



Pension cuts, job cuts, service cuts

WE'RE STRIKING BACK ON 10 MAY



photo Elaine Brunskill

John McNally

National vice-president, Public and Commercial Services union (PCS), personal capacity

The PCS executive committee has called national strike action on 10 May (M10) as part of a united campaign with other unions. Strikes will take place in three of the four sectors being affected by the government's attacks on pensions – civil service, health and education.

This M10 trade union coalition is needed to challenge a government of millionaires which is trying to force low-paid workers to pay more, work longer and get less in their pensions.

The government's aim is to cut pensions to make privatisation more 'affordable'. They want to cut or destroy the vital services that bind our communities together and allow their banking and big business paymasters to squeeze as much profit out of what remains.

But there's £120 billion in uncollected taxes, largely from the rich. Big business is sitting on over £750 billion that they could invest to create jobs. Not one cut to our public services is necessary.

The M10 action will be on the day after the Queen's Speech, which will set out the coalition government's next set of cuts. This includes forcing through more pension changes that will mean civil and public service workers paying more each

month and working up to eight years longer. They also have plans for regional and local pay which, if implemented, would mean lengthy pay freezes for many in the most deprived areas of Britain.

The attack on pensions is a critical element of the government's assault on working people. To concede on pensions would give the Con-Dems a green light to step up their attacks.

The pensions battle gives the trade union movement the chance to build the widest coalition to stop the government's plans. 30 November saw the biggest strike in modern history and the government was shaken. If that action had continued, there is no doubt the government would have been stopped. And it still can be!

Make the M10 strike a success

- Organise a workplace meeting to prepare for the strike
- If your union isn't striking discuss how to put pressure on your leadership. If applicable link up with other unions
- You could organise a public meeting in your town or city via the unions in dispute or trades council, anti-cuts campaign or National Shop Stewards Network. Explain the need to prepare for further action
- Plan for a demonstration in your town or city on the day
- All united – invite private sector workers, young people, pensioners, benefit claimants etc, to any public meetings, rallies and demonstrations



**GREETINGS
FROM SOCIALIST
PARTY BRANCHES
IN COVENTRY AND
WARWICKSHIRE**

**Socialist
Party**

**MAY DAY GREETINGS FROM RUGBY
TRADE UNIONIST AND SOCIALIST
COALITION**

**STANDING AGAINST ALL CUTS
TO JOBS AND SERVICES**

**TUSC
AGAINST
CUTS**

BENN - Bert Harris

BILTON - Steve Roberts

EASTLANDS - Rob Johnson

HILLMORTON - Dave Goodwin

NEW BILTON - Ally MacGregor

NEWBOLD & BROWNSOVER -

Bill Smith

ROKEBY & OVERSLADE -

Julie Weekes

WOLSTON and The LAWFORDS - Pete McLaren

**VOTE TUSC AGAINST
CUTS IN RUGBY ON
THURSDAY 3 MAY**

**MAY DAY
GREETINGS
FROM TRADE UNIONISTS & SOCIALISTS
IN
COVENTRY AND
WARWICKSHIRE**

Solidarity Greetings on
International Workers' Day
to workers everywhere
defending jobs and services

● **Join a union - Build
trade unionism!**

**Coventry
Unite No 7
Branch**



**FIGHTING FOR
A PUBLIC POST AND
TELECOMMUNICATIONS INDUSTRY
COVENTRY BRANCH CWU**

May Day Greetings
from

**UNISON & UNITE
ACTIVISTS AT
COVENTRY COUNCIL**

Build campaigning and
democratic
unions
to fight
the pay
freeze
and
defend
jobs and
pensions



The Railway Tavern
sends greetings to the
Youth Fights for Jobs
+ Nuneaton socialists
wish **Paul Reilly** and
Eileen Hunter well in
the local elections



MAY DAY GREETINGS FROM NHS SOS

NHS SOS greets all
those fighting privatisation
& the break up of our NHS -
whichever government is doing it.
For a national demo now!



NHS faces more cuts

National demo urgently needed

NHS hospitals have been told to make deeper cuts by the health regulator Monitor. They said last year that hospitals should make cuts of 4.6% from 2013. But in a letter to NHS hospitals Monitor now says that these cuts should increase to 7%.

This hike would mean that a typical hospital with a £300 million turnover will have to find savings of £21 million.

Such cuts will seriously impact the delivery of services to patients. NHS workers will be put under intolerable pressure. Their reward will be worsening terms and conditions, including wage cuts and redundancies.

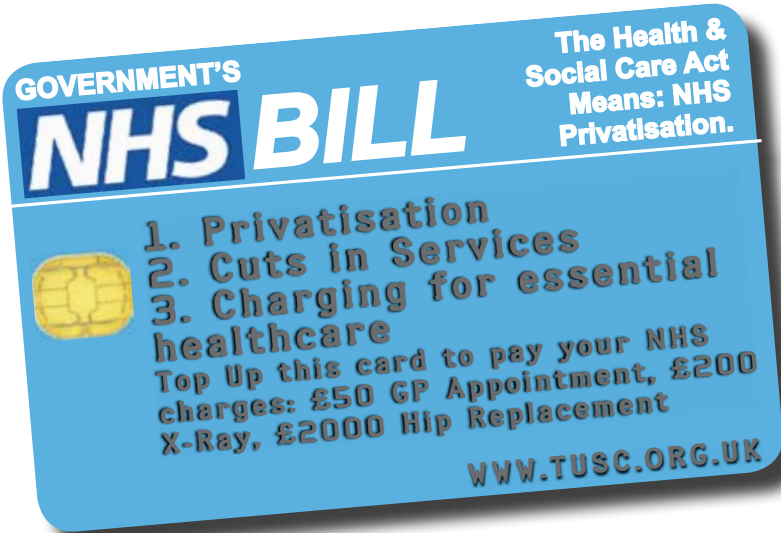
It was recently revealed that the NHS has been targeted to make £50 billion (yes, billion!) in savings over the next decade. Such devastating cost cutting would make the NHS even more attractive to private operators, such as Virgin Care who recently took over care services in Surrey.

Rob Bishop, Gloucestershire Socialist Party & Keep Gloucestershire NHS Public

Activists and their supporters from Save Heatherwood Hospital are holding a range of activities during the week commencing 23 April. Highlights will be the public meeting on 27 April and the march and rally on 28 April.

Speakers at the public meeting will include Steve Bell from the Unison SGE (personal capacity), Terry Pearce representing Save Heatherwood Hospital and Labour MP Fiona McTaggart.

We are channelling local public anger at the hospital closure through meetings, petitions and lobbies. But our campaign is not limited to sav-



ing the local hospital - we are also fighting to save the NHS from privatisation.

Terry Pearce, Defend Our Community Services, personal capacity

Two decades ago, the poll tax was made law and implemented, meaning every adult had to pay the same rate whether they lived in a mansion or a one-bedroom flat. It was defeated by a mass campaign organising 18 million people who refused to pay.

We need a similar fight to save the NHS - we can win. The Socialist Party demands:

- Axe the Health and Social Care Act. For a publicly funded service, free at the point of use, to provide for everyone's health needs
- End big business profiteering from the NHS! Scrap the costly Private Finance Initiative (PFI) schemes.
- Take all health services and buildings back from big business and place them under

public ownership. Publicly fund and integrate them with the rest of the NHS

- Nationalise the pharmaceutical and medical supply industries and private health providers, with compensation only on the basis of proven need. Bring them under working class control and management
- Abolish Foundation Trusts. For democratic control of local health services including by elected health workers and community representatives
- End NHS job losses and low pay
- For a massive trade union-led struggle to defend the NHS, including a national Saturday demonstration as soon as possible and strike action
- For a new mass workers' party to fight for the NHS and against cuts and privatisation.
- For socialist policies and a democratic planned economy to end poverty, bad housing, unemployment, pollution and inequality - the biggest killers and causes of ill-health

The ugly truth behind the latest unemployment figures

A slight fall in the most recent set of unemployment figures hides the reality facing millions. The fall has only occurred because of an increase in part-time work. And the number of people claiming unemployment benefit is still going up. By the end of 2012 almost a million people will have been out of work for more than a year.

There was a slight fall in the number of young people unemployed as well. And yet more young people than ever are now long-term unemployed - showing the failure of the Con-Dems' 'youth contract', aimed specifically at this group. Recent figures showed that the number of unemployed young people across Europe has increased by 50% since 2008.

Tony Mulhearn, Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition mayoral candidate in Liverpool said: "Unemployment is a blight on our society. It ruins lives, it wastes people's potential and it costs money. At a time of horrifically high unemployment the policy of both the Con-Dem government and local Labour councils of cutting jobs is lunacy."

"In the Liverpool area hundreds of jobs will be cut in the private sector. 100 MMP workers in Bootle were sacked, over 220 jobs will be lost at Dairy Crest in Aintree and thousands of jobs are being cut in the public sector."

"I stand for opposition to all the cuts. I am advocating a mass social house-building programme across the city. This would not only help to alleviate the thousands of people waiting for social housing, it would create jobs and apprenticeships in the construction industry."

The Socialist Party demands:

- An end to job cuts, save our public services
- Scrap all slave-labour workfare schemes, a day's pay for a day's work
- A minimum wage of £8 an hour for all
- Open the books - when companies claim they can't afford to keep workers on, they must show us where the money has gone!
- Massive investment in a



photo Suzanne Beishon

programme of public works to create socially useful jobs

See www.youthfightforjobs.com

Them...



160 miles from home

Poor people shipped across the country to make room for rich people. That's the situation emerging across London in the wake of cuts to housing benefit and in the build up to the Olympics. Newham council has offered a housing association in Stoke, 160 miles away, the 'opportunity' to rent properties to 500 families from Newham unable to find affordable places to live. Waltham Forest council has so far found 13 flats in Luton, 40 miles away, for the same purpose. But the figures speak for themselves - there are 70,468 empty homes in London and 200,000

at home or know where their next meal is coming from. And a Netmums poll

4,350

families in the North East have received food from food banks since 2009

32%

Increase in young Londoners sleeping rough last year

found that one in five mothers regularly misses meals so that her children can eat.

All in it together?

As the government tries to legislate after pay-day-loan-gate, now we have pawnshop-gate. There was a 15% increase in use of pawn shops last year. And half of that increase is thought to be middle class people. The National Pawnbroking Association says that works of art, designer clothing and luxury cars have all been pawned in return for loans to pay for school fees or a mortgage repayment.

Apple's squirrels

£120 billion - that's how much unpaid tax there is by the super rich. How do they get away with it? Well, big companies hire people specifically to tell them how to squirrel their fortunes

£2.4bn

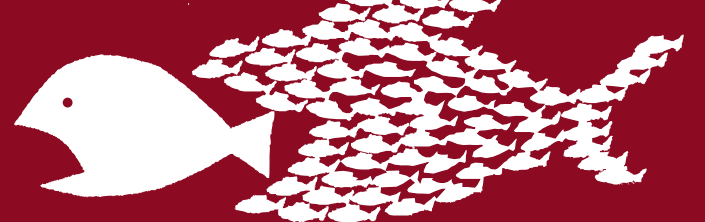
About what Apple makes each year from British consumers

away. Apple, for example, has worked out that by making all British retailers buy iPads and iPhones through its Irish offshoot company, they can cut their tax rate from 24% to 12.5%.

Winning strategy

Vodafone looks set to buy Cable and Wireless Worldwide for £1.04 million. CWW has been struggling but Vodafone is sure it can turn the company around by - you guessed it - cutting jobs. Funny how Vodafone can't pay its £6 million tax bill then...

...& Us



What we heard

You couldn't make this stuff up. After Labour-led Coventry council implemented the cuts so 'well' - even winning an award from the Tory government in the process; refused to pay £250 for low paid workers after budgeting for it and spent £9 million on private consultants, Labour leader John Mutton asked Coventry Unison for a donation to Labour election leaflets! This was unanimously rejected by the branch.



Join the fightback! Join the Socialists!

www.socialistparty.org.uk • Phone 020 8988 8777 • Text 07761 818206 to get involved, donate or subscribe to the Socialist

The next stage in the pensions battle

Building for 10 May strike

John McNally

National vice-president, Public and Commercial Services union (PCS), personal capacity

The government has given no concessions on the core issues on pensions of paying more, working longer and getting less. So it was a major error by the TUC leadership to fall for the government's divide and rule tactics and accept their 'Heads of Agreement' on pensions last December. This craven behaviour risked demoralising workers and it was a major boost for the government.

Along with a number of other unions, PCS opposed this sell-out. PCS played a major role in re-building the trade union coalition. PCS's Left Unity conference in London on 7 January, which saw over 500 activists from all public sector unions come together to build a fightback, was a critical turning point.

In an indicative ballot, 90% of members voted to reject the government's offer and 72% supported further action. Members voted on the clear understanding that any further action would be on the basis of a "strong campaign" capable of winning concessions. 28 March (M28) was set for the re-launch of the industrial action, but it then transpired that key allies in the alliance could not or would not take part.

The situation was quite simple, the alliance could not deliver the



PCS members marching in London with the other unions on N30
photo Senan

type of action our members expected. Rather than press ahead with M28, the PCS national executive voted to spend a few weeks re-building the coalition so that successful action could be organised.

In the middle of a battle it is important to aim for maximum unity. Members and activists were disappointed that M28 did not go ahead but understood the reasons.

We wanted to wait a few weeks to deliver effective action - as will now happen - on the basis of a greatly strengthened alliance. That alliance

will now be bigger than the 30 June strikes and covers three out of the four pensions sectors - civil service, education and health.

The pensions battle is building in strength as workers realise the full scale of the attacks. On 10 May other unions, including Unite in health and the civil service, Northern Ireland's main public service union Nipsa, lecturers' union UCU, whose executive is to make a formal decision to strike this week, and RMT in the Royal Fleet Auxiliary will take part.

Teachers' union NUT is meeting

to make decisions on regional rolling action and national action, including in June.

The Police Federation will also be holding a 25,000 strong demonstration on London on 10 May against attacks on their pensions, jobs and pay and privatisation. The British Medical Association is also balloting its members.

Crucially, the GMB is balloting for rejection of the deal. This is a significant development. While the union will not take part on M10 it raises the prospect that one of the biggest public sector unions could be part of a growing coalition. By the summer we could see action on a far bigger scale than many thought likely.

To carry out its pensions cuts, the government needs to introduce legislation that can take up to nine months. And the whole package doesn't come into full force until 2015, giving us 18 months to two years to stop them or win concessions.

The government, with the shameful connivance of TUC leader Brendan Barber and Unison general secretary Dave Prentis, have tried to give the impression that the pensions dispute is all done and dusted. Their instruction from Labour leader Ed Miliband is clearly: "don't rock the boat guys".

But this dispute is only just beginning. The choice will be bow down and let these gangsters kick us into the ground, or fight back. PCS will continue to be at the forefront of this battle.

In brief

Tube strike

A 72-hour strike by London tube workers employed by Tubelines started at 4pm on 24 April. The transport union RMT members are fighting to be allowed to join Transport for London's (TfL) pension scheme and to benefit from the same travel concessions as other TfL workers.

There was a four-to-one vote for strike action by the workers, who are responsible for both maintenance and upgrade work on the Jubilee line, Northern line and Piccadilly line. They also provide a number of services across the network including the Emergency Response Unit.

Bus victory

More than 100 Belfast bus drivers, members of Unite, have forced their bosses to reinstate a driver after an unofficial walkout. When the workers heard over their internal radios that a fellow driver had been suspended for allegedly damaging the handle of a ramp for disabled passengers, they drove their buses to city hall in protest, where they were joined by GMB members.

After assurances from management that the driver had been removed from suspension, they resumed the service, after scoring an important and quick victory.

Greenwich libraries

Unite members working in libraries in Greenwich, south east London, are striking for four days from 27 April. A further strike is planned for 11 May. The workers are protesting at plans to transfer the libraries to Greenwich Leisure Limited, with a consequent threat to the pay, jobs and working conditions of the library staff.

Teachers strike

Two dozen teachers at Swinton Comprehensive School, near Rotherham, members of the National Union of Teachers (NUT) took one day strike action on 17 April, to oppose compulsory redundancies arising from a £800,000 deficit. The new Head's "robust recovery plan" included the potential for eight teachers to lose their jobs. Seven teachers have avoided redundancy, but the Head still wants to get rid of the Special Educational Needs Coordinator. So the NUT members voted by 93% in favour of strike action.

• Please send messages of support to the NUT rep Chris at ccooksey@swinton.therham.sch.uk

BT pay

The three-year pay agreement signed by BT and the Communication Workers Union (CWU) in 2010 provided for talks to be re-opened if the inflation rate in November 2011 was higher than 3.2%. BT has offered a one-off £250 consolidated payment which the CWU leadership couldn't accept quickly enough. There will be no membership ballot so there is no opportunity for members to register any opposition.

Industrial action was never considered. Socialist Party members and others on the left were in favour of threatening to disrupt TV coverage of the Olympic Games which can't happen without BT engineers. A new leadership is urgently needed in the CWU telecoms section

Clive Walder, CWU Birmingham, Black Country and Worcester branch, personal capacity

Workers' Memorial Day 28 April

Jack Palmer

In 1912 when the Titanic sank, workers' lives were considered expendable by the bosses. But is the situation any better today?

Of the 919 crew members on the Titanic, 703 perished in the ice-cold waters of the Atlantic.

Even without the deaths on the Titanic, a life at sea was dangerous and each year claimed many lives unnecessarily. In 1911, the number of deaths from so-called industrial accidents totalled 4,296. The number of seamen killed that year was 1,254.

It has taken over a century of struggle by the trade unions to bring that figure down and in the year 2010/11 the number of deaths from industrial accidents was 171. However, the real scandal is the 20,000 people who die each year in the UK due to injury or diseases linked to their work.

The government of millionaires

is attacking our health and safety legislation. The Health and Safety Executive's budget has been cut by 35%. There has been a 50% cut in the number of workplace inspections and the number of prosecutions have fallen by the same amount. The bosses are demanding many more safety regulations be swept away.

Workers' Memorial Day is held on 28 April every year. The TUC says: "the day serves as a rallying cry to remember the dead, but fight like hell for the living."

The Labour newspaper, the Daily Herald, ended its first editorial on Titanic's disaster with the following: 'Let our tears not blind us to the real tragedy. The blood of those slain cries for justice. Shall we not hear.'

For centuries working people have demanded justice for those slain in the workplaces by the bosses whose sole motivation is profit. If we don't fight to maintain the gains of the past then the bosses and their government will surely take them away.

Cheers for Remploy workers marching in Sheffield



Remploy workers were cheered as they marched photo Alistair Tice

On 20 April hundreds of Remploy workers and supporters gathered outside Steel City House (DWP head office) in Sheffield to show their opposition to this government's plans to close 36 of the Remploy factories, closely followed by the remaining 17 factories.

This will lead to over 2,000 disabled workers and people with long-term health issues, facing the prospect of a lifetime on benefits with no real chance of gaining employment again.

A public meeting was held at the town hall, where local councillors, MPs and members of the consortium of trade unions (GMB, Unite and Community) spoke. After a wishy washy start, listening to the

platitudes of the MPs and councillors and the usual rhetoric with no real substance, the mood of the meeting changed for the better once the union representatives took to the stage.

Phil Davis said that for every day the Remploy workforce were out on strike he would give his day's wages to the fighting fund. The unions are now much more ready for a fight, compared to the impression that was given before the 90 day consultation started.

The loudest claps and cheers were saved for all who spoke about really fighting to save the Remploy network.

Paul Wheelhouse, Remploy GMB member

Jobs threat at CSC

Unite members joined lunchtime protests against job losses at Computer Sciences Corporation (CSC) Chesterfield and Leeds sites. A rep in Chesterfield told me that the profitable US company wants to make more than 400 compulsory redundancies across four of its larger sites in Britain.

"450 have already been identified for redundancy, but 700 have volunteered. It's a sign of how people feel working for this company that so many want to go.

"In addition to this the company has announced a further 650 job losses across the UK and Ireland. CSC is retaining its offshore jobs in India. There may now be a ballot for

industrial action."

CSC has lost work on the massive Lorenzo NHS contract that New Labour introduced ten years ago. Despite a £3 billion agreement with the Department of Health to install IT systems, there have been huge technical problems that CSC has not overcome. Government bureaucracy and NHS Trusts wanting their own standards have made the project even more complex.

The government now aims to cut £1 billion from the project. Remember when Cameron and Co claimed that public sector job losses would be replaced by the private sector?


Jon Dale

FOR UNITED ACTION ACROSS PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTORS IN DEFENCE OF PENSIONS, PAY, JOBS AND SERVICES

PCS LEFT UNITY NEC MEMBERS

Janice Godrich, President
Chris Baugh, Assistant General Secretary
Dave Bean, Deputy President
Sue Bond, Vice-President
John McNally, Vice-President
Mark Baker
Alan Dennis
Cheryl Gedling
Kevin Greenway
Sam Hall
Joel Heyes
Zita Holbourne
Derek Thomson
John Jamieson
Hector Wesley
Emily Kelly
Paul Williams
Adam Khalif
Rob Williams


Marion Lloyd
Dominic McFadden
Kevin McHugh
Lorna Merry
Chris Morrison
Andy Reid



National Union of Teachers - Ipswich

May Day Greetings to all Trades Unions

- NO to pensions robbery
- NO privatisation of public education
- End the pay freeze now



TORIES OUT!

UCU Wales retired members branch

Sends May Day Greetings to trade unionists across the world



- ◆ Hands off our pensions. Retirement at 60 for all on final salary pensions
- ◆ Oppose all cuts in post-school education funding

Pam Hughes (chair), **Norman Morgan** (vice-chair), **Andrew Price** (secretary), **John Martin** (treasurer)

Fraternal greetings to all comrades from the disabled workers of Remploy Swansea GMB R06 Branch



Thanks to the Socialist Party for all the help and support

Remploy factories are not for privatising


May Day Greetings from Swansea and District NUJ

Standing up for journalists and journalism in South West Wales



Camden 3 RMT branch

Socialist greetings on International Workers Day



“Life is beautiful. Let us cleanse it of all evil, oppression and violence, and enjoy it to the full”



The Professional Trades Union for Prison, Correctional & Secure Psychiatric Workers



May Day Greetings

We call upon the Trades Union and Socialist Movement, to campaign for the repeal of anti-trades union legislation

PJ McParlin *National Chairman*

Steve Gillan *General Secretary*

May Day Greetings



CAMPAIGNING FOR WORKERS' RIGHTS ACROSS THE COMMUNICATIONS INDUSTRIES



Billy Hayes General Secretary
www.billyhayes.co.uk

Jane Loftus President

03723

CWU 150 The Broadway, Wimbledon, London SW19 1RX
www.cwu.org



Billy Hayes
General Secretary
www.billyhayes.co.uk

CWU
The communications union



**NO
CUTS**

- **VOTE TUSC ON 3 MAY**
- **ALL STRIKE TOGETHER**
DEFEND JOBS, PENSIONS, PAY AND PUBLIC SERVICES
- **YOUTH DEMAND A FUTURE**
RE-INSTATE EMA, AFFORDABLE HOMES FOR ALL, RE-OPEN ALL
CLOSED YOUTH CENTRES



TUSC candidates for the
London-wide list for the GLA



Fight Gove's academies!
Haringey



Huge anger against
the destruction of the NHS



Defending fighting trade unionists



Battling to save libraries in
Greenwich



Fighting workfare at
Westfield



On 30 June
pension strike



One of many lobbies of Waltham Forest
town hall - Labour cuts hurt too!



Sparks won a famous victory
over the Besna



On the 2-million strong
N30 strike



After the riots London Youth Fight for
Jobs campaigned to re-open youth clubs



London welcomed the magnificent Jarrow
March for Jobs on 5 November



Massive turnout for N30 in Ealing

May Day
Greetings

from

London

Socialist Party

branches in East London,
Walthamstow, Leyton/
Leytonstone, Hackney/
Islington, Tower Hamlets,
Haringey/Enfield, Camden,
West London, Hillingdon,
Lambeth/Southwark,
Lewisham, Greenwich and
Bexley, Croydon and
Kingston

Build a socialist alternative to austerity

The Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC) is an electoral coalition of trade unionists along with socialist organisations, including the Socialist Party, and individuals. It is contesting the 3 May local elections in England, Wales and Scotland as well as standing for Mayor in Liverpool and in the city-wide list for the London Assembly. Its agreed programme is to provide an electoral alternative to the capitalist austerity measures promoted by the establishment parties.

Below are some of the many reports of TUSC activity reflecting a section of issues the candidates are campaigning on. For more information on TUSC see www.tusc.org.uk

Liverpool: TUSC shows support for Sure Start

Laura Mannion
Sure Start parent

On Thursday 19 April the parents of Liverpool Sure Start centres came together to demand that the Education Select Committee of Liverpool City Council hear their reaction to the proposed 53% cuts to children centre services. Parents presented a petition to the committee which boasted over 8,800 signatures, with online signatures pushing the petition count over 10,000.

The demonstration was a huge success with around 300 people (children as well as adults) turning up to voice their opinions outside Liverpool Town Hall. We had media coverage from the Liverpool Echo and North West Tonight.

The demonstration, organised by parents' groups across the city, was supported by both Unite and Unison, alongside the much appreciated support from Tony Mulhearn, mayoral candidate for Liverpool, representing the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC).

Tony demands that cuts against children's centres be stopped in his

six-point policy programme. The support received from Tony and TUSC was invaluable, allowing the parents to run their own demonstration while having the experience onside to ensure our voices were heard effectively.

As the council meeting began, a successful road block was actioned showing council leader Joe Anderson and the rest of the Labour council that children's centres are an invaluable resource.

Parents across the city believe that children's centres should not be facing cuts of more than double the national average, as these centres provide support and education to families facing a wide spectrum of problems.

Children's centre staff are highly trained in quickly and adeptly identifying the needs of every family that walks through the doors. To lose these services would cause a whole array of problems in the future, which would affect multiple agencies including the NHS, education services and social services. Liverpool Sure Start parents believe wholeheartedly that every child matters.



Coventry Socialist Party councillor Dave Nellist (right) lends support to the campaign to keep open the Foleshill Leisure centre, which is threatened with closure by the Labour-run city council photo L Shail

'Move house' if you don't like waste-site plans!

Elaine Brunskill

TUSC candidate for High Fell ward, Gateshead

In Wrekenton, Tyne and Wear, the Campground Action Committee was set up to fight waste disposal plans by French multinational SITA. If these plans, (which have been approved by Sunderland council) go ahead, SITA intends to redevelop the waste reclamation centre. Local residents' fears include the increased volume of HGVs which will overwhelm the local community.

Although the Campground site is under the control of Sunderland city

council, it is in very close proximity to Wrekenton, in Gateshead.

Gateshead councillor Peter Mole is quoted on SITA's website as saying: "This is great news for the local community". However, when he and other local councillors were invited to speak at meetings with local residents they didn't even acknowledge the invitation.

Local campaigners also knocked on the door of one of the local councillors - only to be told she wouldn't comment as she didn't know enough about the issue!

Campground Action Committee member, Debra Coxon, told us that SITA's claim is that they are 'good

neighbours'. However, when concerns were put to Corrina Scott-Roy, planning manager for SITA UK, she suggested that 'if it's that bad why don't you all move house'.

The campaign group has been so angered by the response from Labour controlled Gateshead council that they have drawn up a petition calling on local residents to withdraw support for Labour candidates in future elections if the redevelopment of the Campground site goes ahead.

We are urging supporters of this campaign to vote TUSC on 3 May. A victory for TUSC will take this campaign into the council chamber.

Labour - no friend of trade unions

Nick Chaffey, Southampton TUSC candidate, Bitterne Park, replies to a letter from Unite regional official Ian Woodland, published in the Morning Star.

Ian Woodland writes: "In opposing the cuts and attacks on the unions, we find that the unions and Southampton Labour Party are effectively as one." How can this be when Labour plans to make £34 million cuts in Southampton if elected in May? This means butchering jobs and services, something union members oppose.

Southampton Tory council has implemented vicious cuts to jobs, pay and services. The unions have fought back with overwhelming public support. But not from Labour who opposed the strikes and said cuts would have to be made.

Strong criticism of the Labour cuts agenda exists among Unite and Unison members in Southampton. One leading Unite steward told TUSC campaigners: "You can't trust any of them!" We agree and so do many others. The only reason Labour will lose the election in Southampton is because of Labour's policy of cuts.

These cuts are not necessary,

nor inevitable. We must build a united movement against all cuts. Support exists for the fight against all cuts as was shown by the public sectors unions' strike over pension attacks on 30 November 2011. This is how the cuts will be defeated - through national strike action linked to a political alternative to the Con-Dem and Labour cuts consensus.

TUSC is committed to defeating cuts and will stand alongside any Labour council or councillors who refuse to implement cuts. It is madness for the unions to back a party that aims at doing damage to our own members.

It is urgent the unions break their political and financial link with Labour, stand trade union candidates against cuts, and help form a new workers' party that can put socialist ideas back on the map. Liverpool's socialist city council in the 1980s showed what is possible. Our task is to build that in Southampton, across Britain, and internationally.

TUSC campaigns round-up

Hillingdon - Bob Crow

Nearly 70 local people in Uxbridge, west London, listened to Bob Crow argue the case for TUSC on 18 April.

Bob Crow opened the meeting, saying: "Tories, Labour, Lib Dems - they all support privatisation, the anti-trade union laws, illegal wars and cuts. Who is putting the case for working class women and men?"

The brilliant meeting was co-hosted by Hillingdon Against Cuts community campaigners, and was full of local workers and union reps from council unions - Unison, Unite and GMB, NUT teachers' union, RMT transport union, and postal workers' union, CWU. They were joined by Brunel university students and local school students - one of whom, eleven year old Alex, addressed the meeting about why he thinks socialism is necessary.

Support from Daymer

At Haringey's TUSC public meeting on 17 April, Oktay Sahbaz from the Daymer Kurdish and Turkish organisation explained why Daymer is supporting TUSC. "Migrant communities are affected by the cuts to public services, education, jobs, the NHS. The Con-Dem coalition does not represent us, TUSC does."

Oktay said that Daymer's activists had ensured every Kurdish and Turkish shop had TUSC leaflets and posters. They had met with 25 Kurdish and Turkish community organisations and discussed TUSC with them, and had explained about TUSC to their 100-strong Sunday breakfast meeting.

2012 election debate

Speakers: Alex Gordon, TUSC (list candidate) John McDonnell Labour MP, Natalie Bennett, Green Party (list candidate)
Friday 27 April, 7 pm
Venue: Housmans bookshop, 5 Caledonian Road, Kings Cross, N1

Ken Loach inspires

On 19 April, a sell-out audience of over 250 people came to one of London's few independent cinemas, Peckham Plex, to see director Ken Loach screen his long-suppressed, 'The Save the Children Fund Film' and to discuss his politics with TUSC candidate for the London assembly, Nick Wrack. Attendees left with hundreds of leaflets to distribute across London, backing TUSC's anti-cuts agenda.

NHS campaigning

On 23 April, TUSC activists, including health workers, assembled outside the Royal Free Hospital in Camden protesting against plans to privatise NHS services. They distributed an 'NHS credit card' (available from www.tusc.org.uk).

Portsmouth TUSC

In the largest left-wing electoral challenge in Portsmouth for decades TUSC is standing eight candidates across the city. The campaign is building on the anti-cuts campaign over the last year. The most prominent candidate is RMT rep and Trades Council chair, Mick Tosh - who is standing in Copnor ward. Mick stood for TUSC in the 2010 general election in Portsmouth North and has con-

tinued to play a leading role in the anti-cuts campaign.

In the majority of wards across Portsmouth, TUSC is the only alternative to the big three parties. It has been TUSC candidates who have proposed anti-cuts 'needs budgets' to the Lib Dem run city council.

Socialist Students member Billy Perry, who is standing in St Thomas ward, home of Portsmouth University, said: "Young people in Portsmouth are not properly represented, despite being heavily impacted by the current economic situation, tuition fee rises and cuts being imposed."

Ben Norman

Swansea fightback

Les Woodward, TUSC candidate for Gowerton ward, Swansea, will address a TUSC public meeting this Friday (27th) evening. Les is the GMB union national convenor for the Remploi factories (which employ disabled workers) and is currently fighting to prevent their closure. Les is pledged to fight for the people of Gowerton with the same dedication and passion as he has done for Remploi workers over the years.

"If elected, I will pledge my heart and soul to fight against all cuts in public spending in Swansea. The good people of Gowerton and Swansea must not be penalised with loss of jobs and services in order to pay for the mismanagement of the financial institutions and the greed of the bankers."

TUSC meeting - 7.30 Friday 27 April, at the United Reformed Church, Sterry Road, Gowerton

Interview: 'get organised to support workers in struggle'

As we celebrate international workers' day on 1 May the Socialist speaks to Rob Williams, national chair of the National Shop Stewards Network (NSSN). The NSSN's founding conference in July 2007 resolved to

rebuild the strength of the working class movement from the bottom up by creating local, regional and national networks of active trade unionists. The NSSN has already built a reputation among active, militant

trade unionists as a body capable of effectively linking workers in struggle, against bosses increasingly expecting workers to pay for their economic crisis with jobs, pay and working conditions.

Many public sector workers are looking forward to and planning the next step of the pension battle. How can we make the strike on 10 May a success?

Firstly, we should emphasise how important this strike is. It has taken over four months to regroup after unions including Unison and the GMB signed the Con-Dems' 'Heads of Agreement' before Christmas. They broke ranks with the phenomenal 30 November (N30) strike which saw over two million public sector workers take action.

This strike is an opportunity to re-ignite this struggle, which has been the focus for all the anger against the cuts. It's also important to have a reaction to year one of the increased pension contributions - which are coming out of wage packets now. This is yet another pay cut on top of a four-year pay freeze!

Civil service union PCS, Unite in the NHS and civil service and Nipsa, the biggest public sector union in Northern Ireland, along with RMT members in the Royal Fleet Auxiliary have all confirmed that they're on strike on 10 May.

We hope that the teachers' and lecturers' unions NUT and UCU will also take part. NSSN supporters in those unions are calling for them to join in. London NUT were out on 28 March and the mood for national action was overwhelming. We also call on members of Unison and GMB to vote to reject the government's offer in the NHS and take part in coordinated action, preferably on 10 May, or when the next action is called, possibly in June.

As with the massive TUC demonstration last March and the strikes on 30 June (J30) and N30, the NSSN and its supporters and affiliates will do everything in our power to make 10 May a success and will support the picket lines, rallies and marches.

Next month will see the NSSN's sixth annual conference. What has the organisation done over the last year?

The NSSN was initiated by the RMT transport union in 2006 but the last year has really seen the NSSN come of age. In many respects, we are now in the period that the RMT started building for six years ago.

We've played a key role in the anti-cuts movement, lobbying the councils of all parties. We've been the champions of the 'fight all cuts' position. We also supported the Jarrow to London Youth March for Jobs.

But we've really made a difference in the struggles in the public and private sectors. I estimate that we gave out hundreds of thousands of leaflets last year with the demand for a 24-hour public sector general strike. Over 700 shop stewards came to our rally before the TUC conference in London last September which then lobbied the

TUC. That week the union leaders called the N30 strike.

We also called a lobby of the TUC's Public Service Liaison Group when it met in December and January to attempt to stop the break-up of the N30 strike coalition and stop a sell-out. As part of this we supported the open conference called by PCS Left Unity on 7 January.

Among the many private sector disputes we've been involved in, we've given full support to the marathon but victorious struggle of the construction electricians, plumbers and pipe fitters that defeated the 'Dirty 7' electrical contractors. These companies wanted to impose the new Besna contract and cut wages by up to 35%. All over the country, NSSN supporters have been regularly getting up at 5am over the last seven months getting to the 'Sparks' protests.

We're also supporting the Remploy workers who are fighting the virtual closure of the company. They are defending an important gain won by the working class, in providing skilled jobs for disabled workers.

There's a temptation to draw comparisons between the NSSN and the Minority Movement, the Liaison Committee for the Defence of Trade Unions (LCDTU) and the Broad Left Organising Committee (BLOC). What do you think about this?

We're still at an early stage but we certainly aim to play the role that these rank and file organisations played in the 1920s, 1970s and 1980s respectively. The Minority Movement had an influence over millions of workers and the LCDTU was able to call out over 500,000 workers on strike.

But the NSSN has shown in the public sector pensions struggle that it can also act as a lever on the official unions to push them into taking action. That was why we lobbied the TUC in September.

The Sparks' dispute showed how rank and file workers, if organised, can pressurise union leaderships to lead resistance to the employers and crucially lead to victories. After weeks of protests and unofficial action by the construction workers, the Unite leadership pushed the existing full-time officials aside to play a critical role.

But we want to transform the unions, not replace them. So we encourage workers to become active in their union. For example, the key Sparks activists have got on to the Unite Combine committee to ensure that any future talks with the employers are representative of what the members want.

Over the last year or so the potential strength of the trade union movement has been glimpsed. How can this be built on?

The organised working class in the unions have shown again that they are potentially the decisive force in society. The mammoth 26 March 2011 demonstration, the over two million-strong N30 strike, along with the Sparks victory, are the answer to the pessimists and cynics in the trade union movement.

The demonstrations of the striking public sector workers have definitely raised the profile of the unions and established again that they are fighting organisations. It can't be an accident that there's been a rash of disputes in the private sector in the aftermath of these events. Re-igniting the pensions dispute would strengthen this development.

Workers' Memorial Day is on 28 April. The Con-Dem coalition seems hell-bent on continuing to undermine health and safety legislation. Can this be resisted?

Yes, but only by getting organised and fighting these attacks through action. The Sparks victory will give construction workers the confidence to fight all the attacks against them, including the battle to make construction sites safer.

Because unofficial action isn't recorded in the statistics, we only have anecdotal evidence that in many workplaces workers are refusing to start work until a job is made safe.

But we also know that workers are killed or suffer injuries that stay with them for life. This is a genuine life and death issue. The Con-Dems have announced eye-watering cuts in the Health and Safety Executive of over 30%. This means even fewer inspections than there are now.

The electrical contractors wanted to reduce wages through de-skilling. This would have meant having semi-skilled workers carrying out work currently done by qualified electricians. Inevitably it would have increased the risk of accidents on the sites as well as the possibility of faulty wiring, which will face less stringent checks. It's all part of the same cost-cutting agenda to boost the profits of big business at the expense of the workers who make the profits.

The Tories' anti-trade union laws, kept on the books by Labour governments, can be a major block to trade union organisation - is there any way to remove them?

There are various tools to do this. The Sparks forced the 'Dirty 7' employers to capitulate because the result of the Unite strike ballot against the biggest of them, Balfour Beatty, was upheld against Balfour's legal challenge. This opened up the prospect of the Grange-mouth Oil Refinery site shut down with millions of pounds being lost. It may have even been the start of a national strike through the construction industry.

However, when the official ballot was suspended because Balfours ran to the courts, thousands of electricians took unofficial strike action on the intended strike day of 7 December. A week later, when they coordinated action with other workers covered by the NAECI agreement, who were fighting on pay, over 5,000 construction workers came out on unofficial strike.

This was crucial in showing the bosses that the Sparks wouldn't be constrained by the anti-union laws. In any case, all the unofficial and threatened official action was backed up by hundreds of workers taking part in what was effectively a weekly campaign of civil disobedience lasting half a year, with protests, unofficial walkouts and other action.

In reality, as with the movement in the late 1960s against the Labour government's 'In Place of Strife' anti-union laws and then the Tories' Industrial Relations Bill in the early 1970s, it was mass strike action that defied the law and forced the government back.

Of course, if a mass party existed that truly represented the interests of workers, that would be a massive advantage. The reality is that none of the main parties want to repeal these laws which, as Labour ex-prime minister Blair once boasted, are the most repressive in Western Europe. They started under Thatcher, continued under New Labour and are now used by the Con-Dems.



nationalshopstewardsnetwork

COME TO THE 6TH ANNUAL NSSN NATIONAL CONFERENCE;

Saturday 9 June 2012 • 11-4pm • Friends Meeting House, Euston, London

Speakers include: RMT general secretary, Bob Crow; PCS general secretary,

Mark Serwotka; A leading Rank and File Unite construction electrician;

NUT deputy general secretary, Kevin Courtney

www.shopstewards.net



COME TO THE NATIONAL SHOP STEWARDS NETWORK CONFERENCE

• Supporting workers in the public and private sectors

• Support the 10 May public sector strike to defend pensions

• Congratulations to the Sparks for defeating BESNA

• May Day Greetings from Socialist Party members on NSSN officers, steering and anti-cuts committees

At the very least, the leader of the TUC has to come from the affiliated unions and should have some experience of representing workers in the workplace. I also think that all union leaders should be on the same wage as those they represent. This is so that they really understand why jobs, terms and conditions and pensions have to be fought for.

If you had one minute on prime-time TV to convince people to attend the NSSN conference what would you say?

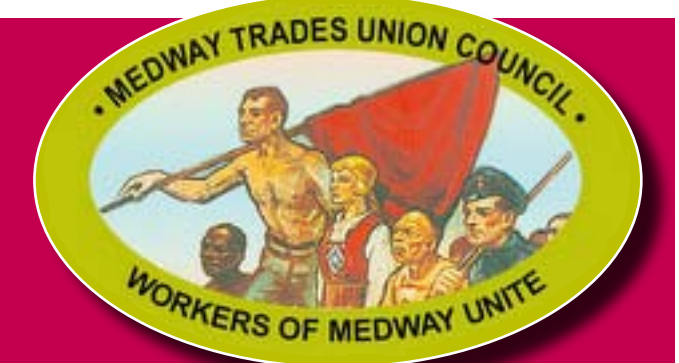
If you're angry about the threats to your job and your ever-smaller pay packet and want to know how you can fight back, this conference is for you. We've got the most militant union leaders - Bob Crow of the RMT and the PCS's Mark Serwotka speaking.

But you'll also hear rank and file workers and reps from the platform, including one of the sparks.

But in some senses, you'll learn as much having a chat over a cup of tea in the break or a pint in the pub after from people who are just like you. They are all facing the same problems at work, from the big bosses or the line manager, foreman or supervisor. It might also be the frustrations of dealing with a union official who just won't listen to you.

That's the great thing about the NSSN - big meetings or small, you're getting organised into a network with other rank and file activists to support workers in struggle. You never know when you might need the help!

Come to the NSSN's sixth annual conference and join hundreds of others like you.



May Day Greetings to all readers of the Socialist from Medway Trades Union Council

• FIGHT ALL CUTS AND PRIVATISATION • DEFEND THE NHS •

IPSWICH & DISTRICT TUC

- No to all cuts in jobs, public services and benefits!
- Save the NHS - national demo now
- Reject regional pay
- Defend our pensions!

www.ipswichmaydayfestival.co.uk



Stevenage & District TUC May Day Greetings to workers everywhere



Strike together in defence of pensions, jobs and pay
BrightonTradesCouncil@gmail.com

May Day Greetings from Notts Trades Council



GREETINGS!
FROM CARDIFF TRADES COUNCIL
Never in the history of class conflict has so much been pillaged by so few from so many
CAPITALISM IS CRISIS; SOCIALISM IS THE FUTURE

Waltham Forest Trades Council

Waltham Forest Trades Council sends May Day Greetings to all workers fighting against cuts, privatisation and attacks on their pay and conditions

- Victory to the workers in Greece and all workers in EU countries fighting against austerity
- Victory to the workers and peasants of the Middle East!
- Defend the welfare state!

BURY, MANCHESTER, OLDHAM & SALFORD TUCs
11am 7 May
Assembly at Bexley Square, Salford, M3 6BZ
12.00am March to Cathedral Gardens, Manchester, M43BG
1pm

Speakers from unions and community groups
2.30pm Social at Friends, Mount Street, Manchester M2 5NS
• FIGHT THE CUTS
• BUILD THE TRADES COUNCILS

See www.manchestertuc.org.uk
Contact: secmntuc@gmail or 0161 740 7806



May Day
Greetings
from

Yorkshire



All power to the Sparks!



If we can build the
Socialist Party in Harrogate.
We can build it anywhere



Solidarity from York
Socialist Party

Fight to keep May Day!



Save our services,
jobs not welfare
vote TUSC in
Kirklees and Calderdale
on May 3rd.



Solidarity from Leeds North West

Private and public sector,
workers and youth unite
to fight the Cuts



Support the oil tanker drivers,
striking for safe working conditions



Campaigning in the local elections for Brian Caton (TUSC)
Looking forward to establishing the next branch of SP in Yorkshire.
Workers of Barnsley, Unite & Fight,
You have nothing to lose but your debts! (and chains!)



Reject the pensions sell out.
Solidarity with workers
on M10 and beyond

Crusader, brewed in
Wakefield specially
for the Jarrow
Marchers.



Who's been fiddling the dole?
Remove A&E from all government contracts
Return employment and training back to public control.
Create real jobs on decent rates of pay. No to Slave Labour.



Rotherham Socialist Party
Branch established May 2010
Smashing paper sales and
Fighting Fund targets ever since!



Doncaster Socialist Party.
Proud to support striking
Free Press journalists,
proud to fight all cuts!

Rotherham against the Cuts
May Day march and rally
Saturday 5th May
assemble 10-30am Town Hall
Rally 11-30am All Saints
Square.

Kick Clegg out of Sheffield
Bin the three main parties
Vote TUSC on May 3rd
For an alternative to cuts and austerity
Build a New Workers Party



Restore EMA
Fight Tuition Fee rises
No to Education Cuts

LEEDS TRINITY
socialist
students

YOUTH FIGHT
FOR JOBS

LEEDS

Argentina: Nationalisation provokes wrath of imperialism

Tony Saunois CWI

Shrieks of protest have been unleashed against the partial nationalisation of YPF, the Argentinean subsidiary of the Spanish petrol multinational Repsol. These emanated from the Spanish government led by prime minister Mariano Rajoy, European Union leaders such as Barroso, right-wing Latin American presidents and others.

The Financial Times echoed such sentiments, warning Argentina's Peronist president Cristina Kirchner: "She should not be allowed to forget that actions have consequences" (FT 18/4/12).

However, Kirchner's announcement that 51% of YPF shares would be taken by the state has been greeted with mass support in Argentina.

The nationalisation of YPF shares is an extremely significant development which has important consequences beyond Argentina. The ruling classes internationally fear that it could set a precedent for other governments; and that these developments in Argentina are an anticipation of what may develop in other countries as the world economic capitalist crisis intensifies.

While there was sharp hostility and opposition to similar steps taken by Hugo Chávez in Venezuela in the past, when his government took action against Total, BP and Chevron, it did not reach the same pitch internationally as the reaction to Kirchner's recent intervention.

New situation

The international situation is now far more critical for world capitalism than when Chávez intervened against these companies. The prospect of other governments being compelled to intervene and go even further in nationalising sections of the economy, either as a result of pressure from the mass of the population, or to try to defend their own interests now terrifies the ruling classes.

A further element in this is the geo-political interests in Latin America and the Americas. The perceived decline in the influence of Hugo Chávez is leaving a space which Kirchner is attempting to fill. US imperialism has therefore been more cautious in its reaction - not wanting to push Kirchner further into the 'populist camp'.

Spanish paper El País quoted one US official following the recent Summit of the Americas in Colombia as saying: "We have occasional differences with Argentina but we don't want this (nationalisation



Argentina's president Cristina Kirchner renationalised YPF

of YPF) to compromise our broad cooperation on economic issues and security" with Argentina.

The partial renationalisation of YPF flows directly from the disastrous consequences of the mass privatisation carried out in Argentina in the 1990s under the then Peronist President, Carlos Menem.

Traditionally Peronism, a populist nationalist movement, had adopted a policy of heavy state interventionism. Menem's change of direction, to mass privatisation, represented the adoption of neoliberal policies internationally during that period.

YPF was privatised in 1992. As with the other privatisations it was a disaster for the masses but brought massive opportunities for Argentinean capitalists and multinationals like Repsol which returned to Latin America as the new 'conquistadores' buying up whole swathes of Argentina and the economies of Latin American.

These privatisations were catastrophic for the economy. As Kirchner has pointed out, the lack of investment and development in the petrol and energy sector has now resulted in the fact that Argentina has to import gas and petrol for the first time in more than 17 years. This is despite the discovery of a large shale gas field.

In the recent period the privatised Aerolíneas Argentinas, electricity companies and some others have also been renationalised, partly for similar reasons.

This change of policy by the Kirchner government has followed a sharp slowdown in the economy, rising inflation and the introduction

of cuts and also rising unemployment. Effectively what she is saying is if the privatised sector will not ensure essential services then the state will step in and do it.

Despite the outpouring of hostility from the representatives of capitalism and imperialism, Kirchner has not carried out a socialist nationalisation. This was made clear by Kirchner herself when she stated: "The model is not statism, that is clear, but recuperation of sovereignty and control of the functioning of the economy" (El País 17/4/12).

Trotsky

In March 1938 the Mexican radical populist government headed by Lázaro Cárdenas nationalised Anglo-American-Dutch petrol companies. Socialist revolutionary Leon Trotsky argued that this step should be supported and that the trade unions and working class should fight for democratic workers' control and management in the new state petroleum industry, despite it not being carried out on a socialist basis. This approach has lessons for Argentina today.

Similarly in Britain, when faced with the post-war Labour governments nationalising the coal, railways and later other sections of the economy, Marxists demanded democratic workers' control and management.

Concretely they proposed that the boards of such companies should be comprised of one-third from the trade unions in the industry, one-third from the TUC - representing the wider working class - and one-

third from the government.

Kirchner's partial nationalisation represents a change in policies for the Kirchner dynasty itself. They have been no friends of Argentina's working class and poor.

Her predecessor and now deceased husband, Néstor Kirchner, was an enthusiastic supporter of the privatisation of YPF in 1992. He sold a 5% share of YPF to Repsol held in Patagonia, in the province of Santa Cruz where he was then governor in 1999.

As Repsol increased its ownership of YPF to 99%, Kirchner then insisted that a percentage be held by Argentinean interests. As a result the Argentinean group Peterson, owned by the Eskenazi family, was given 25% of YPF shares. These have not been touched by the recent partial nationalisation.

In government the Kirchners amassed a fortune. When Néstor Kirchner was elected president in 2003 the couple's fortune was estimated at US\$2.35 million.

Once in office the Kirchners' wealth soared by a stunning 900% in seven years. By the time of Néstor's death in 2010 they were worth US\$18 million with 27 houses, apartments, stores and hotel businesses to their name.

In 2003 the family had no business interests in the Patagonian town of El Calafate. By 2010 the Kirchners ran 60-70% of economic activity in the town.

This capitalist state intervention is also an attempt by Kirchner to rally support against a background of a decline in the economy and attacks on the working class. She has tried to invoke the memory of the radical populist nationalist Evita Peron - announcing the measures in front of an image of a smiling Evita in the presence of the Madres de la Plaza - the mothers of the thousands disappeared during the military dictatorship.

The demand for nationalisation now needs to be taken up by the workers' organisations internationally. It is a positive step that the IU (United Left party) in Spain has opposed the Spanish government and defended the right of the Argentinean government to nationalise YPF.

The CWI supports all genuine measures taken against imperialism and calls for the democratic socialist nationalisation of the entire energy sector, with compensation paid only on the basis of proven need.

A nationalised energy sector should then be run democratically by the working people of Argentina as part of a democratic plan of the whole economy based on the nationalisation of the major companies and finance sector.

The Committee for a Workers' International

May Day greetings from the Committee for a Workers' International (CWI), the socialist international organisation to which the Socialist Party is affiliated.

The CWI is organised in 45 countries and works to unite the working class and oppressed peoples against global capitalism and to fight for a socialist world. For more details including CWI publications write to: CWI, PO Box 3688, London E11 1YE. email cwi@worldsoc.co.uk

www.socialistworld.net

The CWI website contains news, reports and analysis from around the world. Recent articles include:



Norway: Far-right Breivik states his loathing of 'equality' and socialism

Extreme right-winger boasts of killing 77 during court trial.

Per-Åke Westelund, Rattvispartiet Socialisterna (CWI, Sweden)



Sri Lanka: Successful convention held to launch Frontline Socialist Party

Committee for a Workers' International representatives report.

Socialistworld.net



Challenging times for the left in Europe

Review of "new Parties of the Left: Experiences from Europe".

Robert Bechert, CWI

France: Left Front vote shows potential for new workers' party

In the first round of the French presidential elections, held on 22 April, François Hollande (28.6% vote) of the social democratic Socialist Party (PS) narrowly headed incumbent president Nicolas Sarkozy (27.1%) of the right-wing Union for a Popular Movement (UMP). Both candidates face a run-off second ballot on 6 May in which Hollande is predicted to beat the much despised Sarkozy.

Most commentators emphasised the success of the far-right, xenophobic National Front (FN) candidate Marine Le Pen - who gained 17.9%, a high waterline for the FN. However, the most positive result,

from a socialist standpoint, was the rapid rise in working class support for the Left Front (FDG) candidate Jean-Luc Mélenchon. The FDG secured 11.1% (nearly four million votes) on a left reformist platform of opposing the austerity cuts to pay for the capitalists' economic crisis.

As expected, the New Anti-capitalist Party (NPA), whose popularity and membership have fallen dramatically because of its unclear programme and the false methods of its leadership, took a disappointing 1.15% (411,000 votes).

Mélenchon's virtual overnight success came about because his

skilful rhetoric tapped into a mood of burning anger among the working class against the rich elite and the capitalist policies pursued by the establishment parties.

Far right

Some of this mood was undoubtedly channelled by Le Pen, who capitalised both on people's anger and uncertainties over the deepening euro crisis and the recent murders in Toulouse by a right-wing Islamist terrorist.

Nearly 80% voted in the first round. Le Pen has called for her

supporters to abstain rather than support Sarkozy in the run-off, while Mélenchon has called for a vote for Hollande.

Despite the limitations of the Left Front programme (which essentially argues for reforming capitalist institutions instead of meaningful socialist change), Mélenchon's successes - the tens of thousands who attended his rallies and four million votes - shows the potential for renewing the debate for building a new mass party to the left of the PS that can challenge capitalism.

See www.socialistworld.net for more comment

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Socialist Party



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photo Guy Smallman



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Brighton

Mass protest counters racist EDL

Brighton and Hove Socialist Party

On 22 April a mass mobilisation of up to 1,000 anti-racists joined a demonstration to counter the English Defence League (EDL) and their annual ‘March for England’ (MfE) through Brighton.

MfE claims to stand for patriotic and nationalist values and argues that its ‘family orientated’ St George’s day demonstrations, which have taken place in Brighton since 2007, are no more than a celebration of national pride.

However, it has become clear that MfE is inexorably tied to various far-right organisations, especially the (EDL), which is known for spreading a virulent anti-Muslim and ultra-nationalist agenda through intimidation and harassment of local populations. On the march last year sexist abuse was shouted at women, such as: ‘Get back in the kitchen.’

Bullies and thugs

The event was dominated by bullies and thugs, intent on promoting fear and hatred in Brighton, known for its history of tolerance and anti-fascism. As socialists, we saw the counter-demonstration as an opportunity to stand with the wider community against this threat.

The EDL tries to capitalise on the anger among working class people about the cuts and attacks on living conditions they face but they have no solutions. We explained the need to build a mass united working class fightback against both austerity and racism.

The march was due to leave Brighton station around midday. Our numbers began to swell as anti-racists lined the main road leading towards the town centre. Even pro-



The police protect the far right photo Paul Mattsson

tected by police regiments from several counties, the group of around 100 to 150 MfE marchers didn’t get far before the road was repeatedly blocked.

The police, numbering 300 to 400, resorted to very violent horse and baton charges, dogs and pepper spray and arrests to break the line of counter-demonstrators, while the MfE route was diverted away from the seafront and towards Victoria Gardens.

Once at their impromptu destination, however, it became clear that the MfE was vastly outnumbered. Our banners, singing and rallying cries drowned out their limp messages of hate. The MfE were then followed all the way to the station by the crowds, who were held back by the large police presence.

But at the station the police allowed the thugs to roam through the town, badly beating at least one trade union and anti-racist

activist. This shows the need for organised stewarding of such anti-racist counter-protests – which the Socialist Party argued for prior to the day.

Nonetheless it is clear that this year’s event was an underwhelming and embarrassing result for the far right, rescued only by the police. Few in numbers, they were humiliated by a big and determined counter-protest.

Socialists used the occasion to engage with local people and demonstrators, and to show the urgent need to build a new mass working class party that fights for jobs, homes and opportunities for all. The far right will try to use the neglect of these necessities by capitalist parties to their advantage.

We will keep building a movement against future fascist events. March for England may well return to Brighton next year, but they will not go unchallenged in our city.

Bringing new life into trade unions

The article in issue 714 of the Socialist from the London busworker about forthcoming elections in Unite for Reps and Branch Officials correctly stated that this is an opportunity to rejuvenate branches and promote members’ involvement in union activity.

Real change can only come from the members and this will lead to a stronger union in the bus industry. This is also true for all other sectors in Unite and socialists should take an active part in these elections.

As the writer points out this does not have to be about replacing peo-

ple who have been isolated and left without support but can be used as a way of building support around an existing rep or branch official.

Where there is a challenge needed then let that take place. But branch positions do not have to be just about being elected as secretary or chair; you may want to create other positions such as Education Officer, and every branch is now required to have an Equalities Officer.

It is not just branches and workplaces that need a breath of fresh air. Many Industrial Sector Committees lack direction and meet for the sake of

meeting. These committees are supposed to organise and run the sector in the members’ interests. These committees are being re-elected in September and this gives comrades the opportunity to further develop Unite as a member-led union.

The Socialist Party has a significant role to play in the influential United Left grouping and it would be refreshing to see a few new faces at UL meetings and contribute to the progressive agenda that the Socialist Party commits itself to at these meetings.

A Unite activist

Manchester Socialist Party

Fraternal greetings to all comrades

Bristol Central Socialist Party

May Day Greetings!

“Life is beautiful. Let the future generations cleanse it of all evil, oppression, and violence, and enjoy it to the full.”

Leon Trotsky

Exeter Socialist Party

Workers of the world unite under the socialist banner!

May Day Greetings to all our comrades in the CWI

Unite Nottingham Health branch

The fight continues to save the NHS

Unite Nottingham Health branch 9214M

Swansea Socialist Party

Cyfarchion oddi wrth Blaid Sosialaidd Abertawe ar Diwrnod Rhyngwladol y Gweithwyr

May Day Greetings from Swansea Socialist Party

May Day greetings and solidarity from Swansea Youth Fight for Jobs!

the Socialist postbag

Do you have something to say?

Send your news, views and criticism in not more than 150 words to Socialist Postbag, PO Box 24697, London E11 1YD, or phone 020 8988 8771, email: editors@socialistparty.org.uk. We reserve the right to shorten letters. Don’t forget to give your name, address and phone number. Confidentiality will be respected if requested.

Shocking result of cuts

Three weeks ago, at the learning difficulties charity where I work, an older woman resident fell, breaking her hip. She was taken to the local general hospital who told us she’d be in for quite a while.

Two weeks later the hospital called to say she’d be sent home later that day, a Friday. Our manager was absent, and no one took any notice of the rest of us.

We received her at 8 o’clock at night and were left to get on with it, without the benefit of even a risk assessment. The staff and patient were heroes, and tried to make things as comfortable for her as possible. But it was obvious she should still be with the hospital. A staff member contacted an area manager and convinced him of the seriousness of the situation. He contacted the hospital and they agreed to take her back on the Monday. Obviously, shortage of beds was their excuse. Just contrast this to the way a member of the royal family gets treated. The staff are upset and angry at this appalling treatment of someone we love dearly.

That anger won’t go begging. Now we can show management the disastrous practice of doing away with all the deputies and making the manager responsible for two houses instead of one, which we foresaw all along. Watch this space.

David, Southampton

Greens no solutions

Any trade unionist looking to the Green Party for a political alternative, after their victories in getting an MP and winning the first Green-led council, should look at the council’s February budget. The Green party has no strategy to oppose cuts and could next year face having to find £20 million ‘savings’; ie cuts.

The Socialist Party aims to build a ‘no cuts’ alternative, backed by a genuine campaigning strategy. But the Greens rejected calls for a campaign against cuts in government funding.

They aimed to raise council tax by 3.5% a year to try to work within the overall funding reduction. But after Labour and the Conservatives defeated this tax rise, a cuts budget was voted through with one Green councillor voting against.

Socialist councillors have done and do all in their power to develop a campaign to challenge central government and their cuts.

The Greens favoured pushing up council tax but measures such as that cannot make up for the huge cuts being imposed. Raising taxes to meet the government’s funding drop is cutting by another means.

We need a working class party that would rely on the strength of a mass movement to achieve its goals of opposing austerity and getting back the funding that the Con-Dems robbed from local government.

Jon Redford, Brighton

Who cares?

Is the general secretary of the Unison union, Dave Prentis, backing the TUSC election campaign? The Unison website describes a campaign of “eye-catching ads” in a few selected locations around the country and Mr Prentis calls for members to vote “for

the party that cares about public services.”

One location chosen by Unison for this poster campaign is Southampton, where TUSC is standing in 13 wards, in clear opposition to the local Labour Party, which has come down against striking public service workers.

So voters in Southampton who are influenced by Unison’s hoardings are more likely to vote TUSC and here’s me thinking Prentis was a Labour supporter!

Rob Rooney, Plymouth

Anti-gay charity

Tory MP for South West Devon, Gary Streeter, says he will continue to accept interns from the Christian Action Research charity (CARE) that promotes a ‘gay cure’. CARE, that provided staff in many parliamentary offices, advocates the bigoted viewpoint of a ‘gay cure’ and has held workshops on ‘mentoring’ the ‘sexually broken’.

This offensive, bigoted view shows how dangerous Christian fundamentalists infiltrate the corridors of power. Steeter declared: “They provide high quality interns.

“They do a great job and many of them will end up in politics. Several go on to be MPs. I shall continue to have an intern if I am offered one.”

The Socialist Party in Plymouth will be keeping up pressure on Streeter about homophobic attitudes as the Socialist Party oppose discrimination on the grounds of race, sex, disability, sexuality, age and all other forms of prejudice, not to mention exploiting unpaid labour.

Steve Merritt

Deported to torture?

Abu Qatada has been tried and found guilty by The Sun and that’s good enough for Theresa May. If, as the paper claims, Abu Qatada was “continually” committing criminal acts in the UK, the government was remiss in not bringing him to trial. Instead they plan to have him deported to Jordan where extraction of confessions by torture is reportedly standard police practice.

May tells parliament with a straight(ish) face that she is assured that he will receive a fair trial in Jordan.

There’s a first time for everything but Amnesty International has no record of a fair trial in Jordan.

Last year, for example, 30 peaceful protesters were locked up under a charge of “insulting the king.” Many were beaten by the brave police in whom May places such touching faith.

It is not so much Abu Qatada’s democratic rights which are being violated. It is yours and mine. Theresa May is avaricious to use the torturers of Jordan. This is “rendition” conducted in the full light of day and with the media baying for blood.

The nominal opposition are so scared of being branded as “soft on terrorism” that they confine themselves to ridiculing Theresa May’s incompetence rather than her authoritarianism.

Government proposals to read your emails and texts become clear now. “Terrorists and criminals” will be targeted.

And anybody who criticises Theresa May’s permissive attitude towards torture is clearly a “terrorist” too and therefore fair game.


Derek McMillan

Celebrate May Day and vote TUSC Against Cuts, 3 May

DEFEND PAY, PENSIONS, BENEFITS & SERVICES - MAKE THE 1% PAY!
IN SOLIDARITY WITH ALL THOSE FIGHTING THE CUTS

Southampton: BASSETT - Neil Kelly • BARGATE - Sharon Cutler • BEVOIS - Andrew Howe • BITTERNE - Perry McMillan • BITTERNE PARK - Nick Chaffey • COXFORD - Tim Cutter • HAREFIELD - Graham O'Reilly • PEARTREE - Josh Asker • PORTSWOOD - David Rawlinson • REDBRIDGE - Pete Wyatt • SHIRLEY - Mike King • SWAYTHLING - Kev Hayes • WOOLSTON - Gavin Marsh

Portsmouth: COPNOR - Mick Tosh • ST JUDE - Andy Waterman • EASTNEY and CRANESWATER - Ben Norman • FRATTON - John Pickett • CHARLES DICKENS - Aron Fielder • COSHAM - Simon Wade • ST THOMAS - Billy Perry • CENTRAL SOUTHSEA - Frances Pilling



Winchester: ST JOHNS & ALL SAINTS - Adele Guntrip

A VOTE FOR ANYONE ELSE IS A VOTE FOR CUTS

Bristol & District Anti-Cuts Alliance sends May Day Greetings

Join NHS demo on College Green, Bristol at 11am, Saturday 5 May
For a National NHS Demo!



May Day greetings from the Socialist Party Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Trans group


In international solidarity with all those facing persecution for their sexuality
Against bigotry and discrimination in Britain and worldwide
For a socialist world free of war, hatred and prejudice



Members and supporters of the Socialist Party in SALFORD AGAINST CUTS send May Day Greetings

Vote George Tapp in Ordsall on Thursday 3 May!
Join us for May Day in Bexley

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We stock all your Marxist and socialist classics, current and past

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by Peter Taaffe - £7.50

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by Hannah Sell - £5.00

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Brighton and Hove TUC Unemployed Workers' Centre

Brings May Day Greetings to all those fighting poverty, racism, imperialism and oppression

OPPOSE ALL BENEFIT CUTS AND ATTACKS ON THE EMPLOYED AND UNEMPLOYED

We say:

- Oppose all attacks on asylum seekers
- No to privatisation and PFI
- No to imperialism's war plans

Fighting Poverty Amidst Plenty FOR INTERNATIONAL SOCIALISM!

4 Crestway Parade, The Crestway, Brighton BN1 7BL
01273 540717

Bill North - Chairperson
Andy Richards - Secretary
Tony Greenstein - Treasurer

May Day Greetings from Youth Fight for Jobs and Education

Fight their system – demand our future!

No to slave labour workfare – for real jobs on decent pay and conditions

For free education – scrap fees, bring back EMA

No cuts to youth services

For a programme of affordable council house building

Stop police harassment - defend the right to protest

www.youthfightforjobs.com





May Day Greetings from Socialist Party members in the National Union of Teachers and NUT executive member Martin Powell-Davies (personal capacity)

- We've got to put a stop to work until you drop!
- Call a calendar of national strike action!

Socialist Party members in the Communication Workers Union extend fraternal May Day Greetings to workers of the world

- No to postal privatisation
- No to workfare



Tony Mulhearn by some of the housing built when he was deputy leader of the Liverpool 47 council

Socialist Party Liverpool & District "Tony4Mayor"

Vote Tony Mulhearn - Trade Unionist and Socialist Against Cuts - Mayor 4 Liverpool

May Day Greetings from socialist students



Fighting against fees and cuts, fighting for socialism!

socialiststudents.org.uk



Youth against Racism in Europe

Jobs and homes not racism

Unite to stop the cuts - End police racism - Stop the far right

PRESTON EMERALD CELTIC SUPPORTERS CLUB



Sends greetings to all its members and comrades on International Workers' Day

May Day greetings to all Socialist Party and CWI members from the following Socialist Party branches in South East Wales

Cardiff Central - Cardiff South - Cardiff West - Rhondda Cynon Taff - Newport

- Drive out the millionaire thugs of the Con-Dem government
- Support TUSC candidates in council elections across south Wales
- Build Socialist Party branches in every Welsh town and city



Llanelli and West Wales Socialist Party branch's Diamond Jubilee message: Save Prince Phillip Hospital!

Greetings from the Socialist Party Northern Region

For the millions not the millionaires

- Vote TUSC on 3 May

Activists in Surrey County Unison send warm May Day Greetings to the Socialist

Defend Our Pensions - We Must Fight On!
Fight the Pay Restraint - A Decent Rise Now!
No More Witch-Hunts - Re-instate the Four



Surrey Unison members and Save Our Services supporters on the 30 November public sector pensions strike

In memory of our friend and comrade, Ian MacDonald

All the activists listed below donated their own money towards this May Day Greeting and did so in a purely personal capacity:

Jane Armitage - Deputy Branch Secretary, Schools and Families Convenor and Local Government Service Group Executive
Sandra Ayliffe - Retired Activist (recently awarded life-long national Unison membership)
Nina Boyd - Schools Convenor
Jan Callender - Branch Employed Office Manager
Glenn Clift - FE and 6th Form Colleges Convenor
Alan Clyne - Adults Social Care Convenor
Helen Couchman - Steward in Dimensions UK
Paul Couchman - Branch Secretary
Ginny Eaton - Deputy Branch Secretary and Schools Convenor
Kelvin Foote - Steward in Children's Social Work
Fiona Heneghan - Equalities Officer and Children's Convenor
Chris Leary - Communications, Life Long Learning and Corporate Services Convenor
James Lewis - Steward in Children's Social Work
Steve Marsh - Steward for Surrey Fire and Rescue Support Staff
Brendan Melvin - Steward in Adult Mental Health
Stuart Melvin - Branch Employed Project Manager
Andy Pattinson - Branch Chair and Steward in Emergency Duty Team
Kay Peters - Customers, Communities, Environment and Infrastructure Convenor
Geraldine Robertson - Branch Treasurer, Education and Recruitment Officer

Porters and health workers at Whipps Cross hospital, east London, send May Day Greetings to the Socialist newspaper

- Reject the pensions deal - For national strike action alongside other unions
- Defeat the Health and Social Care Act - For a national demonstration linked to a programme of industrial action to fight cuts and privatisation
- Kick out private contractors - Renationalise all PFI contracts. Compensation to be paid on the basis of proven need only
- For a minimum living wage of £10 an hour
- Abolish Foundation Trusts - For a fully funded, nationally integrated and democratically planned NHS - For the management boards of health facilities to be elected and run by health unions, the TUC and government
- Nationalise under workers' control and management the pharmaceutical and medical supplies industries and all private health facilities



A protest against trade unionist victimisation at Whipps Cross hospital photo S Sachs-Eldridge

HACKNEY COUNCIL WORKERS SEND MAY DAY GREETINGS TO WORKERS OF THE WORLD



On the 30 November pensions strike



This greeting has been sponsored by: **Len Stephenson** Unison Shop Steward; **Andy Clifford, Paul Childs** Parks Shop Stewards; **Karen Lynn** Unison Education Convenor; **Patricia Louis, Earl Bailey, Nat Neuwirth, Margaret Sinn, Clementina Anya**, anonymous, **Tina Mejeh, Brian Debus, Janet Adegoke, Samirah Sharif, Lydia Julien, Gerard Mason**, all Libraries Staff; **Cleolyn Short, Debbie Peart, Martin Cootes** Unison Admin staff; **Peter Coleman** Private Sector Organiser; **Mick Regan** Hackney NUT Secretary; **Sandra Hall** NUT Branch Committee; **Eamann Devlin** Unison Membership Secretary; **Lee Ray** Unison Health & Safety Officer; **Kathy Hamilton** Unison Branch Treasurer; **Martha Alaneme, Joylyn Lawrence** Unison Shop Steward; **Jean Howard**; all in a personal capacity



NO PENSIONS SELL OUT
NO MORE JOB CUTS
FOR AN OLYMPIC PAY RISE
AFTER A THREE YEAR PAY FREEZE

- **COURT VICTORY FOR UNISON FOUR**
- **UNISON LEADERSHIP GUILTY OF 'UNJUSTIFIABLE DISCIPLINE'**
- **NO MORE WITCH-HUNTS**
- **FOR REGULAR ELECTION AND ACCOUNTABILITY OF NATIONAL OFFICERS IN UNISON**

May Day Greetings from Socialist Party members on Unison's NEC

April Ashley, Roger Bannister, Vicky Perrin, Jean Thorpe (All in a personal capacity)

- **Fight the attacks on pensions**
- **National action against cuts in jobs and services**
- **Fight the wage freeze**
- **End the witch-hunt**

VOTE FOR A SOCIALIST ALTERNATIVE

The Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC) is a new electoral coalition that was set up by leading trade unionists including RMT general secretary Bob Crow, and socialists, including the Socialist Party, to provide a political voice to the millions who oppose the cuts. TUSC is standing candidates with a proven campaigning record.

Vote for one candidate only		
	Vicious cuts Conservative	
	Progressive cuts Liberal Democrat	
	Better our cuts than their cuts Labour	
	Reluctant cuts Green Party	
	NO CUTS! Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition	X

Dave Nellist Socialist Party councillor and former Coventry Labour MP, expelled for fighting Thatcher's poll tax

“Coventry has 24,000 people on the housing waiting list, and the Labour council has a target of 305 new affordable and rented homes a year - which isn't being met because they rely on the private sector to build them, and people can't afford to buy.

“The wait for overcrowded families is tragic - last year, in one part of Coventry 752 families applied for a single three-bed house. We

urgently need a mass public programme of house building; but none of the establishment parties will deliver that.

“In Coventry council I'm often the only one to vote against cuts”

“We need a new party that will stand for socialist policies, stop the cuts which all three main parties agree on to pay off the bank-

ers' gambling debts, and plan the country's resources so that young people have a future, families have security and pensioners have dignity in old age.

“In Coventry council I am often the only one to raise my hand to vote against cuts which shows the urgent need to build a new mass party of the working class. The Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition is an important step towards that.”



photo Paul Mattsson

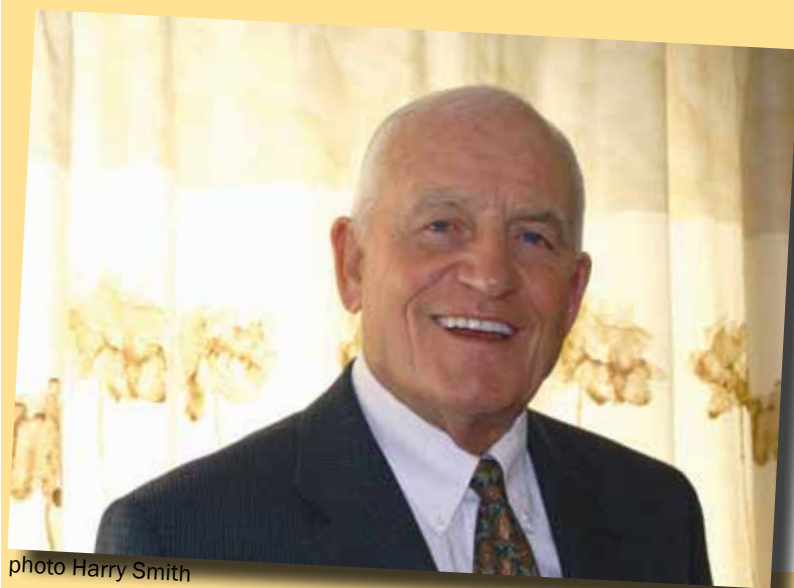


photo Harry Smith

Tony Mulhearn, veteran socialist and trade unionist, former Liverpool District Labour Party president, and one of the leaders of the 1983-87 socialist council

“The Labour group in Liverpool proposes a vision of cuts today and jam tomorrow, claiming that private developers will deliver thousands of jobs and houses at some time in the distant future.

“These are meaningless promises given the scale of problems which demand an immediate solution.

“I will demand that councillors support a fight against this millionaires' government whose main objective is to transfer wealth from the 99% into the pockets of their friends, the mega rich.

“Liverpool's working people are being subjected to the most savage cuts in post-war history. The Labour-controlled council and its Con-Dem acolytes are slavishly

implementing the cuts and granting freedom of the city to former minister Tory Lord Heseltine, who wielded Thatcher's axe in Liverpool during the 1980s.

“Liverpool is entitled to an alternative candidate to the cuts candidates. A socialist challenge is imperative, that's why I'm proud to stand in the name of the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition.”

Nancy Taafe, east London library worker made redundant through cuts and Waltham Forest anti-cuts union coordinator

“Social provision of services is the main way women improve their lot. Healthcare, welfare, education for themselves and children, public housing, etc - when these things are well resourced and easily available women's lives improve; take them away and we suffer.

“They say that women in Brad-

ford West helped to make the break with the 'traditional' pro-cuts par-

“The services we rely on are disappearing. No wonder women are in the fightback everywhere”

ties, punishing them instead by voting for George Galloway. This

change is symptomatic of the mismatch between what we've been promised and what our lives are actually like.

“Over a million women are now unemployed, the services we rely on are disappearing. No wonder women are in the fightback everywhere - in the pension strikes, in the anti-cuts unions and in this TUSC election campaign.”



photo Paul Mattsson