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# the Socialist

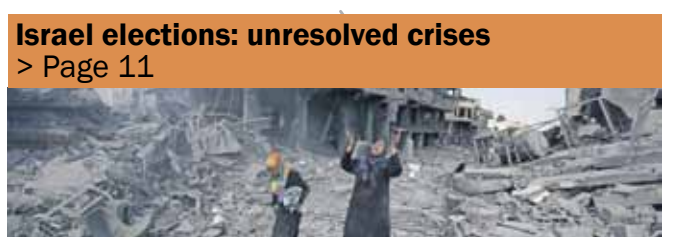
Four-page elections special  
> Pages 7 to 10 pullout



25 years ago: we beat Thatcher's poll tax!  
> Pages 14 and 15



Israel elections: unresolved crises  
> Page 11



# A VOICE FOR

# THE 99%

- Read the Socialist
- Join the Socialist Party



Steve Score  
Editor of the Socialist

**W**hen people are losing their homes because of the bedroom tax, when 93,000 children are homeless, when parents in this country have gone without food so their children could have something to eat, when cuts and privatisation in the NHS threaten people's lives...

Something is very wrong with this society. When the number of ultra-rich individuals (who own more than £20 million each) is rising rapidly, and as a result the trade in superyachts, private jets, classic cars and high value jewellery is booming... The system needs changing! The Socialist Party puts forward the alternative, a socialist solution. And the Socialist is one of the key tools to get this alternative across. Welcome to the first issue of our revamped paper, we hope that it will be even better for that purpose!

> Continued on page 2

# THE SOCIALIST PAPER REDESIGNED

## Sell it, read it, write it

# A voice for the 99%



**Selling the Socialist**  
photo Sarah Wrack

### Continued from page 1

Millions of people know that what they face is wrong. But the alternative doesn't often get heard - not in the mainstream media at least. We get treated like mushrooms - kept in the dark and fed on bullshit! No wonder when the main papers are owned by multi-billionaires like Rupert Murdoch - it isn't in their interests to challenge the profit system.

You may have noticed - an election is on the way. Despite Labour's claim it will hold "four million conversations", they and all the main capitalist parties will fight it mainly through the TV and the press - with wall to wall coverage.

Just as these parties are arguing about how fast to make the cuts rather than whether to make them at all, the press will play up their differences and cover up their similarities. They all operate on a common assumption - there is no alternative to austerity, and the system cannot be fundamentally changed.

### Build the fight

The Socialist can help to challenge that assumption.

It can help to build the fight to change things. It is the Socialist which has had detailed coverage of where that fight is taking place, written by those involved in the struggle themselves, reporting from the frontline - firefighters, health workers, public and private sector workers striking to defend jobs, pensions, pay and conditions. Where else do you get that? Young people report on

their experiences of zero hour contracts, low pay, and the debt that results from trying to get an education.

Unlike the capitalist papers, the Socialist is written and sold by our own members and supporters. We don't have large numbers of professional journalists, but we have something the main papers can't match - you! We potentially have thousands of reporters. We need you to tell us about what makes you angry, what motivates you and what you are doing about it.

### International struggle

We report on the battles, not just in this country, but around the world. Take the inspiring example of the massive anti-water charges movement in Ireland - where Socialist Party members, including three MPs, have played a leading role in the battle. We covered this in a way that no other paper could.

But we also put forward a strategy and a programme for how the struggle can go forward: Look at the material we have had from our sister section in Greece on the programme Syriza should be carrying out to fight the imposition of austerity by the European Union.

In the election campaign the Socialist plans to deal with the issues: NHS, education, low pay, housing, council cuts, while campaigning for a vote for the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC). We want to supply the ammunition for the street battle with the other parties!

We aim to provide the arguments for campaigners to use in the shop-

ping centre, on the doorstep and in the workplace and college. We will report on TUSC's activities and share ideas on the best ways to campaign.

But we don't just want votes from this election campaign. We need more people to get active! We want you to join the Socialist Party, and get others to join as well.

We point out the glaring injustices in society, and highlight the struggles that are taking place. But we also explain the socialist alternative - the articles we have in our centre pages, and the features that elaborate on our ideas, can convince people to get involved, and stay involved, in the fight.

One of the ways to build this alternative is to sell our paper. If you don't have a subscription to the paper, fill in a direct debit form guaranteeing you will get it every week. Try to get others to do the same.

Consider selling the Socialist yourself. You can sell the paper at work, at college, to friends, even to people you get chatting to at the bus stop or in the pub!

Just as we aim to eventually build a mass party with clear so-



**We don't have large numbers of professional journalists, but we have something the main papers can't match - you!**

### Fortnight of action

The fortnight of action on sales of the Socialist and Socialist Party fighting fund is continuing until 4 April. Can you help:

1. Make a calendar of activity and plan to increase sales of the Socialist and donations to the Socialist Party in the run up to May's elections?
2. Take out a subscription or convince a friend or workmate to do so?
3. Organise an extra campaign stall or sale at a workplace or college during the fortnight?
4. Have a discussion in your Socialist Party branch or discussion group on the role of the paper and how to increase sales?
5. Make a donation in celebration of the new design?



**One of the ways to build this alternative is to sell our paper**

cialist ideas, we also aim to have a mass daily workers' paper. This newly redesigned socialist is a step in that direction and you can help us get there!

## Subscribe to the Socialist

**Election campaign special offer**

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- Or direct debit for £3.30 a month until the end of June (usually £4)

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**Have you got news for us?** DEADLINE: Friday before publication date, urgent news: Monday

020 8988 8777 editors@socialistparty.org.uk @socialistpaper

Editor: Steve Score  
News: Dave Carr

Letters/reviews: Roger Shrivess  
Sales: Alison Hill

Workplace news/sales: Bob Severn  
International: Sarah Wrack

Party/campaign news: James Ivens  
Photographer: Paul Mattsson

# Government's pre-election budget Osborne's total eclipse

"The sun is starting to shine" crowed posh boy Tory Chancellor George Osborne in last week's Budget. That's certainly true for the super-rich and the big corporations who

have coined in more wealth in the UK than some countries' economies over the last five years. But for the living standards of the 99%, the rain hasn't stopped pouring down since the 'great recession' began in 2008.

The collapse in oil prices, low inflation and upfront tax receipts, have given the government an unexpected £6 billion bonus.

But true to its capitalist nature, the Tory/Lib Dem coalition will be unrelenting in applying its vicious cuts on welfare and public services - slashing a further £30 billion from public spending while giving 'big oil' fat cats a massive £1.3 billion tax break.

Labour's front bench response to Osborne's budget measures was like a petulant child.

Instead of issuing a rally call to workers, the poor and dispossessed to fight the cuts; instead of offering long-suffering people in this country the hope of a better tomorrow, the two Eds (Miliband and Balls) moaned that they would've stopped austerity bashing slightly earlier than the Tories' deadline of 2020.

That some trade union leaders continue to bung 'austerity-lite' Labour millions of pounds in political



Osborne - set to slash a further £12 billion from welfare

donations while union members are shafted by cuts-happy Labour councils, is a disgrace.

Whatever party or combination of establishment parties forms the next government, it's abundantly clear to tens of millions of people that 'the sun ain't gonna shine anymore', unless there is a fundamental change in the system.

That means organising within the trade unions coordinated action against the cuts, and building a socialist political alternative. Both tasks are being undertaken by the Socialist Party.



Coordinated union action against cuts is vital  
photo Senan

The Institute of Fiscal Studies says that the cuts up to 2018 will be "twice the size of any year's cuts over this parliament". £12 billion more are to be made in welfare alone, piling more misery on the poorest. Yet Osborne hasn't explained where the axe will fall.

The government has retreated on the planned surplus announced in the autumn statement for 2019-2020 from £23 billion down to £7 billion, reflecting the angry response they got to public spending being cut to 1930s levels. Even these plans are based on the expectation that there will be continued growth - not the most likely given the many factors in the world and British economies that could change that.

## Tory candidate attempted to divide community

The Tory parliamentary candidate for the marginal Dudley North constituency, Afzal Amin, has been forced to quit after he was secretly filmed collaborating with the far-right racist English Defence League (EDL).

He apparently offered money to the EDL to stage a provocative demo against a local "super-mosque", which would then be called off, with the political credit going to the 'conciliatory' Mr Amin.

The opportunist Tory also promised, as part of the 'deal', to be an "unshakeable ally" for the EDL in parliament.

Tory leader David Cameron, who has previously denounced Ukip for its racism, has been quiet as a church mouse now that one of his own candidates has been caught out stirring up ethnic divisions in the community.



photo Paul Mattsson

David Pitt, Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC) prospective parliamentary candidate for Dudley North, said:

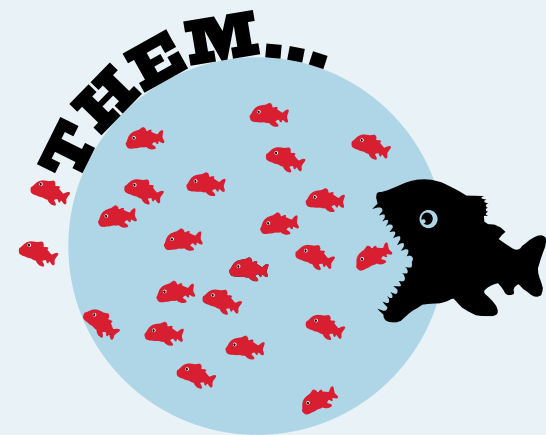
"The accusation that the Tory candidate for Dudley North was prepared to inflame issues around race for personal or party gain is an absolute disgrace.

What Dudley needs is jobs and decent pay for doing those jobs. Dudley needs homes for our young people and an end to cuts and privatisation in our NHS and the growing misery of austerity.

What we don't need are attempts to divide our community, to get us to fight amongst ourselves rather than campaign for a better life for all.

I spoke on behalf of the Fire Brigades Union (FBU) at the rally in opposition to the last EDL march in Dudley. The people of Dudley don't want to be used like this. We expect our politicians to help solve problems, not create them."

**Anti-racism demo, page 12.**  
**TUSC feature, page 6**



### Profits from illness

A Unite union report has revealed that many of the big private healthcare companies aiming to get lucrative contracts from the NHS budget operate through offshore tax havens. Tax expert Richard Murphy who was commissioned by Unite to examine these companies found that companies such as care UK, Circle, Virgin care, etc, all make use of tax havens. Optum UK, a subsidiary of US health insurance giant United Health, is bidding for a £1.2 billion NHS contract. The Independent reported that hedge fund manager Martin Taylor - who has donated nearly £600,000 to Labour - works for Nevsky Capital, which has a large stake in United Health.

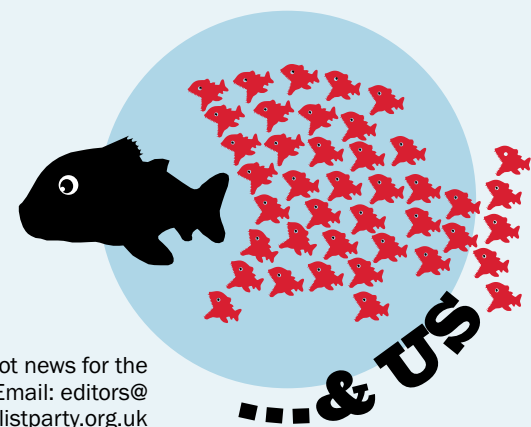
support for at least 15 days before they become eligible for hardship payments. The committee also noted that the Department for Work and Pensions had reviewed 49 cases involving the death of a benefit claimant, but could not say how many cases involved claimants subjected to a sanction.

### Bedroom tax

The government's iniquitous bedroom tax has pushed thousands of families into poverty and hardship by imposing housing benefit deductions of 14% or 25% from households deemed to have 'spare bedrooms'. Many affected social tenants are unable to 'downsize' because of an acute shortage of smaller-sized accommodation. Around 160,000 Londoners were on housing waiting lists for single-bedroom properties in 2013, the year the reform took effect. Labour says it'll abolish the tax, if elected. But Labour-run councils continue to persecute tenants who have been pushed into rent arrears by it.

### Sanctions kill

A work and pensions committee of MPs has said the government's benefit sanctions regime is causing severe hardship for families and was contributing to food poverty. Benefit claimants who are sanctioned - often for trivial reasons - are left without any financial



Have you got news for the 'fishes'? Email: [editors@socialistparty.org.uk](mailto:editors@socialistparty.org.uk)

### Ireland: Mass protest against austerity charges

Dublin came to a halt on 20 March when 80,000 people marched against the government's imposed water charges. Socialist Party TD (MP) Ruth Coppinger spoke at the rally and encouraged the non-payment campaign. The demo was the latest in a series of mass actions in the run-up to the issuing of punitive water bills next month, when another huge protest demo is planned. In what is seen as a political vendetta by the pro-austerity

Fine Gail/Labour Party coalition government against the anti-water charges movement, Gardaí (police) are reported to have recommended charges of 'imprisonment and violent disorder' be brought against Paul Murphy, the socialist TD for Dublin South West, Socialist Party councillors Mick Murphy and Kieran Mahon, and five other protesters. Their arrests followed a peaceful anti-water charge protest in Tallaght last November, in which Tánaiste (deputy prime minister) Joan Burton was briefly blockaded in a car.

# Anti-blacklisting leader arrested at Hilton protest

**Rob Williams**  
Chair, National Shop Stewards Network

**B**lacklist Support Group secretary Dave Smith was arrested on the peaceful protest of 40 construction workers and their supporters outside the Hilton Hotel in central London's Park Lane on 18 March.

The protestors, who briefly stopped traffic, were highlighting the disgraceful sacking of workers on the Crossrail project for raising health and safety concerns. For example, workers at Whitechapel were 'let go' because they wanted torches attached to their helmets, yet days later 13 workers had falls because it was too dark!

A protest took place there on 23 February. Afterwards there was a vigil outside St Pancras Coroner's Court at an inquest into the tragic death last year of Crossrail worker Rene Tkacik. Over the last month there have been numerous protests with thousands of leaflets given out.

## Public money

Crossrail is the biggest public sector project in Western Europe costing £15 billion, giving construction companies millions of pounds of profits. Yet workers are treated like dirt.

On 18 March, police were far more heavy-handed than before and we were suspicious that they were singling out Dave. His new book 'Blacklisted' has exposed the role of 'spy-cops', where undercover police infiltrated protest groups of construction workers and anti-racist campaigners. The book also reveals the incredible extent of illegal blacklisting of workers by companies, particularly in construction, often for the very 'crime' of making the sites safe. Scandalously, Dave has this month lost a test case on blacklisting because he was employed by an agency.

The police had promised protestors that Dave would be released from the police van because the protest had left the road. But instead they drove him to Paddington Green station where he was detained for six hours before being released in the early hours of the morning. He was eventually charged with obstructing the highway.

On his release, Dave said: "When multinational construc-



Blacklist Support Group secretary Dave Smith was held by police photo Paul Mattsson

**Blacklisted: The Secret War Between Big Business and Union Activists**  
£9.99 plus  
£1 p&p



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tion firms sack our safety reps and collude with the police to blacklist union members, they get away scot free. But if we protest about it, we get arrested."

We expect a solidarity protest outside the court when Dave appears on 27 March.



Protesters outside the Hilton photo Paul Mattsson

## Sacked for identifying a hazard

Crossrail electrician and Unite the Union member Dan Collins was laid off by contractor Skanska after he raised a safety concern. Dan spoke to the Socialist.

"I started work on Monday 9 February. They told me it was a three-year contract. A foreman showed me around - there was an abundance of work to do. He asked me if I didn't mind working 12-hour days or weekends.

On the Wednesday I noticed 16-inch wide boards lying across a metre-high elevated steel section, over which Labourers were carrying materials in and out of the area. The boards weren't fixed down. Someone could slip off the board, with their foot going through the grate.

I spoke to my Skanska supervisor. I put an observation card in. These companies promote a safety programme on site. But the reality is it's all about ticking boxes and signing sheets to make them look like an ethical employer.

I told another foreman, but he didn't want to talk about it. He said it was fine, there hadn't been an accident so far. I then told the Skanska engineer - she asked me if I'd put an

observation card in. I said yes, but we needed to do something straight away.

That evening when I locked up my tools, my supervisor complained: "I've been getting my ear chewed off about this in the office. You've been here two days. Stop going on about it."

He said an observation card had been put in against me for using my phone in an unapproved area. But I was only taking a photo of the hazard as no one was listening!

### 'Downturn'

On Friday the agency called saying there'd been a downturn of work and I was no longer needed. But before there was three years of work!

I spoke to the health and safety manager and project manager. They said they were aware of the issue but were not going to change anything. They said I wasn't laid off for raising the health and safety but due to a downturn.

I went back to site to finish my shift, but the fingerprint scanner had stopped allowing me access. The security guard let me in, but the foreman then escorted me off site.

The worker facilities were across the road. My supervisor was with another guy. They stood either side of me while I got changed and packed, then escorted me out the door.

If they had nothing to hide as a business, if they weren't sacking me for raising health and safety issues, then why was I having my shift cut short and being escorted off the job?

They've got their own health and safety managers which approve any method they see fit. The only way to question their methods is to have a unionised job with health and safety reps elected by the workforce.

I went to the Rank and File meeting in Glasgow, which voted unanimously for a campaign against Crossrail to get me reinstated, for union representation and direct employment so we get employment rights and national agreements."

The **National Shop Stewards Network** (NSSN) has stood shoulder to shoulder with construction workers on protests against blacklisting.

**Get the weekly NSSN bulletin** for regular union news - sign up at: bit.ly/16sZJxm

**Come to the NSSN national conference** Saturday 4 July, Conway Hall, Holborn, London WC1R 4RL. Put the date in your diary now! Speakers include PCS general secretary Mark Serwotka

[www.shopstewards.net](http://www.shopstewards.net)



## Stop press

The Unison local government special recall conference has overturned the union's leadership and demanded that a new pay claim is now submitted for 2015 for council workers. See more in next week's paper.

## LEWISHAM: MARCHING AGAINST ACADEMIES

**Beth Sutcliffe**  
Lewisham Socialist Party

Amid loud chants of "No ifs! No buts! Academy status sucks!" and "Parents, teachers, students say: Academies in Lewisham? No way!" around 300 protesters demonstrated through Lewisham in South London on Saturday 21 March.

The threatened change to academy status at the three Prendergast schools would take them out of the control of the elected local authority. The schools would be able to change their curriculum and cut employees pay, terms and conditions.

### "Hands off our school"

Some students had made their own placards, with messages like "We are not for sale" and "Hands off our school".

Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition parliamentary candidate and National Union of Teachers (NUT) executive member Martin Powell-Davies, leading the rally at Hilly Fields, said Prendergast governors had not expected such a high level of opposition to their plans.

A parent praised the action taken by students, which has included taking strike action of their own and supporting striking teachers on picket lines.



photo Martin Powell-Davies

Socialist Students held a lunch time ballot of pupils at Hilly Fields campus over whether the school should become an academy. 303 of the 800 students at the school voted. 294 people voted 'no', with only eight saying 'yes' and one undecided.

During the stall, students asked questions about academies, but also told us what they had found out and why they didn't want the school to change. Parents also demand a ballot, something currently being

denied to them by the school governors. On top of the strikes, protests and student action, a parents' ballot would be further evidence of how the school's community feels about academy status.

**Helen Pattison**

■ On 24 March, NUT, NASUWT and GMB union members started their latest two-day strike action against academisation at the three Prendergast schools, with well supported picket lines of over 30.

## Barking and Dagenham

### Refuse workers strike against wages theft

**Pete Mason**  
Barking and Dagenham Socialist Party

Barking and Dagenham council refuse workers in East London struck on 18-20 March, with two more days planned in April, in an attempt to stop their Labour council from stealing £1,000 out of their annual wage packet.

At the Creek Road depot, GMB union pickets closed the depot and joked that the council is 'up the creek without a paddle'. At the Frizlands Lane Reuse and Recycling Centre there was a large and enthusiastic picket line, with GMB flags flying.



**Celebrate May Day with the Socialist this year - phone 020 8988 8781 or go to socialistparty.org.uk/mayday to book your greeting**

The highest-paid council officers are said to be awarding themselves a pay rise of up to 9% at the very same time as refuse workers' pay is cut. An online poll showed 75% public support for the bin workers' action.

### TUSC

Barking Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition candidate, Joseph Mambuliya, a cleaner on the London Underground, visited the picket lines.

Many GMB members enthusiastically welcome the idea of TUSC standing against Barking Labour MP (and millionaire) Margaret Hodge. In 2006 the GMB London region called on Hodge to resign. The GMB should break with the Labour Party.



Barking refuse workers with TUSC leaflets photo Pete Mason

## Unite women's conference hears how zero-hours were beaten

Unite Women's Conference heard about the potential power of women in the workplace when Socialist Party member Sara Kasab moved the motion on zero-hour contracts.

Sara had led Greenwich Library workers, the majority of who are women, in a victorious battle against employer Greenwich Leisure Limited (GLL), a company who employ three quarters of its workers on zero hour contracts!

This so called "social enterprise", which claims to be worker run, took over libraries in the borough in 2012 and moved quickly to cut posts and deny pay rises, while at the same time



Sara Kasab

increasingly employing zero-hour contract workers.

Sara told the conference how strike action led to victory, with the employers forced to increase pay, reduce zero-hour contracts and employ 22 new permanent staff.

The conference agreed to take on employers, GLL in particular, who exploit workers while claiming to be the soft option to privatisation.

This Socialist Party led victory made clear to delegates that the fight for equality, if it is to lead to real, lasting gains, is a fight to be conducted industrially, not by lawyers but by workers.

# Inspired by Bob Crow to stand for TUSC

**Joseph Mambuliya** is chair of the RMT London Underground cleaners grade committee, and is standing for TUSC in Barking. Pete Mason spoke to Joseph about why he's standing.



**Joseph Mambuliya**  
photo Pete Mason

## How did you get active in the RMT?

When I started working as a cleaner on the London Underground in 2002, I saw the way the cleaners were being treated and bullied. It reached a point where their self-esteem was so low that they couldn't defend themselves.

I was approached by a union activist who recommended me to the union for training as a health and safety rep.

When I went for training at RMT headquarters I met Bob Crow and other union leaders who showed me that we should not be afraid to stand up for ourselves. As a health and safety rep I was trained to recognise health hazards. That boosted my confidence and I started to



**Bob Crow**

stand up and represent people.

I became chair of the RMT London Underground cleaners grade committee in 2007. The treatment of the cleaners had not changed - short payments, moving people to different locations without prior notice. We are looking to ballot for industrial action in the near future.

## What made you decide to stand for TUSC?

The day I watched Bob Crow walk out of a Labour Party meeting, looking furious. Bob had seen that the Labour Party no longer stands in the interests of workers - that motivated me to do something.

The good news is that the RMT union has come together with the Socialist Party and others in the

Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition.

Otherwise we are all going to sink in the austerity deluge. So I decided to take the challenge and stand as a candidate - for council in May 2014 and now against Margaret Hodge who is the current MP in Barking.

## How is the campaign going?

Very well. We have had publicity from the Barking and Dagenham Post. We have given our encouragement to the bus drivers - going down to the picket lines when they were on strike.

We have given our support to the bin workers who are losing money at this critical time. I'll raise support for them at my union's cleaners grade committee.

## Fighting against the cuts for the most vulnerable

**Noreen Bailey** is one of the leaders of the campaign against a criminal cut imposed by Salford's Labour Council. They have withdrawn transport provision for disabled adults who attend day centres. The previous system of driver plus escort provided safety and reassurance for very vulnerable adults. Now many parents are forced to entrust their disabled adult children to taxis, or to take them to centres themselves - depriving the parents of a window of respite in their stressful lives. Here Noreen explains why she's standing for TUSC in the general election in Salford and Eccles.

I was brought up in a small mining village in West Yorkshire. My dad was a miner. I came to live in Salford when I was 16 because there was little work in our nearest town - mills and factories were closing. From the moment I moved here people made me feel part of the community.

I have seven children and am a grandma and great grandma. My husband and I began long term fostering 25 years ago and have been adult carers for the same boys ever since. We feel so privileged to do this because between them and our birth children our lives have been so enriched.

I feel the need to fight the most vulnerable people in Salford because they are getting a rough deal from both the government and council.

I'm standing for TUSC because all through our fight for transport for disabled adults, TUSC supporters were there too. They are genuine. We are genuine.

We need an MP who will fight



**Noreen Bailey**  
photo Salford TUSC

for the most vulnerable - for the homeless, for the elderly, for those unable to voice their opinions. I don't want to see the city that has been so good to me dragged to its knees. I want to stand up for the people of Salford.

## Attempt to exclude TUSC from Leicester hustings

Leicester University is hosting an upcoming hustings with Labour, Tories, Greens, Ukip and the Lib Dems all represented. However, the party supported by the official opposition in Leicester City Council - the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC) - was not invited.

Andrew Walton, TUSC parliamentary candidate for Leicester South, is an NHS worker and Leicester University graduate. Andrew said: "TUSC is the only party to oppose all cuts to public spending, and one of two parties who campaign for free university education. Rather than simply providing a stage for the main parties, universities should be a place for proper democratic discussion."

Organisers claimed to "extend invitations to those parties dominating opinion polls". But the organisers include the vice-president of Conservative Future; and the East Midlands regional coordinator for Labour students and member of Progress (a right-wing organisation within the Labour Party).

The self-appointment of these individuals is undemocratic. One student told the Socialist: "Organising committees need to be subjected to democratic principles if they are to function properly."

■ **As we go to press Andrew has been invited onto the platform thanks to the pressure of the campaign**



**Leicester TUSC supporters**  
photo Ambrose Musiywa tusc.org.uk

# REJECT THE AUSTERITY LIES

4-page  
election  
special - pull  
out and keep!

## JOIN THE SOCIALIST FIGHTBACK!



photo Paul Mattsson

**T**he Socialist Party's central message in the 2015 elections is this: austerity is not necessary and there is an alternative - a socialist alternative. We are part of the historic Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC) anti-cuts challenge.

Poverty, homelessness and hunger stalk lives made vulnerable by zero-hour contracts, the bedroom tax, public service cuts, low pay and sky-high housing costs. Life is getting harder for most people and the main parties have no solutions.

### Fragmenting

Another hung parliament is on the cards, say the pollsters. Five years of 'Austerity Britain' under the Con-Dem government, with cuts obediently meted out by Labour-led councils, have delivered a historic fragmenting of political loyalties. Millions of people seek an alternative to the rotten status quo.

Last year, while the poorest 100,000 children went hungry because of benefit cuts, champagne sales were rising. Sales of fine art have gone up 15% as the world's oligarchs seek out a safe haven for their obscene wealth.

The claim that there is simply not enough money for everyone

to enjoy a decent and dignified life is a lie. TUSC exposes it and offers an alternative based on harnessing the wealth of society in the interests of all - not just a tiny elite.

Can you be part of the TUSC campaign? TUSC needs working class people to get involved by standing as no-cuts council candidates, by making a financial donation, by helping with the many campaign events in your area, and by spreading the word that there is an alternative!

See [www.tusc.org.uk](http://www.tusc.org.uk)

■ If you agree with what you read here we also hope that you will consider joining the Socialist Party. For info on becoming a member today:

**Join the fightback!**

**Join the Socialists!**



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## Socialism for the 99% - not the super-rich

In 2008 when the world economic crisis triggered the bank collapse, the government rushed in to bail the banks out. We pointed out that it wasn't genuine nationalisation that took place under democratic working class control and management.

But it was a form of socialism - for the rich. A need was identified and the resources of society were gathered together to meet that need - of the banks. Almost a trillion pounds was poured into them.

But when our jobs, homes and services are in need, we are told the cupboard is bare. The Socialist Party says it doesn't have to be like

this - it's just that the wealth isn't in the hands of the majority so it can be planned to meet all our needs.

Occupy was right!  
Next year the world's richest 1% will own more than the other 99% according to Oxfam

Socialist nationalisation would mean we could get rid of the spivs and the speculators in the banking system who hold the working class to ransom. We could run the banks

in the interests of the majority.

The number of evictions is at the highest rate on record - a socialist banking system could help those struggling to pay mortgages by converting them to affordable mortgages or rents. Cheap loans could help struggling small businesses. And cheap finance would be useful for the much-needed house-building programme.

If this was part of a democratic socialist plan for the economy, taking the major industries, corporations and utilities into public ownership, you can start to see how some of the poverty and inequality could disappear.

## Vote against planned poverty

Tory chancellor George Osborne talked about a "truly national recovery" when he delivered his latest cuts budget. There's nothing 'true' about it - and it's certainly not 'national'.

The Joseph Rowntree Foundation estimates that the cuts have taken £182 more per head in the poorest areas of England.

Office for National Statistics

figures show that baby boys and girls born in the richest 10% of areas can expect to enjoy a healthy life for around 74 and 71 years respectively. But in the poorest tenth of areas newborns are condemned to chronic ill-health striking two decades earlier.

The Socialist Party has explained that austerity is nothing

more than planned poverty for the working class and the 99%.

For the super-rich 1%, however, it's been a feeding frenzy of bailouts, tax cuts, a privatisation bonanza and a fire-sale of workers' pay and living conditions. On average a chief executive in Britain will take home more in three days than one of their employees can earn in one year.

# Let's look at how things could be different

In 2013 the Economist ran a feature on tax havens that admitted: "Nobody really knows how much money is stashed away; estimates vary from way below to way above \$20 trillion." And we won't know what money is out there until we gain access to the secretive accounts of big business.

But we know there are vast sums available. 2014's Sunday Times Rich List found that Britain's richest 1,000 people are wealthier than ever. They have a combined fortune of £518.975 billion. Meanwhile a million people had to queue at food banks, many of them because their employers did not pay them enough to feed their families.

In January only five Labour MPs voted against the Tories' proposal

Corporate Watch has unearthed some interesting figures on privatised utilities

	Energy	Water	Rail	Total
2013 payments to shareholders	£8.5bn	£3.8bn	£478m	£12.7bn
Savings if publicly financed*	£4.2bn	£2bn	£352m	£6.5bn
Savings per household	£158	£75	£13	£248
Support for public ownership	68%	71%	66%	
Lib-Lab-Con support for renationalisation	No	No	No	

\*because of cheaper borrowing rates available to government. Nationalising the banks could lead to much greater savings.

for another £30 billion of cuts over the next three years. But the top five UK entries to the 2015 Forbes rich list have a combined wealth of £35 billion. Taking the wealth off the 1%, or the 0.001%, could end all austerity today.

A democratic socialist plan for the economy would open the way to eliminating poverty, unemployment and want. Under capitalism there is enormous waste. Look at the human and material resources that are poured into nuclear weapons, for example.

The annual operating costs of the Trident programme are well over £2 billion. Replacement will cost at least £100 billion. A socialist government would invest that technology and finance into solving humanity's problems.



photo Paul Mattsson

The figures on this page pose the question - if the capitalist system can't use the resources that exist in a rational way to meet the needs of the population,

'what is the alternative?' The Socialist Party advocates going much further in order to fully transform the lives of the 99% - including nationalisation, un-

der democratic workers' control and management, of the key sectors of the economy with compensation paid on the basis of proven need.

Why we need to take the wealth off the 1%

What we need	Costs	Where money could come from
No cuts	£85bn	A one-off 20% levy on the £519bn held by the richest 1,000
No council cuts	£3.1bn (42%)	PFI firms have made £4.2bn on equity sales alone over the last decade
Fill the NHS funding gap	£30bn	Don't pay the £60bn PFI bill
28,000 nurses	£980m	Profits of privatisation vultures: Care UK £21m in 2009; Capita £310m in 2010; Blackstone private equity made £600m on its 2006 sale of Southern Cross; Serco made £214m in profit in 2010
Insulate every home to reduce energy bills	£5bn	Big Six energy companies paid over £8.5bn to shareholders and lenders in dividends and interest in 2013
Bailing out the cancer drug fund	£380m	\$11bn annual profit of two UK pharmaceutical giants, GSK and AstraZeneca
£10/hr minimum wage for the 1.2m people currently on the national minimum wage	£8.7bn	Tory tax cuts mean businesses will pay nearly £8bn less corporation tax a year by 2016-17
A living wage	£1.4bn would pay all care workers a living wage	Private vulture Capita is estimated to be worth £7bn, five times that
Restore EMA	£680m	England's 4,400 academies held cash reserves of £2.47bn
Free education and restore a grant	£12-15bn	A fraction of the £60bn annual defence budget
A million homes	£100bn (BBC Evan Davis estimate)	Councils already have the land. Ending subsidies to private landlords would raise £26bn



1% or even 0.1%. If this had been handed over to the British public, it would have meant an extra £24,000 per family.

Instead much of it is being hoarded. In March 2012 it was revealed that UK companies were sitting on £750 billion worth of cash piles. The Financial Times reports those piles are growing. They refuse to invest in factories and jobs. Why? Because of the weakened state of British capitalism they see no profitable outlet. Between 2007 and 2014, over 350,000 manufacturing jobs disappeared leaving 350,000 families without that income.

While Tory Osborne boasts that unemployment is no longer increasing, low pay and precarious working conditions mean the share of wealth going to workers continues to shrink. The Socialist Party campaigns for a £10 an hour minimum wage - now the official policy of the TUC. A campaign to win that demand is urgently needed.

The successful socialist-led campaign for a \$15 an hour minimum wage in Seattle in the US shows what a struggle can achieve. It's estimated that in this city, the size of Glasgow, 100,000 workers will be lifted out of poverty over the next ten years, as \$3 billion is transferred from the bosses to the workers.

Raise the minimum wage!

	Minimum wage demand	Delivery date	Detail
Labour	£8	2020	25p/hr a year
Tories	£6.70	October	20p increase
Greens	£10	2020	60p/hr a year
TUSC	£10	Now!	£3.50/hr increase - trade union struggle needed

## NHS

Labour shadow health secretary Andy Burnham has promised 20,000 more nurses by 2020. But we need them now. The RCN estimates that £980 million would pay for 28,155 permanent nursing staff.

But Labour has not promised to scrap the Private Finance Initiative (PFI) robbery. There are 149 PFI hospitals valued at £12.27 billion for which the NHS is due to pay £70.5 billion! Refusing to pay back that excess of almost £60 billion to the privateers could easily fill the £30 billion funding black hole predicted by 2020, paying for many of the nurses, doctors and beds we need - and an end to the pay freeze in the NHS.

## Education

Young people have suffered under this vicious Tory-Liberal coalition. In the autumn of 2010 college students protested in their thousands against the cold cruelty of the ending of the Education Maintenance Allowance payments of up to £30 a week for 16 and 17 year old students. To restore it is estimated to cost a mere £680 million.

The Con-Dems trebled tuition fees to £9,000 so going to university is a pricey business. But the wealth exists to fully fund high-quality free education (far better than Labour's £6,000 fees). Labour has priced its cut at £1.7 billion. It's estimated that re-introducing the grant and scrapping fees altogether would cost £12-£15 billion a year. That sounds like a lot of money but York university research found that £14 billion was paid out in grants and subsidies to big business in 2011-12. For example, the Department of Business provided £5 billion of coaching and marketing and advocacy services for big business.

Austerity is an attempt to steal away the gains of the past - like our libraries. But the Robin Hood tax campaign group estimates that only £110,000 would save 350 of those at risk of closure.

## Decent jobs not cash piles

£375 billion has been pumped into the economy via quantitative easing (QE). That money has gone to the richest in society. The biggest share of this has gone to the top

## How are we going to get it?



The working class has huge potential power photo Paul Mattsson



There are 149 PFI hospitals valued at £12.27bn for which the NHS is due to pay back £70.5bn! Refusing to pay back that excess of almost £60bn to privateers could fill the funding black hole

The hallmark of the Socialist Party is our understanding and confidence that the working class is central to the struggle to change the world and can do that.

Since the onset of austerity the working class has been the main force challenging the cuts - from the three-quarters of a million who marched for an alternative in 2011, to the two million public sector workers on strike in November of that year, to the hundreds of local campaigns in our workplaces and communities against the onslaught on our living standards.

### Strategy

Workers have enormous potential power - when the RMT union brings the London Underground out on strike, the Evening Standard estimates it costs the City £50 million a day!

But the right-wing trade union leaders did not put forward a clear strategy, based on that potential power of the working class, in terms of building for a 24-hour general strike as the Socialist Party and trade union militants were campaigning for.

Nor did they take the necessary steps towards building an independent political voice for the working class. Instead the right-wing trade union leaders have effectively asked the working class and those suffering austerity to wait for a Labour government.

The ruling class - the capitalists - expend a lot of energy and money to ensure their interests are represented in politics. A small indication of this was revealed by the Independent recently when it found that one in four of the MPs who voted against introducing plain cigarette packaging have declared links to tobacco industries in the past.

The working class and all suffering under capitalism need an in-

dependent political voice that is prepared to fight for our interests. Socialist Party members elected as MPs would only take the average wage of a worker, showing that they are ready to fight for change that benefits the working class.

The Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC) was co-founded in 2010 by the late Bob Crow, then leader of the RMT, and the Socialist Party. It involves other socialist groups and leading trade unionists. Since then it has stood 1,200 no-cuts candidates in council elections. There have also been TUSC challenges in the mayoral elections in Liverpool, Doncaster, Bristol, Tower Hamlets, Newham and Lewisham.

In 2014, 561 TUSC candidates pledged to vote against cuts and offered a working class alternative. But TUSC suffered a blackout in the capitalist press. Nonetheless, where campaigners were out on the streets, in the workplaces, speaking at meetings and on the doorsteps, the idea of a working class alternative gained an echo.

### Austerity-lite?

We were able to ask: who would you like to represent you? Do you want Miliband's austerity-lite establishment party that is voting to slash your services in the town hall? Do you want Ukip, a divisive party led by former stock-broker Farage? Or do you want an organisation founded by a class fighter, the late Bob Crow?

Even the BBC admitted that RMT members had "pay rises every year even during austerity, good pensions and good holiday allowances." Surely that's the best basis for a party to defend our class.

Trade unionists who every day fight to defend workers' rights in the workplace were able to explain that they would take the same approach if elected - not



Capitalism will never allow permanent or lasting reforms. Ending austerity means ending capitalism

accepting the capitalist 'logic' that workers always have to tighten their belts and accept cuts while the bosses and the super-rich get ever richer.

In Seattle, city councillor Kshama Sawant gave a glimpse of what that could mean in power. She is a member of Socialist Alternative, co-thinkers of the Socialist Party there. Her election campaign took up the demand for a \$15 an hour minimum wage that fast food workers and other campaigners had started to popularise.

Kshama's election meant this struggle, taken up by unions and the 15Now campaign, had a determined and reliable representative in the council chamber where legislation is passed.

Her presence revealed that it was the Democrats in that city who brought the interests of big business to the table, fighting on the bosses' behalf for delays in implementing \$15 and for tips to be included, for example.

As a result of tireless campaigning by activists, strikes of workers and also of Kshama's role in the city council, \$15 is becoming a reality in Seattle.

### End capitalism

The Socialist Party fights for every improvement to the lives of workers and all who suffer under capitalism. But we recognise that it is an unequal system based on exploitation in the interest of the super-rich 1%. It will never allow permanent or lasting reforms.

Ending austerity means ending capitalism. Transforming the world along socialist lines would allow society to democratically plan how to use the world's resources to provide everyone with a decent life and to meet the needs of the planet. That's something worth fighting for - and to do that we need you - join the socialists!

# CASE STUDY Housing



The utter failure of the market system to meet people's needs is exposed in the housing crisis. It delivers low pay and sky-high rents. Private renters spend 43% of their income paying the rent, on average. In London the average age that someone could buy their first home is 52! The numbers sleeping rough are up by a third. No wonder people are saying enough is enough.

So what do the political parties offer?

The Tories have committed to 200,000 so-called starter homes by 2020. These shoeboxes are to be sold at a 20% discount subsidised by waiving the fees house-building companies pay. But they are the ones who have not been building the homes we need. And the profits of the four biggest property developers have gone up 557% since 2010. What's more, housing charity Shelter estimates we need to build 250,000 new homes a year.



High house prices and rents are of interest to landlords and speculators. But working class people tend to have a rather old-fashioned view of housing - as something to protect you from the elements and a place to bring up your family!

A 2013 report by the British Property Foundation shows how out of touch such a concept of housing is - of all the new homes built in London that year 39% were to live in and 61% were bought by investors.

## Greens

Many listeners will have felt some sympathy for Green Party leader Natalie Bennett when she had her interview meltdown recently. But her problems on the radio highlighted the limits of the Green Party's overall political approach.

Natalie's difficulty lay in explaining where her party would get the funding for its pledge to build 500,000 'social rented' homes by 2020. The only example Bennett could muster was ending tax breaks on mortgages for landlords - a reasonable enough policy, but unlikely to raise enough build to half a million homes.

The crux of the problem the Greens face is that they have accepted the terms of political debate as laid out by the capitalist establishment. We would ask why should it be necessary to spend billions purchasing land on which to build social hous-



photos Paul Mattsson

**“Working class people tend to have a rather old fashioned view of housing - as something to protect you from the elements and a place to bring up your family!”**

The BBC reports that "Labour wants to see 200,000 new homes built a year by 2020". But Labour is also committed to staying within the market system. Homes have become financial assets to be bought and sold by people who have no intention of living in them.

Look at the E15 mums - young mothers who fought Newham's Labour-controlled council because they wanted to stay in their homes, within their communities and their support networks. The Labour council evicted them, telling them if they can't afford to live in Newham then they can't live in Newham. But it wasn't their fault property prices sky-rocketed.

ing? Councils in England are sitting on 23,000 hectares - enough brown-field land to build one million decent council homes.

The 'big four' property developers are sitting on enough land to immediately build 1.4 million homes. Why could that land and the biggest cultures in the construction industry not be nationalised, with compensation paid to current owners only on the basis of genuine need?

Socialists would then build high quality council homes on an environmentally sustainable basis.

Generation Rent calculates that private landlords benefit from subsidies worth £27 billion! Ending

their tax breaks and capping rents could raise a lot of the money needed to build the homes we need.

## Liverpool

As Tony Mulhearn, Liverpool socialist Labour councillor and District Labour Party president in the 1980s, said: "There's always a choice. Either you resist, say you are not passing on cuts and back it up with a mass campaign, or you lamely carry it out with the apology that goes with it."

In the 1980s Liverpool City Council, in which Militant (forerunner of the Socialist Party) played a leading role, forced Thatcher to hand over an extra £60 million to Liverpool - which was used to build 5,000 council houses (more than were built nationally the whole time New Labour was in office!), plus new leisure centres and nurseries and to create tens of thousands of jobs.



## Israel-Palestine: Likud election victory

# The new coalition will face a chain of unresolved crises and bitter struggles

**Yasha Marmer**  
 Socialist Struggle Movement  
 (CWI Israel-Palestine)

“The rule of the right wing is in danger. Arab voters are heading to the polling stations en masse. Left-wing NGOs are bringing them in buses.”

This blunt racist statement was published on polling day by Israel’s Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. It was the peak of an ultra-nationalist incitement campaign launched by Netanyahu’s party, Likud, in the week before 17 March general election.

Likud, the election victor, faced with a background of growing discontent and revulsion against its rule, strove to mobilise the most reactionary elements in society, particularly the far-right settlers’ movement.

The outcome of the election is in many ways a result of this mobilisation. Likud’s victory was achieved not at the expense of the rival Zionist Union and the left-leaning liberal Zionist Meretz party but rather at the expense of the parties of the far right.

Netanyahu urged the settlers to support Likud rather than Jewish Home - which triumphed two years ago as the political arm of the settlers’ movement - to secure the future of the colonial enterprise in the occupied Palestinian territories.

This appeal managed not only to transfer votes from the settlers’ party to the Likud but also to recruit a layer of activists from the settlements.

### “Anyone but Bibi”

Just a couple of months after the end of the Gaza war (July-August 2014) the reactionary mood in Israeli society began, relatively, to shift - despite deepening national tensions - with the re-emergence of social discontent.

In the election campaign this dissatisfaction was galvanized around a popular slogan - “Anyone but Bibi” (Bibi being Netanyahu’s nickname). Indirectly, this slogan also reflected the political vacuum on the left.

The hopes to oust Netanyahu grew just before the election when tens of thousands took part



in big rally against the continuation of the Likud rule. However, the platform rally was a mixture of two opposition camps, rallying against the Likud for different reasons.

On the one hand, there were female speakers who were involved in the 2011 social movement and in the struggle against evictions from public housing.

But on the other hand, the platform - that excluded Arab-Palestinian speakers - was mostly dominated by representatives of the establishment and particularly of the army and secret service.

Needless to say, those generals who were implicitly calling for a vote for the Zionist Camp to oust Netanyahu are part of the problem and not part of the solution.

The Zionist Camp differs with Likud in its approach to foreign policy and on some questions of strategy and tactics used by the regime against the Palestinian struggle, but not on fundamentals, ie the continuation of national oppression and expropriation of the Palestinian masses.

During last year’s 50 days war on Gaza, Tzipi Livni was to some extent Netanyahu’s closest coalition partner and Labour party leader Isaac Herzog supported Netanyahu’s course, from the ‘opposition.’

The Zionist Camp did manage

to get a higher vote than Likud and the rest of the right parties in both Haifa and Tel Aviv, but this was a preference for a ‘lesser evil’ and not a mass expectation for an actual change in policy.

### Unresolved crisis

The final composition of the government coalition is going to be decided in the coming weeks, but it’s already clear that Netanyahu will go for the so-called “government of natural allies”, ie the far right and religious Haredim parties and Moshe Kahlon - a split from Likud.

Before the election, Socialist Struggle Movement (CWI) stated: “A more right-wing government of Likud-Bennett-Haredim is a sure recipe for burning bridges at the international level, an escalating Palestinian struggle, and a social explosion in Israel.”

A prolonged honeymoon for the new government is very unlikely.

Internationally Netanyahu starts his fourth term in a much more isolated position, especially after his statement a couple of days before the election that no Palestinian state will be established on his watch.

Western imperialist governments fear that Netanyahu’s refusal often to contemplate any significant concessions is preparing the way for future conflicts.

Immediately after the elections Netanyahu conducted two interviews for American media outlets to try to blur his position but without much success.

For the Palestinian masses in the occupied West Bank and besieged Gaza, the outcome of the election diminished even further any support for negotiations with the Israeli regime.

Netanyahu’s racist scaremongering that “Arabs” were voting and his demand that Israel is recognised as Jewish state, ie one in which its 20% Palestinian population is merely tolerated, means that Palestinians

expect nothing but the worse from his rule. This feeling can pave the way for a new mass uprising against the occupation and national oppression.

The economy’s trend is likely to compel the new government to launch new attacks on living standards and on organised labour, which can push workers and youth into struggles.

### Racist legislation

The components of the future coalition are already planning further attacks on democratic rights and civil liberties and new racist legislation against the Arab-Palestinian minority inside Israel. This will generate new rounds of rage and protest.

Two days after the election the head of the Joint List, Ayman Odeh, called for a march from the rural Bedouin villages in the Negev, which the government doesn’t recognise as legal, to the Knesset, before the new Knesset is sworn in.

During the last phase of the election campaign he called for the organisation of a march of tens of thousands of Jews and Arabs for equality in the tradition of the Martin Luther King’s US civil rights marches.

This type of action can be a starting point for building the movement in Israel that is needed to stop Netanyahu’s new government in its tracks, particularly if organised around both democratic rights for all and wider social demands for welfare, housing, livelihood and peace.

Read full article and more at [www.socialistworld.net](http://www.socialistworld.net)

■ The final results were marked by a regroupment within the nationalist-right bloc. Likud has 30 seats, Jewish Home eight and Yisrael Beiteinu, led by racist foreign minister Avigdor Lieberman, only six - only one more than this right-wing bloc got in the 2013 election.

The Zionist Camp - an electoral bloc of the Labour party and Tzipi Livni’s Hatnua party, and Meretz - got 29 seats, two more than in 2013. However, their increase in votes was smaller than the increase for the pro-Netanyahu bloc.

The Joint List - an electoral alliance of the Arab-Jewish Hadash,

the Palestinian nationalist-liberal Balad and Ta’al, and the Palestinian Islamist United Arab List, won 13 seats, compared to eleven the four components of this bloc achieved in 2013.

As a response to the rise in the election threshold that parties have to clear to get elected - introduced with a clear intention to force Arab-Palestinian representatives out of the Knesset (Israeli parliament) - the turnout among Arab-Palestinians rose from 58% to 64% and the Joint List became the third-largest alliance in the Knesset.

# Fighting racism, austerity and capitalism



TUSC prospective candidates on the march photos Paul Mattsson

Black and Asian people are at the sharp end of austerity. There has been a 50% increase in long-term unemployment for young black people since 2010.

Only 4% of British Pakistanis say they are not worried about being harassed because of their race or religion. 65% of black Africans are worried about religious or racially motivated attacks.

Ukip is not alone in its divisive rhetoric. The Tories are notorious for their war on multi-culturalism. But we also see Labour running after them with their "tough new approach to immigration."

## Change

Traditionally, the majority of black, Asian and migrant communities have looked to Labour as their party. In the past Labour was - at least partly - a working class force for unity and against rac-

ism. But that is no longer the case.

How much longer will black and Asian people - or more recent migrant communities from Eastern Europe - look to Labour?

The reality is that Labour councils have passed on ferocious cuts, crying crocodile tears while working class communities pay a terrible price. In many instances the axe has fallen hardest on black and Asian people.

Proportionately more black workers have lost their jobs through cuts. Labour councils have slashed language services and English courses.

## New voice

A new working class political voice is needed to unite us all against austerity and fight racism. That is why the Socialist Party takes part in the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC - see page 6).

We support campaigns in our communities on a whole range of issues. We also fight for the massive potential power of the trade unions

to be used to the full, including co-ordinated strike action to oppose attacks on our living and working conditions.

A mass movement is needed to end austerity - no matter which party wins the general election. If you agree with what we say, join the socialists (see page 7).

## A sea of pink placards

That's part of what you saw as Socialist Party members joined a national march against racism on 21 March.

The pink signs and banners were held by TUSC supporters. Over 20 TUSC prospective parliamentary candidates marched - significantly more than any other political group. TUSC black and Asian prospective candidates and supporters were out in force.

About a dozen EDL supporters tried to hold a counter-protest at Piccadilly Circus. However, thousands of anti-racist marchers eclipsed the weak far right.

And the Socialist Party was the one group clearly explaining the link between capitalism, austerity and racism.

**Marvin Hay**

# Saving libraries: it's a page-turner!

## Bristol backs books

Bristol City Council has been slammed for low school results in reading. So what does it do? It plans to close seven branch libraries.

These are places where people can self-educate; use a computer for free; apply for jobs; enjoy books; meet people; access free training... the list goes on.

It follows a sham consultation where questions like "Do you use Amazon?" suggested we no longer need libraries.

On 7 March, Socialist Party members and TUSC supporters gauged opinion on this. Campaigning against these cuts, we sold out our 35 copies of the Socialist and collected over 100 signatures in just over an hour.

**Sheila Caffrey**

## A story of a girl

Coventry Socialist Party took part in a library "read-in" protest on 2 March against closures. It involved the telling of stories. So here is a story of a girl, who as a child had nothing.

This girl got kicked out of school aged 14 without being able to read or write and was branded a good-for-nothing.

This girl used to pass a house of ten, and in that house lived Dave Nellist. The girl heard that this MP stood up for people like her, but didn't ever dare to think that one day she would meet him. That girl was me, and now I campaign along-

side Dave!

It's thanks to libraries and adult education classes that I learned how to read and write and got diagnosed with dyslexia aged 25.

Now I have been selected to stand in the local elections. Vote TUSC for fighting councillors who'll stand up for you!

**Sarah Smith**



Sarah campaigning photo Coventry SP

## Authors speak out

Authors Cathy Cassidy and Alan Gibbons addressed Coventry campaign Save Our Libraries on 3 March. Coventry National Union of Teachers president and TUSC supporter Nicky Downes chaired the meeting of around 50.

Read an interview with Cathy Cassidy at [coventrysocialists.com](http://coventrysocialists.com). "Be a thorn in the side of the council!"

**Dan Crowter**

## Donate to fund the fightback!

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## Socialist Party Fighting Fund

	£ target	£ received	January to March 2015	Deadline 6 April 2015
North West	1,200	1,814		151%
Northern	600	580		97%
Yorkshire	2,900	2,692		93%
West Midlands	2,100	1,824		87%
South West	1,400	1,177		84%
Eastern	1,200	974		81%
East Midlands	1,600	1,124		70%
Wales	2,300	1,591		69%
London	6,100	3,562		58%
Southern	1,200	680		57%
South East	750	348		46%
England and Wales	3,650	6,546		179%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>25,000</b>	<b>22,911</b>		<b>92%</b>

# Socialist Party election appeal 2015

"Good luck to you all" from Teresa Mackay, with a donation of £75, brings us almost up to £40,000 paid in! There is still time to donate if you haven't already.

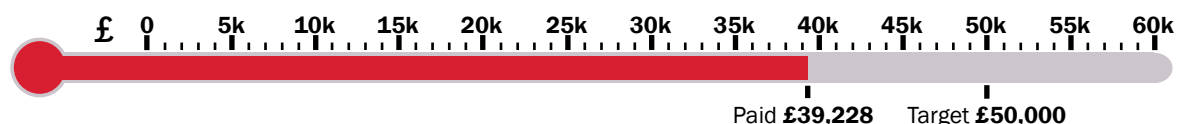
Thanks to all who have sent donations, including: Alex Davis £50,

Susanna Farley £100, Danny Hoggan £250, Dan Smart £20, Liat Norris £100, Katie Simpson £100, Josie Shelley £200 and Damiano Laurenzo £20.

You can donate at [socialistparty.org.uk/donate](http://socialistparty.org.uk/donate), phone 020 8988 8777

with your card, or post a cheque made out to "Socialist Party" to PO Box 24697, London E11 1YD. Please mark your donation "Election Appeal 2015" and send by 30 April 2015.

**Naomi Byron**  
Socialist Party finance team





The suffragettes were repeatedly attacked by police

## TV review

# Suffragettes Forever!

**Katrine Williams** of Cardiff Socialist Party reviews BBC TV's 'Suffragettes Forever! The Story of Women and Power'

**T**his series of three programmes is worth catching on BBC iPlayer. It tries to put the struggle for the vote in the context of the position of women in society and the struggle of women over centuries to assert their rights.

The presenter, Professor Amanda Vickery, clearly sees that this battle continues today. She considers the battle for the vote, as did the working class suffragist movement, not as an end in itself but as a means to an end - to continue the battle for equality and better conditions through the political route as well.

### Physical repression

The programme clearly shows the physical repression of women with the use of the scold's bridle (a kind of iron muzzle) and the legal position of married women as the property of their husbands.

The phrase 'rule of thumb' comes from the definition of the width of stick that husbands were once reputedly allowed to beat their wives with. In fact this legal view of women as property meant that rape in marriage only became illegal as recently as 1991!

All these issues were raised when the Socialist Party's predecessor, Militant, initiated the Campaign against Domestic Violence, which, among other things, got every major national trade union to adopt a policy on domestic violence. It is good to see the oppression of women covered in the mainstream media.

The programme has interesting coverage of the role of ordinary women in struggle. From the radical Levellers marching to Cromwell's parliament demanding to be heard, to the women particularly targeted and attacked by troops in the 1819 Peterloo massacre, to the Bryant and May women workers in 1888.

The key role that the women

workers at this match factory played in taking strike action and highlighting the appalling and dangerous working conditions and pay is emphasised. This was a victory for collective action and established the right of these women to form a trade union and increase wages.

However, mass involvement of working class women in the suffragist movement and their collective action demanding the vote gets no coverage in the third episode.

All attention is paid to the Women and Social Political Union and the role of Emmeline and Christabel Pankhurst and the militant suffragettes. The horrendous treatment of the suffragettes by the state before World War One is clearly shown. But as soon as the war was declared in 1914, Emmeline and Christabel Pankhurst jingoistically championed the war effort.

The programme does not consider the social background to the vote being given in 1918 on a limited basis to 8.4 million women, and also extended to five million men. This is unsurprising - the BBC would not publicise the fact that when the working class starts moving into struggle it can bring about social change and force concessions from the ruling class. The Russian revolution in 1917 terrified the ruling class worldwide and increased workers'

confidence to struggle.

The series ends even more disappointingly, looking at 1980s Tory Prime Minister Thatcher's role and whether that helped advance women's struggle for equality. You may not want to watch the last 15 minutes. They are painful, with coverage of Thatcher and an interview with Kirsty Wark who admits that Thatcher did little to advance things for women but claiming that her reform of the trade unions was not a bad thing!

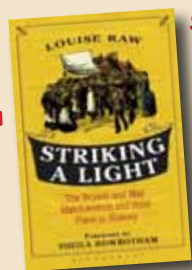
### Today

The programme ends with an example of more recent attitudes. It highlights the furore over the campaign for a woman to appear on the bank note and the fact that Labour MP Stella Creasy was bombarded with rape threats for championing this.

Working class women know firsthand the attitudes existing in society and that we need to keep fighting. This series gives some useful information and background, but no way forward. Women are already involved in the real battles to defend jobs, services and our communities.

We will fight on to get a better future, more than just a woman on a banknote. We have even more to gain from fighting to change this unequal class society and build a socialist world where the 99% have a decent future.

**It Doesn't Have to be Like This**  
**Women and the struggle for socialism**  
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## The Socialist Inbox

### Do you have something to say?

Send your news, views and criticism in not more than 150 words to Socialist Inbox, PO Box 24697, London E11 1YD, or phone 020 8988 8771, email: editors@socialistparty.org.uk

### Back on the rails

Support for renationalisation of such vital public services as rail is high - outside of the mainstream political parties. Ironically, since Major's Tory government broke up British Rail some 20 years ago, the public subsidy for running our rail networks has actually increased.

James Abbott, the editor of Modern Railways magazine, suggested that renationalising railways now would not be difficult at all. As Ian Taylor, author of the trade union report, Rebuilding Rail, says: "The biggest obstacle to renationalising rail is the prevailing dogma that marketisation and competition must be best."

Their study demonstrated that by removing the profit motive from Britain's rail network, £1 billion could be saved annually for the benefit of wider society. The railway system should exist to provide a public service not service private profits.

Bringing the rail industry into democratic public ownership is not difficult, but finding any political will to seriously carry out this task is a problem. The Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC) calls for full renationalisation of our rail system so our trains may serve public need not private greed.

**Michael Barker**  
**TUSC PPC, Leicester East**



### Nationalise telecoms

Further to John Reid's interesting article on the sale of broadcasting rights for football, it will be customers and workers in BT and Sky who will ultimately pay the price, whether or not they go to football matches.

BT put up its line rentals by 6% in December and hinted that at some stage they will charge their existing broadband customers for BT Sport. There are rumours of price increases for Sky customers too.

All these things are no doubt connected to the spiralling cost of televising football. If the telecom and broadcasting industries (and there is greater and

greater overlap with modern technology) were nationalised there would be no competition to increase the cost of broadcasting rights.

And the removal of greedy shareholders would prevent the customer from being fleeced.

**A BT worker**

### House of Cards

Last month the TV series 'House of Cards', the US political drama based on the 1990 BBC series of the same name, returned for its third year. Kevin Spacey and Robin Wright reprised their lead roles as Frank and Claire Underwood, the conniving couple vying for political power and influence at all costs.

I won't spoil the plot, except that in one episode a rival politician cynically vows to tackle corporate greed and raise the minimum wage, naming and criticising a multinational retailer.

Frank Underwood and his opponents are no socialists, but the show's rhetoric and support for some of these political ideas reflect the real life appetite for them by the US working class. It is a thoroughly enjoyable addition to the show's previous years.

**Andrew Howe**  
**Southampton Socialist Party**

### Where's our coverage?

Recently, members of 38 degrees were petitioning to defend the NHS. Socialist Party members and TUSC supporters met them all over London.

We were mostly campaigning on the other burning issue for London's working class, housing, but we all signed each other's petitions and had good conversations about the need for an anti-austerity voice in the elections. Several 38 degrees people donated to assist our election challenge.

It was great to see their day of action in the TV London news later that day, it's so rare to see any campaigning shown in a positive light on our TV screens.

But I couldn't help thinking, our members are out on Saturdays doing exactly that week in, week out, and TUSC is standing well over 100 candidates in the general election. We're constantly sending out press releases and ringing up the different media outlets - where's our coverage?

**Paula Mitchell**

We reserve the right to shorten letters. Don't forget to give your name, address and phone number. Confidentiality will be respected, if requested.

# 25 years since the poll tax battle

## How we defeated Thatcher's poll tax

**Steve Nally**  
 Former secretary, All-Britain  
 Anti-Poll Tax Federation

The battle against the so-called 'poll tax' was one of the biggest movements of working people against a modern British government. Millions refused to pay; many millions more simply could not afford to pay. Mass non-payment beat the tax and finally removed Margaret Thatcher from office.

Uniting this struggle was the All-Britain Anti-Poll Tax Federation, led by members of the Militant (now the Socialist Party). The Federation brought together 1,500 affiliated anti-poll tax unions and labour movement bodies.

The poll tax, officially called the Community Charge, was a flat-rate levy on all adults to pay for local council services. With some partial exceptions, the poor were to pay the same as the rich. It was proposed by Thatcher's Conservatives to replace the more progressive 'domestic rates'.

The Tories first imposed it in Scotland in 1989. A major campaign developed - not just to oppose the tax, but to organise non-payment by building local anti-poll tax unions. These genuine grassroots organisations would be critical to maintaining mass non-payment and defending those the authorities dared to pick on. Without anti-poll tax unions and their policy of mass non-payment, we might not have defeated Thatcher and her hated tax.

The tax was imposed across England and Wales in 1990. In the build-up, mass lobbies of councils were held involving tens of thousands. In Brixton over 6,000 protested outside the town hall. In early 1990 many councillors felt the hot breath of protest, with some joining the movement. However, not one council refused to implement the tax.

These mass lobbies built more anti-poll tax unions, and consolidated the slogan "can't pay, won't pay". Unfortunately, this did not become the mantra of Labour's leaders. Instead they urged people not to break the law while openly attacking leaders of the anti-poll tax movement.

The Federation called a national demonstration for 31



photo S Gardiner



**The poll tax, officially called the Community Charge, was a flat-rate levy on all adults. With some partial exceptions, the poor were to pay the same as the rich**

March 1990. It will go down in history as one of the biggest and most important ever to hit the capital. Well over 200,000 flooded the streets of central London in a celebration of mass non-payment. On the same day, 50,000 marched in Glasgow.

### Police attack

The London mobilisation was peaceful and good humoured, but was brutally attacked by police. Thatcher's Tory government had used violent tactics on numerous previous occasions, including against the heroic 1984-5 miners' strike and 1986 London printers' strike.

As demonstrators defended themselves, rioting broke out - but the vicious police assault backfired. Too many people on the spot and watching on television had seen a peaceful, mass demonstration broken up by police brutality. The rioting itself was a reflection of the discontent that existed in Thatcher's Britain.

In some quarters the demo, and in particular the ensuing riot, are mistakenly seen as the single event that defeated Thatcher and her tax. But this mass demonstration, while important, was just one part of an ongoing and well-organised

campaign. What was decisive was mass non-payment and defence of non-payers.

By the summer of 1990, over 18 million had refused to pay. The Tory government and colluding local councils made their move. First up were the court cases in Newport on the Isle of Wight, led by the reactionary landed gentry who made up the Tory council.

Summoning non-payers to court was intended to scare people into paying - but the Federation turned it into its opposite. Thousands turned up to contest cases in Newport, clogging the courts and forcing magistrates to dismiss all cases and pay expenses to those summoned!

This tactic of mass turnouts at court was replicated by other local anti-poll tax unions. Many tens of thousands of cases were dismissed or never heard. Our legal campaign also resurrected the tradition of 'McKenzie friends', where non-lawyers could assist, and sometimes represent, defendants in court. Within a short time the Federation had such representatives at most court hearings.

Bailiffs were the next weapon used against us, but again the Federation came out fighting. Militant argued for community defence



**What was decisive was mass non-payment and defence of non-payers. By the summer of 1990, over 18 million had refused to pay**

groups, and the anti-poll tax unions were crucial in organising them across the UK. Taunton Deane in Somerset was the first test. In late July 1990, hundreds protected the village of Bishops Lydeard from bailiffs trying to enter.

Bailiffs (and in Scotland, sheriffs) were sent packing across the land. Millions quickly learnt that in addition to rarely having the legal right to entry, bailiffs never have an appetite to take on a mass, peaceful blockade! Anti-poll tax unions also took the fight to the bailiffs. We invaded their offices giving them a taste of their own cruel medicine.

### Jail

The last resort for the Tories, and compliant councils of all political colours, was to try and jail those who had beaten off the courts and bailiffs. Grantham, Thatcher's home town, led the way by jailing a young building worker just before Christmas 1990. There was uproar.

After a big local demonstration, the governor at HM Prison Lincoln fast-tracked his release! The last thing many prison governors wanted was poll tax non-

### 1990

As the bold Chartists so long before  
 They engulfed the sweet scented park  
 A beautiful scene of strength and awe

The radiant sunshine before the dark  
 With raucous laughter, speech and song  
 In wait, the backfiring, horse ridden attack

Youth and age forged as one  
 As molten lava past fresh spring trees  
 A mass of two hundred thousand strong

All defiantly imbued with one belief  
 A deafening chorus of "No Poll Tax"  
 Voiceless folk now raised off their knees

Families waved from the Kennington flats  
 Bright home made banners flourished high  
 To smother and still Thatcher's brutal axe

The melting pot march never a penny to pay  
 Flowed proudly into a sunlit Trafalgar Square  
 A bloodily remembered victory foray

A final riposte to her Downing Street prayer

Steve Nally



The burning of Poll Tax bills



**Bailiffs (and in Scotland, sheriffs) were sent packing across the land**

payers stirring things up inside. Jailings continued, including that of MP and Militant supporter Terry Fields. Shamefully, the leaders of the Labour Party refused to back non-payment. But Militant said: 'it's better to break the law than break the poor'. In any case, the Federation, local anti-poll tax unions and supporting lawyers ensured jailings were kept to a few hundred. Many thousands avoided imprisonment.

By the autumn of 1990, millions were still refusing to pay. In many areas the collection system had ground to a halt. The Tories were in crisis, and hav-

ing all the loyalty of hyenas they turned on Thatcher, removing her from office.

Their arrogance in pushing through the poll tax had exploded in their faces. Mass self-organising had won out. Thatcher left Downing Street in tears, but this was nothing to the ocean of tears her policies had created.

A short while later, in what must be one of the understatements of all time, Tory MP Michael Heseltine stood in parliament and said of the poll tax: "The public have not been persuaded that the scheme is fair."

The lessons of the battle against the poll tax are many, but what was

critical was correct strategy and tactics. Mass non-payment, put forward by Militant, was essential. But to build that required a serious level of organisation that could take on councils, courts and above all Thatcher and the government.

Local anti-poll tax unions were the bedrock of our resistance. They gave people information, protection and above all the confidence to stand firm against the onslaught they faced.

This is how the poll tax was beaten, and how a prime minister was humiliated. This is how the working class will have to plan and build for the future battles we face.



**The Tories' arrogance in pushing through the poll tax exploded in their faces**

**The Rise of Militant: The First 30 Years**  
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### 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 over 40 countries.

**Our demands include:**

**PUBLIC SERVICES**

- No to ALL cuts in jobs, 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.

**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 MASS 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.
- 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!

**Join the fightback!  
 Join the Socialists!**

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# DEFEND THE NHS

## NO TO 'DEVO MANC'

**Alex Davidson**  
TUSC Prospective  
Parliamentary Candidate  
for Manchester Central

Smug-faced Greater Manchester Labour leaders lined up with Tory chancellor Osborne to promote 'Devo Manc' and a similar scheme for health and social care services.

This is actually about having one lackey of Westminster to implement austerity across Greater Manchester. A mayor will be appointed in 2017, but not face election until 2019! Much of the power over local services, healthcare, and planning currently held in each of the 10 boroughs by councils or other bodies, will pass into the hands of this Whitehall-agreed appointee.

There is no new money. It will mean the implementation of devastating cuts and privatisation, and widespread closures of hospital departments. Cen-

tralisation of control under the mayor, and their not directly elected 'cabinet', is intended to make it harder to fight against cuts in local services and unwanted corporate schemes.

Similar plans are in the pipeline for other regions. Osborne and the Tories see the possibility of breaking up the NHS and the welfare state, with the collusion of local politicians.

Working-class people will lose out. Corporate central Manchester is booming at the expense of our communities. Devo Manc will apply that on a grand scale, channelling even more wealth towards the city centre and developer-dictated projects, away from communities right across Greater Manchester.

Manchester city council leader Richard Leese faced a barrage of criticism about his hypocrisy during his online 'debate' about Devo Manc. We had a referendum over a Manches-

ter mayor - which rejected that charade - so why no referendum over a Greater Manchester mayor?

Real devolution would be based on the agreement of the population concerned, and hand over real powers and sufficient funding to a democratically-elected body, such as a regional parliament, for which immediate direct elections would be held with proportional representation and without an autocratic mayor.

Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC) prospective candidates oppose Osborne's 'devolution' and support the campaign for a referendum. No more cuts and no more smoke and mirrors! What we want is real devolution and an end to austerity!

■ **March against "Devo Manc" and NHS cuts**  
Sunday 29 March at 10.30am, Piccadilly Gardens, Manchester city centre.



On 17 March it was announced that Barts Health NHS trust, the largest in the country, was being put into special measures after a report found "a culture of bullying and low-morale at Whipps Cross". Whipps, in Waltham Forest, is one of the six east London hospitals covered by Barts.

**Nancy Taaffe**, standing for the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition in nearby Walthamstow responded to the news.

This announcement is a direct consequence of the £77 million of cuts made by Barts Trust in 2013 following the use of the Private Finance Initiative (PFI) to fund redevelopment of the Royal London Hospital.

I stood for parliament in 2005 against then Labour MP Neil Gerrard who debated with me and said that PFI at our local hospital was 'the only show in town.' That 'show' has led to this.

The culture of management bullying and harassment is a direct consequence of trying to make NHS workers do more with less. This bullying directly led to the sacking of Unison branch chairperson Charlotte Monro, who tried to raise the issue of cuts in a wider audience.

I had my two children at Whipps Cross and know the value of its services. TUSC supporters have been active, both in the hospital and

in the community, opposing cuts, including participation in the Whipps Cross demonstration in 2013.

TUSC demands an end to PFI and all NHS privatisation, and no cuts, with full restoration of all funding lost to the NHS. We do not want to see a revolving door of 'new administrators' leeching off the public purse while those who deliver the service are run ragged and face pay cuts.