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# the **Socialist**

# WE CAN STOP THE TORIES!

- Unions must organise for coordinated action against austerity now
- Build the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition to represent workers at the ballot box

#### Election analysis:

- Fight against 'five more damned years'  
**Pages 2 to 5**
- TUSC's results and campaign reports  
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- The 'Scottish effect'  
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# FIGHT AGAINST “FIVE MORE DAMNED YEARS”

## Miliband’s ‘responsible capitalism’ shows its bankruptcy

**Peter Taaffe**  
Socialist Party general secretary

“Our sweet victory”, read the London Evening Standard, owned appropriately by a Russian oligarch and reflecting their delight at the unexpected victory of the Tories. “Corks pop as threat of populist policies evaporates in the swanky Cavalry and Guards Club in Piccadilly,” reported the Financial Times.

On the other hand, the Daily Mirror summed up the widespread dismay of working people with a funeral black background on its front page which read: “Condemned again, five more damned years.”

How is it that David Cameron, George Osborne and their hated Tory crew have, against all the predictions and with their brutal record of attacks on working people, managed to sweep back into power with a 99 seat lead over Labour, and an overall Commons majority of 12?

There was no massive shift in

votes towards the Tories compared to 2010. They took votes primarily from their partners in crime, the Liberal Democrats, who suffered payback for Nick Clegg’s decision to prop up “his friend” Cameron in 2010. The Tories also picked up a few marginal seats from Labour. But compared to 2010 the Tories

increased their overall share of the vote nationally by just 0.8%.

Labour on the other hand increased its share of the popular vote by 1.5% - gaining in the demographically mixed population of London - but they were wiped out in Scotland. It is true that the Tories were mightily aided by the right-wing press who outdid themselves in the bile directed against Labour. The Daily Mail - supporter in the

1930s of Oswald Mosley’s fascist Blackshirts - on the day before the election hysterically warned in relation to Ed Miliband: “For sanity’s sake don’t let a class war zealot and the Scottish National Party (SNP) destroy our economy - and our very nation.”

Very few would recognise this as an accurate picture of Miliband, who had spent the time since his

election as Labour leader preaching in favour of “responsible capitalism”, as well as slavishly seeking to imitate Tory Chancellor Osborne’s cuts mantra.

But when has the Daily Mail ever allowed the truth to get in the way of a good story aimed at frightening its readers? The same can be said of the Murdoch press which, through the Sun newspaper managed to back the ‘anti-austerity’ SNP in Scotland and yet lined up behind the pro-austerity Tories in the rest of Britain!

But their backing for the Tories was not enough to explain this serious setback for Labour. The Tories’ record over the last five years provided more than enough ammunition to have buried them electorally.

**24%**

of the electorate  
voted for the Tories

The Con-Dem government  
boasted about the economic

recovery. Yet few feel the alleged beneficial effects and it is the slowest recovery from a recession in 100 years. They also boasted about halving the deficit over five years but they originally promised to eliminate it completely. They also told blatant lies - in holding Labour solely responsible for the deficit without a mention of the world crisis of 2008.

Yet in 1997, when the Tories were still in power, the deficit was 42% of GDP, which decreased to 35% during the Labour government before the 2008 British and world economic crash. It was driven up again by the crisis and the rise of unemployment, resulting in reduced tax income, the increased cost of welfare benefits, etc.

Miliband and Labour were so inept that they were incapable of defending their own record in power. Their real mistake was to try to work within the framework of capitalism and, at the same time, give the impression through Gordon Brown that they had abolished the laws of capitalism itself, the cycle of ‘boom and bust’.

Housebuilding is at its lowest

level since the 1920s, with a dramatic increase of homelessness and home ownership for millions of young people just a distant dream. The first fall in living standards over a five-year period has taken place since modern records began in the 1960s. More than 900,000 people rely on food banks, a 15-fold increase since the last election.

**900,000**

rely on foodbanks

Yet the Tories, now shorn of their Liberal Democrat tail, are set to inflict even greater misery and devastating cuts in the next five years. Cameron re-entered 10 Downing Street proclaiming a supposed return to the philosophy of “one nation”. Thatcher also invoked St Francis of Assisi when she came to power, and then proceeded to act more like Genghis Khan!

This government will now maintain the vicious bedroom tax, impose £12 billion of cuts in child and other benefits, savage the NHS and ruthlessly pursue its privatisation agenda. It will deepen the campaign against the trade unions through the abolition of the check-off system and also through increased punitive charges to access industrial tribunals, effectively backing the bosses in unfair dismissal cases, etc.

It is not excluded that it will also attempt to introduce further anti-union laws, such as a requirement for a 50% vote in favour in trade

union ballots before industrial action can take place. Yet in every election since 2005, only four voters out of 10 backed the government in office and, in this election, the Tories were backed by just 37% of voters.

Given the Tories’ vicious record there is outrage and derision that Labour had a worse election result than even in the 2010 general election. Victory for the Tories was not preordained. The Tories and their Lib Dem henchmen could have been defeated with different policies from those of Miliband and Labour.

They shamefully swallowed the austerity mantra, promising, in the words of the now defeated Ed Balls, to “cut the deficit every year”! Miliband also boasted that he was the first Labour leader in history who actually fought an election campaign promising to make cuts!

And, as he was continually reminded by the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC) during the election, in January he and his MPs trooped through the same lobby as the Tories and Lib Dems - with only five Labour MPs voting against - to support the continuation of savage austerity, planned poverty to give it its right name!

Is it little wonder that some, therefore, preferred to vote for the real Tories, rather than the ‘red Tories’, the contemptuous term which

Scottish workers used to describe Labour who collaborated with Cameron during the Scottish independence referendum to organise the ‘No’ vote?

True, Ed Miliband sought to tilt slightly left during the election campaign by suggesting some limits on rent increases, attacks on energy companies’ profits, promising action against the ‘non-doms’ and wealthy, etc. But this was too little too late, particularly as he and Labour had spent most of the previous five years distancing themselves from struggles against the government. He denounced strikes and bent to the austerity policies of the government.

### Miliband spurned SNP offer

Therefore, promises for radical action were not taken seriously by many workers. Miliband maintained his ‘austerity-lite’ stance throughout and refused to even contemplate a working parliamentary agreement with the SNP to “lock out Cameron from Number 10”, in the words of Nicola Sturgeon, the leader of the SNP. Incredibly, he refused her offer for collaboration even if this meant Labour not taking office.

This, in turn, reinforced the Tory English nationalist campaign, orchestrated by Lynton Crosby, the Tories’ Australian ‘eminent grise’, with his North Korean-style propaganda. If Labour won, Crosby put out, it was likely to be held hostage by Scottish national-

ism. This probably had some effect on wavering voters. As in the 1992 election, ‘shy Tories’ opted for the status quo.

However, the arguments of the Tories could have been effectively answered by a bold campaign pointing out that it was the British people who were really ‘held hostage’ by a vicious austerity regime which, moreover, the Con-Dems had no mandate for.

The SNP promised to act in concert with Labour in an attempt to prevent further savage attacks on living standards. There were significant sections of the working class and other voters who would have welcomed such a bloc, a united front or anti-austerity alliance.

It was not an accident that Sturgeon was widely applauded in England and Wales for opposing austerity - at least in words - in the party leaders’ debates. Moreover, the slaughter of Labour in Scotland testifies to the fact that the anti-austerity of the SNP was enormously popular!

It is a measure of the political timidity of Miliband and the whole of Labour - rooted as they are in the refusal to step outside the limits of crisis-ridden capitalism - that this offer was turned down.

He paid for this with his resignation as Labour leader, followed by the contemptible Clegg - reduced, as we predicted, to a rump of now just eight Lib Dem MPs.

### Fault line of EU

What therefore are the perspectives for Britain in the light of this election result? Cameron is triumphant-

“Labour shamefully swallowed the austerity mantra, promising to “cut the deficit every year”

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

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Photographer: Paul Mattsson



ist but so was Major when he crept back to power in 1992. However, he was assailed soon after from both within and outside his party.

From inside by the 'bastards' - his term for the right-wing Tory eurosceptics - who harried him continuously, demanding he should lead the charge for concessions to Britain from the European Union (EU). If anything this wing is even stronger in this parliament among Tory MPs.

Even before the election, Cameron was forced to concede an EU referendum by December 2017, which could even take place as early as 2016. The Tory right will ensure that his feet are kept to the fire on this issue.



**If Cameron is forced to advocate leaving the EU, this will put the issue of Scottish independence back on the agenda**

But with the majority of big business fearing the economic consequences of 'Brexit' - British withdrawal from the EU - and most of the Tory Cabinet forced eventually to reflect this, this issue could tear Cameron's party to pieces. Not least are the consequences of this issue in Scotland, with the SNP leaders opposed to withdrawal from the EU.

If Cameron does not get sufficient concessions from Brussels and is therefore forced to advocate leaving the EU, this will put the issue of Scottish independence back on the agenda.

The Socialist Party will intervene in an EU referendum favouring a 'No to EU' vote but at the same time completely rejecting a

nationalist approach. We will advocate a clear class programme to oppose the capitalist EU, linking this to the idea of a socialist confederation of Europe.

#### Scotland, England and Wales

A new round of cuts - already promised by Cameron and Osborne - will also resurrect the independence issue in Scotland, which in turn will have important repercussions in England and Wales.

Boris Johnson's reference on election night to the need for some kind of "new constitutional federal arrangement" indicates the direction in which the government is likely to move.

The Tory ministers probably

intend to give a form of 'fiscal autonomy' to Scotland with a reduced 'grant' in order that they can unload responsibility onto the SNP for whatever pain is inflicted. This in turn will test out the SNP's declared aim to "resist austerity". But if the SNP decides to carry this out - while still blaming 'London,' as it has done up to now, when 'reluctantly' carrying through cuts - it will pay a price in the opposition that will develop.

It will be the same as when English and Welsh councils - including Labour ones - carried through the government's bidding in imposing cuts. They have been perceived as agents of the government's programme for misery, with a growing

demand for them to either resist and refuse to act as the government's butchers, or make way for real fighters.

The Cameron government will also move towards some kind of federal solution. It will attempt to force through 'English votes for English laws', thereby hoping to continue with its strategy of seeking to divide the working class along regional and national lines.

While recognising the legitimate national aspirations and rights of the Scottish people, at the same time, the Scottish workers and the trade unions must be implacably opposed to reinforcement of divisions in their organisations along national lines.

#### Unity

Autonomous rights within the trade unions on a regional and national basis are legitimate and can be supported, but we are for the unity of the working class and its organisations, particularly the trade unions, across national boundaries.

The bosses, through divide and rule tactics are always attempting to set workers against one another.

The repercussions of Labour's defeat will have serious consequences for the workers' movement. It is ludicrous, as the re-emerged Blairites have begun to argue, even on election night, that Miliband went down to defeat because he adopted a left, 'old-fashioned socialist' posture.

Miliband's ascent to Labour's leadership did not represent a fundamental departure from Blairism. On the contrary, he and the defeated Balls stuck steadfastly to the neo-liberal script, seasoned with occasional left tinges.



David Cameron posing with new Tory MPs outside Parliament

Only TUSC, with a combined vote of 120,000 votes in the general and local elections (see pages 8 & 9) consistently argued against all aspects of austerity and called for socialist measures.

Let the sceptics and the faint-hearted dismiss our election results! TUSC managed to assemble a serious national challenge with a splendid election broadcast, which attracted the attention and support of broad layers of workers, even those who said that 'this time' we may not vote for you, but in the future, 'we will see'.



**TUSC has now 'arrived' as a recognised factor on the workers' movement's national and local electoral map**

TUSC was squeezed by the acceptance of 'lesser evilism' by many workers. There was an overriding deep fear of five more years of attrition over living standards. Many workers who agreed with us nevertheless thought that they needed to stop the 'enemy at the gate'. They gave Miliband the benefit of the doubt and he cruelly disappointed them.

TUSC has now 'arrived' as a recognised factor on the workers movement's national and local electoral map. What conclusions will trade unionists and particularly the leadership of the unions draw from this? They poured resources into Miliband's campaign - Unite even donating an extra £500,000 during the campaign on top of the millions already delivered - and what was the outcome? Back to Labour's result in 1987, one of the worst in the post-war period.

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Also Blairism - in the form of Gordon Brown, joint initiator of New Labour - led in 2010 to the disaster of the Con-Dem government.

No doubt some on the right will seek to undermine TUSC, to play down the achievement of putting together a coalition of trade unionists and socialists to fight the election. Some national trade unions may seek to distance themselves from TUSC.

But how much more powerful and attractive to voters would an alternative have been if the trade union leaders, particularly those on the left with their huge potential strength, had come behind an electoral alternative, modelled on TUSC?

What general conclusions should workers draw from this election? So disillusioned with Labour were many workers that they were persuaded into voting for the SNP in Scotland or, in protest, some even opted for Ukip in the rest of Britain.

#### Ukip

This party has unfortunately established a serious base in the North in particular, which will not easily be dislodged, and has a presence now in all parts of the country. The danger from Ukip has not been ended by this election. Farage did not win and they may only have won one seat, but they got almost four million votes.



This has led to a renewed call for the introduction of proportional representation as a fairer method for conducting elections. The Socialist Party supports this. But despite the clamour of the Greens and Ukip, without a significant bloc of MPs this campaign is unlikely to succeed.

What the Tories will certainly do is to go back to their plan A, to gerrymander to their benefit the existing electoral boundaries, which they were forced to withdraw in the last Parliament.

Ukip started in the general election where the French National Front ended up, as a far-right, but not fascist, party. In a very dangerous development, they have established a base now amongst disillusioned former Labour supporters, as well as the discontented middle-class former Tory voters. Ominously Farage has suggested that his party should make more of an appeal to youth, through social media. This must be countered.

They can undoubtedly be undermined and ultimately beaten but not by parties which remain within the framework of capitalism, which can do nothing to answer the concerns on issues like immigration. Only TUSC and the Socialist Party

have a programme to answer the racist demagoguery of Ukip through such measures as an immediate introduction for all workers of a living wage of at least £10 an hour, abolition of zero-hour contracts, etc.

#### Struggles to come

The whiff of 'counterrevolution' - in the form of greater austerity and attacks on democratic rights wielded by Cameron - will undoubtedly provoke a demand for action from

the ranks of the unions and the working class generally.

In fact, blocked on the electoral plane, workers have, in the past, usually turned to the industrial field. But the unions have been weakened by the axing of the public sector, where union density is greater, and by the driving down of wages and conditions in the last five years.

However, there can be no question of retreating in the face of the Tory juggernaut. The right-wing union leaders eventually chose this course last time, in the teeth of the Con-Dem cuts. Unless there is resistance, which has to be organised now, the cuts of the last five years will be as nothing to what Cameron has in store for the working class.

So-called 'One Nation Toryism' of the past under governments like Macmillan in the 1950s rested on a relatively buoyant capitalist economy, which was still experiencing a boom. But that has disappeared like the snows of yesteryear.

#### Prepare

We confront today crisis-ridden capitalism which, far from offering real reforms and improvements in living standards, promises nothing but counter-reforms. This leaves no room for 'social democracy', which was predicated on a few crumbs falling off the rich table of capitalism into the laps of working people.

Therefore, we must prepare for struggle, including industrial action, at the same time also maintaining the electoral challenges, particularly through the council elections, in an organised campaign to thwart the plans of Cameron and big business.



Only TUSC consistently argued against all austerity photo Medway TUSC



**It is ludicrous to argue that Miliband went down to defeat because he adopted a left posture**

## Meeting/Event Details

#### Eastern: 0790 516 7703

##### ■ Stevenage

After the election... the fight goes on  
8pm, Monday 16 May, Shephall Centre, Shephall Green, SG2 9XT

#### East Midlands: 0770 335 3130

##### ■ Leicester

Trotsky's Transitional Programme: How do we achieve socialism?  
7.30pm, 20 May, King Richard III pub, 70 Highcross Street

#### London: 020 8988 8786

##### ■ Barking & Dagenham

Working class struggles in Britain 1842 - 2014  
3pm, Saturday 16 May, Rivergate Centre, Minter Road, Barking, IG11 0FJ

##### ■ Camden

What the Socialist Party stands for  
7.30pm, Thursday 14 May, Torriano meeting house, 99 Torriano Avenue, Kentish Town, NW5 2RX

##### ■ Newham

Why you should join the Socialist Party



7.30pm, Thursday 14 May, Carpenters Community Centre, 98 Gibbins Road, E15 2HU

##### ■ Greenwich

Why you should join the Socialist Party  
7.30pm, Wednesday 13 May, Glyndon Community Centre, 75 Raglan Road, Plumstead, SE18 7LB

##### ■ Haringey & Enfield

The election result, TUSC, and the future  
7.30pm, Tuesday 19 May, Turk Art Cafe, 77 Bounces Road, N9 8LD

##### ■ Hillingdon

Why you should join the Socialist Party  
7.30pm, Thursday 14 May, Friends Meeting House, corner of Belmont Road and York Road, Uxbridge UB8 1QW

##### ■ Lambeth

Why you should join the Socialist Party  
7.30pm, Thursday 14 May, Middle Room, first floor, Bonnington Café, 11 Vauxhall Grove, SW8 1TD

##### ■ Southwark

Join the Socialist Party!  
7.30pm - 9pm, Thursday 14 May, Albert Arms, 1 Gladstone Street, SE1 6EY



##### ■ Waltham Forest

Join the socialists! What do the election results mean for the 99%?  
7.30pm, Thursday 14 May, William Morris Community Centre, Greenleaf Road, E17 6QQ

North East: 0191 421 6230

North West: 07769 611 320

Southern: 07833 681910

South East: 020 8988 8777

South West: 07759 796 478

Wales: 07935 391 947

##### ■ Swansea

Build a fightback against austerity  
7.30pm, Thursday 14 May, Dyfatty Community Centre, SA1 1NB

West Mids: 02476 555 620

Yorkshire: 0114 264 6551



**Why you should join the Socialist Party**

7.30pm, Tuesday 19 May  
The Hob, opposite Forest Hill station, London SE23 3HE

Hosted by Lewisham Socialist Party



# Labour annihilated as SNP sweeps in as the ‘anti-austerity’ alternative

Philip Stott  
Socialist Party Scotland

The general election produced a “political revolution” in Scotland. The Scottish National Party (SNP) won 56 of 59 Scottish seats, polling 1.45 million votes. Now, unless huge concessions are made to the SNP through wide-ranging and extensive powers for Scotland, a new referendum on independence seems inevitable.

Scottish Labour’s vote collapsed from 42% in 2010 to below 25% and they lost 40 of their 41 MPs. This will usher in the probable end of Labour in Scotland. The trade union movement must now prepare to build a new mass party for the working class.

The SNP gained because it poses as an anti-austerity alternative, promising that SNP MPs would oppose any more Westminster cuts

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and would “lock the Tories out of power.” The SNP also opposed Trident’s renewal, privatisation and further attacks on welfare.

Labour still insisted that cuts would be necessary under a Labour government and said there would be “no deals, no pacts or coalitions with the SNP”. This gave the impression they would prefer the Cameron government’s return to an electoral arrangement with the SNP.

The SNP could then appeal, even to those working class people who voted No in the referendum. The surge to the SNP was spectacular.

## Collapse

Labour, the former major party of the working class in Scotland, was completely eclipsed. The hatred of austerity and Labour’s criminal role in the Better Together campaign in the independence referendum obliterated Labour’s already shrunken support base.

The grim reality of another Tory government will create mass anger. Cameron and Co will be largely seen as an illegitimate government of the elite 1% in Scotland. With a huge

mandate to oppose further austerity, the SNP will be under growing pressure to take a fighting stance against a cascade of planned Tory cuts.

Socialist Party Scotland and TUSC have challenged the SNP to live up to its anti-cuts claim by refusing to make Tory cuts. However, the SNP has implemented every penny of Con-Dem austerity since 2010 rather than using their dominant position in Scotland’s parliament to oppose cuts.

Instead the trade union movement must respond to the Tory government with its own huge industrial and political offensive, confronting the austerity establishment that was so decisively defeated in Scotland.

Labour’s rout will usher in unprecedented debate in Scotland’s trade unions. We’ll be calling for unions to play a key role in the forging of a real working class political alternative to all the cuts politicians - including the SNP.

Full article on [www.socialistpartyscotland.org.uk](http://www.socialistpartyscotland.org.uk)



photo Wikimedia Commons

## Bradford Fire - victims demand new, independent inquiry

Thirty years ago, on 11 May, 56 people died and 256 were injured in a devastating fire which gutted Valley Parade, the home ground of Bradford City football club.

In just four minutes the fire swept through a decrepit stand which had been officially condemned. Fleeing survivors had to break down locked doors to escape.

The Popperwell official inquiry which followed this worst fire disaster in British football history concluded that a discarded cigarette had ignited accumulated rubbish under the wooden stand.

However, a recent book by survivor Martin Fletcher - Fifty Six: the Story of the Bradford Fire - castigates the Popperwell inquiry for its lack of investigative rigour.

Fletcher also criticised the club’s top officials saying: “The club at the



Bradford Fire memorial  
photo Wikimedia Commons

time took no actual responsibility for its actions and nobody has ever really been held accountable for the level of negligence which took place. It was appalling that public

money was given to the club while it was still owned by the same shareholders under whose direction the fire had happened. I do not include the people currently running the club.”

Further, the book points the finger of suspicion at the late owner and chairman of Bradford City at the time, Stafford Heginbotham. Fletcher’s investigations reveal a history of fires at businesses owned by Heginbotham. In fact there were eight fires in the 18 years before Bradford City’s, which led to substantial insurance payouts.

Clearly, there is enough evidence unearthed by Martin Fletcher to launch a new independent public inquiry into the fire and to obtain justice for the victims and their surviving families.

A review of *Fifty Six: the Story of the Bradford Fire* will appear in a future issue of the Socialist.

## New Tory cuts Rewarding the super-rich, and hammering the poor

Alison Hill

Champagne corks popped as Tory-backing hedge fund managers, corporate chiefs and super-rich elite, celebrated the election result.

Shares in posh estate agents, banks, and outfits like Serco and Capita that leech off the NHS and the rest of the public sector, all shot up.

As the financiers began to sober up the Financial Times was outlining likely future Tory spending cuts: “With more than £7 billion of income tax cuts, a pledge to reduce inheritance tax and commitments to increase spending on health while also protecting pensions, schools and overseas aid, the cuts to the rest of the government will be brutal.”

## Slash and burn

However, the Tories have been coy about a lot of the detail of their cuts. Chancellor George Osborne had earlier announced £12 billion of cuts from the social security budget by 2017-18.

According to the Tory manifesto this would include freezing the rates of some working age benefits, lowering the household benefits cap and cutting (mainly housing)

benefit entitlement for 18-21 year olds.

In other words attacking the poorest, the lowest paid and young people.

But these cuts only add up to about £1.3 billion - where will the other £10.7 billion come from? The Institute for Fiscal Studies (IFS) pondered before the election that this would “entail some very difficult choices”.

The IFS, however, reckons that ‘protected’ areas will get a real increase in spending of £10.6 billion by 2019-20, compared to 2014-15. This will undoubtedly provide many opportunities for the privatising companies to make some juicy profits.

But an increase in spending in one field will mean more cuts in other departments.

The IFS estimates that this £10.6 billion increase will mean over 11% cuts in ‘unprotected’ spending during the next parliament. None of this has been defined so far by the Tories but you can guess who will bear the brunt of it.

It is clear the Tories are preparing a new wave in their battle against the working class and the public services we all rely upon. There is no time to waste in fighting back against this onslaught.

## Housing crisis deepens

Shelter, the homelessness charity, says more than 80% of homes for sale in England were unaffordable for the average working family looking to buy their first home.

Its latest survey found that in London there are only 43 homes for sale (0.1% of the total advertised) that are genuinely affordable, based on an average family income at £31,000 a year. And those 43 properties include house boats and a mobile home! In 13 London boroughs Shelter found no affordable houses at all.

The re-election of the Tories will see the nasty party legislate to extend the ‘right to buy’ law to 1.3 million tenants in housing associations. Expect many of these sell-offs to end up in the hands of private landlords, as happened with council house sales.

Meanwhile, new housebuilding continues to falter in both private and public sectors. Not least because of a massive 66% cut in the housing investment programme by the previous coalition government.

Only 107,980 new homes (private and social) were completed in England in 2012-13 - the lowest total since the 1920s. While in 2013-14 just 118,770 new homes were built.

The current welfare cap, combined with soaring rents, has led to 50,000 families being moved out of London over the last three years. The size of this ‘social cleansing’ rivals the forced movement of people



photo Paul Mattsson

in recent European conflict zones, despite Tory London Mayor Boris Johnson’s claim that welfare cuts would not lead to “Kosovo-style social cleansing”.

The Tories pledged in the election

to further cap welfare payments by £3,000 and end the limited housing benefit currently available to under-21s claiming Jobseeker’s Allowance. Such draconian measures will increase evictions and homelessness.

## Rent controls

I was interested to read the article on rent controls in the Socialist (issue 854). In 1988 I was renting a one-bedroom ground floor flat in South East London. Both it and the identical flat upstairs were “fair-rented” on a secure tenancy. As long as we paid the rent and didn’t wreck the place, we couldn’t be thrown out. The rent was £200 a month plus rates (this was before the Poll Tax.) The upstairs tenants moved out in October 1988 and the landlords kept the place empty for three months. As soon as the Tories’ Housing Act came into force - I think it was 31 January - the next day the flat was rented out for £400 a month (plus rates of course!) on an ‘Assured Tenancy’, which meant that after six months the landlord could throw the tenants out on a whim. So under the Tories’ Housing Act rents literally doubled over night!

A consequence for me was that the landlord continually tried to get my rent put up far more than the rate of inflation using the argument they were getting twice as much for an identical flat up the stairs! This meant annual trips to the Rent Tribunal with the additional hassle of preparing a case. But with the help of the Local Authority Advice Centre we managed to fight these. I have since moved on but as the saying goes I couldn’t afford to live there now.

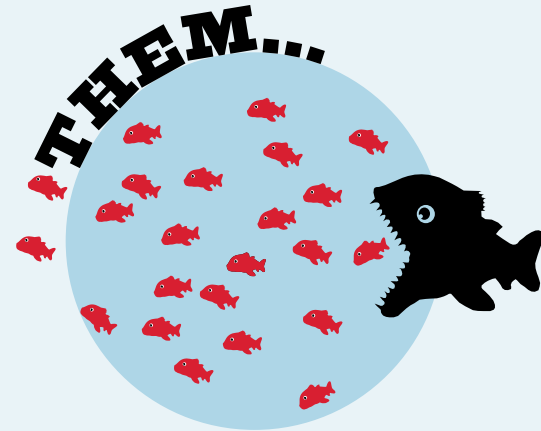
Tom Prentice, East Lothian

## Socialist planning

During the election Labour said it would eventually build 200,000 affordable homes if elected. However, tucked away on page 9 of Inside Housing (1 May) was an article headlined: ‘Brick shortages delay plans’. In it the Federation of Master Builders (FMB) says that brick production ground to a halt at the beginning of the recession and is still struggling to catch up. Some of the brickworks were closed for good and will never work again. As well as the shortage of materials, there is also a shortage of bricklayers and the FMB says they may well have to rely on migrant labour.

If ever there was proof of the need for a socialist planned economy this debacle is it. Only then would there be control of raw materials, the means of production, training and apprenticeships, all linked together to meet the needs of society. Yet again the failure of market forces undermines the needs of the people.

Kevin Wilson, Leeds



## Rich and poor

The richest tenth of the UK’s population pay 35% of their income (not wealth) in tax. The poorest tenth pay 43% (including VAT and council tax) of their income (the Guardian, 5 May).

## Boomerang Gove

Tory MP Michael Gove knew nothing about education so the last government made him Secretary of State for education, with a pot of money to spend on crackpot schemes such as ‘free schools’ staffed by untrained staff.

He is now Justice Minister. Can we look forward to ‘free courts’ staffed by unqualified kangaroos?

Derek McMillan

## Private fuel poverty

The usual refrain of millionaire government MPs to house-holds enduring fuel poverty is to say they’ll make it easier for consumers to switch suppliers (instead of renationalising the gas and electricity companies and providing cheap energy). But switching is not so simple, as the Evening Standard reports. Residents of the Myatts Field North estate in Lambeth, south London, are tied into a 40-year private finance initiative contract to supply heating and hot water run by energy giant E.ON. Residents complain of intermittent supplies of hot water. The PFI deal was signed by Labour-run Lambeth council.

## Living in glass houses

Chair of the parliamentary Public Accounts Committee, Margaret Hodge, has regularly railed against tax-dodging corporations. However, it’s reported that Hodge, Labour MP for Barking and Dagenham, had received £1.5 million in Stemcor shares via the tax haven of Liechtenstein.

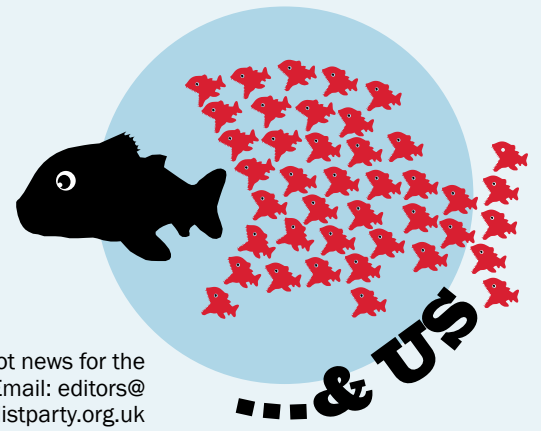
Hodge owns 10% of Stemcor - a steel company started by her father. According to the Times, 75% of shares in the family’s Liechtenstein trust had previously been held in Panama - a country notorious for money laundering.

Hodge had earlier criticised banking giant HSBC (convicted of money laundering in 2012) for paying huge bonuses to top managers through a Panamanian company.

## Exploitation direct

One immediate beneficiary of the Tory election win was billionaire owner of Sports Direct, Mike Ashley. The UK’s 22nd richest person saw his company’s shares leap by 4.5%, netting him an extra £100 million in the process.

Ashley has made his fortune by employing 75% of his workforce on exploitative zero-hour contracts. During the election Labour had mildly called for permanent employment contracts after three months. Hardly revolutionary stuff, but Miliband’s defeat was enough to send the super-rich into paroxysms of delight.



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

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# TENACIOUS TUSC CELEBRATES HARD-WON PROGRESS

## 118,000 votes against all cuts

**Hannah Sell**  
Socialist Party  
deputy general secretary

Including the local elections taking place on the same day across England (outside London), the 100% anti-austerity Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC - see box below) received 118,125 votes.

In Coventry North West, Dave Nellist, chair of TUSC, received 1,769 votes. In Southampton, Councillor Don Thomas, a TUSC supporter who has taken a clear anti-cuts stance, retained his seat with 2,350 votes, a majority of 1,000.

24

number of councils where TUSC polled over 1,000 votes, including seven polling over 3,000

Millions of those who abstained or voted for other parties could have been won to voting Labour if it had clearly opposed austerity. A successful programme might have included measures such as renationalising the railways, energy companies and Royal Mail; introducing an immediate and substantial increase in the mini-

mum wage; and planning a mass council house building programme.

Renewed austerity needs to be met with a renewed and strengthened movement against it. The last government could have been defeated if the public sector general strike in November 2011 had been used as a starting point for a mass movement against austerity.

Workers have suffered the longest and severest wage squeeze since the Victorian era. And despite Chancellor George Osborne's claim that there is now a recovery, average incomes remain 2% below the pre-recession level.

In one opinion poll the SNP, who portrayed themselves as anti-austerity, won 9% support in English and Welsh seats - despite only standing in Scotland! During the election debates, "can I vote SNP in England?" was one of the most frequent Google searches. This, combined with the growth in the Green vote, shows part of the potential for a genuine anti-austerity party.

### Workers' voice

The workers' movement needs to create a political voice. Unite, and the other big trade unions, gave many millions to Labour to fund its election campaign. Yet they had no say over how it was conducted. The Collins Review now means trade unions do not even have a voice in the election of the Labour Party leader.

The heads of Labour-affiliated unions are likely to back Andy Burnham, with some of them hoping he will be a more left-wing leader. His

record, however, is not more left wing than other figures in the Labour leadership. As health minister in the last Labour government he oversaw the dramatic extension of privatisation in our NHS.

1,769

TUSC's top parliamentary vote, for national chair and Socialist Party member Dave Nellist in Coventry North West

Before the general election, Len McCluskey, general secretary of Unite, suggested that if Labour could not even defeat the Tories, the time had come to look at a new party. Labour's failure on 7 May puts that issue centre stage. The trade union movement as a whole needs to urgently discuss how to create a new mass workers' party.

In these elections TUSC did not yet have the numerical strength or profile to attract and channel the majority of the anti-austerity mood. Nonetheless, its campaign gave a glimpse of the enthusiasm that a new mass anti-austerity force could create.

■ This analysis is an edit of a longer response to the election results available at [socialistparty.org.uk](http://socialistparty.org.uk).

## SOUTHAMPTON TUSC COUNCILLOR CRUSHES CUTS LABOUR



Don (centre, wearing tie) celebrates on the steps of the town hall photo Southampton TUSC

**Nick Chaffey**

Southampton anti-cuts councillor Don Thomas has been re-elected with a huge 1,000-vote majority over his closest rival, the Labour candidate.

If Labour had shown the determination of Don and fellow anti-cuts councillor Keith Morrell, the Tories would have been swept aside. Since taking the council in 2012, Labour has cut more jobs and services than the Tories did

since 2010!

After the council strike of 2011, enthusiasm among trade unionists for Labour as an alternative has disappeared. After this general election defeat many trade union members will ask why their subs should go to back Labour candidates who carry out cuts.

What if they had backed Don and the TUSC anti-cuts candidates in the city, as many activists have done? What if they had put their money and enthusiasm into building a political voice to oppose cuts?

## ANTI-ACADEMIES ACTIVIST VOWS TO FIGHT ON

**Martin Powell-Davies**

TUSC parliamentary candidate, Lewisham West and Penge

Locally, TUSC and the Socialist Party will be getting straight on with the job of supporting Stop Academies In Lewisham and the teachers' unions. We are building the fight to stop the break-up of local schooling into academy chains.

We were more active on the streets than any other group standing.

Silenced in most of the press, many voters still saw TUSC as a 'minority' option; the Greens picked up most of the 'anti-cuts' votes locally. How reliably anti-cuts every Green would be once elected is debatable, as we found out ourselves when both Greens and

the Socialist Party had councillors on Lewisham council.

For now, TUSC's support came from the most determined voters who have seen through the austerity lies or have worked with us in trade union and community campaigns.

### Labour shipwreck

Some of those who still refuse to jump from Labour's shipwreck will say that TUSC's relatively modest votes show a new voice cannot be built. Far from it! TUSC campaigners know that, wherever we were able to get our views across, they were enthusiastically supported.

That was certainly my experience at hustings - and at our TUSC pre-election rally that was packed with new faces, most much younger than mine!

1 in 12

TUSC Westminster candidates were members of transport union RMT; 42% of all candidates were members of Labour-affiliated unions Unite and Unison

## Buoyant TUSC campaigners report back

### Fleetwood, Lancashire

Simon Roberts joined the Socialist Party after he realised he was better qualified than the 'medical professional' from ATOS who assessed his eligibility for benefits. Now he's a TUSC town councillor in Fleetwood, elected unopposed, and has helped to shake up the politics of this town.

Before TUSC came along, the town council was 'independent' - despite its members being from Labour, the Conservatives and even the BNP. The town might never be the same again. **Bill Reed**

### Warrington, Cheshire

Councillor Kevin Bennett, TUSC parliamentary candidate for Warrington South, said: "Here in Warrington it has been a short campaign. I only resigned from Labour at the end of February. But it has been an intense campaign, and we have raised the profile of TUSC.

"I stand fully behind the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition, and agree that we need a radical left agenda. TUSC will put forward an agenda for the people, and I will be proud to fight for a better future." **Warrington TUSC**

### Kent

Highlights include presenting outgoing Ukipp MP Mark Reckless with a giant P45 one week ahead of the count - TUSC called it first! Our eye-catching use of high-visibility vests (see pic below) - instead of rosettes - helped identify us as the most vibrant party. **Chas Berry**

### Manchester

Parliamentary candidate Alex Davidson and council candidate Emma Clark appeared on local radio debating Labour and the Greens. They were able to challenge both parties on their record of voting for cuts, as well as

making the point that only TUSC candidates pledge to accept no more than a worker's wage.

Feedback from the show was fantastic, and a flood of visitors to our campaign stall confirmed dissatisfaction with the status quo across Manchester's working class communities. **John McFarlane**

### Tower Hamlets, London

I watched four Poplar and Limehouse candidates thank their agents and election teams on the platform at the count. Three spoke of the 'fair fight' now being fought in Tower Hamlets. They thanked the justice system for its shameful attack on democracy in suspending the elected mayor.

One candidate instead thanked the council workers: TUSC's Hugo Pierre. He was the only candidate to mention working class people and the anti-cuts movement, reminding us that "it's better to break the law than break the poor."

**Ellen Kenyon Peers**

"So we have the blue Tories back in instead of the red ones." **Emma, anti-cuts campaigner**

### Harrow, London

Leafleting in Harrow at the end of a successful day's campaigning, we met a young woman who had just been to vote.

When she got to the polling station, she saw the TUSC candidate at the top of the ballot paper. She had not heard of TUSC before. She searched for us on the web, and liked what she read so much that both she and her mum voted TUSC. **Chris Newby**

### Wakefield, Yorkshire

TUSC candidates in Wakefield polled 1,627 votes - a 29% increase on 2014. One supporter said: "I wanted to

phone you to express my support, and say it is refreshing that there is a real alternative to vote for."

**Mick Griffiths**

### Salford, Lancashire

The generosity of our supporters was impressive: £650 from the RMT, two anonymous donations of £100 each, £130 from a coffee and cakes afternoon (see pic right) and £180 from a meeting collection!

**Paul Gerrard and Matt Kilsby**



Salford's fundraising was a piece of cake photo Salford TUSC

### Totnes, Devon

I have lived in Totnes for about ten years, but was not known for my political views. It took a bit of guts to stand for the first time.

The best thing is that I keep meeting people who have spotted my TUSC badge, come up to me and say "I voted for you." Shop workers, a laundrette manager, a bar worker at one of the pubs. People you only know because you have gone up to buy a bottle of milk - suddenly we have become friends and allies. **Alex Moore**

### Darlington, County Durham

We did seven hustings to audiences of more than 70. Feedback was that TUSC 'won' or was close to being the best performer at all of them. **Alan Docherty**

### Spelthorne, Surrey

"I just wanted to say a big thank you for cheering up such a depressing and sad morning! It was fab to see all those votes for you! When I think of the small band we were on the night of 29 April in Staines Community Centre, it's gobsmacking that translated into 228 votes. Especially when we see what has happened nationally.

"This is testament to all the amazing hard work you have put in - and your courage. You've established an alternative voice in Spelthorne, and shone a light in the gloom we've woken up to. Thank you so much." **Fiona**

### York

Our highlight was seeing 50 people at our public meeting. Many were impressed enough to join the campaign!

The Greens won four council seats, which may give hope that an anti-austerity party could hold the balance of power. This, unfortunately, is not

1 in 4

council wards where either TUSC outpolled the Lib Dems or they couldn't find a candidate

1 in 5

council wards where either TUSC outpolled the Greens or they couldn't find a candidate

## What if...

TUSC had been given one quarter of the Lib Dems' media coverage - or one fifth of the Greens'?

74%

growth in total number of TUSC votes 2014 to 2015



35%

growth in number of TUSC candidates, from 554 last year to 748 this May





# Barking bin workers' eight-day strike

Pete Mason

Barking and Dagenham bin workers in east London struck for eight days between 1 and 8 May, with more action likely if the council does not shift.

The 100 GMB union members are fighting the robbery of £1,000 from their annual pay packets.

Disgracefully the Labour council has used methods typical of bullying bosses to attempt to break the strike.

Instead of negotiating, management has gone over the heads of the GMB union, which also represents thousands of other council workers.

The workers have received letters, signed by council leader Darren Rodwell, threatening the drivers with taking away their overtime pay. The letter was ignored by the driv-

ers. Senior management also held a meeting with the workers with the same intention.

## More action

The Barking and Dagenham Post has leaked GMB plans for a 13 day strike, followed by a nine day strike, if negotiations don't take place.

The GMB has conceded the pay cut if the council will pay a one-off £5,000. This has been misrepresented in the local press as the workers demanding £500,000, instead of being robbed of £1,000!

The council has offered a one-off £300, and upped it to £500. Unite has ten members affected but, under pressure from its union officials, has accepted the offer.

But the Unite workers aren't happy with this. One passed the picket line saying "we should be out alongside you".



photo Pete Mason

## STOP PRESS: RMT members vote for Network Rail strike

RMT members working for Network Rail, including signal and maintenance workers, have voted by four-to-one to strike over pay and job security on a 60% turnout.

92% voted in favour of action short of a strike. TSSA and Unite are also balloting their members.

The current pay offer is a £500 lump sum for this year followed by Retail Price Index-linked pay changes for 2016-18. RPI is currently 0%! The 'no compulsory redundancies' promise only lasts until December 2016.

The action would be the first national rail strike for 20 years. The last strike, on Network Rail's predecessor Railtrack, resulted in two-thirds of trains being cancelled.

■ RMT members on London's Docklands Light Railway have voted by over 80% for strike action over pay and working conditions.

## Blacklisting: The secret war between big business and trade union activists

Public meeting hosted by the Haldane Society of Socialist Lawyers and the Institute of Employment Rights

*Tuesday 2 June, 6.30pm  
Diskus Room, Unite the Union, 128 Theobalds Road, London WC1X 8TN*

Speakers include Dave Smith, blacklisted builder and organiser of the Blacklist Support Group, and Gail Cartmail, Unite assistant general secretary  
Contact: secretary@haldane.org

# BROMLEY UNITE PLANS MORE SELL-OFF WALKOUTS

A Bromley Unite member

Bromley's Tory council wants to privatise everything it can get away with, and withdraw all trade union facilities with immediate effect - but they've got a fight on their hands.

Unite members have so far taken ten days of strike action with more to follow. Transport services work-

ers will strike from 13 to 18 May, followed by a branch-wide strike on 19 May.

Unite's public campaign against library privatisation has won massive support from the community. Members in adults services are taking strike action to defend services for vulnerable adults.

Transport services are due to be handed over to a company set up and run by Labour Party dominated

Greenwich council, GSPlus. Yet Labour councillors in Bromley have publicly opposed the privatisation plans.

■ Lobby Greenwich council to demand GSPlus pulls out of the privatisation process. 6-7pm, 13 May, Town Hall, Wellington Street, Woolwich SE18

■ Join the march through Bromley on 13 June. Assemble 12noon,

13 June Norman Park, Bromley Common, BR2

■ Support the mass picket on 19 May. 7.30-10am, 19 May, Civic Centre, Stockwell Close, Bromley

■ Please send messages of support to onay.kasab@unite.theunion and donations to Kathy Smith, Unite Office, Bromley Council, Civic Centre, Stockwell Close, Bromley BR1 3UH (cheques payable to Bromley Unite)

# KONE BLOCKS NEGOTIATIONS



photo Elaine Brunskill

Elaine Brunskill

Kone engineering service workers have been on strike every Monday over plans to use unreliable tracking devices in their vehicles.

A Unite rep from Gateshead's site on the Team Valley Trading Estate said that, at the request of ACAS, Unite submitted an eight-point proposal. He said: "We cannot see how the company could possibly find a way to reject the package."

The strikers were hopeful that the Unite package would at least bring the company back to ACAS. The rep commented: "We have been prepared to be flexible, but at present

the company are not showing the same commitment.

"The company initially responded by stating they would give the proposals due consideration." However, strikers have found it "contemptible" that Kone has said it would respond within seven to ten working days!

There is clearly growing anger on the picket line towards a company that, at this stage, will not negotiate a way forward. But there is also growing confidence that the dispute can be won. One striker said: "Spirits remain high and this has been helped with the support from fellow union members and the Socialist Party."

# TNT/Whistl stops deliveries

Carl Harper

Royal Mail worker and CWU member

Thousands of jobs are at risk as TNT/Whistl has suspended its entire UK delivery operation after losing its financial backers.

Just six months after City Link folded, and following the privatisation of Royal Mail, the news is further evidence that capitalist competition in the postal industry is not working.

Bosses are trying to push down workers' wages, terms and conditions, with increasing use of zero-hour contracts and subcontracting. When it emerged that the company was in trouble, workers were given a

piece of paper briefly explaining the situation and then left to wait to see whether they need to find new jobs. The many TNT/Whistl workers on zero-hour contracts would not receive any redundancy pay.

Dave Ward, Communication Workers Union (CWU) general secretary elect, said: "The sad truth is if Whistl had been successful then it would have been at the expense of even more job losses in Royal Mail."

But this shouldn't be the case. The whole delivery industry should be brought into public ownership and taken out of the hands of these ruthless employers, who are looking to maximise profit ahead of workers' security and public service.

## CWU telecoms oppose Openreach changes

The recent CWU telecoms conference voted to vigorously oppose, with industrial action if necessary, BT Openreach's plans to concentrate all office-based jobs into just 23 'centres of excellence'. The only two centres of excellence in Scotland will be in Edinburgh and Glasgow, with just one in Wales.

Unfortunately the conference also voted against a proposition to defend the current grading structure, negotiated in 2000, when BT launches a comprehensive grading review. This is likely to result in widespread downgrading although current post holders will probably be unaffected.  
**Clive Walder**

# DUNDEE PORTERS ENTER SIXTH WEEK OF ACTION

Philip Stott

The Dundee hospital porters are into their sixth week of all-out strike action as we go to press and they are as strong and determined as ever.

Initial discussions are now due to start as part of the NHS Scottish Terms and Conditions Committee (STAC) review of the porters' grading. The STAC process was offered by NHS Tayside management to "provide the platform upon which the dispute can be resolved".

It has dawned on managers that the 117 Unite members will not go back to work until they have their grading changed with compensation for historic underpayment.

A porter on band one, working 37.5 hours a week at Ninewells and Royal Victoria hospitals, currently takes home around £250 a week. Moving to band two, in line with the majority of porters across Tayside and Scotland, would mean a £50 weekly increase.

## Bosses' propaganda

The propaganda offensive against the strikers by NHS Tayside bosses has continued. Unite, said NHS Tayside Chief Executive Lesley McLay, was acting "contrary to what we would consider to be the normal actions of a reasonable trade union".

The message from striking porters like Mark Gilligan, Mark McDonald and Graham Nelson is "welcome to the new normal". They are, along with scores of other porters, the backbone of the daily protests outside the hospital.

"The solidarity is still pouring in," they told the Socialist. Unite senior steward Graham Nelson added: "We've now had over £20,000



Some of the strikers on the May Day march photo Philip Stott



The 117 Unite members will not go back to work until they have their grading changed

in donations from the public and cheques from other trade unions across Scotland and the UK."

Graham addressed the recent May Day march in Dundee, the biggest for years, as hundreds of trade unionists, led by the porters, marched through the city to huge public support. One person stopped her car at the protest line and donated £100.

The backing given to the strike by Trade Unionist and Socialist

Coalition (TUSC) supporters and Socialist Party Scotland members - combined with the complete lack of support from the SNP and the Scottish government - resulted in many of the porters voting for Jim McFarlane, Dundee West TUSC candidate, in the election.

A coachload of porters will be in Glasgow this week to show support to the striking homelessness case-workers. They will also be protesting at the Scottish parliament next week.

# Check-off attack will not defeat PCS

Fran Heathcote

PCS DWP group president

reached 78.5% and 73% respectively.

In DWP we were able to mount a legal challenge against the removal of check-off which bought us an extra month until the end of April but, despite our solicitors pushing for an early hearing, we still await a date for a court case.

With the election of a Tory majority, any idea of the decision to remove check-off being reversed is well and truly out of the window.

But reps are working hard to maximise the numbers signed up to Direct Debit and also recruit new members to PCS.

It is easy to feel downcast after

the general election result but the left leadership of PCS has shown that we will not be beaten by this hostile Tory government.

■ **PCS conference Socialist Party meeting: 'After the election, how do the unions fight back against the Tories?'**

*6pm at the end of conference, 19 May  
Coffee Republic next to UMI Hotel  
Speakers: Socialist Party general secretary Peter Taaffe, PCS national vice-president John McNally, NIPSA president Padraig Mulholland (personal capacity)*

■ **Official NSSN fringe meeting: 'Stop the union busters!'**

*Syndicate 1, Brighton Conference Centre  
Wednesday lunchtime, 12.30pm, 20 May  
Speakers: PCS DWP president Fran Heathcote, BFAWU president Ian Hodson, NSSN chair Rob Williams*

# FBU conference looks to continue fightback

The Fire Brigades Union 2015 conference is being held just days after the general election. Another 20% of cuts by the Tory government would reduce the fire service to the bone.

But are Labour fire authority members finally willing to fight back against the cuts and refuse to implement austerity?

The conference will take stock of the union's campaign against the attack on pensions nationally and local resistance to fire service cuts and privatisation, recruitment freezes, and attacks on terms and conditions. This conference has to set the tone for continuing the fight against cuts with a sober but confident assessment of members' determination.

Delegates should support the motion calling for the union to affiliate to the National Shop Stewards Network (NSSN). The NSSN has fully

supported the FBU struggles and looked to build solidarity with the union across the movement, particularly against the victimisation of reps like Ricky Matthews.

Delegates should also vote against any motion which calls for affiliation to the pro-austerity Labour Party.

■ **Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition fringe meeting: 'After the election - What's the political direction of the FBU?'**

*Thursday 14 May, 5.30pm  
Imperial Hotel Blackpool, Imperial Suite 3  
Speakers include: TUSC national chair Dave Nellist, FBU general secretary Matt Wrack, Essex FBU chair Ricardo La Torre, West Midlands FBU acting-chair David Pitt, Manchester FBU organiser Simon Hickman*





# Don't mourn - organise and join the socialists!

**Sarah Sachs-Eldridge**  
Socialist Party national organiser

**T**he fear and gloom that descended in the aftermath of the election will only intensify as Cameron installs a raft of Thatcherites on the new Tory government front bench.

He and they will plan to take Maggie's market policies to their logical conclusion - wiping out the welfare state, crucifying the trade unions, and privatising everything in sight to the enrichment of the already super-rich.

Never was a bold socialist opposition more needed and never was Labour more utterly unable and uninterested in providing it. Playing the blame game in the pages of the press appears to be the pursuit of choice for aspiring Labour leaders. The talk about 'aspiration' seems to start with their own careers - and end there. There has not been a word about opposing Tory austerity from that quarter.

## Elections

Socialists stood in the election to offer a 100% anti-austerity choice and socialist policies. The Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition programme - including nationalisation of the banks under democratic control, for a £10 an hour minimum wage, and a huge programme to build council housing - offered a real alternative.

Now we ask everyone who agreed with those ideas to get actively involved in the struggle to resist Tory austerity and to join the Socialist Party.

We are committed to continuing to build an independent working class political voice, to preparing anti-austerity action in the unions, including defence of the right to strike, of working

among young people to build organised resistance, and putting forward a clear socialist alternative to cuts and capitalism.

Every improvement to the lives of working class people must be fought for, and every attack resisted - and we believe that the organised working class has the potential power to stop the cuts and transform society. The Socialist Party fights for socialism - a democratic society run for the needs of all and not the profits of a few.

## What does it involve?

What does it mean to join the Socialist Party? First of all agreement with our general ideas, which we welcome discussion on and which many will have encountered during the election campaign.

We ask all members to make a financial contribution - membership dues - to the running of our party. The super-rich who pour funds into the pro-capitalist parties have no interest in giving us any.

And we ask members to read, buy and sell our paper and to participate in the life of the party as much as possible.

Get in touch to join today.

See page 5 and [www.socialistparty.org.uk/whatsonfor](http://www.socialistparty.org.uk/whatsonfor) details of meetings near you or go to [www.socialistparty.org.uk/join](http://www.socialistparty.org.uk/join)



One of those arrested, Senan, surrounded by police on the demo  
photo Sarah Wrack

## EDL protected by huge police presence in Walthamstow

**Paula Mitchell**  
Walthamstow

Massively outnumbered by local people and a counter-protest, a tiny group of far-right, racist English Defence League (EDL) thugs were enabled to march through Walthamstow on 9 May protected by an enormous £300,000 police operation.

The community felt like we were being invaded. It was breath-taking the numbers of police, fully kitted out in riot gear, vans, horses and dogs.

Three years ago when the EDL tried to march in our borough they were soundly defeated. Local youth, assisted by Socialist Party members and Day-Mer Youth (a Turkish and Kurdish community organisation), broke out of a police kettle to occupy the spot outside the Town Hall where the EDL wanted to rally. The EDL gave up, humiliated.

The EDL are now only able to muster a sorry handful on a national mobilisation. Shamefully, the police spent this huge sum to prevent local people from defending our own streets while the local Labour council has decimated services because of a 'lack of money'.

## Standing firm

Unite Against Fascism (UAF) had organised a counter rally which took place 100 yards from the EDL's rally, resisting the police's attempt to move it further away. But many of us wanted to stop the EDL again and stood firm in the EDL's chosen spot.

The police forced people to move, threatening big numbers of us with arrest. It was inspiring for Socialist Party members to link arms with people - mainly women (dubbed by one steward "the anti-fascist golden girls") - peacefully trying to hold on to their right to assemble and defend their own homes.

Some very young people were arrested, in a clear attempt to intimi-

date a new generation from protesting, and in many cases seemingly racist selection of targets. Echoing the protests against police brutality in the US, we held up our arms and chanted "hands up, don't shoot!"

Additionally, hundreds of local people had turned out along the route to oppose the EDL. Many, assisted by Socialist Party members, bravely gathered in front of the police horses.

The EDL thugs, from the safety of three lines of police around them and horses front and back, yelled racist taunts at local families standing on their own front steps.

Though vastly outnumbered and bravely faced down by the local community, the racists got their way thanks to the police.

## Anti-austerity fightback

At the anti-EDL rally, Nancy Taaffe, TUSC candidate in Walthamstow, spoke about the danger of a growth in support for racist and far-right organisations if there is not a clear anti-austerity fightback.

But she raised the sights of those protesters who were shocked by the Tory victory, explaining that they can be defeated, giving the example of the defeat of Margaret Thatcher by the anti-poll tax movement.

Socialist Party members complained to the police for hours in defence of those arrested and a heroic band sat it out at the police station until nearly midnight, refusing to leave till every single person had been released.

Outrageously, having just spent vast sums keeping us apart, the police held at least one EDL-er in the same custody suite and allowed their supporters in the same waiting area.

We now want to discuss in the local trade union movement about the best way to prepare for any future attempts of the far-right or the police to invade our streets in this way.

See full version of this article at [www.socialistparty.org.uk](http://www.socialistparty.org.uk)



**It was inspiring for Socialist Party members to link arms with people peacefully trying to hold on to their right to assemble and defend their homes**



**Echoing protests against police brutality in the US, we held our arms up and chanted "hands up, don't shoot!"**

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

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# Brixton marches against gentrification

James Ivens

Lambeth Socialist Party

Anger at impossibly high rents raised its voice in south London on 25 April.

The "Reclaim Brixton" event centred on local businesses facing crushing rent hikes, but attracted an array of anti-gentrification protesters. Social tenants fighting estate sell-offs and young private renters fed up with gouging landlords made up most of the crowd.

International food stalls, fine weather and live music contributed to the carnival atmosphere traditional for Brixton demonstrations. We estimate up to 2,000 were there at any given time.

Demands raised by multiple campaigns included rent caps, council

home repairs and protections for existing residents and community businesses. Local Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC) candidates and supporters backed these as part of a general anti-austerity platform. Our bright magenta banners pierced the high street.

The youthful and receptive crowd engaged eagerly with the dozen lo-

To get a foot on the housing ladder in London requires a minimum salary of £77,000 a year according to a new report by auditing firm KPMG

cal Socialist Party members taking part. We sold out of the Socialist - 43 copies.

A largely peaceful march then protested at the town hall, police station and market. During this, a small group targeted Foxtons estate

agent, breaking a window.

The Socialist Party shares the anger of many at this symbol of yupification. But we point out that actions like this do not advance the struggle against it. In fact, authorities often use them to crack down on protests: police later used tear gas against Reclaim Brixton demonstrators. We condemn this unacceptable act by police.

To reverse social cleansing we need well-organised, concerted campaigns by tenants' groups and trade unions. Residents of the New Era estate in Hackney beat their Tory MP landlord's rent hikes with such a campaign.

Working class people also need representation in council chambers and the Commons to fight for our housing needs. This is why the Socialist Party helped found TUSC.



photo Paul Mattsson

## TUSC prominent on anti-academies demo



A highlight of TUSC's Lewisham election campaign was the uplifting 25 April demonstration against turning schools into academies.

TUSC's candidate in Lewisham West and Penge was Martin Powell Davies, secretary of National Union of Teachers (NUT) Lewisham branch. The local "Stop Academies in Lewisham" group organised the demo. Hundreds marched between two threatened local schools.

Most noticeable was the large number of school students and parents on the demonstration. The whole march was dominated by pink TUSC placards attacking the

plans for academies.

Martin said the best way to plan local education is as part of a democratic local education authority. TUSC calls for the law to be changed so we can bring academies back into local authority control.

We were also fighting for parents and staff to be represented in decision-making alongside local councillors.

Martin said the NUT will step up action - including further strikes - before community 'consultation' ends on 8 June.

**Roger Shrives**  
Lewisham Socialist Party

## Student occupation of Birmingham library

James Brackley

Students have twice occupied the Library of Birmingham to protest shortening opening hours and library closures across the city. Two well-attended, peaceful sits-ins refused to leave after the new closing time of 5pm, despite a strong presence of police and security.

These protests are being led by young people and library users themselves. Over 50 occupied the library on 20 April, and around 30 on 24 April.

In March, Birmingham City Council voted through over £100

million of further spending cuts as part of Labour's plans to slash overall spending by more than £800 million. This is a huge reduction - over 60% of the council's managed expenditure in real terms. It includes £3.1m 'savings' from library services.

### No cuts

The Socialist Party links the fight against this cut to the need for a strategy to fight all cuts. Birmingham also plans to slash the 'Protecting People's Fund' - a cut of £3.7 million.

This fund was designed to keep vulnerable people independent

in their own homes. The council's website lists frail elderly people, the mentally ill, people with physical and sensory disabilities, teenage mothers, women escaping domestic abuse, people with HIV/AIDs and others as beneficiaries. 1,600 people will now go without this support.

The fight for library services and protection of the most vulnerable must be part of a fight against the structures of inequality in our society.

The only way to guarantee we can maintain and improve all these services is to take control of the huge resources locked away by big business and the rich.

## Left gains at NUS conference

Ian Pattison

Socialist Students national chair

Last year at the National Union of Students conference, support for free education passed by a whisker, overturning a decade of opposition. This year, 90% of delegates voted to back free education.

The right wing was not confident to challenge anti-austerity ideas. Unfortunately, bureaucratic manoeuvring by the leadership ensured conference did not plan any concrete action. Conference didn't even discuss whether to call a national demonstration in the autumn.

The left won four of the five vice-president positions - the first time we've taken a majority in two decades. Labour Students, the entrenched right wing, lost every full-time officer position it went for.

Socialist Students member Ben Mayor, alongside Socialist Party Ireland member Courtney Robinson, stood for the national executive.



An anti-Private Finance Initiative (PFI) battle bus recently toured east London highlighting how PFI privatisation is wrecking services provided by the local Barts NHS Trust, the largest NHS trust in England. Barts was placed into special measures in March with staff shortages cited as a major reason. The Trust, due to PFI debt, is £93 million in deficit. Photo Paul Mattsson



## Socialist Party Fighting Fund

	£ target	£ received	April-June 2015	Deadline 30 June 2015
North West	1,200	965		
South West	1,400	927		
Northern	600	351		
West Midlands	2,100	1,187		
East Midlands	1,600	725		
Eastern	1,200	504		
Yorkshire	2,900	896		
London	6,100	934		
South East	750	114		
Wales	2,300	328		
Southern	1,200	90		
England & Wales	3,650	515		
TOTAL	25,000	2,037		





## Iran: free all political prisoners

On 1 May the Campaign to Free Political Prisoners in Iran (CFPPI) and the Haldane Society of Socialist Lawyers organised a picket of the Iranian embassy to highlight the plights of labour activists and political prisoners.

The picket was attended by over 30 people. We heard from Shiva Mahbobi of the CFPPI and former political prisoner herself, Hassan from the Iranian Solidarity Campaign, Paul Heron from the Socialist Party and renowned human rights activist Peter Tatchell. Four police came on motorbikes, followed by three vans of riot police. All those who attended felt inspired to carry on with the struggle and to ensure that the plight of labour activists in prison will not be silenced.



## CWI celebrates May Day 2015

These are some of the sections of the CWI celebrating International Workers' Day



# RAGE IN BALTIMORE: THE AFTERMATH OF FREDDIE GRAY'S DEATH

Eljeer Hawkins

Socialist Alternative (co-thinkers of the CWI in the US)

On 26 April, the first black US President, Barack Hussein Obama, stepped to the podium at the annual White House Correspondents' Association dinner to engage in frivolous banter with fellow politicians, corporate media hounds and comedians, dressed in their finest tuxedos and gowns.

A mere 40 miles away from the White House, the youth in Baltimore, Maryland, exploded in mass rage against the death of Freddie Gray from injuries sustained while in police custody. His spinal cord was 80% severed and his vocal cords were crushed. He fell into a coma, and died a week later.

The words of civil rights activist Dr WEB Du Bois still ring true for black workers and youth: "A system cannot fail those it was never meant to protect."

After months of handwringing in the mainstream media and from leading Democratic politicians, there is no still no serious plan brought forward to address the brutal policing of poor black communities and the lack of a decent future for black youth across the US.

### Endemic racism

The death of Freddie Gray, along with so many other women and men in Baltimore, shows the real face of poverty, drugs, official neglect, law enforcement surveillance, deindustrialisation, and endemic racism.

Despite having a black mayor, the residents of this majority black city

are the victims of a corporate agenda that places downtown Baltimore above the needs of the Gilmor community in which Freddie Gray lived and died. The example of a dilapidated basketball court in the Gilmor houses, which the city authorities have refused to refurbish for fifteen years despite the community raising the money to do so, tells the whole story.

The police are viewed as an occupying force that is there to oversee, contain and control the black working class and youth. Baltimore law enforcement has a long and notorious record. There have been pleas for federal oversight dating back to the 1980s.

'Zero-tolerance policing' has led to mass arrests of people for small infractions to "deter" them from committing more crimes. It has swept a whole generation into the criminal injustice system, destroying families and locking up huge numbers of innocent people for the crime of being poor.

### Elite divided

The details of Freddie Gray's injuries and subsequent death are tragically not unheard of in Baltimore. Freddie's death comes alongside the killing of Walter Scott in South Carolina and the failure to convict the cop who killed Rekia Boyd in Chicago.

The US ruling elite is in a quandary of what do to about the constant attention being drawn to cases of police violence since the emergence of the Black Lives Matter movement. Some in the elite want to bring in reforms but within very narrow margins.

The Ferguson report following Michael Brown's death described the levels of racism, leeching by city officials on the backs of poor people

and outright corruption.

The possible reforms prescribed in the Ferguson report could be a starting point to organise for more serious reforms to address the crisis. But achieving even basic reforms will require a militant, uncompromising, consistent, and national co-ordinated social movement by the working class and poor.

### Crossroads

Black Lives Matter is at a crossroads. After the wave of protests at the end of last year, there is not a clear direction or leadership despite important local links developing in some areas between this movement, the fight for a \$15 an hour minimum wage and rank-file union activists. This was reflected in the 15 April low wage worker strikes and the protests against the killing of Tony Robinson in Madison, Wisconsin. The developments in Baltimore are a new opportunity to give direction to the fight nationally.

What is necessary is to forge unity around a programme to end police violence and poverty. This means challenging the corporate political establishment, including its black wing, which has colluded in keeping institutional racism intact through the 'war on drugs' and mass incarceration.

But behind the politicians stands the capitalist system, which in the US has always used racism to keep working people divided and which will never agree to the decisive steps necessary to break down racial discrimination. This can only be accomplished by the multiracial working class fighting for a socialist future. See [www.socialistalternative.org](http://www.socialistalternative.org) for full version of this article and updates

# DISASTER IN NEPAL - AMPLIFIED BY CAPITALISM

Senan  
CWI

Nepal, one of the poorest countries in south Asia, has been further devastated by the recent earthquake and its aftershocks. More than 8,000 people are estimated to have perished so far and around 18,000 are injured. Some villages were completely flattened.

Most of the victims were rural poor and the poor in the cities who lived in 'precarious housing'. The Guardian reports the grief of a paralysed newspaper seller: "If we had money we would have built a strong house. But we had none. There is no place to go. There is no one to look after us. Life was hard for us already. I don't want to be alive."

Added to their woes is that there is a severe shortage of medical facilities and the threat of diseases spreading. There is not enough emergency shelter or food for all those affected.

### Warning

But the government of Nepal and geologists across the world knew in advance that a disaster of this scale was waiting to happen, given the understanding about the movement of seismic plates in the sub-continent. And yet the Nepal government and other

governments in the region made no effort whatsoever to prepare and take precautions to prevent death and disaster. The scale of the disaster is therefore made - it could have been lessened dramatically if adequate preventive measures were put in place and infrastructure invested in. There is a massive discontent emerging against the government due to its mishandling of the disaster.

### Poverty

More than a quarter of the population lives below the poverty line in Nepal. The rural poor in particular suffer from a dire lack of clean water and other basic facilities.

Now the huge economic burden of this overwhelming disaster is also transferred on to their heads. The damage to the economy due to the disaster is already expected to exceed \$5 billion - more than 20% of the GDP.

Capitalist governments across the world pretend to be 'sympathetic' but have offered very little help so far. A mere £5 million from the UK government made available to charities is nowhere near the amount needed. According to Unicef, apart from anything else, 940,000 Nepalese children are in urgent need of humanitarian assistance.

In the 2004 tsunami disaster,

people across the world reacted faster and donated more than governments. There is no reliable mechanism to translate the generosity of people across the world into real effective relief efforts. So-called promises from governments are never fully delivered. A significant portion of the money that people donate to charities doesn't get to the people in need, but is wasted through 'administration' and at times also channelled to government departments.

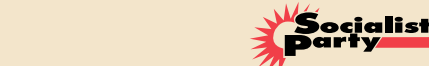
Already evidence is emerging about the mismanagement of relief efforts. Democratically elected committees of workers, peasants and poor should be set up to control aid and an emergency rebuilding programme.

### Hypocrisy exposed

This disaster exposes the inability of Nepal's government and the hypocrisy of the capitalist governments of the world. The need for alternative ways of governing will be raised in the eyes of the masses.

The implementation of social production - a socialist planned economy - could not only lift the masses out of poverty but also plan and implement adequate measures to minimise the disasters that nature causes.

See [www.socialistworld.net](http://www.socialistworld.net) for full article



## What we stand for

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

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

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

### Our demands include:

#### PUBLIC SERVICES

- No to ALL cuts in jobs, 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.

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](http://www.socialistparty.org.uk)

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# ORGANISING RESISTANCE TO TORY CUTS STARTS NOW!

**Rob Williams**  
National Shop Stewards Network

**P**ublic sector workers will be at the sharp end of more austerity but also at the centre of the opposition against it.

The PCS civil service union, the FBU firefighters' union and the POA prison officers' union are holding their 2015 conferences in the immediate aftermath of the Tories winning the general election.

From top to bottom, the trade union movement has to urgently discuss how we organise the resistance to more cuts and attacks on union rights.

There has to be an emergency TUC general council where coordinated strike action, including a 24-hour general strike has to be at the core of the strategy. But we also need to build rank and file pressure on the union leaders.

More anti-union laws, including raising the threshold for strike ballots, could be announced as early as the Queen's Speech on 27 May. Trade unionists must prepare to

## National Shop Stewards Network 2015 conference

**Saturday 4 July, 11am - 4.30pm**  
**Conway Hall, Holborn, London WC1R 4RL**

Confirmed speakers include PCS general secretary Mark Serwotka, BFAWU general secretary Ronnie Draper and anti-blacklisting campaigner Dave Smith

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

defy any such restrictions, most effectively in a united fashion around concrete issues that affect workers, like breaking the pay freeze.

### Leadership

As John McNally, national vice president of the PCS, has said: "The TUC must ensure there is no repeat of the lack of leadership in the 2011 pensions dispute that saw a public sector general strike followed by a humiliating surrender that opened the doors to further attacks and a deepening of austerity."

"Rather than reacting to events the TUC must now pull together the unions to implement its policy of building coordinated campaigns

against the pay freeze and unity in action against austerity. Our movement at every level, including the TUC, must now accept the policy long advocated by PCS and a few other unions of no cuts, no privatisation, as the only viable basis on which to fight austerity."

To take this struggle forward, this year's National Shop Stewards Network conference is meeting in London on 4 July, two weeks after the 20 June anti-austerity demonstration called by the People's Assembly. Our conference is open to everyone in the trade union and anti-cuts movements who are determined to organise the fightback against the Tories. Register today!



photo Senan

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