



Government condemned at the ballot box

Election analysis and Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition results

See pages 2,6,7 and 8

FIGHT FOR THE NHS

No to cuts and privatisation

The Tory/Lib Dem coalition has voted through the Health and Social Care Bill, now at report stage, which will lead to wholesale privatisation of the NHS. The Royal College of GPs, the latest health organisation to condemn the Bill's proposals, said that these 'reforms' risk "unravelling and dismantling" the NHS in England.

As London ambulance driver STEVE HARBORD writes here, in a personal capacity, there seem to be 'wobbles' within the coalition after the Lib Dems' slaughter at the local elections, particularly on the national health service. Now is the time to step up the fight for the NHS.

London ambulance service recently announced 890 job cuts over five years. This is staggering, especially considering the big year-on-year increase in emergency calls to the service.

Trying to sell these cuts to ambulance workers and the general public, the truth is veiled in management-speak. NHS chief executive Sir David Nicolson claims that the NHS "uses efficiency savings to make real improvements in the quality of care for patients".

Improvements? Nonsense! These cuts attack the very principle of the NHS and the welfare state. Alongside the cuts, Con-Dem 'reforms' will mean privatisation. In future

any private firm, whose first priority is profit for its shareholders, will be able to apply to run any service within the NHS.

That includes the ambulance service. You can foresee a future service where admin, training, and call-taking are outsourced, and private ambulance services compete for contracts to provide emergency cover - ultimately at the cost of worse terms and conditions for staff and worse services for the general public.

Big businesses will be the only ones to gain long term if we don't fight the sell-off of the NHS and public services. Britain is a rich country but that wealth, generated by working people, is concentrated in the

hands of a few greedy individuals and corporations who will do anything to avoid paying tax.

Pharmaceutical companies still overcharge the NHS for medicines. Banks, bailed out in their billions by us, still pay obscene bonuses to the executives on their boards.

But there is an alternative. And what better time than now to step up the fight for the NHS? Politicians wobbling on NHS reforms mean we must hit hard at the coalition.

Workers must keep up the pressure on the trade union leaderships by supporting industrial action across all sectors, starting with the strike action on 30 June. We need to build links with community groups fighting the cuts.

We also need a broad-based socialist alternative to confront this rotten capitalist system, to challenge the spivs in Westminster who protect the interests of big business. This would give working class people a genuine say in how we build a better, fairer society for all.

March to save the NHS

Tuesday 17 May 5.30pm,
University College Hospital, Gower Street, London WC1



photo Chris Bird and Leon Kuhn

We say:

- Stop the cuts. For a fully funded, publicly owned NHS.
- End all privatisation through GP consortiums or other methods.
- Return privatised services to NHS control. Publicly fund and integrate them with the rest of the NHS.
- For united action to defend the NHS involving trade unions, anti-cuts campaigns and service users.

**nationalshop
stewardsnetwork**

The 2011 NSSN conference will be held on 11 June at the South Camden Community School, London NW1 1RG.

The themes are:

- Strike to defend jobs and pensions
- Fight the anti-trade union laws
- Save our NHS

Registration begins at 10.30am.
Email info@shopstewards.net to register.
See also www.stopcuts.net and www.shopstewards.net