

Protest at the Tory Conference in Manchester

- **SAVE OUR NHS**
- **Defend Jobs and Services**
- **No to Austerity**

March and Rally - Sunday 29 September

Assemble at Liverpool Road, M3 4FP, 11am
Marching to a rally in Whitworth Park

CUTS RATION CARE

Bob Severn

The medical director of NHS England, Bruce Keogh, has said the NHS should be run by Dixons or PC World with a "more for less" mentality - he must mean more profits, less healthcare, poor service and closures (all Dixons shops closed in 2006!).

But already, a study has shown that the lack of adequate staffing means that nurses 'ration' the care they give to patients because of pressures on their time. Areas most likely to be cut back on are talking to patients, adequate monitoring, recording details of care, and pain management. Unsurprisingly, the problem was shown to be worst in the hospitals with fewer staff per patients.

This blows out of the water the idea that poor care is because of uncaring nurses. Many simply do not have the time and resources to do the job they are trained for because of understaffing and cuts.

The evidence for this BMJ Quality and Safety medical journal study was gathered in 2010

- before most of the 7,000-plus nursing jobs cuts made so far under the Con-Dems! And more redundancies are on the way - 140 hospital foundation trusts plan to slash 30,000 jobs by 2016.

The government and media talk about a £30 billion NHS funding gap by 2020. But this 'shortfall' could be more than met if the government scrapped all PFI (Private Finance Initiative - 'Profit from Illness!') in the NHS.

Robbery

PFI is like taking out a high interest mortgage, but the lender owns the house at the end of the loan! And while everything else in the NHS gets slashed, the PFI payments stay. The total cost of all PFI (including non-NHS) has been measured at over £300 billion!

PFI was a favourite scheme of New Labour, but despite criticising PFI in opposition, the Tories' only new hospital - Alder Hay in Liverpool - has been built under the costly system.

Of course, two more easy ways of 'plugging the gap' would be to

kick big business out of the NHS and make the rich and corporations pay tax!

Another money saver would be to take the drugs companies under democratic working class control and management. This would stop the pushing up of drug prices by up to 2,000%, as reported in the last issue of the Socialist.

North West TUC is organising a demo outside the Tory party conference in September.

But we can't just stop at demonstrating - the health unions, especially Unison, should be organising national strike action to stop the break-up and privatisation of the NHS.

This would be best done as a part of a 24-hour general strike by all unions in opposition to austerity.

But we also need political representation - the Tories, Lib Dems and Labour all agree that the NHS should be cut, broken up and privatised. That is why the Socialist Party is part of the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition, which stands in elections against all cuts and privatisation.

See page 2 for more on the NHS

National Health Service in crisis!

Stop the destruction of the NHS in east London!

No cuts at Whipps Cross, Barts, Newham and the Royal London



photo Paul Mattsson

Socialist Party members in east London

A major campaign to defend the NHS is needed in east London, as it is in many parts of the country. Privatisation and cuts threaten Barts Health Trust, which includes Whipps Cross, Barts, Newham and the Royal London hospitals, forming Britain's biggest NHS hospital trust.

Barts has announced it is losing £2 million a week and plans severe cuts at all the hospitals, especially at Whipps Cross, to avoid going into administration. The Trust is making the biggest cuts in the NHS, with £30 million cuts this year alone.

It is saddled with a massive PFI (private finance initiative) deal to rebuild the old Royal London. These cuts are due to the greed of private companies that suck the lifeblood out of the NHS.

They are also part of the Con-Dems' plans to sell off the NHS and make massive cuts to all our public services, to pay for a crisis caused by bankers and bosses.

Part of the reason for the dogged drive to privatisation of the NHS, which clearly opens the door to disaster, is in order to provide new and profitable fields of investment for big business in this time of ongoing economic crisis. Another hint is the over £10 million in donations from companies profiting from private healthcare that the Tories have received since 2001.

The cuts must be fought! Why

should working people across east London – workers in and users of the NHS – pay such a terrible price for the failures and the greed of the rich and big business?

Workers at Whipps Cross hospital have a proud record of standing up and fighting and winning.

Whipps Cross Unison branch is calling a public meeting and demonstration, and wants to work with the unions across all the hospitals to build a united campaign.

Attack on the union

The Waltham Forest Guardian reports that: "Charlotte Monro, chairperson for Unison's Waltham Forest health branch at the Leytonstone hospital, has been barred from representing members at a Barts Health Trust staff consultative group pending an investigation into her trade union activity."

It also reported a Unison spokesperson saying that "Ms Monro is the public service union's main link to the trust-wide body for the branch at Whipps Cross and barring her from attending disenfranchises members at the hospital."

Hospital workers and trade unionists who speak out to defend public services must be defended – an attack on one key figure is an attack on the whole union and the campaign.

The whole community should get behind the campaign of the workforce in the hospitals. The Unison branch at the hospital has a very

National Shop Stewards Network NHS bulletin number 3

Includes articles on Whipps Cross, Wales, Mid Staffs and building for a 24-hour general strike. See shopstewards.net or email info@shopstewards.net



good record of resisting attacks on members and of defending workers' rights by organising determined campaigns, involving wide sections of the workforce and including strike action.

Demonstrations and other protests will all be important to bring together the community, NHS users, and the workforce to fight the latest attacks and to prepare for further threats. It is the workers in the hospital and the union branch who ultimately have the power to take decisive action, including strike action, which, with the community behind them, could beat these cuts back.

Socialist Party members, who work at Whipps Cross and are campaigning across east London, are pointing to the need to link up this struggle with all those against the cuts and to support the NSSN lobby of the TUC to call a 24-hour general strike (see page 5).

Several hospital workers from the area are planning to stand as Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition candidates in next May's local elections to provide a political voice that stands up for the NHS.

To get involved in the campaign and for details of meetings and protests, email paulamitchell@socialistparty.org.uk

No cuts in the health service

- Kick big business out of the NHS:
- Cancel privatisation and outsourcing contracts - reintegrate all health services back into the NHS
- All hospitals to be fully run and funded by the NHS
- Adequate staffing levels to provide good quality care for all patients. Decent pay and conditions for all staff
- Health service unions to organise industrial action to defend every part of the NHS

111 emergency

The NHS non-emergency phone line – 111 – is in crisis after NHS Direct decided to pull out of the contracts it holds (threatening the service in a quarter of areas). Why the sudden cold feet? Well, it has become 'financially unsustainable' to continue providing the service on the current contract. Which might have something to do with the fact that NHS Direct massively under-bid for the project, promising it would only cost £7 a call. The actual figure has been much higher, leaving NHS Direct in the red and the service worse than shoddy. So much for the benefits of competition.

Serco scandal...again

One company very interested in the latest round of privatisation in the NHS is Serco. Serco already runs out-of-hours GP services in Cornwall – which suffered massive failings and a "culture of lying and cheating" within a couple of years of takeover – and community health services in Suffolk. They have a hand on every area of public services in fact – the prisons where they keep prisoners locked up all day, the tagging where they overcharge the government by millions. You'd think these success stories would be enough to put a stop to it but Serco is now going after a £1 billion contract for health services in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough.



111 is the non emergency NHS number

Stafford A&E

The A&E at Stafford hospital is to be permanently closed after years of scandal, criticism and uncertainty. Hundreds of patients are thought to have needlessly died as a result of failings at the hospital over a number of years. But is taking away emergency care from the town really the solution? Local people certainly don't seem to think so – 30,000 marched in defence of the hospital in April this year. Patients will now have to travel to Stoke or Wolverhampton in an emergency.

Out to tender

£5 billion worth of NHS contracts are going out to tender. These include 160 large-scale contracts and seven worth over £100 million. Private sector vultures are swarming round the bidding process, in what has been described as "an arms race", recognising this huge outsourcing of public services as one of the only ways to make a profit in the current economic situation. This tendering represents a major shift in how the NHS operates and the likely devastating effects will be seen over the coming years.



A section of the Stafford march



Privatisation: bleeding the NHS dry cartoon Phil Hackett

The Socialist summer schedule

The Socialist is now into its summer fortnightly schedule:

Issue 775, 1-14 August

Issue 776, 15-28 August

The weekly schedule will be resumed from issue 777 (29 August-4 September).

The fortnightly schedule allows members of the editorial staff to attend the CWI Summer School and also take some holiday!

In the meantime, with workers' struggles, anti-bedroom tax campaigns and other protests against austerity continuing, we recommend you keep a close eye on the Socialist Party website:

www.socialistparty.org.uk

You can also follow us on Facebook and Twitter (@Socialist_Party and @Socialistpaper).

**Needed:
a strategy to stop
the destruction of the
NHS. A collection of articles
from the Socialist**

£2 including postage
Available from Socialist Books, PO
Box 24697, London E11 1YD,
020 8988 8789 www.
socialistbooks.org.uk



Benefits shock: London family on state handouts avoids the benefit cap and bedroom tax

Royal birth deflects from campaigns to save maternity services across the UK

As the Welsh government considers the results of the consultation into downgrading at least one maternity unit in south Wales the media has gone into a frenzy of congratulation over the birth of a new royal prince.

Of course it's not the fault of the baby. He is just like any other baby, totally unaware of the furore erupting around him. It will not be for a few years that he becomes aware that he lives an entirely different existence from the rest of society.

In his luxurious cot attended by servants in Kensington Palace, he will be oblivious of the fact that a short distance away other babies are being evicted from their homes by the government's benefit cap on families living in flats charged high rents by landlords in central London. He will be unaware of other young children unable to stay with one of their parents over the weekend because of the bedroom tax.



Scroungers

Normal families

The media is keen to promote the monarchy as a sort of normal family living a royal-celeb lifestyle. This serves as a useful distraction from real lives. Princess Kate's childbirth was nothing out of the ordinary, but its promotion serves to distract from the cuts being made in maternity services across the UK. There is something distasteful about the medieval way that both the media and the royals see princesses as breeding machines above all else.

Where was The Sun's coverage of

the tragic loss of her baby by a mother in Caerphilly while she waited for an ambulance to take her from Ystrad Fawr hospital, where there is no consultant obstetrician to the Royal Gwent Hospital?

It is Socialist Party members, campaigning in the Penyrheol by-election, who are fighting for a consultant-led maternity unit at the hospital, while the royals continue

to live a life of unimaginable luxury paid for by the mothers who need maternity services and are denied them by increasing austerity.

The Queen has declined the opportunity to join her subjects in cutting public spending – she has just been given a 5% rise – the royals total cost is an eye watering £200 million a year.

Wales Socialist Party

Atos misery: scrap work capability assessments!

The government recently announced that they will be bringing more private companies in to do work capability assessments alongside hated current provider Atos. This is after a review showed unacceptably poor reports resulting from Atos assessments.

Here a South Yorkshire Mental Health Nurse shows that it's not only Atos' failings but the Con-Dems' whole approach to disability benefits that is causing misery to millions. Work capability assessments must be scrapped and previous benefit levels returned to all who've lost money.

This morning I sat with a 52 year old man as he wept.

I've been a mental health nurse for more than two decades and commonly see patients in different states of distress but on this occasion the man's tears were not caused by a psychiatric disorder. He was crying because his benefits have been stopped and he has no idea how he will survive.

I work in a mental health home treatment team. Our remit is to provide intensive community support for people who are acutely unwell. Without the input of our team, most of our patients would have to be admitted to hospital.

Despite the fact that this gentleman is unwell and has had sick notes and supporting letters from our consultant psychiatrist confirming this, his Employment Support

Allowance has been stopped and he has been told that he must apply for Jobseekers' Allowance and demonstrate that he is actively seeking work. Due to his current poor health, this is impossible for him to even start to contemplate.

Anger

I wish I could say that this gentleman is an exception, a rarity, but he is not. As the Con-Dem austerity knife cuts deeper, my colleagues and I are seeing more and more people in the same predicament. Vulnerable people who find themselves dragged to a dreaded Atos assessment or stung by the bedroom tax and have their already fragile mental health further undermined as a result.

I advised the gentleman to go to the Citizens Advice Bureau, ensured



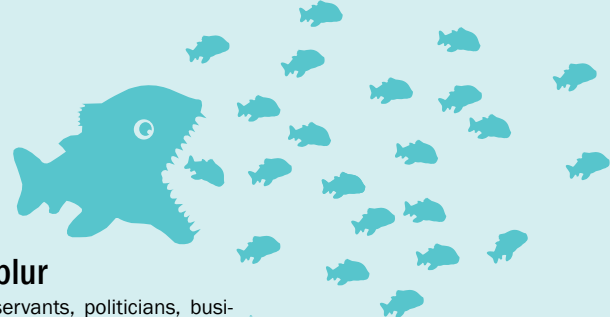
photo Paul Mattsson

that a family member would be able to take him and moved on to my next visit.

I am angry. Furious that the most vulnerable people in one of the world's richest countries are intimidated in this way.

If you feel the same when you hear stories like this, don't just sit on that anger - use it. Let it motivate you to redouble your efforts to build the Socialist Party and to fight for a world where every human being is able to live with dignity and free of fear. That's what I do. It's how I stay sane.

Them...



One big blur

Senior civil servants, politicians, business people – they often seem to be just one big ugly blur swirling round parliament. Take Lord O'Donnell for example. He used to be the head of the civil service. Then he entered the House of Lords, speaking up loudly for big business-friendly policies. And now he's bagged himself a one-day-a-week job as chair of Frontiers Economics. He will be attempting to use his knowledge from both his previous and existing roles to influence policy in favour of the company's corporate clients.

Not a single penny

Margaret Thatcher's funeral cost a whopping £1.2 million – mainly covered by the tax payer. We're supposed to be pleased though as this is less than the upper estimates that were given at the time of £1.6 million. And the ceremonial funeral with military honours was nothing compared to the state funeral that she could have been granted.

But given the misery she brought on the working class we hope we'll be forgiven for not feeling too happy about a single penny being spent on her send off!

Housing fears

The effects of austerity are making thousands of people scared about losing their homes because they can't afford their rent or mortgage. A recent survey by Age UK showed that nearly a quarter of those in their early 50s are worried about losing homes they have often lived in for decades as a result of redundancy, pensions reductions, the bedroom tax and lower savings rates.

Not for profit

From the first moves towards academy schools (under the last New Labour government) we've been assured that they won't lead to schools being run for profit. But the Socialist Party warned that opening the door would lead the way for sneaking privatisation.

The latest step is that academies are to be encouraged to open branches abroad and charge fees to foreign students. Yet another motivation for profit-hungry companies to grab a piece of the academy pie – and yet again nothing to do with providing a good quality education for all.

£850bn

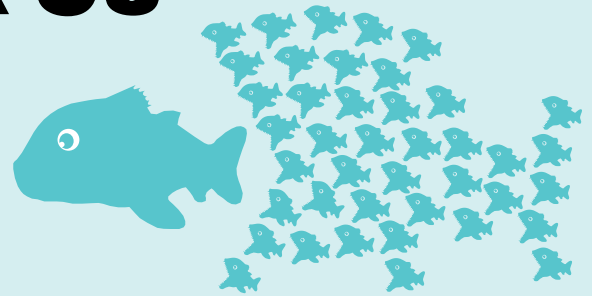
sitting idle in banks of big business in UK

Minimum wage failure

Professor Sir George Bain – the first chairman of the Low Pay Commission which established the minimum wage – has pointed out what has been obvious to many of us for a long time – the minimum wage isn't doing its job.

The minimum wage is currently £6.19 an hour while the living wage (i.e. what's actually necessary to live on) is at least £7.45 an hour. A minimum below the minimum becomes pointless rather quickly. 3.6 million workers are paid over the legal minimum but below the living wage.

...& Us



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

What we heard

Endorsement for Ty Moore, Socialist Alternative (US sister section of the Socialist Party), in the Minneapolis city council elections:

"I want to live in a city where every resident lives in prosperity, has access to good-paying jobs, enjoys safe neighborhoods, great quality schooling, and is part of building our democracy. We need someone who will elevate the conversation about our city's role in our lives and our neighborhoods. As a Council member, Ty will support raising the minimum wage in the city, allowing all residents to vote, call for a moratorium in deportations, improve and enforce our city's "Separation Ordinance" so families are not broken due to deportation, and support immediate and unconditional citizenship rights. Even more importantly, Ty will use his position to move forward Ward 9 residents' vision for the good in common for us all. I am supporting Ty because I know he is committed to racial, economic, and environmental justice, and is committed to bringing ALL of us together to participate in our democracy."

Juve Meza, Ward 9 resident and DREAM Act organizer

Socialist Alternative is also standing candidates in Seattle and Boston. See socialistalternative.org



Join the fightback! Join the Socialists!

www.socialistparty.org.uk • Phone 020 8988 8777 • Text 07761 818206

the **Socialist**

The paper of the Socialist Party. Issue 775.

The Socialist, PO Box 24697, London E11 1YD Registered as a newspaper at the Post Office. Published by Socialist Publications, printed by Sharman and Co Ltd. ISSN 1366-9621

what we think

Miliband's 'Clause Four moment'

Ed Miliband's decision to rush through the end of trade union bloc affiliation to the Labour Party at a special conference next spring has all the symbolism of Tony Blair's 'Clause Four moment' in 1995. That was when Blair organised a special conference to abolish Labour's historic commitment, in Clause Four, Part 1V of the party's rules, to "the common ownership of the means of production, distribution and exchange".

It is not only symbolism that is involved in Miliband's move, however, but the content that is also the same; to continue (in fact, to complete) the process of transforming Labour into just another capitalist party.

Clause Four summarised the collective interest of the working class in fighting for a new form of society, socialism, in opposition to the capitalist market system. Trade union affiliation (when democratically exercised by union members) enshrined the ability of the working class through the unions to control its political representatives.

It was these characteristics that defined the Labour Party in the past as a 'capitalist workers party', with a leadership at the top which invariably reflected the policy of the capitalist class, but with a socialistic ideological basis to the party and a structure through which workers could move to challenge the leadership and threaten the capitalists' interests.

Details have yet to emerge of the proposals being considered by a review led by former Labour Party general secretary Lord Collins to go to the special conference. But the central idea, to replace bloc affiliation in favour of trade unionists joining Labour as 'affiliated' or 'associate' individual members, would finally end the remnants of the affiliated trade unions' collective political voice within the party.

The Falkirk affair, the ostensible reason for the changes, shows how far in fact this process has already gone. What happened in Falkirk – with Unite officials recruiting union

members to become individual members of the constituency Labour Party (CLP) – actually had no connection with the union's affiliated status.

In the past trade union branches would send delegates to constituency Labour parties (CLPs), alongside ward party representatives, to select a parliamentary candidate. This was the way, for example, that the Militant MPs Dave Nellist (now chair of the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition – TUSC), and the late Terry Fields and Pat Wall, won their selection as Labour candidates in the 1980s.

Democratic structure

That democratic structure, which meant that healthy mass participation Labour parties like in Liverpool and Coventry were effectively local 'parliaments of the labour movement', was overturned in 1994 by the introduction of 'one member, one vote' (OMOV) rules for selecting candidates.

Those changes, promoting passive membership over representative democracy (some OMOV selections have been decided by postal ballots, with prospective candidates having no chance to speak to members) were accurately described by John Prescott as being more important in changing Labour than the abolition of Clause Four.

The Labour Party's official membership figures were released on 26 July, showing individual membership standing at 187,537 at the end of 2012. In the 2007 the membership was 181,008. Despite claims by some on the left that workers would flood into Labour in opposition to the Con-Dems, after five years of the deepest recession since the 1930s its membership has increased by less than seven thousand.

In Falkirk Unite members were being recruited as individuals to take part in a future OMOV ballot with no certainty, of course, as to how they would vote. But even that pale reflection of 'union influence' has been seized by Miliband as a chance to complete the job of effectively ending the union link.

The Socialist Party believes that the Labour Party has already been qualitatively transformed from its roots as a capitalist workers' party, which is why we argue that a new workers' party is necessary.

We support TUSC as a precursor of a new mass party that could unite together trade unionists, unorganised workers, socialists, young people, oppressed groups and community campaigners, as the only way to ensure that the working class today can achieve an independent political voice.

But social formations can retain many of their old forms – even as their new content predominates – and residues of the past position of the unions in the Labour Party still remain.

Affiliated unions have 30 votes out of 144 in Labour's National Policy Forum (NPF) for example (which will now be examined by the Collins review), and are directly represented on the national executive committee. And while the affiliated unions' 49% share of conference votes has been reduced from the 90% share in the past, if they rejected Miliband's proposals, which they should, it is not guaranteed that he could push them through the special conference.

But unfortunately the Unite leadership in particular are not signalling opposition to Miliband's plans and in doing so are using arguments that are undermining the very idea of independent working class political representation.

Unite general secretary Len McCluskey, for example, has argued that he could not go "in front of TV cameras and pretend to speak on behalf of a million Unite members" since

many of them do not vote Labour. That's true, they don't; but when Len speaks he is representing Unite's democratically agreed policies against cuts and privatisation, for repeal of the anti-union laws etc.

In negotiating with employers, union representatives speak for the decision reached collectively by the union members, even though a minority may not have supported the finally agreed position. So why shouldn't the union be represented collectively in the political arena too?

More power?

Len McCluskey has also suggested that Unite could actually have more power by making its donations conditional on Labour's support for specific policies.

But how would this be different to the position of the US unions, reduced to being just another lobbying group alongside corporate donors, giving millions of dollars to buy some alleged 'friends of labour' in the Democratic Party? Or for that matter the 19th century 'Lib-Labism' of unions before the formation of the Labour Party, seeking support for particular policies and parliamentary representatives within a capitalist party?

Not the least danger of such an approach is that it reinforces the idea that the attacks of capitalism on workers' living conditions, jobs etc could be met by a few policy changes or reforms rather than an alternative programme for government – which requires an alternative party.

Ultimately the only effective control over workers' political representatives is that exercised by workers' organisations through their collective decision-making structures.

In Britain today that means the trade unions drawing the lessons of Miliband's 'Clause Four moment' and taking the necessary steps to set up a new workers' party.

Unite "at a turning point"

Socialist Party Unite members

Following the scandalous referral from the Labour Party, the police will not be investigating any allegations surrounding the recruitment of Labour Party members in the Falkirk constituency or the selection process for a Labour candidate.

This action by the pro-big business Labour leadership prompted the suspension of Stevie Deans, the Falkirk party chairperson, by Ineos, owner of the Grangemouth oil refinery where he works, on the grounds of 'bringing the company into disrepute'. It was withdrawn when the 450-strong Unite branch at the refinery threatened to walk out unless he was reinstated immediately!

Stevie and Unite's preferred candidate, Karie Murphy, remain suspended by New Labour. Yet a BBC investigation for 'The Report' programme suggested that Unite had done nothing wrong in Falkirk. Indeed, the only possible membership irregularities did not involve Unite members.

When the Falkirk selection process was halted by Labour's National Executive Committee, the NEC only saw extracts from the full report!

Miliband wants to force his proposals through at a special conference of Labour next spring. He clearly believes this would make



Len McCluskey photo Paul Mattsson

him more popular. In reality, social attitudes are far to the left of Labour on issues such as nationalisation and support for trade unions. Since 1997, Labour has lost 4.5 million mainly working class votes at general elections. These moves could lose them more as workers turn away from a party increasingly involved with big business.

Unite general secretary Len McCluskey said this was a clear 'turning point' in the relationship between Labour and the unions in his speech to the special meeting of the Unite Executive with Regional Political Committee members on 24 July, which was broadcast live.

However, he did not reject the proposals outright. Although previous press reports had said he would endorse them, he offered a 'wait-and-see' approach to the Collins report. He also called on Labour to move away from the policies of austerity. Nevertheless he seemed broadly favourable to Miliband's proposals.

This position is the worst of all worlds; if Unite is to remain affiliated to Labour and try to implement its political strategy, it and the rest of the unions need their collective voting power to assert their strength. The Miliband proposals would eliminate that collective power.

It would be far better though for Unite and the other unions to break the link with New Labour and form a new worker-based party which would reflect union policies and keep the collective strength of workers' organisations.

The resolution passed at the Unite North-West Regional Committee published on this page is a welcome first step. In the closed session of the Unite EC/RPCs, support was expressed for Unite to maintain its collective strength and for a discussion throughout the union on its political strategy. Branches and constitutional committees of the union must take this up and convince the Unite leadership to reject dilution of its power and assist with the establishment of a new mass workers' party.

Resolution passed at the Unite North-West Regional Committee

This Unite region is appalled at the smear campaign being orchestrated against Unite the Union by the Labour Party for nothing more than campaigning for the union's referred candidate in Falkirk.

Our union has been more than patient with new Labour giving loyal support and considerable financial backing while they have failed to adopt policies which are demanded by Unite and are vital in offering working people an alternative to the neo-liberal policies which have destroyed our economy and social system.

Many Unite members had already come to the conclusion that reclaiming the Labour Party was impossible because there are no democratic structures which would allow it. This latest affair categorically shows that this is the case.

Instead of joining the Tories and their friends in the media in accusing our democratic union representing 1.5 million workers of scandalous behaviour in Falkirk, Ed Miliband should have focused the country's attention on the Tory's own arcane funding arrangements from individual multi million-

aires including stockbrokers and hedge fund managers who created the world's economic catastrophe.

However it is impossible for New Labour to take the moral high ground on this issue as their bureaucracy have long indulged in the practice of parachuting in MPs who have not been selected by their local constituency members and have accepted funds from dubious sources and from people who are accountable to nobody.

Therefore we call on the EC to:

1. Hold an emergency meeting where they can pass a resolution to remove from the rulebook the reference to Labour Party affiliation.

2. The EC will then organise a recall rules conference to discuss the change and the political representation of the working class

3. With the support of conference Unite should then convene a meeting of trade unions and trade unionists with the aim of creating a new workers' party which would meet the union's demands for a programme of policies including scrapping the cuts, the anti-union laws and renationalising all public services.

One Housing support workers - more determined than ever!

Paula Mitchell
London Socialist Party

Highly skilled and dedicated workers looking after some of the most vulnerable people in society have undertaken a second three-day strike against massive pay cuts.

Following a three year pay freeze, One Housing Group (OHG) bosses decided to slash wages by up to £8,000 a year.

As the workers say: "if we sign the new contracts they will cut our wages next February. If we refuse to sign, they will cut our wages now".

At the Ponders End picket line in London, Unite members explained: "Even more people are out this time than last time because management have been so intransigent.

"Everyone's even angrier because of the bonuses. The volunteers are not coming in. Effectively we've brought the service to a close."

One said: "I feel sorry for my clients but it's got to the stage where we have no choice".

One Housing management have decided to pay a £750 bonus to all staff apart from the care and support staff!

There have even been protests from managers about the gross unfairness of this move.

Management agree that OHG is in good financial shape. They are making huge surpluses and the CEO has awarded himself a



One of the lively picket lines photo Naomi Byron

£31,000 pay increase.

Management brazenly say that they are not cutting pay because there is no money; they are cutting pay so they can undercut other service providers bidding for contracts.

Workers are determined to fight

this disgraceful race to the bottom. They want to stop the pay cuts. They want to be treated with dignity, decency, respect and equality.

- Send messages of support and donate to the hardship fund: unite.le1111@gmail.com
- Make a donation: Unite branch

1/1111 Account no. 0040639 sort code 08-60-01

Or by cheque payable to unite branch 1/1111 and send c/o Nicky Marcus, Housing Workers Regional Officer, Unite the Union, 128 Theobalds Road, London WC1X 8TN

Metro cleaners action

Lizi Gray

Churchill cleaners for the Tyne and Wear Metro have mounted a serious escalation in their industrial action over pay and conditions. They began two weeks of strike action on 13 July. The workers are currently on the minimum wage and many are still not on permanent contracts after years with the company. This was their longest strike to date.

"Value for money for the taxpayer" is what Nexus director Bernard Gardner believes he is delivering for service users by contracting out these workers to the lowest bidder.

Gardner has had a salary increase of 18% to £155,000 over the past five years, while the Churchill workers have no sick pay, no pensions and do not even receive travel allowances on the Metro.

RMT shop steward Stuart Roberts told the Socialist: "The decision to escalate strike action was one made by the cleaners themselves, since no movement has come from the company or any of the local politicians.

"Our dispute is said to be the longest-running in thirty years and if there is still no movement we will consider increasing it once again - possibly to a month.

"Our contract was sold off to the worst of the worst companies and

the Labour government allowed this privatisation to take place, they have turned their backs on ordinary people. It is disgraceful that the Labour Party are overseeing this and doing nothing."

Another worker, currently on maternity leave, said she is only receiving statutory maternity pay, while other companies offer full pay for at least the first three months.

Another female worker had to take a day's annual leave to attend a pre-natal scan. The union threatened to take the company to tribunal over this act of discrimination and the worker was rightly given the time off without it reaching that stage. Regarding the next increase to the minimum wage, Churchill worker Jimmy 'Salou' Walker pointed out that they will not see this pay rise until the end of October.

Nightshift workers are paid no more than daytime staff either, at a time when there is little security presence on the Metro system. "The councillors don't want to talk; they're burying their heads in the sand hoping this will all go away.

"We're a strong union, we're prepared to keep coming out until we win this."

The two-week strike ended on 25 July with a mass protest outside a meeting of the Tyne and Wear Integrated Transport Authority.

Strike to stop Royal Mail sell-off



Strike action is needed to stop privatisation photo Paul Mattsson

Gary Clark

Assistant branch secretary, Scotland No.2 branch CWU

CWU members in Royal Mail are meeting on 31 July and 1 August to discuss defending the service against privatisation. In a recent consultative ballot there was a 96% vote against the government's plans to float Royal Mail on the stockmarket within nine months.

The CWU has announced that it will have no choice but to proceed with an industrial action ballot if it can't get a watertight national agreement on protection of its existing national agreements.

We should go further than this. No matter what the law says we should take industrial action against privatisation. As the law stands just now

you can only take action if there is a trade dispute and the question of who owns the company would not be seen as a legitimate trade dispute under the current anti-trade union legislation. But we should make it clear we will be fighting privatisation by any means necessary, up to and including strike action.

Our fight cannot be taken in isolation from the pay talks and other talks around pensions as well as the future of Royal Mail. The union proposed a two-year deal which was followed up with a counter proposal of a three-year deal by the management.

This is because they want to clear up all issues and have a period of settling-in for a newly privatised service without any major industrial relation issues. We should oppose any pay deals longer than two years.

In brief

Tribunal rip-off

Fees for going to an Employment Tribunal have just been introduced. It will now cost £160 for relatively minor cases, or £250 for issues like unfair dismissal, to lodge a claim and a further charge of up to £950 if the case goes ahead. Employment Appeal Tribunal fees are £400 to lodge an appeal and another £1,200 for a full hearing. Unison is going to a judicial review over the introduction of the charges and the GMB protested outside a tribunal in central London when they were introduced.

Unite general secretary Len McCluskey described the introduction of the fees as "a throwback to Victorian times".

This is yet another reason for a united trade union battle against the Con-Dem attacks on workers - starting with a 24-hour general strike.

Crown Post Offices

Workers in the 371 Crown post offices were on strike for the ninth time on 29 July, over closures, jobs and pay. 4,000 workers were on strike across the network. The Post Office wants to close or franchise out 75 Crown offices and cut 1,500 jobs. The workers have not had a pay rise since April 2011 while head office managers shared a bonus pot of £15.4 million. The CWU members voted by nine to one to strike. The Post Office published half-year profits of £61 million in September 2012.

Strike ballot

Transport union RMT is balloting its members on London Overground for strike action after Transport for London (TfL) announced plans to introduce driver only operation across the overground network. They are trying to axe 130 guards posts.

This is a massive threat to safety on the network and the union is organising a series of public meetings and protests as well as the ballot. The ballot closes on 15 August.

Samaritans

The Samaritans have derecognised Unite as the union for its 110-strong workforce. At the same time management have announced that they want to make sweeping changes to policies and procedures.

Unite are consulting the membership about how to respond to this attack - this is likely to include industrial action if the Samaritans refuse to negotiate.

Pay strike

PCS members working for Equiniti on NHS contracts were on strike for the second time on 29 July. They were out previously on 1 July in a pay dispute.

The company initially agreed to benchmark pay against comparators in the public and private sectors but they have reneged on this agreement. Instead the company pays poverty wages whilst making millions on the contract.

The well-supported picket line in Fleetwood vowed to continue to put pressure on the company to negotiate.

Website

For more workplace and trade union news, see the Socialist Party's website: www.socialistparty.org.uk

Lobby the TUC conference - For a 24-hour general strike!

Bournemouth, 8 September

12.30-3pm Hardy Suite, Hermitage Hotel, Exeter Road (opposite Bournemouth International Centre)

National Shop Stewards Network (NSSN) rally followed by a lobby of Congress. Speakers include: RMT general secretary Bob Crow, PCS general secretary Mark Serwotka and POA general secretary Steve Gillan.

For more information and a model resolution on the lobby see: www.shopstewards.net

THE CAPITALIST WORLD IN TURMOIL

The global crisis and the class struggle today

"We stand on the eve of convulsive events, the greatest in world history, of which the mighty movements in these countries are the precursor."

This was how Peter Taaffe of the CWI's International Secretariat described the current international situation in the session at this year's CWI summer School on the 'Capitalist World in Turmoil – the crisis and the class struggle today'. The "mighty movements" he referred to were the huge protests in Turkey, Brazil, Egypt and South Africa of the last 12 months which have shown the colossal power of the masses once they move into action. These have followed on from the protests against austerity in Europe of the last few years.

Kevin Parslow reports on this plenary session of the CWI school.

The mass occupation of the squares in Turkey was followed by mass action by the working class.

Millions mobilised in Egypt to overthrow President Morsi, more than in the first revolution of two years ago.

In Brazil the mass demos that began as protests against fare rises on public transport convulsed over 120 cities by mass demonstrations. At one stage 1 million or more at least on the streets. They forced the government to recognise the massive social problems confronting the country.

In the past, such movements in Latin America might have led to guerrillaist ideas gaining ground but South America is now the continent with the highest proportion (84%) of its population living in urban areas. The working class and city poor are the overwhelming majority and lead the mass movements but it has echoes in rural areas. These huge changes are preparing the forces of revolution throughout the world.

These events - avidly watched through the mass media and social media by workers internationally - also underline the way that the world today is bound together with iron hoops.

The events in one country, continent or region can exercise a some-

times mesmeric effect on the outlook of the working masses. In so doing they reinforce the need for internationalism, upon which the CWI is based and will grow.

The essence of Marxism is to generalise the experiences of the working class and draw out the lessons for the workers' movement and especially the CWI, guiding our actions now and in the future. Without a broad understanding of perspectives we would be like a sailor without a compass in a stormy sea.

We cannot analyse events pragmatically or empirically. Marxists need to approach 'reality' in an all-sided way. If not, we will be unprepared for the sharp turn of events and its highest and most important form: revolution itself.

Revolution

But Peter explained that our method had permitted the CWI to foresee a situation when an ANC government in South Africa would turn guns on workers. Similarly, we had predicted the overthrow of Mubarak in Egypt.

We forecast a 'second revolution' based on an understanding of the laws of revolutions.

The masses make revolutions and their dissatisfaction with the Muslim

Brotherhood in office brought them back onto the streets to get rid of them.

Our conclusions are founded not on sentiment or wishful thinking, but on the character of the present era, which is marked by the most devastating world economic crisis now in its fifth or sixth year. Under capitalism one quarter of youth worldwide are 'NEETs': Not in Employment, Education or Training.

Desperate economic straits provided the initial impulse for the revolution in Egypt. 1,500 factories have closed since the first revolution in 2011. Half of the country's 80 million people are living below the poverty line or near it. One journal, in relation to the overthrow of Morsi, commented: "This was a revolution of the hungry."

However, Peter warned that the overthrow of Morsi by the army - even

With the worldwide intensification of class struggle, the capitalist state has implemented measures of civil war against the rights and conditions of the working class and the poor

though it appears initially to have had the support of big sections of the mass movement, particularly the liberals - is a potential danger for the working class. The Egyptian workers had shown tremendous appetite for struggle and organisation.

Jon Dale explained that the independent unions had grown in size from 50,000 to 2.5 million members in two years. However, one of their lead-



Millions of Brazilians took to the streets in June against price hikes, cuts and government corruption. On 11 July organised workers took strike action

ers had joined the military-led cabinet following Morsi's overthrow! The movement that overthrew Morsi and the Brotherhood had behind it shadowy figures of the 'Deep State' and the Mubarak regime.

The downfall of Morsi and the Brotherhood had realigned the positions of the regional powers in the Middle East, whose stance was guided by the simple proposition what best would serve the counterrevolution against the 'Arab Spring'? The interests of these powers are now polarising the Middle East and threatening the masses of the region, as witnessed by the bloody civil war in Syria.

The Egyptian army is not like the Portuguese army in the uprising in 1974. That army had been radicalised by neo-colonial wars. The Egyptian army, like all capitalist armies, ultimately guards private property and the 'Deep state' has a significant economic stake, rather like the Pakistani army.

The likeliest outcome of the events in Egypt is that the Brotherhood and their co-thinkers in the rest of the Arab world will be weakened. This will have consequences in Tunisia, where the Ennahda government is facing challenges to its rule. When a leading leftist opposition leader was assassinated, a general strike movement was ignited.

We must always stress the independence of the working class and organisations from all pro-capitalist

forces and fight for the creation of independent, working-class forms of struggle.

It is not always economic crisis that provokes mass movements. Both Brazil and Turkey have seen economic growth in recent years. But the fruits of this growth have been unevenly distributed.

This has laid the basis for the social explosions which have taken place, not just in demonstrations, but with moves towards occupations, assemblies, etc., which socialists in Brazil have campaigned for during this social and political tsunami.

These revolutionary events have developed not from grinding austerity, as in Europe, but from significant economic growth which has strengthened the power of the working class and the masses. This, in its full power, was then displayed in these movements.

Attacks

With the worldwide intensification of class struggle, the capitalist state has implemented measures of civil war against the rights and conditions of the working class and the poor.

That is the warning from the revelations of whistle-blower Edward Snowden, of the massive surveillance against the population and organisations or of the planting of police spies in the anti-capitalist and workers' movements and organisations.

While these measures are anti-democratic, the capitalists cannot establish a police state now because of the opposition such a move would provoke. But the rise of Golden Dawn in Greece shows the medium and long-term dangers to the working class, which needs to fight against the encroachment and attacks on civil and democratic rights, including anti-trade union laws.

These developments have induced widespread disillusion with President Obama, who has proved to be just as undemocratic and oppressive as George W Bush. And his unpopularity is compounded by the lack of improvement in the conditions of the working class in the US, while the bankruptcy of the city of Detroit illustrates the depth of the crisis.

Quantitative Easing (QE) internationally has had the effect of stabilising the economic situation to an extent. Yet as Robin from England and Wales detailed, this had led to further speculation and new financial 'bubbles' being created that would burst at some stage.

However, Peter explained that the small recovery of the economic position in some countries, the slight pause in the class struggle and the success of capitalism in getting through austerity measures have posed questions such as "Is this a passing phase?" and "Could capitalism establish a new economic equilibrium?" These are the hopes of the

capitalists internationally.

Marxists have pointed out many times there is no 'final crisis of capitalism'; capitalism will only be ended when the working class takes power. But if the working class, through a lack of leadership, fails to take power, a new growth of capitalism could not be ruled out. But this is certainly not the perspective in the short-term.

This is recognised by the theoreticians of capitalism. They have absolutely no idea of any way out of this impasse for their system.

Deepening crisis

In all the big economies of the world, there has been little or no growth. And now the Chinese economy is slowing down, this will have a profound effect both within China - where revolution will be put on the agenda - and internationally for those economies that either supply capital goods, like Germany, or commodities, as comrades from Australia and Canada amplified, where the economies have benefited from the Chinese boom.

Raheem from Nigeria showed that the gains from commodity sales, in Nigeria's case oil, were extremely unevenly distributed: 1% of the population owns 80% of the wealth in the country while 70% of the population lives in poverty!

One comrade from Asia outlined the huge debts in China, which had a 'Frankenstein economy' - large and



Peter Taaffe, general secretary of the Socialist Party, being interviewed on an anti-austerity workers' demo

out of control!

Peter showed that Chinese workers were beginning to stir with strikes, protests and even the imprisonment by workers of a company boss who

Desperate economic straits provided the initial impulse for the revolution in Egypt. 1,500 factories have closed since the first revolution in 2011. Half of the country's 80 million people are living below the poverty line or near it

This is the explanation for worldwide privatisation. It is will produce a social catastrophe. But the capitalists hope it could offer a short-term outlet for their accumulated capital which includes almost \$2 trillion held abroad by US banks avoiding US tax.

Peter concluded by saying we are in a new period of long, drawn-out crisis. This, in turn, will mean the intensification of clashes between the capitalist powers that dominate the globe, including in the Middle East, Asia-Pacific and Africa.

Consciousness

In this new period there will be wave after wave of radicalised and revolutionary movements. Tens of thousands of advanced workers, millions of raw masses, are pondering and learning the lessons of Brazil, Turkey and the Middle East.

However, political understanding is still historically low due to a number of factors, including lingering effects of the collapse of Stalinism and the rapid descent into the crisis which has stunned the working class.

Comrade Didi from Brazil explained how the workers' leaders helped muddy the waters: In 1992 they led protests against the government which led to its downfall, but this year they have only sown confusion through lack of leadership. But the capitalists themselves understand the drawn-out character of this crisis and some are quite clear that they fear revolution, particularly socialist revolution.

They will try and deflect and prevent movements from moving in revolutionary directions. In his summing up, Bob Labi of the CWI's International Secretariat commented on pundits who were comparing the protests to the revolutionary movements of the 1848 and 1968, but were studiously avoiding comparison to 1917 and the period of working-class revolution

following the First World War!

Peter said the capitalists have not taken the Marxists into account. A handful of Marxists in one country, for example in South Africa, could be the key to mass change.

There is scepticism and opposition from the new generation to the idea of 'parties' in general. They are identified with pro-capitalist parties, their policies and massive corruption. Comrades Andros from Greece and Kevin from Ireland explained how workers had the will to fight against austerity but there was still a hangover from the past period and the low level of understanding, which could negate the idea of fighting.

Andros, in particular, showed there have been significant explosions in Greece yet the lack of a leadership was the key to the defeat so far of the battle against austerity. The Syriza leadership was moving rightwards. But new leaders, including the Marxists, would be propelled to the front of the movement in the next period.

Peter's final remarks mentioned the volatility of the political situation, which has thrown up new campaigns and organisations, like Occupy, the Indignados in Spain and the Five Star movement in Italy.

Once the masses see a party fighting for their interests - especially on a mass scale - which is incorruptible, they will flock to its banner. The current impasse will then be shown to be another passing phase.

New mass formations are inevitable given the stage through which the working class must pass. These will lead on to the formation of mass revolutionary parties.

Therefore, our tasks are to build the CWI now and prepare ourselves together with the working class to lay the foundations of mass revolutionary parties and a mass international.

More reports from the school will be posted on the CWI website, see www.socialistworld.net



On 27 June a powerful anti-government general strike in Portugal paralysed the economy

Committee for a Workers' International (CWI)

The Committee for a Workers' International (CWI) is the socialist international organisation to which the Socialist Party is affiliated. The CWI is organised in 45 countries and works to unite the working class and oppressed peoples against global capitalism and to fight for a socialist world.

For more details including CWI publications write to: CWI, PO Box 3688, London E11 1YE. email cwi@worldsoc.co.uk



The CWI website contains news, reports and analysis from around the world.

www.socialistworld.net

We can beat the bedroom tax!

After a spirited democratic discussion, the federation's founding statement was ratified unanimously. A steering committee was elected, including six Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition supporters.

- Scrap the bedroom tax and write-off all the debt
- Defend all those who cannot or will not pay
- No evictions for rent arrears due to the tax or austerity cuts. Build an anti-eviction army
- End all cuts - tax the bankers and the billionaires not bedrooms
- For a programme of new council house building to meet social need
- Build a mass movement against austerity starting with a 24-hour general strike organised by the trade unions



At the end of the meeting, many attendees put themselves forward to help set up a local anti-bedroom tax group.

30 people attended the Brent TUSC meeting on 23 July, with speakers including Steve Hedley, RMT assistant general secretary, Hank Roberts, Association of Teachers and Lecturers national president and Brent ATL Secretary (personal capacity) , Helen Davies – Barnet Unison and Unison NEC (personal capacity), Nancy Taafe – Waltham Forest TUSC candidate and Isabel Counihan-Sanchez, housing campaigner.

Tamil Solidarity has drawn up a protest letter - available at www.tamilsolidarity.org - for union branches, student and community groups to pass.

- Northern region Socialist Party members raised £23.49 from selling ginger-

Phone 020 8988 8777 to pay by card, to arrange a direct debit, or to join

[illegible]

Tunisia: Political assassination provokes renewed workers' struggles

For a revolutionary government of workers, youth, the unemployed and the poor!

The assassination of Mohamed Brahmi, MP for El Shaab (People's Movement part of the Popular Front opposition), has triggered a new mass movement of workers and youth in Tunisia.

Under mass pressure, the main union federation, the UGTT, called a one-day general strike on 26 July.

Clearly, the revolution is not over in the country which sparked the Arab spring over two and a half years ago, when the uprising saw the end of decades of dictatorship.

Since then, however, the situation for the workers and poor has deteriorated, as capitalist governments have driven through austerity measures dictated by the IMF.

The Socialist is printing extracts from a leaflet distributed on the day of the general strike by supporters of the Committee for a Workers' International (CWI) in Tunisia, one of whom, Rezgui, told us: "The strike was absolutely solid. And 50,000 people gathered for the funeral."

The town of Sidi Bouzid [in central Tunisia, where Brahmi was MP, and where the Arab spring erupt-

ed] has proclaimed self-rule, with 'democratic committees' being set up to defend and organise the area. The same is true of Gafsa, further south.

There have also been further mass sit-ins, with tens of thousands - even official figures say 25,000 - protesting in front of the national assembly building on 28 July. Security forces and the army are now encircling them.

"They are demanding that the government resigns and that the whole 'constituent assembly' is dissolved."

Rezgui added: "Although there are many examples of mass struggle, strikes and the formation of committees organising working-class and poor people, there are also some dangers in the situation, especially if a lead is not given."

"What is needed, above all, is the call for an indefinite general strike to bring down the government, and to move towards linking up the democratic committees and areas which have declared self-rule."



The 26 July general strike was solidly supported throughout Tunisia

The following text is an edited translation from a leaflet distributed by CWI supporters in Tunisia.

Two and a half years after the fall of President Ben Ali, the situation for the masses has gone from bad to worse and anger is brewing across the country. The assassination of Mohamed Brahmi is a new catalyst for the fury of workers, youth and revolutionary masses, whose willingness to topple the Troika regime (the governing coalition) is at fever pitch.

The Popular Front gathers under its umbrella many revolutionary activists, trade unionists and young people who aspire to continue the revolution all the way and for the coming to power of those who serve the interests of workers and

to end the exploitative capitalist system. However, its outlook is toward reaching compromises with political forces alien to the struggles of the workers, the poor, and all those who carried out the original revolution.

The Popular Front has called for the formation of a 'National Salvation' government which will see the possibility of agreements with representatives of the wealthy classes - who want to end the struggle of the popular masses and the working class.

The CWI believes that the strength of the Tunisian trade union movement and the weight of the Popular Front should instead be placed in the interests of the struggling masses, in order to build a power that is democratically controlled by action committees at all levels of society and across the country.

The coming days will be decisive as to the future of the revolution, which is at a crossroads.

But the situation is fraught with danger. The risk of demobilisation, and the absence of clarity in how to extend and organise actions in the following days, can only benefit those who are against the revolution, whether they use demands for "democracy" or in the name of religion.

The CWI has called for the formation of revolutionary committees in workplaces, universities, schools and popular neighbourhoods to organise the movement collectively and democratically, and according to the will of the mobilised masses.

Such committees should also be responsible for self-defence to prevent violence by the forces of repression and reactionary militia.

These committees could be

channelled into a revolutionary government in the interests of the workers, youth and oppressed, and could be supported by the UGTT and activists in the Popular Front, the Unemployed Union (UDC) and social movements.

- Down with the Troika (the government coalition)! For an open general strike until the fall of the regime!
- No agreements with the government or with the political forces which defend the continuation of capitalism!
- For a government of workers, youth and the poor masses, supported by trade unions and popular and Left organisations
- For the cancellation of the debt and the nationalisation of banks and vital sectors of the economy under democratic control of the workers and communities!

The Committee for a Workers' International

The Committee for a Workers' International (CWI) is the socialist international organisation to which the Socialist Party is affiliated.

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

www.socialistworld.net

- For an international struggle of youth and workers against capitalism and imperialism, for a socialist world!

Neither the military nor Morsi... for a workers' government

Niall Mulholland

The Egyptian state's bloody crack-down against Muslim Brotherhood (MB) supporters continues, leaving hundreds dead and injured. At least 83 died during last Saturday's (27 July) police massacre of supporters of former president Mohamed Morsi near the Rabaa Adawiya sit-in protest, in east Cairo.

The regime claimed that pro-Morsi supporters fired first, while the MB accused the police of orchestrating a bloodbath. Many victims were shot in the head and chest - a clear 'shoot-to-kill' policy.

The tops of the military and police are intent on violently crushing all pro-Morsi demonstrations and intimidating dissent. Deposed president Morsi remains under arrest and is charged with conspiring with Hamas and "economic sabotage". Saturday's massacre followed calls by the Egypt's army chief, Abdel Fatah al-Sisi, for mass protests against pro-Morsi "terrorists".

US Secretary of State, John Kerry, could only bring himself to note "deep concern about the bloodshed and violence". Unlike Libya under Colonel Gaddafi's rule in 2011, the EU, Britain, France and the US are not advocating any serious action to stop state massacres in Egypt.

This is because the Egyptian military are a key ally of US imperialism in the region, funded to the tune of \$1.3 billion a year by the Pentagon. The US and EU are broadly backing al-Sisi, while pushing for the stabilisation of an 'inclusive' regime in Egypt, to see an end to mass protests.

Morsi was removed by the army tops on 2 July, following enormous anti-Muslim Brotherhood protests involving at least 17 million people. The mass movement was fuelled by deep anger at the MB's right wing policies, authoritarianism, collusion with police brutality, largely pro-US foreign policy and for presiding over the country's disastrous economic situation. Tragically the huge movement had no independ-



Anti-Morsi protest in Cairo

ent leadership and the military tops were able to put themselves back into power.

Big parts of the 'deep state', including the old Mubarak apparatus, were never reconciled to MB rule. The generals also acted to remove Morsi to cut across the street protests and a planned general strike, which they feared could have threatened the entire ruling elite.

Working people in Egypt have nothing to gain from the current military-appointed regime, which involves various neoliberals, Mubarak-era figures and Mohammad El-Baradei, a leader of the pro-capitalist National Salvation Front, and now Vice President.

The regime will come under intense pressure from the IMF to make cuts in fuel and food subsidies and other austerity measures in return for a financial lifeline, throwing millions more Egyptians into penury. Inevitably the regime will come into direct conflict with the working class.

The state's guns fired against MB supporters today can be turned against striking workers and radicalised youth tomorrow. The

interim prime minister has been given powers to declare a state of emergency and he announced the return of notorious Mubarak-era police units.

The Tamarod (Rebel) movement that helped spark the mass anti-Morsi movement was supported by some left groups, like the Revolutionary Socialists.

But Tamarod spokespersons supported the generals' takeover. A leader of the independent unions, Kamal Abu-Eita, is now Minister for Manpower and advocating an end to all industrial action.

The Egyptian masses have shown great reservoirs of energy and courage in overthrowing two regimes in just a few months. They will not easily accept a new repressive regime and neoliberal policies.

But to satisfy the urgent demands of the masses - including democratic rights, jobs and a living wage - requires the building of a genuinely independent workers' movement with socialist policies to struggle for power and to transform society.

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.

Not giving ATOS

My (Tory) MP is Francis Maude. He recently sold a £1.5 million house. Nevertheless he needs a public handout to pay his travel costs, first class all the way for Francis. It is galling that his government then has the cheek to label disabled people, the unemployed and pensioners



photo Paul Mattsson

as "scroungers" and to seek to cut their benefits further. The basis of the attack on the disabled, leading to gutter press headlines such as "80% of claimants are frauds" was so-called assessments carried out by ATOS. ATOS were tasked with getting these 'fraudulent scroungers' back to work. In some cases they pushed them to commit suicide which led disability campaigners to label ATOS "contract killers." To be fair, ATOS were 'only obeying orders'. Their orders to harass and stigmatise disabled people were carried out to the letter. The result of three years of their ministrations is that just under half of their assessments are regarded as "flawed." Not by disability campaigners but by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) itself. Does this spell the end to privatised assessments? No, the DWP will just look for other private companies to do their dirty work. Perhaps the ever-efficient G4S will fit the bill - assuming nothing comes of those pesky fraud claims against them.

Derek McMillan

Health insurance snubbed

Have you noticed how it seems to be open season on the NHS these days? There's a lot wrong with the NHS and Andy Burnham, and other Labour fig-

ures, have a lot to answer for. They were the ones who introduced self-governing foundation trusts - the obsession with which seems to have been the problem at Mid-Staffs. But despite the intensive, universal rubbishing of the NHS, by all the 'main parties', fewer and fewer people are opting for expensive private health insurance, less than a million for the first time in decades (Times, 16 July). An 'industry expert' comments: 'The best hope the private sector has got is a collapse in confidence in the NHS'. That's what the Tories and their rich backers are banking on.

Paul Gerrard

'Free' light bulbs?

Families hard hit by energy prices could save money and reduce CO2 production by using energy-efficient light bulbs but they used to be relatively expensive. A government initiative, the Carbon Emissions Reduction Target CERT gave cash to private energy firms to give out free light bulbs to low-paid households. Energy giant E.On was given 25 million free bulbs to distribute to consumers. But in 2010, after five years of the system, it could only account for 21 million bulbs being given out. Many of these bulbs were found for sale in Ireland. For this chicanery, surely profit-motivated, E.On was fined £3 million, including £2.5 million to go to households hit by fuel poverty. A small fine for a huge multinational though some good news for a few hundred energy users - that is until the next huge energy bills come in



photo Indymedia london

from these privateers. Take energy industries back into democratically run public ownership.

Rob Smith

Climate change accelerates... but capitalism sets the agenda

Pete Dickenson

The concentration of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere, the main cause of global warming, has reached a critical level. Carbon dioxide is released by the burning of coal, gas and oil, so called fossil fuels.

The recent measurement of the concentration of the gas at the Mauna Loa observatory in Hawaii shows it has reached 400 parts per million (ppm) in the atmosphere for the first time since human beings inhabited the planet.

As the evidence on climate change has grown, governments have nevertheless refused to take any meaningful measures to address the problem. Their paralysis in facing this emergency has become almost total since the financial crisis of 2008.

The graph below from the Scripps Institution of Oceanography in the USA, shows how the situation is now out of control. Going back nearly a million years, carbon dioxide concentrations have risen and fallen but were never high enough to destabilise global temperatures.

This changed dramatically 30 years ago with a very rapid increase to 400 ppm. The earth has experienced this concentration before, tens of millions of years ago, and it was then associated with sea level rises of between 5 and 40 metres (16 to 131ft) and average global temperatures rose by 3-4 degrees. This could be repeated with devastating consequences.

Also, the earlier rise to 400ppm concentration took place over thousands, or tens of thousands of years, allowing time for life to adapt. The present increase has happened in three decades and is accelerating all the time, making the future even more dangerous.

Global warming is not just a threat to future generations, the effects of climate change exist now in the form of extreme weather events. The drought in the USA last year, combined with droughts and floods elsewhere, pushed up world food prices, which not only worsened world hunger but had more general economic effects.

In Britain inflation was expected to fall rapidly due to austerity, but didn't, partly because of sharply rising food prices. As a result, take-home wages after allowing for inflation have continued to fall, prolonging the 'Great Recession'.

In the USA, the cost of Hurricane Katrina and Superstorm Sandy that devastated the Wall Street finance district last year has been put at over \$100 billion.

The evidence linking the extreme weather events the earth is experiencing to global temperature rise is



increasing all the time, yet despite the huge human and economic costs already incurred, there has been no significant action taken by capitalist governments on global warming.

The opposite is in fact the case, with attempts to agree a new treaty to replace the ineffective Kyoto agreement being abandoned and a new drive launched to step up fossil fuel production in the USA, UK and elsewhere. This is linked to producing gas from shale rock where there are enormous potential reserves which will add a vicious twist to spiralling global temperatures.

Fracking

Gas from shale, made by a process called fracking, could be even more deadly than conventional gas production. This is because methane gas is released, which is far more damaging to the environment than carbon dioxide. Fracking has also caused localised earthquakes and can lead to contamination of ground water.

Despite this George Osborne has just announced that he wants to create the world's most generous shale tax (dodging) regime to stimulate production. He intends to cut the tax paid by shale gas manufacturers from 62% to 30%.

One justification given for this policy is that a shale industry will create thousands of new jobs, but a programme to develop

renewable energy like wind, wave and solar would generate far more employment.

Osborne's preference for fossil fuels over renewables is showing once again that what matters to the capitalist class is short-term profit and nothing must be allowed to stand in the way of this goal, even potential environmental destruction.

Competition between the main imperialist powers, whose governments primarily represent the multinational companies based inside their borders, has prevented any agreement being reached to tackle climate change. The financial crisis of 2008 squeezed profits and made any agreement even less likely.

This deadlock clearly points to the need to remove the profit-based economic system and replace it with socialism that will create the conditions where environmental problems can be solved.

The main technical elements of a socialist programme will be:

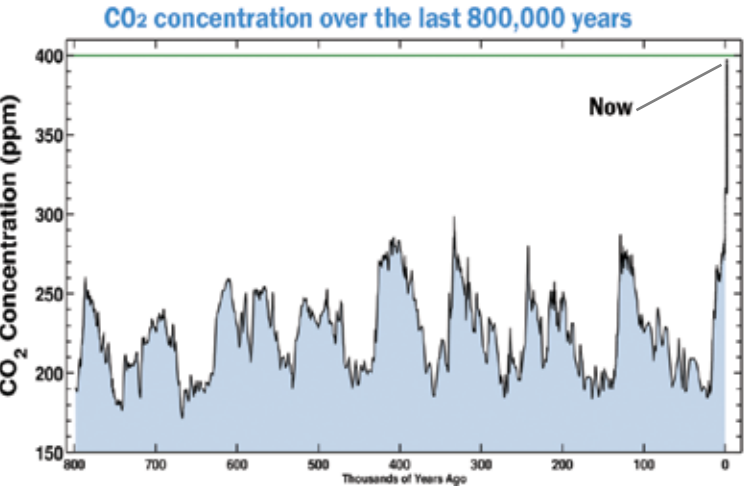
- Rapid conversion to the use of renewable energy sources, such as wind, wave and solar power.
- Big expansion of public transport
- Conversion of the car industry to use renewable energy sources.
- More research into renewable energy such as clean coal technology.

To put this programme into effect will need the democratic public ownership of the energy and transport industries. The industrial sectors to be nationalised, or renationalised, will be the energy generating and distribution companies, vehicle manufacturers and bus and rail service providers.

Another key aspect in achieving environmental sustainability will be to increase the efficiency of the production of all manufactured goods and housing.

In fact, the need to reduce the intensity of energy use includes nearly all areas of the output of goods and services, so it will be essential to efficiently integrate the different sectors of the economy into a democratically determined plan of production, which will have environmental needs at its centre.

This in turn will require the public ownership of the approximately 150 big corporations that presently dominate British society.



Planning for the Planet

How Socialism Could Save the Environment

by Pete Dickenson
Special offer: £7 including p&p

Available from



PO Box 24697, London E11 1YD, 020 8988 8789
www.socialistbooks.org.uk bookshop@socialistparty.org.uk

Please make cheques payable to Socialist Books

Book review

Karl Marx: How to change the world

Niall Mulholland reviews 'Karl Marx: A Nineteenth Century Life' by Jonathan Sperber

In this book Jonathan Sperber says he aims to place the great revolutionary thinker and activist firmly in his times. In a comprehensive, readable biography, the University of Missouri's Professor of History does succeed in portraying Marx engaging with 19th century society and intellectual currents.

The juxtaposition of Marx the public activist, theoretician and private man are generally well-balanced in Sperber's hands. But a central assertion of Sperber's - that Marx's ideas have limited application or are largely irrelevant to 20th and 21st century politics and society - is the book's fundamental flaw.

Today, more and more workers and youth look to Marx's ideas to find an explanation for what has gone so badly wrong with world capitalism. Not long ago Marx's ideas were derided by most defenders of the profit system. Now this year Time magazine ran an article, entitled, 'Marx's Revenge: How Class Struggle Is Shaping the World'.

The unfolding drama of the Egyptian revolution, alongside other mass movements and strikes across southern Europe, Turkey, Brazil and elsewhere, show that Marx's writings on the role of the masses in struggling to change society, the international character of this process and the need for a revolutionary socialist leadership have never been more relevant.

Sperber's mining of the "total editions of Marx's and Engels's writings" does not cause fundamental re-evaluation of Marx the man or his ideas. Sperber generally adds to our knowledge more biographical details and colour.

These include Marx's complex relations with his parents; his Jewish heritage (his lawyer father converted to Protestantism to escape restrictions imposed upon Jews); doubts over the supposed aristocratic Prussian background of Jenny von Westphalen, Karl's future wife; and the long years of poverty the Marx family endured in London exile, which led to Karl and Jenny's chronic ill health and to the death of several of their children.

Sperber recreates mid-19th century Trier, where Marx was born on 5 May 1818. The town fell under Napoleonic and later Prussian rule, leaving the young Marx with deep antipathy to Prussia's military and aristocratic orders.

As a student in Bonn and Berlin, Marx was hugely influenced by the great philosophers, GWF Hegel (who developed the dialectical method but in an obscure way) and Ludwig Feuerbach (who espoused a materialist philosophy). Sperber also emphasises the impact on Marx of radical followers of Hegel, like Eduard Gans and Bruno Bauer. Marx became involved in the Young Hegelians movement, who held a radical critique of Christianity and, by implication, a liberal opposition to the Prussian autocracy.

Sperber highlights Marx's work as a radical journalist, which he began after the authorities denied him an academic career. Marx became editor, in Cologne, of the Rheinische Zeitung, a liberal newspaper backed by Rhenish industrialists. His incisive articles, particularly on



Karl Marx

economics, led the government to close the paper.

Marx moved to Paris in 1843, where he began writing for other radical newspapers and met Friedrich Engels, who became his life-long friend and collaborator. Marx was in contact with groups of émigré German workers and French socialist sects, trying to form a bridge between early French socialism and German radical Hegelians. In 'The Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts' Marx championed 'communism', ie the collective ownership of the means of production.

Missing from Sperber's account is the vigour of Marx's revolutionary contribution to human thought. Expelled from Paris in 1844, Marx moved to Brussels where he elaborated in 'The German Ideology' what became known as the materialist conception of history. Marx traced the history of the various modes of production up to capitalism and its replacement by communism.

In 'The Poverty of Philosophy', Marx broke with the most influential French socialist of that period, Proudhon, who opposed political action by the working class and espoused utopian socialism.

Manifesto

On the eve of the 1848 revolutions that spread across Europe, Marx and Engels were commissioned by the Communist League to write the 'Communist Manifesto'. This brilliantly set out their view of the communist movement's methods and aims. It explained the materialist conception of history; that human societies progress through class struggle.

Marx argued that capitalism was creating a world market and also the working class. The bourgeoisie were the ownership class that controls production and the working class provides labour for production.

But a new socialist revolution would see the working class act as the "grave diggers" of capitalism, ushering in a new society, based on need not profit.

Early in 1848, Marx moved to Paris, where the revolutions broke out, and then returned to Cologne where he founded the influential Neue Rheinische Zeitung, which presented a radical democrat line against Prussian autocracy.

Marx and Engels consistently advocated tactical and critical support for specific actions of the 19th century's rising capitalist class against reactionary autocracy, while calling for the political independence of the working class.

The Prussian counter-revolution led to Marx's expulsion from Germany and to exile in England in 1849. He rejoined the Communist League and wrote important pamphlets on the 1848 revolution in France ('The Class Struggles in France' and 'The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte'). In preparation for renewed revolutionary developments, Marx devoted himself to a study of political economy to determine the causes and conditions of capitalist crisis.

It was not until 1867 that Marx could publish the first results of his work in volume 1 of Capital, which concentrated on the capitalist process of production (volumes 2 and 3 were published posthumously by Engels).

Marx laid bare the nature of capitalist crises which, he explained, were intrinsic to the system. Marx was writing when capitalism was still in its relative youth. In our epoch, the system has exhausted itself. The productive forces have been strangled by the barriers of private ownership and the nation state.

One reason why Marx was delayed in his work on 'Capital' (his initial plan included separate volumes on the state, international trade, and the world market and crises) was that he gave so much time to the International Working Men's Association (1864) - the First International.

Marx and Engels played a leading role politically and organisationally in this formation. Sperber gives a lively account of Marx's struggle against the influence of Bakunin and the International's anarchist wing, where Marx insisted upon the working class acting as the main agent of socialist change.

During this period, Marx wrote 'The Civil War in France', which drew important lessons after the bloody defeat of the 1871 Paris Commune. Not least, Marx analysed the role of the capitalist state, which has strong echoes today in Egypt.

The last decade of Marx's life saw a steady decline in his health and the death of his wife and a daughter. Yet he developed his theories and commented substantially on

contemporary politics. Although he strongly criticised the Programme adopted by the unification congress (1878) of German social democracy ('Critique of the Gotha Programme'), Marx was encouraged by the spread of socialist organisations throughout Europe, and by his ideas' growing influence in the socialist movement.

Myths

Throughout his comprehensive account, Sperber presents Marx's ideas alongside opposing views, from Marx's time and since. For example, Sperber repeats the old myth that Marx's ideas were distorted and misrepresented by Engels, which "were then absorbed by an entire generation of socialist intellectuals and political leaders".

He says Engels' book, Anti-Dühring, which refuted the arguments of an economics lecturer who denounced Marx's ideas, was "a nasty and unpopular polemic" and wrongly presented Marx's ideas as a "positive science".

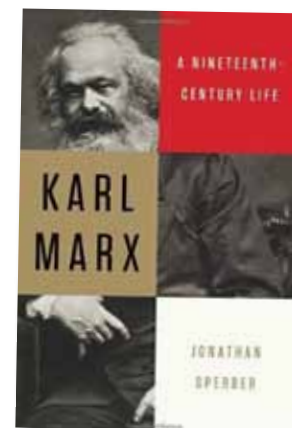
But Engels was never a crude "positivist" - as Sperber infers - who argued that the development of science meant philosophy was redundant and had lost all intellectual relevance. On the contrary, Engels' (and Marx's) dialectical method led them to counsel that findings of even brilliant natural scientists will be limited to the extent that they lack philosophical understanding.

Marx and Engels' voluminous correspondence shows intimate intellectual and political collaboration from 1844 until Marx's death in 1883, with only secondary differ-

ences expressed. Engels published Anti-Dühring with Marx's encouragement and Marx even wrote the section on the economy.

Not all that Marx and Engels wrote was correct in every detail or has always been confirmed by events. Yet their contribution to our understanding of society has been immense and continues to be so. Not only that. Marxism is a guide to action. As Marx famously remarked, "Philosophers have only interpreted the world, the point, however, is to change it".

A comprehensive Marx and Engels booklist is available from Socialist Books
www.socialistbooks.org.uk



Karl Marx: A Nineteenth-Century Life
By Jonathan Sperber
W.W. Norton, 512pp,
£25.00

Marxism in today's world

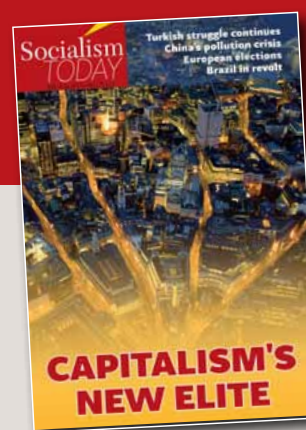


by Peter Taaffe £8



Marxism in Today's World, an excellent demonstration of Marxism's relevance to today's complex society, is now available in a new edition with a new introduction.

Socialist Books, PO Box 24697, London E11 1YD
020 8988 8789
www.socialistbooks.org.uk
bookshop@socialistparty.org.uk
Please make cheques payable to Socialist Books



£2.50 including postage:
Socialism Today
PO Box 24697,
London E11 1YD.

Socialism TODAY

The Socialist Party's magazine July-August 2013 issue includes:

Plutocrats

Ultra-free market capitalism has produced a new breed of super-rich

Turkey

Mass movement against Erdogan is just the beginning

Europe

The need for a workers' alternative in the Euro-elections

ZERO HOURS CONTRACT SCANDAL

WE DEMAND REAL JOBS AND A LIVING WAGE

The scandal of Sports Direct employing their entire part-time workforce (90% of employees) on zero hours contracts has been exposed this week.

At the same time they are paying huge bonuses in the forms of shares to 2,000 staff. But the bonus scheme only applies to full-time workers - mostly supervisors or managers. And managers are apparently allowed to exclude workers from the bonus scheme for 'under-performing'.

The workers on zero hours don't know how many hours they will get to work from one week to the next, making it impossible to plan ahead or pay normal household expenses. They are also not entitled to sick pay or holiday pay.

This precarious existence is experienced by hundreds of thousands of workers - even the government statistics office ONS admit that over 200,000 are on such contracts and nearly half of those are 16-24.

These figures are rising as the bosses pass the effects of their crisis onto the workers at the bottom of the employment pile.

A combination of zero hours contracts, plus working hours and bonuses which can be arbitrarily with-

drawn as a disciplinary measure, creates a bullying climate of fear in many workplaces.

Laurence, a young worker from south London is on a zero hours contract.

He told the Socialist: "The biggest things for me are that it makes it impossible to plan what you're doing on a week to week basis. That means it's socially inconvenient but obviously you don't know what money you'll have anyway."

"It's impossible to navigate the benefits system, which is designed for people who are on a fixed income. You can't tell them how much you earn."

But there is a fight back. Youth Fight for Jobs has launched the "Are You Sick of Your Boss" campaign.

They will be protesting in London outside Sports Direct in Oxford Street on 3 August and spreading the protests around the country.

Youth Fight for Jobs spokesperson Ian Pattison said: "We won't win proper contracts with guaranteed hours by asking nicely."

"Around the country, we will be marching straight into Sports Direct stores speaking directly to staff about how they can fight and strike for better rights and conditions."



Youth Fight for Jobs on the march photo Paul Mattsson

Youth Fight for Jobs demand:

Proper contracts, guaranteed hours and full employment rights

Pay us enough to live on

Decent tea and lunch breaks

End 'fire at will'

We won't be used as cheap or free labour

We have the right to get organised at work

Scrap the anti-trade union laws

Build democratic campaigning trade unions

No to benefit cuts

Fight sexism and discrimination in the workplace

For more on this see

www.youthfightforjobs.com

What we stand for

The Socialist Party fights for socialism - a democratic society run for the needs of all and not the profits of a few. We also oppose every cut, fighting in our day-to-day campaigning for every possible improvement for working class people. The organised working class has the potential power to stop the cuts and transform society.

As capitalism dominates the globe, the struggle for genuine socialism must be international.

The Socialist Party is part of the Committee for a Workers' International (CWI), a socialist international that organises in 45 countries.

Our demands include:

PUBLIC SERVICES

- No to ALL cuts in jobs, pay, public services and benefits. Defend our pensions.
- No to privatisation and the Private Finance Initiative (PFI). Renationalise all privatised utilities and services, with compensation paid only on the basis of proven need.
- Fully fund all services and run them under accountable, democratic committees that include representatives of service workers and users.

- Free, publicly run, good quality education, available to all at any age. Abolish university tuition fees now and introduce a living grant. No to academies and 'Free schools'!

- A socialist NHS to provide for everyone's health needs - free at the point of use and under democratic control. Kick out private contractors!
- Keep council housing publicly owned. For a massive building programme of publicly owned housing, on an environmentally sustainable basis, to provide good quality homes with low rents.

WORK AND INCOME

- Trade union struggle to increase the minimum wage to £8 an hour without exemptions as an immediate step towards £10 an hour. For an annual increase in the minimum wage linked to average earnings.
- All workers, including part-timers, temps, casual and migrant workers to have trade union rates of pay, employment protection, and sickness and holiday rights from day one of employment.
- An immediate 50% increase in the state retirement pension, as a step towards a living pension.
- Reject 'Workfare'. For the right to decent benefits, education, training, or a job, without compulsion.
- Scrap the anti-trade union laws! For fighting trade

unions, democratically controlled by their members. Full-time union officials to be regularly elected and receive no more than a worker's wage. Support the National Shop Stewards Network.

- A maximum 35-hour week with no loss of pay.

ENVIRONMENT

- Major research and investment into replacing fossil fuels with renewable energy and into ending the problems of early obsolescence and un-recycled waste.
- Public ownership of the energy generating industries. No to nuclear power. No to Trident.
- A democratically planned, low fare, publicly owned transport system, as part of an overall plan against environmental pollution.

RIGHTS

- Oppose discrimination on the grounds of race, sex, disability, sexuality, age, and all other forms of prejudice.
- Repeal all laws that trample over civil liberties. For the right to protest! End police harassment.
- Defend abortion rights. For a woman's right to choose when and whether to have children.
- For the right to asylum. No to racist immigration laws.

NEW WORKERS' PARTY

- For a new mass workers' party drawing together workers, young people and activists from workplace, community, environmental and anti-war campaigns, to provide a fighting, political alternative to the pro-big business parties.
- Trade unions to disaffiliate from the Labour Party now and aid the building of a new workers' party! Support the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition as an important step towards this.

SOCIALISM AND INTERNATIONALISM

- No to imperialist wars and occupations. Withdraw the troops immediately from Afghanistan!
- Tax the super-rich! For a socialist government to take into public ownership the top 150 companies and the banking system that dominate the British economy, and run them under democratic working class control and management. Compensation to be paid only on the basis of proven need.
- A democratic socialist plan of production based on the interests of the overwhelming majority of people, and in a way that safeguards the environment.
- No to the bosses' neoliberal European Union! For a socialist Europe and a socialist world!