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the Socialist

Save our schools!

Teachers from around the country respond to attacks faced by schools, including the fight against academies and free schools > Pages 8&9



20 years since the ending of Labour's Clause IV

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BRUTAL TORY AXE TO FALL ON POOR

NO CUTS TO

WELFARE!

Mary Jackson

Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition parliamentary candidate, Doncaster North

The Tories plan to savagely cut £12 billion from welfare benefits. This brutal axe will fall on disabled people and carers, among many low-income and vulnerable households. How dare they!

Carers save the country billions of pounds by giving often 24-hour care to severely disabled people. And for this they get the princely sum of £63.35 a week!

Taxing disability benefits will effectively result in means-testing claimants.

They also plan to limit child benefit to two children. We've already got 3.5 million children in the UK living in poverty - one million more than when the Tories and their Lib Dem allies came into office. How many more in poverty will satisfy them?

Further reducing the benefit cap will cause more severe hardship and family break-ups. In cities like London with rocketing rents, the current cap is already forcing people out of their homes - effectively, class cleansing!

The government's bedroom tax has already driven people out of social housing. In Prime Minister Cameron's 'broken Britain' a family loses their home every eleven minutes.

This has to stop! However, all the mainstream political parties are set on continuing the failed policy of capitalist austerity.

Rich get richer

But while low-income households are being hammered, the super-rich are laughing all the way to the bailed-out banks.

Millionaire Tory Chancellor George Osborne says he's 'getting tough' on mega-rich tax dodgers. But the rhetoric doesn't match reality. His 'tough' measures have hardly made a dent in the estimated £120 billion dodged in taxes each year, mainly by wealthy capitalists and giant corporations.

Cameron claims the government's cuts

measures have got unemployment down and turned the economy around. But that is ignoring the one million benefit claimants sanctioned every year, the 900,000 on cheap labour 'workfare' schemes and the huge rise in low-paid 'self-employment'.

But Miliband's Labour is no alternative. He and shadow chancellor Ed Balls have made it clear that they'll match the Tory cuts, but over a slightly longer timeframe. And let's not forget, all Labour-run councils have ruthlessly implemented the Tories' austerity programme.

We need a strategy to rebuild Britain, to recover the stolen taxes, to nationalise the banks under democratic workers' control, to take back the privatised railways and utilities, for a massive house-building programme, and much more besides.

We need a democratic socialist society run in the interests of the vast majority people, not a super-rich elite protected by their political establishment friends. A socialist planned economy would allow sustainable production, full employment and fully funded public services to be planned to meet the needs of the 99%.



The planned cuts will hit disabled people and their carers photo Paul Mattsson

NHS funding crisis deepens

Main parties have no alternative strategy

A London mental health NHS worker

Despite an underfunding crisis - against the backdrop of government austerity - a recent Kings Fund report shows the National Health Service (NHS) bearing up well and high patient satisfaction rates.

But this situation is not sustainable. The fact that the NHS appears to be performing well is because nurses and other staff are doing even more without any increase in resources.

There are layers of administration workers who are being asked to take on two jobs as staff and posts are axed to save money.

A Royal College of Nursing report showed that untrained health care assistants are being left in charge of wards and are being asked to carry out procedures that they are not trained to perform. This only comes to light when accidents occur and patients die. Sickness and absence levels are on the rise as staff reach breaking point.

Multiple A&E closures are leading to increased waiting times and hospitals are now regularly breaching waiting time targets.

Patients are left on trolleys in corridors as the casualty departments that have survived closure become increasingly overcrowded.

Costly restructures - which act as a cover for staff cuts and reducing services - are also draining the NHS budget. Staff and patients are quickly learning that 'service redesign' leads to confusion and reduced services, with higher thresholds for accepting patients.

Billions of pounds in 'efficiency savings' are being stripped out of the NHS every year. There is now a £30 billion funding black hole.

None of the three main political parties offer a strategy that is capable of rescuing the NHS. Their extra funding pledges of £2 to £3 billion won't make up for the savage spending cuts since the coalition government came to power.

Private vultures

In spite of the funding cuts the private sector continues to do well. The NHS is increasingly used as a cash cow by private companies, with expensive Private Finance Initiatives costing the NHS £60 billion over time.

Figures from the Nuffield Trust indicate that the overall NHS drug budget has increased by 10% in 2014-2015, while spending on staffing has only increased by 0.15%.

Excellent care requires a holistic approach, resting on highly skilled staff working together.

Drugs alone won't work. However, patients are consistently offered medicines more than any other



Over 1,000 people marched in Leeds last Saturday in defence of the NHS Photo Iain Dalton

therapy or treatment.

In mental health services, day centres are being shut because a private provider has won the bid and wants to introduce a 'new model' which 'signposts patients to services' rather than offering services directly.

Mental health service users die 15-20 years earlier than the rest of the population, so there is a drive to ensure that we offer basic

physical health care and advice on smoking cessation, weight loss, diabetes monitoring, etc. This is a demand from the top, but without the training or additional resources needed.

People can be left on waiting lists for psychiatric services for months before they even get a first assessment and are batted back to the GPs as overstretched community teams struggle to cope with the complex

caseloads we already hold.

Increasingly, the NHS is measured on how trusts perform financially rather than on the availability of care and how that care is delivered.

If patients are to continue to remain satisfied with the NHS, the profit motive that is seeping into the heart of care must be robustly challenged by the trade union movement and wider community.

TV Review

Election 2015 Cameron and Miliband Live

Spot the difference?

Simon Carter

With parliament dissolved, the 2015 general election campaign has officially commenced. And while the winning party, or more likely combination of parties, is hard to predict, one thing is certain - whoever forms the next government will continue with capitalist austerity.

It's all the more ironic therefore that the most recent TV election debate was between Tory David 'austerity' Cameron and Labour's Ed 'austerity-lite' Miliband.

Grilled by Jeremy Paxman, the 90-minute Q&A began with Cameron being reminded about his claim

to 'repair broken Britain' but then unable to explain why food bank usage has soared.

Next, the millionaire PM, after repeated questioning, eventually admitted he couldn't live on an exploitative zero-hour contract. Cameron was also left looking decidedly uncomfortable on the economy when Paxman pointed out that, despite trumpeting an economic recovery, the government had borrowed more than the previous government.

On foreign policy, Cameron's response to the calamity in Libya, caused by western imperialism's intervention, would've been laughable if it wasn't so tragic. The prime

minister retorted that the situation was "challenging"!

Miliband's turn at being questioned was excruciating to watch as he tripped over virtually every issue; from Labour's handling of the economic meltdown, to immigration, to the cost of living crisis.

The hapless wannabe PM, when told by Paxman that unemployment has fallen under this government, failed to point out that instead of permanent well-paid jobs there has been a massive increase in low paying self-employment and temporary, insecure jobs.

But to prove his capitalist-friendly credentials Ed keenly trotted out his desire of a future Labour govern-



ment to cut public spending.

Any undecided voter watching this dire spectacle would've probably concluded that there is precious little difference between the two main establishment parties - and they'd be right!

BBC News special: Election 2015 Cameron and Miliband Live - available to watch on the BBC iPlayer

Socialist election challenge - see pages 14&15

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

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END PUNITIVE BENEFIT SANCTIONS NOW!

"If you commit a crime, no court is allowed to make you go hungry as a punishment. But if you're late for an appointment at the Jobcentre they can remove all your income and leave you unable to feed you or your family for weeks." (Church Action on Poverty)

Last year, over one million people had their benefits sanctioned under this callous government regime. That figure includes 100 people a day who have severe mental health problems.

The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) has recently reviewed 49 cases involving the death of a benefit claimant, but would not say how many cases involved claimants subjected to a sanction.



As part of the national day of action (19 March) against benefit refusals and sanctions by Unite Community, a 'die-in' was held outside Chesterfield Job Centre. According to homeless charity Crisis, Bolsover, near Chesterfield, has one of the highest sanctions rates for JSA claimants.
 Elaine Evans

Darren, a Jobseeker's Allowance claimant from Leicester, has been sanctioned, without proper justification, following a new DWP pilot scheme involving daily signing at a Jobcentre. Darren explains what happened.

"Recently I was forced into daily Jobseeker's Allowance signings at random times. I have now been tripped up. I was ten minutes late to an appointment and have now been sanctioned a full month's benefit.

Needless to say, with new council tax and winter fuel bills due I'm up the creek. Regardless, I'm expected to continue with this daily regime without fail.

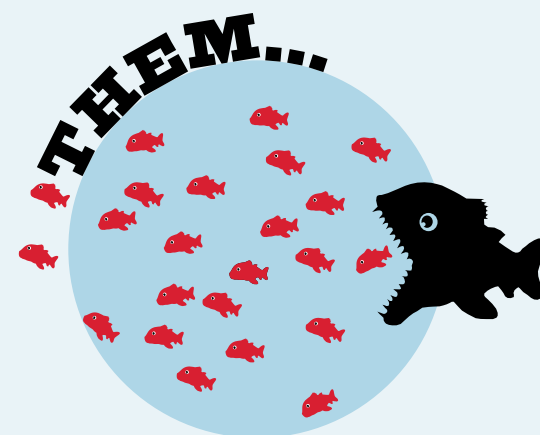
I want to appeal. It first went to the 'decision makers' who aren't even based in Leicester. I now have to get back to them just to express an interest in appealing before I'm even allowed to commence the procedure!

The most insulting part of this all is that I am digitally logged and proven to be applying for an average of 25 vacancies a week! I have three-hour turnaround in my day to travel

and wait on the appointments. It is nothing but a counter-productive hindrance to getting a job.

The sheer disruption of not knowing the time of an appointment from one day until the next is very destabilising. The constant threat of sanctions creates fear and anxiety, which is not conducive to finding work but is guaranteed to promote both deterioration in health and mental state.

I am not a convicted criminal, but I have previously served on workfare for six months! It should also be only fair to further point out this is an attack on civil liberty and basic human rights."



■ Problem debt

Millions of people in the UK are in "severe problem debt" as a result of the capitalist recession - in which wages fell for six years - and government austerity. A further 18 million are worried about making their income last until their next pay packet. Debt charity StepChange says over half a million people, with debts averaging £14,650, have sought help in the past year alone. It also says that the number of people needing help to manage their debts has risen by 56% since 2012. But it's not only the unemployed seeking help. Increasing numbers of people in full-time work are struggling to pay essential bills such as gas and electricity. Also, the number of people in council tax arrears has rocketed from 20% to 33% in only two years due to benefit cuts. Problem debt costs the economy more than £8 billion a year - £960 million on mental health treatment; £2.3 billion in costs due to job losses or lost productivity, and £790 million in "relationship breakdown costs," the report says.

■ Zero-hour nightmare

"Irregular hours from flexible work and zero-hour contracts leave some workers anxiously facing eviction, afraid to speak out about their employment rights for fear of losing their work, or with debts piling up". That's the verdict of the Citizens Advice Bureau who reveal that 83% of people with fluctuating work have problems with debt; 87% of people with fluctuating work face complications or delays to benefits such as working tax credits or housing benefit; 74% of people with fluctuating work seeking help from CAB have problems with childcare. Last year over 220,000 people asked Citizens Advice for help with their employment problems.

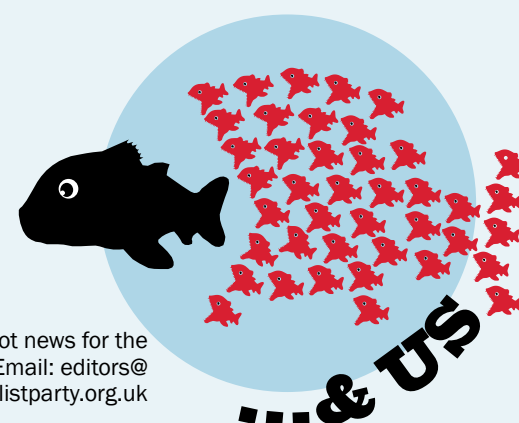
41% fall in housebuilding investment since 1985

■ Unaffordable rents

Meanwhile low income tenants in 25,000 housing association (HA) households in the capital are collectively paying £70 million in rent increases because of the government's policy. Due to a 63% cut in capital investment budgets for HAs since 2010, renters have found their homes re-designated from 'social' housing to 'affordable' housing ie from half the market rate to up to 80% of market rents, as HAs recoup the shortfall.

■ Hardest hit

Households with the lowest incomes have been hit the hardest by the coalition government's tax rises and benefit cuts over the last five years. This unsurprising conclusion from the Institute for Fiscal Studies says that although tax increases had hit people on the highest incomes "the poorest have seen the biggest proportionate losses."



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

The new look Socialist – thumbs up from readers

The launch of the redesigned Socialist has proved a hit among readers and sellers. Socialist party members in Walthamstow, east London, sold 46 copies on a public sale last Saturday using the back page feature on cuts in the National Health Service.

Here is a selection of readers' comments:

Love it!
 It looks lively and 'together.'
Heather Rawling

Excellent. Pass on my thanks to the team with a special mention to Suze (who designed the layout). Love the page numbers!
 No doubt plans are well under way for the election week issue....a plea from me for the simplest front page headline poss. Skip the word 'austerity'! I'd welcome NO MORE CUTS! VOTE TUSC!
Dave Gorton

I was delighted to receive the newly redesigned Socialist. I'm particularly impressed by the sharp layout on the features, the letters section and the little details around the page numbers.

Inspired by this excellent new look and with a big NHS demo approaching I doubled my sales target to 20. The paper and TUSC leaflets got an excellent reception on the demo, and I sold 15 papers. The previous day I sold five at an RMT union protest.

But getting to 20 hasn't stopped me. At an election public meeting another two sold and from visiting potential new party members, I've reached 27 sales so far and still going. It's important to turn these sales into regular buyers of the paper and hopefully new members. All the contacts visited get a subscription form and an invite to the next branch meeting.

Iain Dalton, Leeds

Here's a fighting fund donation to support the great new design of the Socialist
Clive Dunkley



Unison special conference votes for submission of new pay claim

Socialist Party members in Unison

Delegates at the Unison local government special conference on 24 March delivered a massive blow to the union's right-wing leadership by voting to submit a new pay claim for 2015-2016.

The special conference was called following an initiative from the north west region in the wake of widespread anger among the membership over the debacle of last year's pay dispute.

The strike was called off, with local government trade unions accepting a worse deal than what had previously been on the table.

The mood of the conference floor was defiant as attempts by the leadership to filibuster the call for a new pay claim backfired.

This was thanks to a disciplined approach by delegates from the floor, determined to come away from the conference with a commitment to a further pay claim.

Despite a clear majority of delegates voting in favour by a show of hands, the president called for a card vote. Unfortunately for the leadership this returned precisely the same result!

Delegates were in no mood to accept the usual attempts by the bureaucracy to blame the membership for an unwillingness to fight and to accept continued pay restraint. They repeatedly called for a determined and confident lead to be given over pay.

Labour link

The anger of delegates wasn't just restricted to those at the top of the union. The Labour Party and the union's relationship with it came in for strong criticism.

At the time of the deal a letter emerged from Jim McMahon, leader of the Labour Party group in the Local Government Association, to Unison general secretary Dave Prentis.

In the letter McMahon instructed Prentis to recommend the offer to Unison members or it would be taken off the table.

Speaking from the top table, Socialist Party member Mike Forster called for an end to deals "... done behind our back with the Labour Party. Next time when they threaten us, let us withdraw funding from every councillor and every MP that supports the Labour Party." This received a huge round of applause from the floor.

Democracy

Important steps were also taken to increase rank and file control of future pay disputes. An amendment to a motion on the decision to cancel strike action for 14 October last year ensured "at least one" lay member would be present at future talks with the employers.

Later in the conference a separate amendment from Hackney council



The mood of the conference floor was defiant as attempts by the leadership to filibuster the call for a new pay claim backfired

Unison branch, moved by Socialist Party member Brian Debus, increased the number to two.

The conference ended on a comical note. For reasons known only to the management of the venue the speakers started playing 'Cry me a River'.

No doubt it struck a chord with many of the glum faced leaders of Unison as they trooped dejectedly off stage!

The conference result was a big step forward towards fighting to win back some of the money stolen from Unison members by years of pay freezes.

It was also a victory for rank and file democracy. However, much work remains to be done to ensure that the leadership carries out the



Local government workers on strike last year
 photo Karl Lang

decisions of conference.

A new pay claim must be submitted by the National Joint Council before the general election in May.

It is vital that rank and file members in the other major local government unions, Unite and GMB, follow the lead of the decisions made

at this special conference.

Pressure must be brought to bear in those unions to ensure that Unison 'isolation' (despite being by far the biggest local government union) is not used as an excuse for inaction by Unison leaders.

Also, the conference must be a

platform to transform Unison into a fighting union. All Unison members and activists should be inspired by it into making a determined effort to get the 'Reclaim the Union' slate of left-wing candidates elected in the forthcoming Unison NEC elections that start on 7 April (see box).

'Reclaim the Union' slate of candidates for the Unison NEC

Regions

Eastern
 Female: Claire Wormald
 Reserved: Polly Smith

East Midlands
 Female: Jean Thorpe
 Male: Adrian Picton
 Reserved: Gail Flack

Greater London
 Female: Helen Davies
 Female: Sonia Howard
 Male: Jon Rogers
 Reserved: Angela Boyle

North West
 Female: Bernie Gallagher
 Female: Karen Reissmann
 General: Tony Wilson
 Male: Roger Bannister
 Reserved: Diane Cawood

Scotland
 Female: Naomi Junnor
 General: Jim McFarlane
 Male: Duncan Smith

South East
 Female: Jacqui Berry
 Female: Diana Leach
 Male: Paul Couchman
 Reserved: Sue Hatherley

South West
 Male: Bernie Parkes
 Reserved: Suzy Franklin

Wales
 Female: Alice Greenlees
 Male: Jamie Davies

West Midlands
 Female: Sharon Champion
 Male: Dave Auger

Yorkshire and Humberside
 Female: Helen Jenner
 Female: Sarah Littlewood
 Male: Adrian Kennett
 Reserved: Vicky Perrin

Service groups
Community
 Female: Janet Bryan
 General: Kieran Grogan

Health
 Female: Jordan Rivera
 Female: Sam Strudwick
 General: Ben Jackson
 Male: Dave Byrom

Higher Education
 Female: Tomasa Bullen
 General: Max Watson

Local Government
 Female: Jane Doolan
 Female: Phoebe Watkins
 General: Paul Holmes
 Male: Glenn Kelly

Police and Justice
 General: Kevin Allsopp

Water, Environment and Transport
 General: John Jones

National Seats
Black Members
 Female: April Ashley
 Female: Nusrat Bukhari
 Male: Hugo Pierre

Contact 020 8988 8768 for NEC election leaflets



Get the weekly National Shop Stewards Network (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

LONDON BUS COMPANIES FORCED INTO PAY TALKS

London bus drivers in the Socialist Party

Following on from the two successful days of strike action in January and February, London bus workers - members of Unite the Union - have forced many of the bus companies and Transport for London (TfL) to talks on 9 April.

This is a major climbdown both from the bus companies who up until now have refused to talk to Unite, but also from TfL bosses which have repeatedly said that the current dispute has nothing to do with them.

On hearing the news that their strike has forced the employers to talks, bus workers are very positive and see this as a significant step in the dispute. It's important the message that strike action has had this affect gets around to as many drivers as possible to help maintain and increase support for the current strategy

This decision to attend the talks



Bus workers in Hackney on strike in January photo Paul Mattsson

was agreed by a meeting of bus worker Unite reps. However reps agreed that if management show they are not serious about these talks and not prepared to discuss the main issues of the dispute, such

as the equalisation of pay across all companies and routes, then strike action will be resumed.

This reps meeting followed on from several well attended 'cluster' meetings of workers from groups of

bus garages where there was still a very determined mood to see a successful outcome to this dispute.

This is a major dispute and would have enormous implications for all workers, if successful.



[News in brief]

Food workers' victory

Two hundred and seventy workers at the giant multinational Refresco-Gerber in Bridgwater, Somerset have won a victory against reductions in terms and conditions after a series of strikes from January to March.

The Unite members had also called for a march and rally, which had been expected to number 1,000, with supporters from across Somerset, Devon and Bristol, including a contingent from Exeter. Victory saw sick pay and six month shift pay protection reinstated, and a contentious shift pattern removed. The workers won due to their persistence and unity, and their support from the wider trade union movement.

Sean Brogan, vice-president Exeter trades council (personal capacity) and TUSC candidate, Newton Abbot

Right royal mess

PCS civil service union members working at Windsor Castle are being balloted for industrial action in demand of better pay. Some workers are paid as low as £14,400 a year. If the 120 union member vote 'yes', we could see the first ever royal staff strike.

Hackney drivers

Drivers that transport disabled children to school and play clubs are due to strike for 24 hours on Thursday 2 April to stop their pay being slashed by 50% to £12,000 a year.

The Unite members, employed by Hackney council in East London, voted by 100% to take action and plan a second walkout on 16 April.

Bolton Uni: reinstate Damien and Jenny Markey!

Salford Socialist Party

The campaign for the reinstatement of sacked trade unionists Damien and Jenny Markey began on Monday 30 April at Bolton University with around 50 people, including staff, trade unionists and university students, protesting at the outrageous actions of the university management.

On Friday 20 March, the University and College Union (UCU) branch secretary Damien was called before a 'disciplinary hearing' at 30 minutes notice, before being summarily dismissed.

The hearing lasted all of 45 minutes, after which Damien was escorted off the premises by University security.

The following Monday his wife Jenny, a Unison member, was also sacked.

Management have recently been



photo Salford SP

embarrassed at several stories in the national press that allege a serious misuse of public money by the university. George Holmes, the highly paid vice chancellor, in particular has benefited after receiving a £960,000 bridging loan to buy a house in the town.

The sacking of the two, just be-

fore Easter, is a particularly cynical manoeuvre by the University bosses as a large proportion of the staff are now on leave.

However, with more than 2,000 signatures already collected on a petition for the pair's reinstatement, the campaign is clearly gathering momentum.

More protests will be organised over the coming weeks.

■ Please sign the petition calling for the reinstatement of Jenny and Damien at www.ucu.org.uk/7464 and send messages of support to Jenny and Damien via the Unison branch at admin@unisonbolton.org



photo Leeds SP

LEEDS: SAVE OUR TRAIN GUARDS

Iain Dalton
Leeds Socialist Party

RMT members and supporters protested outside a West Yorkshire Combined Authority (WYCA) meeting against plans for driver-only operated trains on the Northern and TransPennine Express rail franchises.

The proposals will mean the end of guards on the vast majority of services in the North of England, posing huge safety concerns. Combined with plans to cut station staff and reduce the numbers and opening hours of ticket offices, this is a

recipe for disaster for commuters and rail workers alike.

The proposals had been drawn up jointly by the Tory government through the Department for Transport (DfT) and, shamefully, by Rail North - a shadowy group comprised of predominantly Labour-run authorities in north England (including WYCA).

Three Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC) local election candidates joined the protest. As one RMT member quipped to me: "TUSC aren't the only party here - it's just that you're the only ones out here with us. Labour are sat inside [making the cuts]."

Blacklisted: The Secret War Between Big Business and Union Activists

£9.99 plus
£1 p&p



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How to fight the anti-union laws

Supporting Labour will not defeat them

“When the law is misguided, when it oppresses the people and removes their freedoms, can we respect it? I am not really posing the question. I’m giving you the answer. It ain’t going to happen.” Unite general secretary Len McCluskey made this comment in a speech to the Industrial Law Society on 19 March.

This was in response to decades of Thatcher’s anti-union laws, maintained by Blair and Brown and now under threat of escalation by another Cameron-led government. The Unite Executive is recommending that the union’s rules conference in July amend the basic industrial and political ‘objects’ of the union in its rulebook, which refer to how it defends its members, by deleting the words “so far as may be lawful”.

The Tories have raised the prospect of even more repressive legislation, including insisting that 40% of union members have to vote for action rather than a simple majority of those who vote. When you consider the low turnouts in elections, only 15 MPs would have been elected in 2010 on this basis and probably not one councillor. Of course, neither would we have the ConDem coalition, which won on 37% of the electorate!

Jumping through hoops

Despite the restrictions of the anti-union laws, big business and their political representatives are desperate for more. Already, unions have to jump through legal hoops to avoid highly paid judges granting injunctions to employers. Even if the strike is allowed to go ahead, from the beginning of the balloting process to the giving of notice, the bosses will normally have at least 6 weeks to prepare contingency plans, including the use of scabs.

Over the last year or so in particular, union facility time has been attacked in the private and public sectors. Councils of all political persuasion have cut back or completely eliminated hard won democratic rights to represent workers. In particular, PCS has been singled out by the government who recognise the role this militant union has played in trying to build co-ordinated action against the cuts. PCS has a left fighting leadership, with Socialist Party members playing a key role. It has to re-recruit 100,000 of its members because in the next few weeks, the ConDems are vindictively removing the right for PCS to collect union dues from members’ salaries.



The move of Unite should be part of a serious strategy to prepare for the mass action necessary to resist further attacks

These attacks, and those that are threatened, show how much the collective power of the unions is still feared by the establishment and the employers. Coming from the opposite class point of view, they have a much more realistic appraisal of the potential power of the organised working-class than the right-wing union leaders. These so-called leaders will be keen to re-write the real lessons of the last five years’ resistance to Osborne’s austerity. They will try and argue that the union movement was too weak, citing the all-powerful anti-union laws as an example of the odds being stacked against workers.

But it could have been very different. From the student protests of November 2010 to the 750,000-strong TUC demonstration in March 2011 and the N30 pensions strike of that year, when two million public sector workers took action together, there was the possibility of inflicting a terminal defeat on a weak government. Even as late as last October, there was the prospect of well over a million



photo Paul Mattsson

workers striking together against the public sector pay freeze. But the right-wing union leaders have acted to foil these disputes. These setbacks have only emboldened the Tories and the bosses.

Union members will welcome the decision of the Unite executive and Len McCluskey’s words that raise the idea of resisting this legal stranglehold. But to confront these laws, it is necessary to mobilise the whole union movement. This move of Unite should be part of a serious strategy to prepare for the mass action necessary to resist further attacks. Unite should popularise the idea of a 24 hour general strike that would inspire union members and act as a stark warning to what will be a weak and volatile government post-election.

Paper tigers

There have been instances over the last five years, when workers have defied the laws, showing that when enough workers move together they render them paper tigers. On 10 May 2012, over 400,000 workers took part in the last major joint strike on pensions. On the same day 30,000 prison officers of the POA union walked-out unofficially, and therefore illegally, as their legal right to strike had been removed by the last Labour government. In addition, construction workers walked out unofficially nationwide to support the struggle at the Lindsey oil refinery in 2009 and again in the BESNA dispute in 2011. Governments were wary of taking action for fear of escalating the strikes.

Unite’s move is an antidote to the pessimism of some union leaders, particularly those who paint a potential new Tory administration as a strong government that will dominate the unions and the working-class. In reality, if Cameron remains in No.10 it will be by the skin



of his teeth and by virtue of an anaemic pro-business Labour campaign.

Many Unite members will be trying to square Len’s words with the union’s continuing support for Labour, including massive financial donations, despite the party’s record. Throughout all the strikes against the effects of the cuts, Miliband has refused to support the unions and their members. While he may at this stage be not prepared to go as far as the Tories on new legislation, Labour’s manifesto says nothing about repealing Thatcher’s anti-union laws. Also, Labour councils have clamped down on union rights.

In fact, Len McCluskey rightly condemned New Labour’s record in power, “Labour’s victory in 1997 was one of the happiest days of my life, but that first Labour government, with its huge parliamentary majority, did nothing to alter the legal superstructure that allows the skewed accrual of wealth and power in our society. Tony Blair even boasted to business audiences that Britain’s labour laws were the most restrictive in Europe.” But in essence, Labour under Miliband is not fundamentally different and its position on the anti-union laws is governed by its determination to appeal to business.

Side by side with an industrial strategy to resist any attempt to further bolster these undemocratic laws, the unions have to build a political alternative that has a real manifesto for workers – anti-cuts and pro-union. The Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition is standing in the elections to lay the foundation for such a party.



Join the fightback! Join the Socialists!

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The axing of Clause IV Making Labour safe for capitalism

Alison Hill

In April 1995 a special Labour Party conference dropped Clause IV, part 4 (the 'socialist clause') of its constitution. This decision cemented the ideas of profit and privatisation into the heart of the party.

The process of Labour becoming just another capitalist party began in earnest with the attacks on socialist ideas by Neil Kinnock, who was elected Labour leader after the party's heavy general election defeat of 1983 - which the right-wing Labour MPs falsely blamed on the party's 'left-wing' manifesto.

The swing to the right was extended by the next Labour leader John Smith and then reached its peak through chief privatiser and war-worner Tony Blair.

This process didn't occur in isolation of course. The economic boom of the 1980s and the collapse of Sta-

linism in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe dazzled many Labour leaders with the idea that capitalism had 'won' and that socialist ideas, or even the idea that there could be any alternative to capitalism, were old hat.

This shift to the right and the abandoning of reformist ideas, let alone socialism, was reinforced by the defeats of the trade union 'heavy battalions' - miners, print workers and others - in the 1980s.

These defeats weren't, however, because of a lack of willingness by workers to fight the bosses and the Tory Thatcher government, but were due to the conscious betrayal of the right-wing Labour and trade union leaders.

Consequently, no coherent opposition was mounted against Thatcher's vicious attacks on workers. It was left to trade union fighters, particularly the miners, and socialists, like Militant (forerunner of the So-



cialist Party) supporters in the leadership of Liverpool City Council, to show there was an alternative.

Even the army of non-payers who defeated the poll tax and brought Thatcher down, was attacked and leading Militant supporters expelled from the Labour Party. Opposition Party branches and the Militant-led Labour Party Young Socialists were closed down, and the party's democratic structures weakened.

So the dropping of Clause IV was simply the end of a lengthy process to prepare the Labour Party for a capitalist future, cosying up to the fat cats.

Tony Blair surfed into office in 1997 on a wave of revulsion against the Tories. He hit the ground running. Nothing Thatcher had privatised was renationalised. Instead, more and more of the public sector was lined up for privatisation. Local councils and other public bodies became less and less accountable to the people who had elected them.

The ability of the trade unions to have any role in policy making in the Labour Party was drastically curtailed, in spite of the still significant donations being made to the party from trade union members' subscriptions. In fact, any policy input from rank and file Labour Party members was ruthlessly snuffed out.

It was hardly any wonder that Labour lost the 2010 general election to the Con-Dem coalition. All that 'modernisation' hadn't guaranteed electoral victory at all. "They're all the same" sums up what thousands of workers make of the current establishment parties.

Today, Labour presents no alternative to the Tory attacks but the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC), in which the Socialist Party plays a leading role, does. With modest votes at the last general election, TUSC made some small but important steps towards the founding of a genuine new, mass workers' party which can represent the 99%, rather than courting the millionaires.

Clause IV timeline

1918

A conference of the Labour Party adopted a socialist clause in its constitution - Clause IV, part 4: "To secure for the workers by hand or by brain the full fruits of their industry and the most equitable distribution thereof that may be possible upon the basis of the common ownership of the means of production, distribution and exchange, and the best obtainable system of popular administration and control of each industry or service."

This came during a period of intense class struggle and a bloody world war, culminating in the Russian revolution of 1917. It was watered down from the demands of many on the left who looked to the Russian soviets - councils of workers and soldiers - for inspiration as to how society could be run in the interests of workers. But it was an important public declaration of support for public ownership of the economy.

The same conference also voted for a minimum wage, a 48-hour week, the building of a million houses a year, a publicly owned integrated transport system, a wealth tax and an increase in public services.

1959

Labour Party leader Hugh Gaitskell concluded that Labour had lost the general election because of public opposition to nationalisation. He attempted to remove the reference to common ownership from Clause IV.

This backfired. After a furious campaign by Labour's rank and file, the clause was not only left untouched, it was agreed to print it on all future Labour Party membership cards.

1995

After a series of lurches to the right, during which New Labour was born, Clause IV was finally rubbed out of Labour's constitution.

The new clause, adopted in 1995, reads: "...We work for: a dynamic economy, serving the public interest, in which the enterprise of the market and the rigour of competition are joined with the forces of partnership and co-operation to produce the wealth the nation needs and the opportunity for all to work and prosper, with a thriving public sector and high quality services, where those undertakings essential to the common good are either owned by the public or accountable to them."



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SAVE OUR SCHOOLS!

Education will be a vital question on people's minds in the general election and local elections on 7 May. But most voters will have very different priorities from the Tory-Liberal Democrat coalition government.

Students at school will be asking if they will be able to afford to go to university, where they are charged sky-high fees, with the prospect of massive debts. Students in further education no longer get the help provided by the Education Maintenance Allowance, abolished by the Con-Dems. In adult education swingeing cuts are now putting it at risk of total extinction.

Parents, students and teachers want places in good schools with well-trained and well-paid teachers. They will be demanding free, publicly run, good quality education for people of all ages.

But the main parties have different priorities. The Tories want 500 more 'Free Schools' set up in England. They all want more Academies. While neither of these is meant to directly make a profit, they are a step towards privatisation. They break schools from local authority control and import business into the running of schools.

The capitalist parties ignore issues such as lack of resources, poverty and the advantages of co-operation between schools. They want to 'open up' education to private investment. They want to downsize and restructure it, turning public education into a marketplace. They want to diminish the power of the unions and scapegoat teachers for problems in education and society.

The unnecessary and callous poli-

cies of cuts and austerity are part of this plan. The Socialist Party says there is an alternative to this capitalist catastrophe and is part of the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC) which is standing hundreds of candidates in the general election and local council elections.

We proudly offer socialist solutions to the problems faced by schools, their teachers, students and parents.

■ The Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC) national steering committee has endorsed the Manifesto for Education produced by the largest teachers' union in England and Wales, the National Union of Teachers (NUT). Four members of the union's national executive committee will be standing as TUSC candidates in May's elections

LABOUR CANNOT DEFEND EDUCATION

The Mail and Telegraph are trying to alarm Tory voters by claiming that a future Labour government would return academies (begun under Labour Prime Minister Tony Blair) to local authority control. If only! That, unfortunately, just isn't their plan at all.



David Blunkett says: "Academies are here to stay"

While the NUT manifesto rightly demands: "Return oversight of all state funded schools to local authorities", New Labour policy has something very different in mind as Jane Nellist (Coventry NUT) reports.

The Con-Dem government is damaging children's education. Their attacks on pay, conditions and pensions demoralise school staff. Excessive testing and divisive league tables drive enjoyment out of education for staff and students alike.

With the general election just weeks away and Labour struggling in the polls, you might think Labour would seize on teachers' demoralisation and staff, students and parents' anger and create a manifesto with clear policies. People in education hope for policies that at least begin to reverse these damaging attacks.

But every time Labour's education spokesperson Tristram Hunt opens his mouth he antagonises teachers with statements and suggested policies that fail to address the real issues and some that will even exacerbate conditions in schools.

At a recent conference, instead of pledging to end 'Free Schools' he suggested "parents, teachers, businesses and voluntary groups set up schools in areas of need". He wants foreign education "innovators" to open up schools.

Well thanks Tristram for showing faith in our schools! It's as bad as handing over education to carpet sellers, car salesmen and other millionaires!

Labour simply hopes to somehow manage this fragmented landscape by introducing "Directors of School Standards" to oversee school provision.

However, unlike local authorities, they would be appointed, not elected. Why not simply bring all schools under a local education authority - that actually worked in the past!

Teachers are desperate for policies to mend our damaged education system and provide us with better working conditions. Parents would back us on this.

But Labour gives no sign that it can do so. Shadow education secretary Tristram Hunt does not have the courage to listen to teachers. Instead he keeps treading the dangerous path of 'marketisation' of our education service. Labour is no alternative.



photo Paul Mattsson

“The mainstream parties all want to downsize, restructure and turn public education into a marketplace”

Ukip's grammar slip

Derek McMillan

Our local UKIP candidate in Worthing is calling for "a grammar school in every town." There are problems with this. It would mean taking any power away from local authorities to decide schooling policy. You would get a grammar school whether you like it or not.

Secondly, in neighbouring Kent parents send their children over the border to the maligned comprehensive schools of West Sussex because they didn't pass the eleven plus and so are not allowed into the glittering grammar schools.

There is no evidence that grammar schools improve the results for pupils excluded from them; but a wealth of evidence that tests which

differentiate children at 11 are not confirmed by subsequent tests and are biased towards white middle class pupils. Like the policies of all the capitalist parties, this policy is not based on any consultation with teachers.



Ukip leader Farage

FIGHT BACK AGAINST ACADEMIES

Martin Powell-Davies
TUSC candidate in Lewisham West and Penge and secretary of Lewisham National Union of Teachers (NUT)

As in many other areas, Lewisham's education is at risk. Governors at three schools, Prendergast schools at Hilly Fields, Ladywell Fields and the Vale, want to turn them all into academies. If these schools convert, others could soon follow.

This government aims to steal away public services from elected local authorities across the country and vowed to put 'rocket-boosters' under the academies programme started under Labour. In some places, this has already led to the break-up of local schooling into different academy employers. In others there is resistance. We are fighting back in Lewisham.

The NUT, NASUWT and GMB unions locally have taken joint strike action. In just a few months, our campaign has also included marches, student protests and public meetings. Even the governors admit academies are 'unproven' but are pressing ahead with a 'consultation' to try and convert the schools quickly. Parents and local residents must act fast to make the governors think again.

If the governors are so sure of their arguments, why won't they agree to a ballot of parents on our schools' future? Maybe they know the facts show their plans are wrong! Our campaign highlights what the facts really say about academies.

Don't academy schools give children a better education?
No. "Current evidence does not prove that academies raise standards overall or for disadvantaged children," said the All-Party Select Committee of MPs in January 2015.

Won't converting to an academy improve our exam results?
No. "The rate of improvement in GCSE results in Local Authority secondaries was twice that of converter academies," said Ofsted's Annual Report for 2013/14

Won't schools be better-off if they convert into academies?
No. "There is no funding advantage to being an academy" says the Prendergast governors' report on the school website.

Aren't academies better than non-academy 'maintained' schools at supporting students from all backgrounds?

No. "Converter Academies, on average, take far less than their fair share of disadvantaged pupils. They aren't helping increase social justice in education." Professor Gorard, quoted in the Prendergast governors' own report

Won't becoming an academy "secure greater accountability" for staff and parents?

No. "Parents are sidelined from all important decisions, over whether schools convert in the first place, and over how they're run once they become academies" said a parent witness to January's All-Party Select Committee Report.

Can academies be trusted to act fairly when given control of admissions policies?

No. "Charter School (an academy in Dulwich) has been criticised for setting its catchment area to exclude children from two council estates with the risk of skewing its intake" said a Guardian report on Schools Adjudicator, 2012.

Can we trust giving academy governors control over school budgets?

No. "Nearly half of academy trusts have paid millions of pounds in public money towards the private businesses of directors, trustees and relatives," said the National Audit Office, 2014

Our campaign is determined to stop these plans but the next government must act nationally. We need all academies brought back into the hands of genuinely democratic local authorities so that parents, staff and the local community can work and plan together to ensure every child receives the education they need and deserve.

And schools' staff, parents, governors and local communities should have direct representation on the bodies making decisions about local education provision, not just politicians.

What's your view? email: editors@socialistparty.org.uk

We pay for their dividends

Education can be a very profitable business - for the rich. GEMS Education is a top ranking international education business. It runs private schools in Britain and has been involved in academies and bidding to run free schools.

In a glorified advert, Investing with GEMS, they say "In 2010, the world's top ten global education companies generated over US\$26 billion in revenue. Education, like the health sector, is a 'counter-cyclical' sector, performing well even in recession."

GEMS says in their experience, "education projects should generate an IRR (internal rate of return) of 15% to 30%". Such blatant private profit seekers are pushing the educational counter-reforms of today. We suffer

for their dividends. 480 private supply teaching agencies are mostly competing in a race to the bottom to underpay teachers. A school may pay £150 to the agency while the teacher is paid perhaps £75 to £100. One of Britain's largest teaching agencies Teaching Personnel has reported £7.5 million profit on a £50 million income.

The Socialist Party demands

- Free, publicly run, good quality education, available to all at any age
- No to creeping privatisation. Teachers, students and parents should campaign to bring academies and 'free schools' into democratic local authority control
- Abolish Ofsted. We need democratic accountability of schools by teachers, parents and communities - not political tools to undermine state education
- Abolish university tuition fees now and bring in a living grant
- Socialist policies for the 99%. Poverty and economic inequality are still the biggest factors in educational inequality



Protesting against academies in Lewisham photo Martin Powell-Davies

WORKING IN THE NHS

Low pay, cuts and stress

**Nurse specialist and GMB member
Sheffield**

As an NHS worker I feel as though I have been hit from all directions for the last five years. The nursing unions and RCN have accepted this year's paltry 1% pay rise.

We have not seen a pay rise in line with living cost increases for the last five years. Health secretary Jeremy Hunt pointed to the increments we all receive. But he forgot to mention that to receive these payments we take on more responsibility. Nurses are now taking on jobs that were once those of junior doctors.

They want to take unsocial hours payments from us. As somebody who worked seven out of eight bank holidays last year and has had only two Christmas days in 19 years when both my wife and I have not been working, I have no doubt that our hours are unsocial.

We have had to work harder and longer due to cuts. I know of a nurse suffering mental health problems due to work related stress. Most leave shifts late and change their shifts with little notice to cover illness.

We're left short of nurses because some are sent to cover other wards. Beds that have been shut are forced to open again to cope with increased demand. Experienced staff are being replaced by inexperienced staff on a lower pay scale to cut costs.

The top down reorganisation of the NHS means that GPs hold the purse strings. The internal market is the biggest mistake in healthcare.



photo Paul Mattsson

Private clinics and hospitals provide space for elective surgery to go ahead. This just puts public money into a private purse.

The NHS has its problems, but many are working to improve services in an almost impossible situation. It is time to stop the privatisation of the NHS and to motivate a demoralised workforce. The unions have to fight for better terms and conditions for the workers, leaving the workers to get on with what they do best - caring for patients.



We have had to work harder and longer due to cuts

BOOK REVIEW

The Great Money Trick: Another World is Possible

If you have read Robert Tressell's the Ragged Trousered Philanthropists, then this book is for you. And if you haven't, you will still enjoy it.

How have the former mining communities pulled together after the strike? What is it like living in these areas now? And just how does the capitalist system work?

Mary Jackson, a Socialist Party member, is a gutsy 'salt of the earth' fighter who has lived in this south Yorkshire community all her life. She was inspired into activity after reading Tressell and over the last 15 years has desperately wanted to update its message. Finally her biographical short story is in print and it packs a punch.

Give yourself a long evening and you will get through it, and feel uplifted and full of hope. Mary tells it as it is.

The book burns with indignation about the way mining communi-

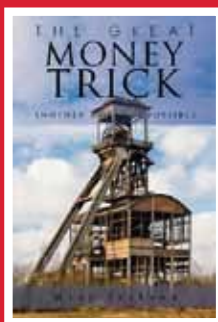
ties have been left to rot and the way working class communities have been hit again under successive pro-big business governments.

But it also brims with confidence about the mission to build a better future. It explains, through the eyes of the key characters, how capitalism has worked its 'great money

trick' over the 99%.

You will want to get to the end to see how this drama ends. But this is based on real life and the struggle is not yet over. Do yourself a favour and get a copy and hopefully you will be inspired to join Mary in her fight for a better future.

Mike Forster



The Great Money Trick: Another World is Possible

by Mary Jackson

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■ Heard this one...

One day a florist went to a barber for a haircut. After the cut, he asked about his bill, and the barber replied, 'I cannot accept money from you, I'm doing community service this week.' The florist was pleased and left the shop. When the barber went to open his shop the next morning, there was a 'thank you' card and a dozen roses waiting for him. Later, a policeman went in for a haircut, and when he tried to pay his bill, the barber again replied, 'I cannot accept money from you, I'm doing community

parties and propose policies for the millions not the millionaires.

Michael Peterson

■ Fingers in the till

I have done a re-write of the old classic 'Strangers in the Night'. I have only got one verse so can any readers add to it or think of who it might apply to? Fingers in the till, exchanging glances, Fingers in the till, what were the chances? We'd be doing time, before the year was through?

Something in the till was so inviting, Something for my expenses was so exciting, Something in my purse told me to have a few.

Pete McNally



■ Health rip-off

The stark reality of rip-off private sector contracts in the NHS came home to me when I had an appointment with the orthotics department to make a pair of shoes and moulded insoles to assist with my walking.

The consultant told me that it cost £500 to make a pair, plus consultant's fees. I could not understand how this cost could be, as I can get a pair of non-medical shoes made for less than £150.

We need to demand the opening the books to know where the money goes.

The real answer is of course an immediate end to privatisation of the health service. Bring those parts of the NHS already tendered out to private contracts back into public ownership, thus ensuring all money for the NHS is spent on services, not for profit at patients' expense.

Bob Marshfield, Bristol

■ Mine closures

The recent announcement of the closure of the final two deep-mined collieries with the loss of 2,000 jobs shows the spite and venom of Tory leeches past and present.

One of the reasons put forward was that the pits do not represent value for money. Nevertheless it looks like UK Coal will be given millions of pounds of tax payers' money to close the pits.

31 years since the 1984 strike began may seem a long time to bear a grudge. But these parasites seem to have held a grudge with working class people for a lot longer. Hopefully as the final lights go out on our coal industry, the Tories may soon follow.

Rebel with a cause, Rotherham

service this week.' The cop was happy and left the shop. The next morning when the barber went to open up, there was a 'thank you' card and a dozen doughnuts waiting for him. Then an MP came in for a haircut, and when he went to pay his bill, the barber again replied, 'I cannot accept money from you. I'm doing community service this week.' The MP was very happy and left the shop. The next morning, when the barber went to open up, there were a dozen MPs lined up waiting for a free haircut.

Thanks to Mike Gard

■ Crumbs budget

Osborne's latest budget was one of crumbs and scraps. Millions of workers will continue to struggle to pay their bills but the gravy train for the rich keeps going. Bankers get paid a salary and then a bonus, where is our bonus? Osborne says he wants to get £5 billion more from a crackdown on tax avoidance. Yet avoidance is estimated at £120 billion per year - £600 billion over the life of this government. If benefit claimants got away with that it would be front page news. Osborne's message to the rich is 'keep calm and carry on fiddling'.

Strangely Labour's Ed Balls cannot find anything in the budget to change. He and Osborne are in it together.

Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition candidates are standing in the coming elections to challenge the big business 'as usual' agenda of the establishment

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

Students occupy for free education

James Ivens

Students across London have been occupying universities, demanding free education and improvements to services. Members of Socialist Students and the Socialist Party have been supporting the movement.

Occupations have taken place at the London School of Economics (LSE), King's College London, Goldsmiths, and University of the Arts London. Students expressed frustration with a lack of action by the National Union of Students (NUS) and opposition to the austerity consensus of the mainstream parties.

LSE occupation

Participants at LSE are demanding management redirect funds from advertising and vanity projects to student support. They are fed up with enormous sums going on expensive new buildings while class sizes bulge and pastoral services dwindle.

Occupiers also demanded an end to zero-hour contracts, a living wage for all university staff, and an effective strategy for action from lecturers' union UCU.

Many students enthusiastically adopted our ideas during discussions. We have sold numerous copies of the Socialist.

Socialist Students and the Socialist Party support these actions. We argue that students' unions and the NUS must give backing to the occupations' demands.

If they won't, Socialist Students is ready to organise action - and stand for election against current leaders. The Socialist also calls for a vote for the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC - see page 6) to reverse all attacks on education.



Many students adopted our ideas during discussions

Goldsmiths occupation

Our decision to occupy the management building of the university reflects widespread anger among students at continued privatisation and marketisation of education.

The demands of the occupation include recruiting more counsellors to meet increasing demand, reducing pay disparity between university staff, and more democracy in decision making.

UCU has offered its support, saying: "We have faced attacks on our

pay and pensions, increased managerialism and workloads, and we will want to work with students who are resisting the tide of neoliberalism inside our universities."

There are plans to use the space we have occupied productively, setting up free workshops and lectures, as well as spaces for students to work.

Cain Shelley and Beth Sutcliffe
 Goldsmiths Socialist Students



The 2010 student movement photo Senan

Laurence Maples

Goldsmiths students are currently occupying university-owned Deptford Town Hall as part of the struggle for free education.

The occupation has also produced an extensive list of demands on other issues. This includes defending the counselling service, ending outsourcing and poverty wages, and electing a full-time women's officer.

Building

Members of the Socialist Party and Socialist Students support all the occupation's demands and have been building it right from the beginning.

On the second day of the occupation there was an assembly of around 120 students discussing how to take the struggle forward. This was a productive meeting and our ideas were generally well received.

We raised the example of the school strikes against academisation in the same borough. We suggested a follow-up meeting after Easter. We

also pointed to the role of TUSC in challenging the mainstream parties at the general election.

However, as the meeting was dissipating, one Labour Party member began harassing us. She demanded we stop selling the Socialist and handing out leaflets.

We refused this, and pointed out that many had happily taken our material. In response she rounded up around 12 others to harangue the four of us. Trapped in a corner of the basement, we argued extensively for our right to participate in the occupation and hand out material, but were eventually forced to leave.

Right to participate

The Socialist Party and Socialist Students both absolutely reject this blatantly undemocratic manoeuvre. We will continue to fight for our right to participate.

It is essential that all groups have the democratic right to organise within the student movement and to debate ideas. This is a clear attempt to push the movement to the right and exclude socialist ideas.

Socialist Party youth organisers' meeting

Kris O'Sullivan
 Socialist Students

Socialist Party members from up and down the country met at the youth and student bureau on 21 March. We discussed events both at home and abroad.

Topics ranged from the rise of Syriza in Greece, and electoral campaign work among youth in England and Wales, to the Youth Fight for Jobs campaign, and the work of Socialist Students in the NUS and students' unions across the country.

In addition, the meeting shared lessons of successes and setbacks, to learn and adapt for work in other regions.



Read more about free education and Socialist Students at: socialiststudents.org.uk

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Socialist Party general election appeal 2015

Naomi Byron
 Socialist Party finance team

"Good luck to all comrades standing for a better society for the masses," says Kerry Brier, who has donated £20. There is still plenty of time to donate if you haven't pledged yet. Every penny is appreciated, and will help build the socialist election challenge.

Thanks to all who have sent do-

nations including Michael Hancock £100, April Ashley £100, Mark Milligan and Rosey Wrack £500, Pauline Gorman £200 and Shari Holden £400.

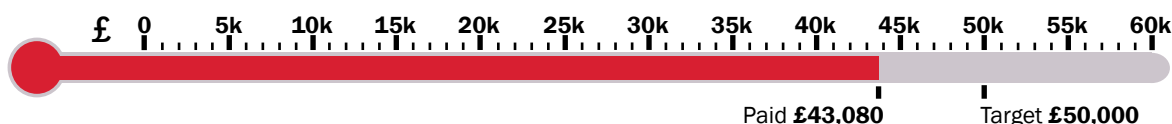
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Donate to help fight the housing crisis photo Paul Mattsson

Socialist Party Fighting Fund

	£ target	£ received	January to March 2015	Deadline 6 April 2015	
North West	1,200	2,173			181%
Northern	600	685			114%
West Midlands	2,100	2,266			108%
South West	1,400	1,324			95%
Yorkshire	2,900	2,704			93%
Wales	2,300	2,201			88%
East Midlands	1,600	1,282			80%
Eastern	1,200	937			78%
London	6,100	4,228			69%
Southern	1,200	756			63%
South East	750	373			50%
England and Wales	3,650	6,546			179%
TOTAL	25,000	25,295			101%





GREECE: NEGOTIATIONS CONTINUE

Working class
action key

Nicos Anastasiades, member of Xekinima (CWI Greece) spoke to Steve Score, editor of the Socialist. The full interview can be viewed at www.socialistworld.net ('Interview with a Greek socialist')

What is happening in the negotiations between the Syriza government and the Troika?

They're not really negotiations - it's a war that the Troika has declared against Greece. The Troika and European elite are trying to implement the continuation of the austerity programmes which benefit the big European banks and European capital. The Greek government has taken a stand on some of the issues.

But at the same time it has accepted a lot of the agenda that the Troika wants to implement. Now these measures are agreed in general terms and both sides are trying to make them concrete.

So now the issue is what will happen in Greece - how will the working class and the social movements respond?

And what is the attitude of Greek workers to the Syriza government?

There was enthusiasm in the first days when the Greek government declared that it would implement all policies that it had agreed to before the election. That seems to have receded in a big way because people see that there has been a capitulation on the side of the Greek government in a lot of these demands.

So at the moment people are waiting to see where this is going to end. The government has agreed to a continuation of the programme until June or July so then it will be an issue again. What will be the

new deal - if there is going to be a new deal?

And also people are waiting to see what will happen with concrete demands. For example will the government implement the minimum wage which had been proposed before the elections and stop the privatisation?

It's a period where people are giving the government some time because they understand that it's difficult, that we're under a very hard attack by the Troika. But at the same time they're waiting to judge it.

What does Xekinima put forward as a way out of the crisis?

We believe that it was shown during the so-called negotiations that the European elite are not willing to give in to any substantial demands to stop austerity. We believe there is a different way.

Greece is on a road from being an industrial developed country to becoming gradually a country of the underdeveloped world. So this has to stop.

We say the debt should not be paid - it was not created by the Greek people, it shouldn't be paid by us. We should nationalise the banks, we should impose controls on capital and foreign trade.

We should nationalise the big companies and put the Greek economy again in a situation where it can grow - but grow in favour of the people, not the capitalists.

Then the question of the Euro will come up - because the European elite threatens the Greek government that it will be kicked out of the Euro. We say that if the European elite don't accept this basic programme in order to avoid the humanitarian crisis that is on-going, then the Greek government can still move forward.

We believe that the Greek population, but also the progressive European citizens who have nothing to gain by this, will be on side.

What are the developments on the Greek left and what are your proposals to go forward?

There's this historic change that the left is in power in Greece. This creates a whole new situation. Syriza arrived on a general mood which accepted big parts of its radical programme.

This is good, it shows that there are possibilities for the left, not only in Greece but in the whole of Europe, to propose a radical agenda and get the support of the population.

But at the same time we see that Syria is capitulating under the attacks of the elite. A lot of the rank and file in Syriza do not agree with these policies. We believe that if Syriza does not take a firm stand and capitulates even more, there will be huge unrest inside and outside its ranks.

From the other side there's the Communist Party and the anti-capitalist coalition Antarsya which has a sectarian approach towards the new government. They're not ready to give support when there are good measures taken. They try to portray it as the same as the previous government.

At the same time a lot of people in the rank and file of all the left parties, leaders of trade unions and of social movements, understand that we need to build a new layer that will fight for radical policies but at the same time not be sectarian towards Syriza.

We will be putting our forces into this idea in the next period that people from different parties, different movements and different trade unions will have to come together to create a policy and a structure.



photo Stephan Kimmerle

Solidarity with Cypriot workers

On 25 March Socialist Party members were joined by Turkish Cypriots at the northern Cyprus consulate in London. We protested in solidarity with mass strikes and protests taking place in northern Cyprus against austerity. Protesters handed in a letter to the consulate and made speeches outside pointing out the common struggle of all European workers against austerity and the need for a socialist alternative.



photo Sarah Wrack

US: Seattle gets a raise!

Workers celebrated in Seattle in the run up to 1 April when tens of thousands of workers received a pay rise.

This is a result of a huge campaign of strikes and protests by the lowest paid fighting for a \$15 an hour minimum wage - a struggle taken into the council chamber, where it was passed, by Socialist Alternative member Kshama Sawant.

Campaigners celebrated to-

gether and toured some of the low-paying workplaces to make sure workers were aware of what was happening.

Socialist Alternative is on the campaign trail again in the run up to Kshama being up for reelection in November. This time the campaign will focus on another key issue facing working class people in the city - housing costs.

www.socialistalternative.org
www.kshamasawant.org



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.
www.socialistworld.net

Ireland: water bills sent out

Starting on 1 April Irish Water, the private company established to implement the hated water charges, will be sending water bills to every home in Ireland. This is in the face of a mass movement against the charges, with demonstrations of tens of thousands continuing and working class people preparing a campaign of non-payment of the charges.

Socialist Party member and Anti-Austerity Alliance TD Paul Murphy said: "If a significant section of people refuse to pay the bills when they

land in April and May, the charges will be a sitting duck.

"As the legislation currently stands and even with the government's threats, there are no penalties for non-payment until July 2016. People can refuse to pay, without threat for 15 months, or until after the next general election. Any government elected in the context of such a major boycott would be under huge pressure to scrap the charges."

www.socialistparty.net



photo Paul Murphy

Tunisia: thousands demonstrate

CWI members took part in the demonstrations at the recent World Social Forum in Tunis. They report that thousands of young people, women, unemployed people and activists came together to protest against terrorism, state repression, imperialism and Islamic State (IS), just weeks after 20 were killed by an IS gunman in a Tunis museum. Tweeting from the event @cio_tunisie commented:

■ 200 copies of our paper were sold at our stall yesterday. Down-

load a copy: <http://thawrablog.com>
■ The mining town of Redeyef in #Tunisia was never as secure as when no cop could enter it and the local UGTT union federation was in control

■ Terror has two faces in #Tunisia: those who committed the attacks and those who are trying to exploit them against us

■ Capitalism won't fall on its own. If rottenness was enough to make it fall, it would have fallen a long time ago



The neoliberal policies of the ANC are devastating the lives of Numsa members

SOUTH AFRICA: CAMPAIGNING FOR A WORKING CLASS PARTY

Workers And Socialist Party reporters Johannesburg

On 16-17 April Numsa, South Africa's metalworkers union, the largest union on the African continent, will be convening a 'conference for socialism'. This will discuss the options available for a working class political alternative to the openly corrupt, big business ANC government.

The neoliberal policies of the ANC are devastating the lives of Numsa members, the working class and the millions of black workers impoverished and destitute in the townships. So Numsa took the historic decision at its special national congress in December 2013 to withdraw financial and political support from the ANC.

Alongside this decision delegates agreed to establish a united front to link up the struggles of the trade unions and the communities and a movement for socialism to investigate the establishment of a new workers party. Numsa has created a task force to



Alec Thraves in South Africa 2013

oversee this process. Alec Thraves from the Socialist Party of England and Wales was invited along with a Workers and Socialist Party (WASP) - set up to stand candidates against the ANC) delegation to address this task force at Numsa's national office in Johannesburg.

Alec opened the meeting by acknowledging the fighting militant traditions of Numsa and praising their courageous decision in breaking from the ANC which no longer represents the interests of the working class. Similarly in Britain he added, Socialist Party members in his own union Unite, are campaigning for a break with the Labour Party which also no longer represents working class people.

Whereas Numsa has withdrawn its members money from the pro-capitalist ANC, Unite had recently donated R28 million (£1.5 million) to Labour's general election fund despite the fact that the Labour leadership is committed to continuing the Conservative-led government's austerity policies if they get elected!

Alec explained how the Trade Un-

ionist and Socialist Coalition (see pages 14 and 15) would be challenging Labour with an anti-cuts programme in around 120 parliamentary seats across the UK, preparing the ground for the future development of a new mass workers party.

He also highlighted the success of Socialist Alternative, co-thinkers of the CWI in the US, with the election of Kshama Sawant and the impact of the \$15 an hour campaign. Also in Ireland where the CWI has three MPs who are performing as genuine workers representatives leading the water tax non-payment campaign.

After a constructive discussion, comrade Banda, political advisor to Irvin Jim, general secretary of Numsa, thanked Alec for his contribution and invited the WASP delegation to continue their political exchanges with Numsa over the coming months.

WASP will be sending an official delegation to the conference for socialism to express our belief that the creation of a new mass workers party with a socialist programme is an urgent priority for the South African working class.



photo CWI Tunisia

“”
They're not really negotiations - it's a war that the Troika has declared against Greece

Kick out rotten MPs and councillors

The Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC) is an electoral alliance that stands candidates against all cuts and privatisation. It involves the RMT transport workers' union, leading members of other trade unions including the PCS, NUT and POA, as well as the Socialist Party and other left and anti-cuts groups and individuals.

Paul Couchman, TUSC prospective parliamentary candidate for Spelthorne in Surrey and council candidate for Laleham and Shepperton Green, says why he is standing.

Spelthorne politically is a 'rotten' borough run almost entirely by Tories. They tend to go along with everything their Surrey county council colleagues decide, whether it is cuts to local fire stations or the building of the proposed 'eco park' household incinerator. Racked by scandal and totally ineffectual, they are just a mirror of the Con-Dem government.

There is no serious opposition from any of the other mainstream parties. Some of the most outspoken critics of the council are actually former Tories who jumped ship to set up as Independents. But these are still Conservatives at heart.

We have people queuing at food banks, workers' pay levels frozen and falling in real terms. Our public services are being decimated and all the mainstream parties agree on the need for cuts and austerity.

Shake

We need something completely different to shake the borough council (and the county) out of its complacency. Locally, TUSC is active in opposing the incinerator and the third runway for Heathrow.

We led the fight to defend local fire stations through our work in Save Our Services in Surrey.

We demand a public enquiry into the causes of the flooding in 2014 and for full public funding of the necessary flood prevention measures. And we support an enquiry into the death of Zane Gbangbola, a seven year old boy killed in the floods - possibly by the release of cyanide gas from an old landfill site.

It really is time for something completely different - honest, passionate councillors and workers' MPs on workers' wages!

**TUSC
 AGAINST
 CUTS**

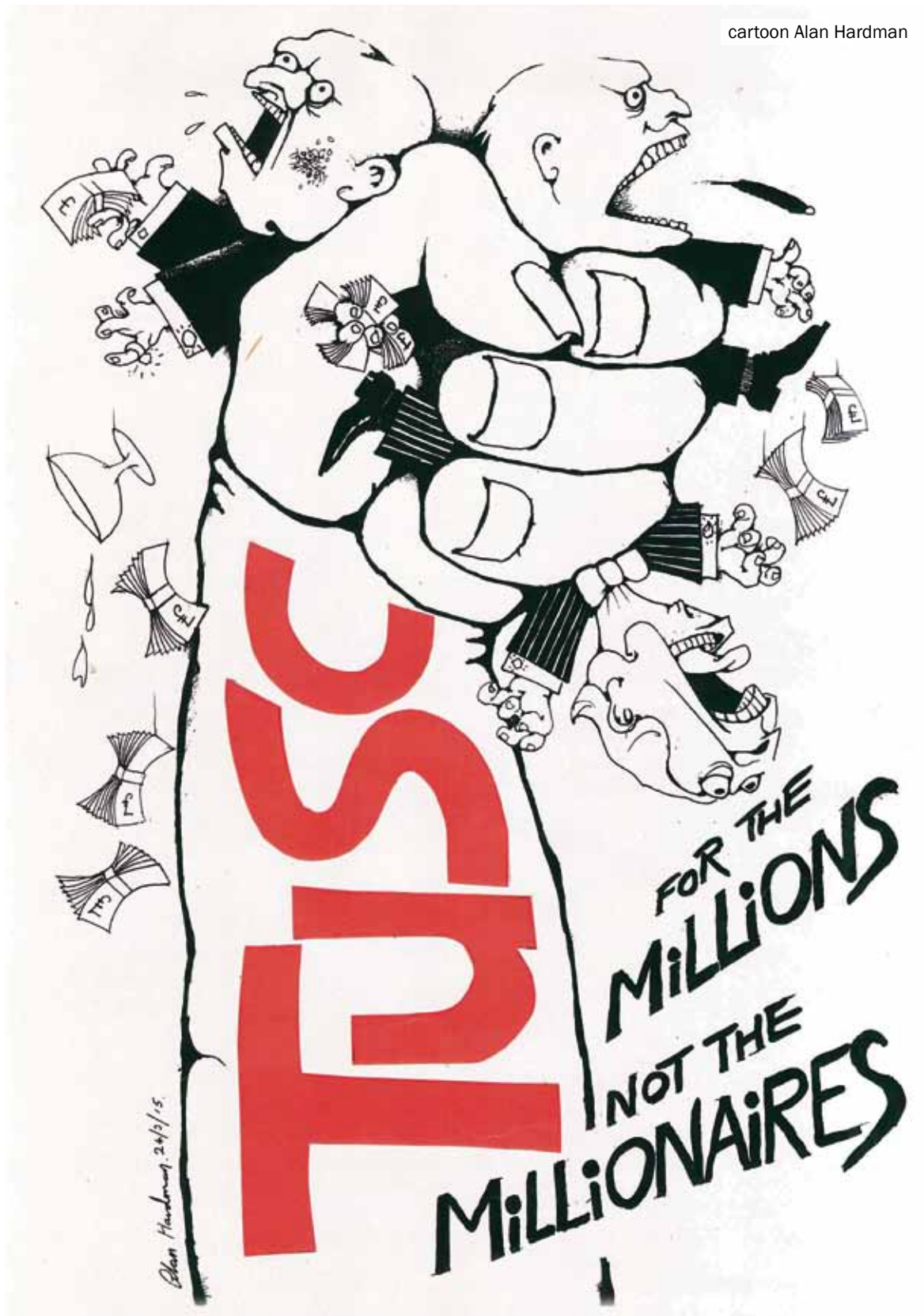
TUSC set for TV broadcast

Great news - TUSC has reached the threshold set by the BBC on behalf of broadcasters to qualify for a TV election broadcast next month.

The national steering committee has so far approved 131 parliamentary candidates and 529 council candidates in 93 towns and cities. As we have promised, this is the biggest working class and socialist electoral challenge for 60 years.

TUSC will have an historic opportunity on Friday 17 April to mount, on TV, the clearest anti-austerity message from any party in the election. Broadcast times are scheduled to be BBC2 5.55pm, ITV 6.25pm and BBC1 6.55pm.

■ See TUSC chair Dave Nellist on Russia Today: youtu.be/HVrTK0tOPAU



cartoon Alan Hardman



School crossing campaigner stands for TUSC

Brian Loader
 Chesterfield Socialist Party

Derbyshire county council plans to scrap all school crossing patrols in the latest round of a monumental £157 million cuts programme.

Two young school workers, Lisa Pritchard and Kelly Stevens, have launched their own campaign to save the patrols.

They have been received tremendous support, collecting thousands of signatures from concerned par-

ents. There is outrage at Labour councillors prepared to let kids attempt to cross some of the busiest roads in the county unaided.

Launch meeting

Lisa attended the recent TUSC election campaigns launch meeting for Chesterfield and Bolsover. She

reported to the meeting how councillors had suggested other 'responsible adults' could assist instead of the patrols. Bang goes the advice to children about not speaking to strangers, then!

The meeting went on to unanimously select Matt Whale as the prospective parliamentary candidate for Chesterfield, and also adopted council candidates for the two areas.

To everyone's delight, Lisa put forward her name - and she will now be standing for TUSC in May.

Visit the TUSC website
www.tusc.org.uk

Gloucester College hustings: Scrap all fees

John Ewers
Gloucester Socialist Party

Sue Powell, TUSC parliamentary candidate for Gloucester, spoke at a Gloucester College hustings on 19 March in front of 50 students.

The hottest issue was tuition fees. Sue spoke first on fees and said "scrap them entirely". The shortfall in education funding could be met by making companies like Starbucks and Google pay their full share of tax.

The local Tory MP and the Lib Dem candidate both said abolition or even a reduction of fees couldn't be "afforded", and student loans could be paid back easily!

The Ukip candidate said they would abolish fees but only for Science, Maths, and Engineering. Labour put forward a reduction to £6,000 a year compared to the current level of £9,000.

Following Sue's contribution, the Green candidate said: "I am growing a 'TUSC' at this stage and I will go with them."

We got the most applause on several issues. People wavered between us and the Green candidate.

Disclaimers

Another question, which queried the "suited and booted" inhabitants of the Westminster village, seemed to throw most of the panel. There was an almost embarrassing rush



of class disclaimers: 'my mum was a care worker', 'my dad was a lowly man', etc. The Tory, a wealthy former merchant banker, obviously desisted.

Ukip brought gasps of surprise from the audience by claiming Nigel Farage had been employed in an ordinary job - a stockbroker!

Sue said our candidates stood for taking a workers wage only. Three MPs in the 1980s, supporters of Militant (now the Socialist Party) did it. How else can we ensure our politicians aren't distant from our lives?



DEFEND FURTHER EDUCATION

Ben Golightly
Swansea West TUSC prospective parliamentary candidate

An early day motion supported by all the main unions in further education, calling for the reversal of devastating cuts in further education provision, now has the support of over 50 MPs.

Scanning the list I noticed that Welsh Labour MP, Martin Caton, representing Gower, has signed. Gower College Swansea, which has one of its two main campuses in Martin's constituency, like pretty much every college in Wales, is facing huge cuts in funding.

It is also, again like many other Welsh colleges, suffering from the Welsh Government's insistence on awarding many training contracts to private providers.

TUSC calls on Martin, who is stepping down at the General Election, to condemn fellow Labour Party members in the Welsh Government for passing on Con-Dem cuts and to demand they change course.

If you are an education worker, a student or a worker considering retraining, then Welsh Labour is letting you down badly. Find out how you can build TUSC and defend education at www.tusc.org.uk



MAY DAY greetings with the **Socialist**

The Socialist reports the victories that show that if you fight back you can win - from housing workers' disputes in Britain, to cleaners in Greece. And we don't just report workers' strikes and the anti-cuts movement. We put forward a strategy to defeat the cuts, and to fight for a socialist alternative. Our writers are real working-class fighters, actively involved in the struggles they report - from workplaces,

communities, universities and schools. Previous years' May Day appeals have resulted in fantastic displays of the respect and authority the Socialist commands in the workers' movement. Let's make sure we do at least as well in 2015, and keep our paper number one. Help the Socialist continue that work with a May Day greeting this year.

Get a 25% discount by paying by Wednesday 8 April. Final deadline Wednesday 15 April 2015. Greeting price guide: £500 for a whole page (£375 before 8 April); £300 for a half-page (£225); £170 quarter-page (£127.50); £90 one-eighth (£67.50); £50 one-sixteenth (£37.50); £30 1/32 (£22.50); £20 small box (£15). Other rates are available. For enquiries please contact us at the details below. Phone **020 8988 8781** Email jamesivens@socialistparty.org.uk

Give your greeting online at www.socialistparty.org.uk/mayday



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.

- 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 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!**

www.socialistparty.org.uk 02089888777
@Socialist_party Text 07761 818206 /CWiSocialistParty



PAY, PENSIONS, WORKLOAD TEACHERS NEED NATIONAL ACTION

Martin Powell-Davies
NUT national executive
(personal capacity)

This weekend, delegates at the National Union of Teachers (NUT) annual conference are discussing how to fight government attacks on pensions, pay and workload.

Many teachers celebrated when Cameron's coalition replaced the unpopular Michael Gove as Education Secretary with Nicky Morgan, but government policies stayed the same.

Morgan's letter to unions in March said: "The direction of policy on teachers' pay and pensions ... will not change." She clearly had no more intention than Gove to seriously negotiate.

Performance-related pay (PRP) is also here to stay according to the School Teachers Review Body. Its latest report admits that recruitment and retention problems are growing after years of attacks on teachers' pay, pensions and conditions. Yet it only recommends a 1% increase to the minimum levels of the various pay ranges.

Even their possible 2% 'offer' to teachers at the top of the main pay range comes with the warning: "We would not expect all teachers on the maxima to receive a 2% increase: the full uplift should be awarded only where merited by performance. Some might receive a lower award or none."

It's another divisive twist to PRP. With school budgets facing cuts, one

teacher's 2% award could be matched with another's zero increase.

In too many schools, workload is at intolerable levels. The spread of academies helped to undermine collective strength - but the bullying culture that includes PRP, Ofsted inspections and league tables is endemic in many maintained schools too.

Many teachers are bullied into accepting the unacceptable - until they are forced out of their posts. Too many leave teaching altogether.

We can win

Where we can bring members together and channel that anger into collective action, victories can be won. What's needed more than ever is a strategy that brings teachers together in ongoing national action. We need a strategy that can win.

Under the next government, whoever it is, we need to wage a campaign even more determinedly. We should aim to defeat the attacks we face, not just to voice protest. We need a clear set of demands and a plan of action to win them. We need campaigns in every area to convince teachers we can win - and to persuade members to vote for, and take part in, national action.

As one conference amendment says: "lobbying, workload assessments, publicity stunts, casework etc, will not on their own lead to effective changes... the only solution... is a planned campaign of escalating strike action."

See also **Save Our Schools** pages 8 and 9



NUT members in Sheffield on 10 July 2014, the last time the union took national strike action
photo Karl Lang

Socialist Party NUT conference meeting

How can we win a real anti-austerity government in Britain?

Monday 6 April, 12.45pm at Cairn Hotel, Ripon Road, Harrogate HG1 2JD

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