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Get rid of Cameron, Murdoch and all they represent

When long-rotten fruit finally falls, all manner of grossness oozes from it and all varieties of parasites can come crawling out. And so it is with the all-embracing bushfire of the News International (NI) crisis.

In two weeks a paper, the News of the World (NoW), has closed, unfortunately with hundreds of job losses. Senior Met police officers have resigned and the extent of entanglement between Rupert Murdoch's empire and the police is being exposed. John Stephenson, who resigned as Met chief, told the House of Commons that ten of the Met's 45 press officers previously worked for NI.

No doubt many who have protested against climate change, against student fees and on other issues, will want their questions about police 'hacking' or infiltration of their organisations answered.

Murdoch, his cronies and Cameron should tell us whether they have ever penetrated or conducted underground work in organisations such as the Socialist Party or its predecessor Militant.

Rebekah Brooks, NI chief executive, friend to at least the last three prime ministers and Murdoch's golden girl, has not only resigned her position but been arrested. She has, alongside Rupert Murdoch and his son James, faced the parliamentary select committee. There, Murdoch senior used his son, as singer George Michael tweeted, "as a human shield".

Andy Coulson, formerly Cameron's pal and Downing Street director of communications, has also been arrested. His other previous incarnations include a stint as News of the World (NoW) editor and witness in the case against wrongfully imprisoned Scottish socialist Tommy Sheridan.

There has also been the death, as yet unexplained, of one of the first whistleblowers, Sean Hoare.

What now for Tory prime minister David

Cameron? How can he pretend that he wasn't influenced by Murdoch's empire? He conducted 26 meetings with NI executives in 15 months plus apparently a number of 'undocumented' exchanges and, as Murdoch senior indicated, 'backdoor' visitors to Downing Street. How many times did he meet victims or working class opponents of his government's cuts?

'Beyond responsibility'

Opposition leader Ed Miliband recognised that the exposure of the hacking of the phone of murdered school student Milly Dowler changed things. In his 19 July speech, he correctly linked all the "powerful people who answered to nobody", out-of-control bankers, tax-avoiding corporations, dishonest MPs who had indulged in a "culture of entitlement" and News International "which thought it was beyond responsibility".

Miliband pointed out that while "Sir Paul Stephenson [Met Commissioner] has taken responsibility and resigned over the employment of Mr Coulson's deputy... the Prime Minister hasn't even apologised for hiring Mr Coulson." Deputy Labour leader Harriet Harman insisted that they wanted to ask Cameron questions. However, Miliband should demand Cameron's resignation, and that of his government as well.

All those who have been victims of Cameron's cuts - ie every one of us who works in or uses public services - every one who is not as rich as the millionaire Cabinet - will want Cameron and Co sent packing.

Cameron, having absented himself to fly around Africa with a load of bankers, is returning for one extra day of parliament before the summer recess. However, one day is insufficient. Cameron must not be 'saved by the bell'. Any opposition worth the name would call for a vote of 'no confidence' and push Cameron out. This government's down-

fall would strike a huge political blow against the ruling class and their cuts programme.

But Ed Miliband himself has also been quaffing from the crystal cup at Murdoch's recent summer party. New Labour in government never took the opportunity to clip Murdoch's wings. Tony Blair and Gordon Brown failed spectacularly to reverse Thatcher's anti-trade union laws or to undo vast Tory privatisations. In fact they added to those policies. Likewise there was no attempt to undo the moves towards monopoly control and political influence enjoyed by Murdoch and his ilk.

Miliband denounced the strikes against attacks on public sector pensions on 30 June, the most important day of struggle in recent working class history. Nonetheless Miliband could be brought to power, not through his own actions but through the unwinding of the crisis. From this coalition's inception, the Socialist has warned it would be torn asunder.

But an attack on Murdoch will not be enough to win an election. A Guardian/ICM poll found that while Miliband's personal approval had risen three points to 31%, Labour had dropped three points to 36%, 1% behind the Tories.

Labour's no solution

For working class and middle class people a change to Miliband's Labour would offer no solution. The trade union leaders should act. Clearly the establishment is bankrupt. Many MPs are now falling over themselves to celebrate the 'principle of free press' - but where were they until now?

The solicitor for one hacking victim told the BBC's Panorama programme that MPs hadn't stopped the scandal - but merely reacted to a scandal that had finally caught up with them.

On 30 June members of the ATL teaching union were on strike for the first time. General secretary Mary Bousted was given a stand-

ing ovation at the strike rally. She said: "I am glad that the ATL is not affiliated to any political party; Ed Miliband is a disgrace." She asked: "What has he and his shadow cabinet, which is laughingly called an opposition ever done? Sisters, and brothers, we're doing it for ourselves."

The Murdoch affair must not be allowed to fade over the summer break. As well as questions about who runs the country are questions about who owns and controls the press

This latest crisis underlines the need for a workers' party more than ever. Steps must be urgently taken to build a party, based on a socialist programme, that cannot be bought, that doesn't seek the approval of anti-working class billionaires; but instead seeks to provide a vehicle to fight to defend all our rights, jobs and public services.

The Murdoch affair must not be allowed to fade over the summer break. Arising from this crisis, as well as questions about who we can trust to run the country, are questions about who should own and make decisions about the press.

The Socialist calls for the nationalisation of the press and all media facilities under democratic working class control and management. This has to be linked to a programme to abolish the roots of this crisis, the profit-motivated capitalist system and to fight for a socialist alternative.

London joint union and NSSN meeting 'Real debate' on preparing for coordinated action

Paula Mitchell
London Socialist Party

"This is what the National Shop Stewards Network is for - to bring together the most advanced elements in the unions to develop strategy," said RMT London organiser Steve Hedley to the London Joint Unions and National Shop Stewards Network (NSSN) meeting on 18 July.

Leading members of some of the most powerful unions in London came together to discuss the next steps in the fight against the cuts, following the 30 June strikes.

Steve charted the development of the anti-cuts battle so far, from the heroic actions of the students, to the 26 March Trades Union Congress demo, to the coordinated strike action on 30 June by four unions. In the next stages of the anti-cuts movement, "it is essential to coordinate with the other big battalions."

Mark Palfrey, London divisional rep of the Communication Workers Union, explained that his union had passed a resolution for general strike action in the autumn.

Ben Sprung, London organiser of FBU, reported that the firefighters' union has agreed to ballot its members over pensions, and is "fully prepared for serious, sustained action; of course we want to be in coordinated action".

NUT teachers' union executive



Union leaders need to match talk with action photo Paul Mattsson

member Martin Powell-Davies pointed to the danger of 'divide and rule' of the government attempting separate negotiations to pick unions off. Martin said we should have "no time for trade union leaders that accept that division - they will not be forgiven".

Civil service union PCS assistant general secretary Chris Baugh said there is momentum building for coordinated action in the autumn. If union leaders don't act, "members of other public sector unions will be asking: Why is my union not taking action with the rest?"

The 60 people from various trade unions in the audience took part in

real debate about the best slogans to raise; the betrayal of Labour and the need for political representation for workers; the socialist alternative to cuts; and what practical steps can be taken to keep up the pressure for coordinated action in the autumn. Unison and Unite members discussed the campaign necessary within their unions.

The meeting emphasised the importance of the NSSN lobby of the TUC on 11 September, in order to keep up the pressure on the TUC leadership, and the leadership of 'the big three' unions - Unison, Unite and GMB - in particular.

www.shopstewards.net

Building an electoral challenge to Con-Dem and Labour cuts

Judy Beishon

Over 60 Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC) election candidates and agents from the May elections assembled in London on 16 July to discuss May's results and plan for next year.

Socialist Party speaker Hannah Sell deplored the fact that no Labour Party councillors in Labour-led councils have yet voted against cuts in public services. She noted that voters are turning to alternatives to the three main parties where they think they may challenge the government's austerity agenda, as shown by the increased votes for the Scottish National Party in Scotland and the Greens in Brighton.

However, these parties will not oppose all cuts, as TUSC does, and although TUSC's election results were modest, it has put down an important political marker.

Simon Hestor, election agent for Tottenham TUSC candidate Jenny Sutton, spoke on behalf of the Socialist Workers Party, supporting the idea of discussions being initiated by TUSC on whether a left challenge can be made in the 2012 London Assembly and mayoral elections.

The third platform speaker, PCS vice president John McNally, reported on the PCS's important structured debate and ballot process on the issue of political representation. There then followed over 20 contributions from the floor during the course of the day, from nine regions of the country, including two from regional representatives of the RMT transport union.

Vist the website:
www.tusc.org.uk

A motion from Rugby on the development of TUSC, and a "framework plan for developing TUSC into 2012" presented by TUSC steering committee member Clive Heemsker, were unanimously agreed by the conference.

Clive urged everyone to start planning for the 2012 elections and to encourage more TUSC candidates in as many areas as possible. He reminded the conference that any trade unionists, socialists and anti-cuts campaigners who support TUSC's core policies can be TUSC candidates, producing their own material and running their own campaigns.

The Socialist summer schedule

The Socialist is now in its fortnightly summer publication schedule until September. The next issue of the Socialist will be out on 4 August.