population.

Unfortunately for Ed this strategy has resulted in Labour's standing in opinion polls actually sinking below that of the Tories, despite four years of vicious government austerity. According to a Guardian poll, Labour is on 31% support - down 6% on last month, its lowest rating since losing the 2010 election - while the Tories are on 33%. And adding to Labour's woes, Miliband was given a net personal approval rating of minus 25!

Jobs cull

As the mass media prematurely claimed the end of the 'great recession', Barclays Bank spoilt the government's party by announcing 19,000 job cuts, of which over half are in the UK.

Some 4,000 jobs have already been axed. It's also expected that many of the bank's high street branches will close to cut costs and boost profits.

Instead of attacking the greedy banksters Tory Chancellor George Osborne called the jobs cull "regrettable".

Taxing issue

Pfizer's multibillion takeover bid for AstraZeneca has highlighted once again the Con-Dems' generous taxation system which benefits big business (20% corporation tax in the UK compared to 40% in the US).

But even this liberal tax regime hasn't stopped leading companies using subsidiaries based in secretive tax havens.

According to the charity Christian Aid, FTSE 100 firms have set up nearly 30,000 subsidiaries, with 14% of them based in "highly secretive" jurisdictions thereby avoiding taxation. This is despite Prime Minister Cameron's repeated pledge to enforce 'transparency' with multinationals.

South Africa: The ANC victory, WASP and the EFF

Weizman Hamilton, General Secretary of WASP

The African National Congress (ANC) has been re-elected with 62% of the vote. This represents a marginal decline of 3.5% on 2009. Given the scandal-filled term of president Zuma, not least of all the Marikana massacre of miners and 'Nkandla-gate' (the lavish state funding of his palatial residence), ANC strategists must nevertheless be breathing a sigh of relief.

However, it hides the reality that the ANC has continued to shed significant support. Sixteen million did not take part in this election. The corresponding figures in 2004 and 2009 were 12 million and 12.4 million respectively.

The ANC belatedly realised that their dominance could not be taken for granted. And its election machine was put into a high gear.

While there has been no widespread or outright corruption, that does not mean the ANC has 'played fair' in this election campaign. The ANC intentionally conflates its role as a political party and their control of the government social services apparatus.

There was a large increase in the budget for food parcels to the poorest in the months running up the election, the recipients of which were of course told it was a gift from the ANC not that it was paid for by taxpayers' money.

The 12 million people in receipt of social grants - pensions, disability payments and childcare - are regularly told that it

is paid to them 'by the ANC'. Even more outrageously, the lie that the hated racist segregation system of apartheid would be brought back should the ANC lose was propagated.

ANC - capitalist funding

Further, the ANC's patronage network was been deployed to full effect. The state broadcaster SABC pulled two TV commercials by the opposition Democratic Alliance (DA) and Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) at the last minute on the spurious grounds that they would "incite violence".

In South Africa, vast sums of money are spent on elections yet there are no rules on the disclosure of party finances. We can safely assume that significant sections of the capitalist class poured huge sums into the ANC's campaign.

The ANC leadership is in reality an executive committee of the new black capitalist class. On the ANC National Executive Committee, over 50% of its members are company directors and one-third are directors of more than one company, with over one in ten holding five directorships or more. Cyril Ramaphosa, deputy-president of the ANC, has wealth estimated at over R6 billion.

Against this behemoth, the Workers And Socialist Party (WASP) embraced the enormous challenge of organising a general election campaign before we had even reached our first anniversary. We are of course disappointed in the low vote, which was below our expectations. We received a little over 8,000 votes (0.05%).

However, the low vote cannot erase the enormous strides that WASP has taken in its short existence in establishing key points of support among the working class. We have already received phone calls from mineworker shop stewards and factory workers reassuring the WASP leadership and encouraging them to continue the task of building 'our' party.

The scarcity of resources for the campaign was a fundamental problem. The struggle to raise the finances to pay the enormous election deposits meant that we spent over a month without a cent as we launched the second phase of fundraising for election material and a campaign fund.

In addition, early in the year, the media decided on their narrative - this election was a three-horse race between the ANC, DA and EFF. WASP was in reality excluded from serious press coverage.

But there are other important political factors to take account of. Unfortunately, WASP has not been able to consolidate its position among the mineworkers. Despite the crucial role of the founders of WASP - the Democratic Socialist Movement (the Socialist Party's sister party in the CWI) - in the move of the majority of mineworkers from the treacherous ANC aligned National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) to the previously marginal Association of Mining and Construction Workers (AMCU), the AMCU leadership has done everything to remove the DSM's influence among the mineworkers.

DSM and WASP members and supporters have been victimised and expelled from the union, frequently leading to the loss of their jobs. The new Workers Association Union (WAU) has attempted to take advantage of demoralisation among sections of the mineworkers in what is now a three month long wage strike in the platinum sector.

The lie has been spread by the AMCU leadership, disgracefully encouraged by tiny jealous forces on 'the left', that WASP is behind this scab union. Thus, WASP found it very hard to even campaign on the platinum belt, with some comrades even facing death threats.

The National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (Numsa), after taking the bold and historic decision in December at a special congress not to campaign for the ANC, unfortunately, failed to develop the position into a positive alternative beyond the promise to found a workers' party by 2016.

Lack of a clear position

For months WASP campaigned to persuade the Numsa leadership not to miss the historic opportunity that the 2014

elections presented for the establishment of a bridgehead for genuine socialism by trying to secure a handful of seats in parliament.

We invited Numsa to take its place in the leadership of WASP, for Numsa to present its own candidates for WASP's election lists and pointed out that this would in fact compliment the democratic decisions of Numsa members at the special national congress. Unfortunately the Numsa leadership did not take up our offer.

The lack of a clear call on who to support in this election had an impact on the wider Numsa membership.

The Numsa leadership's position was used by the rest of the South African left as an excuse not to back WASP under the cover of 'supporting Numsa'.

Finally, WASP had serious competition in the form of the Economic Freedom Fighters. The EFF has done quite well and won over a million votes which will translate into nearly 30 MPs not to mention a similar number of MPLs at provincial level.

This left-populist party, standing on a left programme of nationalisation and land expropriation made an appeal to the youth and the poor. Its leader, Julius Malema, expelled former leader of the ANC's youth league, was able to take significant sections of the youth league with him, not to mention connections to the new black elite that years inside the ANC provided, giving the EFF the resources necessary to wage an effective campaign.

Last August there were discussions between WASP and the EFF where we proposed forming an electoral bloc.

However, important differences between WASP and EFF on nationalisation, socialism and other issues required that we maintain the right to debate these questions in front of the working class and poor.

In the wake of the Marikana massacre, assisting the working class in achieving political clarity on the tasks necessary for the socialist transformation of society was fundamental.

Numsa, for example, explicitly rejected the EFF at their December special congress due to the EFF's failure to call for workers' control of nationalised industry and their equivocation on the need for socialism.

New workers' party

Unfortunately, the EFF rejected our proposal of an electoral bloc/alliance and demanded the effective liquidation of WASP and closing down of discussion on programmatic and political questions. WASP had no other choice but to stand independently following this response from the EFF leadership.

Though we were unable to fill the vacuum to the left of the ANC, the Workers And Socialist Party reaffirms that we were correct to stand in this election. We have played a pioneering role and laid important foundations for the development of a mass workers' party on a socialist programme. This process will continue and pick up its pace in the next period.

WASP is first and foremost a party of struggle, and a step towards building a mass workers' party. We will now turn our attention to campaigning for a mass workers' party, the uniting of the service delivery protests and the building of a mighty socialist youth movement.

The ANC majority in this election is not the end of the process. It means more neoliberal attacks and class struggle in which WASP will intervene, and the necessity to build a mass workers' party on a socialist programme will be ever more clearly posed.

- See socialistworld.net for the full version of this article

Capitalist politicians have no solution to Boko Haram crisis

Hassan Taiwo Soweto, Democratic Socialist Movement (DSM, CWI Nigeria)

The abduction of over 200 girls from a public secondary school in Chibok (in the Northern state of Borno) on 14 April by right-wing political Islamic group Boko Haram has sparked global outrage. Widespread condemnation has come from far and near and almost the entire world is following the horrendous situation in Nigeria as a result of daily coverage by the international media. Together with a big campaign that has taken off on social media sites under the hashtag #BringBackOurGirls, protests and demonstrations have been held in several cities in and outside Nigeria.

This latest crisis has again highlighted the failure and weakness of President Jonathan's government. However, the working masses and youth must not make the mistake that all it takes to tackle the Boko Haram insurgency is a strong president. In reality, President Jonathan's weaknesses are reflections of the weaknesses of Nigeria's neo-colonial capitalism.

Social conditions

Elites from the north have ruled Nigeria for more than half of its history since independence from Britain. Yet while little has been done to develop formal education, healthcare and job creation in the whole of Nigeria, even less has been done in the North. It is against this background that Boko Haram emerged in the North questioning the legitimacy of western education both from a religious standpoint and because the corrupt elite is largely western-educated.

Just like the history of most fundamentalist religious groups, Boko Haram offered much more than religious vitriol. The group also condemned social and economic injustice and corruption. But Boko Haram's solution is the introduction of Sharia law. Without alternative mass working class active organisations and socialist ideas on offer, this kind of religious fundamentalist teachings tinged with some form of radicalism, can draw support among the huge swathe of poor and mostly uneducated youth in the North. Besides, the sect also offered shelter, food and sustenance to the poor and dispossessed youths who flocked to it.

Even though Nigeria is endowed with stupendous natural and human resources, capitalism has ensured that over 80% of Nigeria's oil wealth is cornered by a few. Meanwhile over 50 million young people are unemployed. Insurgencies like Boko Haram's will not end unless the root cause - the exploitative system of capitalism - is tackled.

Behind Nigeria's corrupt capitalist ruling elites are imperialist countries and their global financial institutions of the IMF and World Bank who, for their own strategic and economic gains, prop up corrupt regimes around the world. Now the western powers, worried that the combination of social crisis and a corrupt, incompetent government will destabilise the whole of West Africa, are using Chibok as an excuse to intervene.

Security?

Examined against this background, the responses of so-called opposition political parties and the labour movement of only bland calls for more security, are shocking. DSM affirms that increased militarisation will not solve the problem. Neither will the intervention of security experts and troops from Western imperialist countries.

Due to the characteristic brutality and atrocities of the military in the North Eastern States, the government cannot hope to rely on the sympathy of the people to provide the information required to locate and engage the Boko Haram insurgents. Many people largely feel caught up in the violence of both the army and Boko Haram and feel no sympathy for either.

So far, all that militarisation has achieved is a clampdown on the democratic rights of the working masses. Under the

guise of fighting terrorism, the federal government now routinely bans protest and breaks up any "unauthorised gathering".

The imperialist capitalist countries are responsible for the growth and spread of Islamic fundamentalist terrorism across the world as a result of brutal wars orchestrated in order to control the crude oil and mineral reserves of countries in the Middle East. So it is illogical to advocate imperialist intervention in Nigeria and expect them to be part of the solution.

The only effective strategy that the labour movement can proffer is to begin to mobilise workers and the oppressed masses to take their destinies in their hands. To start with, a one-day general strike and mass protest called by the labour movement can send the right signal to both the corrupt capitalist ruling elite and Boko Haram that the organised people are prepared to defend themselves against the onslaughts from both.

In the areas threatened by Boko Haram raids, the labour movement has to take the lead in mobilising working class people to begin to take up the responsibility of securing their neighbourhoods and communities. This can only be possible by setting up democratic multi-tribal and multi-religious self-defence committees.

Socialism

In opposition to the current labour leaders, this is what we in the DSM are striving for. We call for the building of a revolutionary mass movement led by the working class to bring an end to Nigeria's corrupt capitalist system. That is fundamentally responsible for the conditions of mass misery in the midst of abundance which is the basis upon which the Boko Haram insurgency emerged and now thrives.

We believe that only a new government formed by the working class and armed with socialist policies can begin to restructure Nigeria. This would ensure that the huge wealth of the country is used to better the lot of the overwhelming majority of ordinary people, regardless of ethnicity or religion.

Read more analysis from Nigeria at www.socialistworld.net

Ireland: Election campaigns "referendum on austerity"

Laura Fitzgerald from the Socialist Party (CWI in Ireland) spoke to the Socialist.

There is a massive anger among working class people in Ireland against all establishment parties. The memorandum signed by the previous government of Fianna Fail and the Greens with the EU/IMF has been carried through by the current coalition government of Fine Gael and the Labour Party. The Labour Party had a successful election in 2009 on the basis that they were going to ease austerity. But they carried through austerity.

Whose recovery?

While establishment parties, the media, and big business are talking about economic recovery, for working class and middle class people it's very different. The new property tax has been imposed. A water tax is planned, on top of a range of attacks on public services and wages. The prevailing mood is that we can't make ends meet.

Meanwhile the richest 300 people in Ireland own over €70 billion, up by €20 billion from 2010. Real corporate tax is just 5.2% and profits are up by 20%. In this way it's a neo-liberal recovery in which the race to the bottom is pursued relentlessly.

JobBridge

This is exemplified by JobBridge - a forced labour scheme that Labour Party minister for social protection Joan Burton

has presided over. This means unemployed workers can be forced to work in this scheme for €1 an hour on top of their dole, replacing real jobs and driving down wages and conditions. Socialist Party MEP Paul Murphy has played a leading role in exposing the JobBridge scam via the website (www.scambridge.ie) and campaigning.

The water tax is a central issue in the current European, local and byelection campaigns. Ordinary people fear that the water tax will sink their houses. It's another tax on working class people to pay for the banker's debt. Over time there will be a cost of €500-600 per household.

The Labour Party is under huge political pressure given the opposition to the water tax. There is a mood to punish Labour for what they have done under the current government.

This year's elections can be used as political pressure on the questions of the water tax and crucially to elect campaigners like Paul Murphy who stands for building a movement of non-payment like the campaign led by the Socialist Party in the 1990s, which successfully defeated water charges.

AAA

In the local elections the Socialist Party is standing as part of the Anti-Austerity Alliance (AAA). This alliance grew out of a movement against the household and property tax in recent years. Many activists emerged from working class communities through this campaign who are now standing as candidates to challenge austerity in the local elections.

A strong showing for AAA and other anti-austerity campaigners in the local elections will be a big boost to building the campaign against the water tax.

Socialist Party activists Ruth Coppinger and Paul Murphy are real contenders in the Dublin West byelection and European elections respectively. We are campaigning to make this election a referendum on the water tax, on austerity and against Labour's sell-out of any remaining left roots.

Elections in Ireland take place on 23 May, check www.socialistworld.net for analysis

Care UK strike: NHS workers v NHS privatisation

Alistair Tice

Doncaster managers have called the Care UK strikers "The Angry Mob". The Angry Mob have been on tour this week taking their fight against privatisation and pay cuts all over the country.

Care UK workers are angry that the Supported Living Service for Adults with Learning Difficulties was privatised out of the NHS last year. They are angry that privateers Care UK tore up the TUPE transfer agreement and are slashing pay by an average of 35%.

They are so angry that they are striking back.

Around 90 Unison members are now into the second week of a fortnight's strike following on from 20 earlier days of industrial action. In the last week strikers have protested at Care UK offices in Sheffield and Leeds. Over 60 strikers took a day trip to the company headquarters down in Essex (report by Gina Beaumont below).

And another coachful will be visiting the HQ of Bridgepoint, the finance equity company that owns Care UK.

On strike day 29, Unison general secretary Dave Prentis is joining the picket line in Doncaster. This should signal the start of the union going national and declaring war on Care UK.

Last week, the Doncaster District Unison health branch unanimously passed a motion to Unison's Industrial Action Committee calling for the union to go on the offensive against Care UK by organising against them wherever they operate and have contracts (see below).

The Angry Mob on tour...

Care UK striker Gina Beaumont writes:

A coach full of Care UK (CUK) strikers set off at 5am. Everyone was in high spirits, chanting and singing, I am one of those strikers and have worked in the NHS for over 29 years feeling proud and determined to stand up with my comrades against the privatisation of the NHS.

We hit Colchester at 9.20am. Once at CUK headquarters we picked up our Unison flags and placards stating 'Save Our NHS' and 'CUK No To Cuts'. We started chanting outside the main office door.

Jim Bell, the Unison regional rep, then asked Julie Nightingale, senior HR change manager, to come outside and see all the CUK strikers. She emerged from the foyer.

Jim Bell asked her if the strikers, some of whom are disabled, could use their toilet facilities. She said 'no', it was only for CUK staff. We said we are CUK staff, we work for you!

Fortunately a fitness club opposite allowed us to use their facilities. We were grateful for this and did a small collection for them.

We continued to demonstrate and chant, marching around the building. In the early afternoon Julie Nightingale agreed to meet Jim Bell and two strikers. Three police cars arrived. They said we could not deny access to the CUK car park. We said OK and continued to demonstrate.

Jim Bell emerged from the office with the two CUK strikers Claire Smith and Roger Hutt. Jim said nothing new had been brought to the table but we could take industrial action and start legal proceedings, the paragraph in the contract was misleading. We believe a new contract should be drafted to clarify this.

It was a great day for us all. We boarded our coach mid afternoon with the police still there. Everyone was on a high because now we are spreading our cause nationally and standing up for what's right.

Solidarity! Care UK Strikers Fight Back !

Motion proposed by Socialist Party member Steve Williams:

"This branch recognises that the Doncaster Care UK workers' strike is probably the most important industrial dispute involving Unison members currently taking place.

Its successful outcome is vital to our members and has widespread implications throughout the NHS, the care sector and local government, in turning back the tide of pay cuts and privatisation.

This branch welcomes the support given to this dispute by the union nationally at the NEC and at the Health Service Group conference.

This branch now requests that the National Industrial Action Committee, as a matter of urgency, considers the following:

- Call upon all regions to organise speaking tours by the strikers of Unison branches and the wider trade union movement

- Promote coordinated Unison organised protests at Care UK offices around the country on a regular/weekly basis
 - Requests that the union's organisers be deployed into all areas where Care UK operate or have contracts to recruit Care UK workers into Unison
 - Organise a national demonstration mobilising Unison members from around the country in Doncaster on a Saturday coinciding with a period of Doncaster Care UK strike action
 - As a leverage tactic, organise (a) co-ordinated day(s) of action against Bridgepoint owned companies such as Pret a Manger and Fat Face. Bridgepoint are the private equity company that owns Care UK and several other companies"
 - Send messages of support to admin@unison-dab.org.uk and donations/cheques made out to: "Doncaster, District & Bassetlaw Health Branch" and sent to: Jenkinson House, White Rose Way, Doncaster, DN4 5GJ.
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PCS: Re-election of a fighting, socialist leadership

John McNally, PCS national vice-president, personal capacity

Socialist Janice Godrich has been elected president of PCS for the 13th time and the Democracy Alliance candidates have been elected to the union's national executive for a 12th. Socialist Party member Chris Baugh is also starting his third term as assistant general secretary.

We are in a period of relentless government assault on the public service and the civil service in particular. Many union leaders have acquiesced with or resigned themselves to austerity. For long periods since 2003, when the last Labour government announced 100,000 civil service job cuts, PCS has often fought in isolation or with small groups of allies.

In this context the re-election of a fighting, socialist union leadership is a remarkable achievement. Union activists and members recognise that in this difficult period support for a campaigning leadership, which has anchored delivery of conference policy on the widest possible consultation and inclusion, is the only serious way of defending conditions.

PCS has consistently argued that joint coordinated industrial action is the best and most effective way of defeating attacks on public sector workers conditions and austerity itself. Pressure is now building to end the pay freeze which has been the longest and deepest in many generations and which has seen a systematic reduction in the value of workers' wages by as much as 20% under the coalition government.

At the TUC's Public Sector Liaison Group two weeks ago it became clear that there is huge potential to develop precisely the type of coordinated action across the public sector that PCS has been calling for. Our union strategy is based on building targeted, national and group action in pursuit of our industrial demands and in order to gain concessions on those issues, like pay, that affect all public sector workers - joint coordinated action.

Unison local government workers are to be balloted and Unite, NUT, FBU and possibly others are looking at a coordinated day of action on 10 July. PCS argued for any such action and further action in early autumn, potentially including greater numbers of workers, to be coordinated by the TUC - a principle agreed by the unions involved.

Many workers will have the surrender over pensions branded in their consciousness but a more potent memory will be the tremendous demonstration of the power of our movement when upwards of two million workers took action together on 30 November 2011. Let us make sure the lessons are learnt and that we continue to fight to build for the most effective response to the attacks on our members - joint coordinated industrial action across the public sector.

Leadership challenged at Usdaw conference

Socialist Party members in Usdaw

Usdaw's 2014 Annual Delegate Meeting (ADM) opened to a backdrop of announcements of job losses and cuts in Tesco. Members' anger at finding this out through social media and the union's complacency peppered their speeches.

As ever, many of the propositions challenging the Usdaw leadership's position never made it to ADM floor. This didn't stop criticism of the union's leadership - delegates made points on the union's annual report, usually a more mundane part of ADM.

Iain Dalton criticised the union leadership. They'd attended an international trade union conference in Argentina and the only official mention of the visit so far was a sentence in the report. If we're sending delegates around the world to discuss with our fellow workers, this should be reported so we can learn from their struggles. He highlighted the inspiring struggles in the US to organise Walmart workers as well as fighting for a \$15 an hour minimum wage.

This, and other interventions, led to a growing interest in the Socialist Party and its bulletin in the union, the Activist. Over 100 copies of the Socialist were sold, more than one for every eight attendees. Delegates also bought 50 copies of the new Activist pamphlet.

A key debate took place around zero-hour contracts. Unfortunately the composite that was passed mentioned every constraint except abolishing them.

Motions were also passed to campaign to abolish tuition fees and work closer with student unions and the NUS. Renationalising public transport was also supported. A motion congratulating Miliband on his energy price freeze was amended to say that the best means of controlling energy prices was: "to renationalise the energy companies with democratic control including workers in industry and consumers over prices".

In the union's upcoming elections Socialist Party members will be building support for the candidates endorsed by the Broad Left meeting at ADM. These include Socialist Party members Scott Jones, who is standing for the Executive Committee (EC) in the South Wales and Western division and Amy Murphy who is standing for re-election to the EC in the Southern division and for President of the union.

See: usdawactivist.wordpress.com
