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the Socialist

Europe and the EU referendum

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£7K RISE FOR MPs ...PEANUTS FOR US!

For workers' MPs on an average worker's wage



Scott Jones

“The pay ‘rise’ I had this year amounts to £10 a month after deductions, which is then offset against my housing benefit and tax credits anyway,” says a low-paid adult social care worker. “For MPs to be awarded massive pay rises makes me feel as if I am living in some cruel satire rather than in one of the richest nations on the planet.”

Workers and their families are forced to ‘debate’ how to pay the bills and put food on the table while languishing on pay that’s been ‘frozen’ for years. Meanwhile MPs and the Conservative government debate whether or not its ‘appropriate’ to accept a £7,000, 10% pay rise. Some reports suggest it could go up by a whopping £19,000 by 2019!

For most people this shouldn’t be a debate at all. David Cameron, feeling the anger, has written to the body that sets MPs’ pay to oppose it.

However, the Tories’ true feelings have been revealed by MPs who have defended the pay rise such as Mark Field. He ridiculously called on MPs to “make a stand” to ensure

the pay rise goes ahead. He then insulted the majority of the population by referring to his £67,000 a year job as “lowly paid”. So much for their claim to be the party of working people!

Some MPs have claimed they would donate the rise to charity. But they happily take home the full amount at the moment and claim expenses for paperclips and biscuits!

Many also find time to take on second jobs - last year MPs declared earnings of more than £7.4 million on top of their parliamentary salaries.

This is in stark contrast to elected socialists like Kshama Sawant, a city councillor in Seattle. She fought for and won a \$15 an hour minimum wage and only takes a quarter of the \$120,000 she is entitled to. The rest goes to assist workers in struggle. Likewise Dave Nellist, chair of the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition. As an MP between 1983 and 1992 he only kept a third of his wage.

These examples show the need for working class representatives rooted in their community and the trade unions, who support workers fighting for proper pay. Join the Socialist Party to help build this alternative.



photo Paul Mattsson

“Not every lie amounts to perjury”

Coulson case collapses amid the stench of hypocrisy

Philip Stott
Socialist Party Scotland

In a farcical outcome riddled with class bias, Andy Coulson - former editor of the defunct News of the World (NoW) tabloid - saw the perjury case against him collapse at the High Court in Edinburgh last week.

Coulson was charged with perjury arising from evidence he gave during Tommy Sheridan's own perjury trial in 2010. Tommy Sheridan was Scotland's most high profile socialist. He was also a leader of the mass campaign that defeated Thatcher's poll tax.

After almost two weeks of evidence, including from former NoW journalists who explicitly stated that Coulson was central to the phone hacking scandal, the judge ruled that the case could not continue.

The ruling states that Coulson's

evidence in the Sheridan trial was neither "relevant" nor "material" to Tommy Sheridan's eventual conviction and he was therefore acquitted.

This astonishing outcome stinks of hypocrisy. Particularly as Coulson, David Cameron's ex-director of communications, was given an 18 months jail sentence for phone hacking in 2014.

Indeed the judge, Lord Burns, pointed to Coulson's deceit when he reasoned that, "not every lie amounts to perjury". Under questioning in 2010 by Tommy Sheridan, Coulson denied any knowledge of phone hacking while he was editor of the NoW.

Just a few months later the Murdochgate scandal erupted in all its fury, leading to four major police investigations, the eventual closure of the NoW and the jailing of Coulson and other news editors.

Had the Tommy Sheridan perjury trial jury in 2010 known about Coul-

son's lead role in phone hacking, and indeed the level of criminality which was routinely practiced at the NoW, there would have been no prospect of a conviction. As it was the jury found Sheridan guilty by only eight votes to six.

Contrast

Coulson's acquittal stands in stark contrast to the way in which Tommy Sheridan was treated by the police and the legal establishment in Scotland.

After winning a civil defamation case against the NoW in 2006, a major police investigation was launched into Tommy Sheridan and those who had given evidence on his behalf. More than £2 million of public money was spent by the police, which also usurped tens of thousands of hours of police officers' time.

In the longest perjury trial in Scottish legal history - the only perjury trial in Scotland arising from a civil



Andy Coulson phone hacker and former Cameron spin doctor (left). Tommy Sheridan before sentencing in 2011.

case and at the cost of a further £2 million - Tommy Sheridan was eventually given a three year jail sentence.

As we explained at the time: "This was a trial through which the rich and powerful enemies of the working class and socialism saw the opportunity to inflict a defeat on an in-

dividual who has been a thorn in the flesh of the capitalist establishment for over 20 years."

Tommy has called for a public inquiry into the handling of the prosecution of Coulson. An online petition is available on www.socialistparty.org.uk

Fifa scandals - a rottenness based on corporate greed



Captain of the sinking ship - Fifa's Sepp Blatter

Suzanne Beishan

Fifa, football's most powerful body, has hit the rocks and is sinking fast. Its high-ranking members, looking to save their skins, have begun to spill the beans on decades' long institutional corruption.

The ongoing bribery and corruption allegations reveal the rottenness of a sporting organisation wedded to profit-driven capitalism and used by unsavoury governments around the world to enhance their

international status.

The most explosive information exposing the football body's systematic racketeering and bribery comes from former Fifa executive member Chuck "super-grass" Blazer - the man who became so bloated on the riches creamed off the world's most loved sport that he reportedly has a £4,000 a month rented apartment in Trump Tower for his cats!

The US Federal Bureau of Investigation, as well as Swiss authorities, are also investigating the 2018 and 2022 World Cup bidding processes.

Bribery

A leaked letter then exposed a \$10 million bribe from South Africa to secure the 2010 World Cup that ended up in the account of former Fifa vice-president Jack Warner through a series of money laundering tricks. Warner is now also facing allegations surrounding a missing \$750,000 he raised for Haiti earthquake victims.

And as the net grows tighter and tighter around outgoing President Sepp Blatter, his former special advisor Guido Tognoni has said that Russia and mass migrant worker-

Corruption: Cameron's skeletons in the closet

Tory Prime Minister David Cameron has used Fifa's bribery scandals to call for a global anti-corruption governance campaign. His missive, ahead of the G7 summit of leading capitalist countries, mostly accuses 'Johnny foreigner' of malpractices.

But before embarking on this crusade Cameron should take a look in the mirror (assuming there is a reflection).

Has he forgotten the decades long revelations of Westminster MPs' 'cash for questions', 'cash for access', 'cash for honours', and expenses fiddles, etc? Fiddles which routinely continue to surface.

Cameron would certainly like to forget having to repay the £680 claimed to remove wisteria from his Oxfordshire mansion (but not repaying the £20,000 a year claimed to pay the mortgage on



Tory PM David Cameron

his wisteria-infested country pile). With these expenses available, no wonder the PM has said he won't take the expected 10% MPs pay rise.

killing Qatar may have had to pay bribes to secure their World Cups.

Ironically, Uefa president Michel Platini, bookies favourite to win the Fifa presidency and who has been very vocal in his criticism of Fifa and Sepp Blatter, voted for Qatar in the controversial 2022 vote. He was on the Fifa World Cup Organising Committee for the now suspect 1998 tournament in France.

Even US prosecutor attorney general Loretta Lynch (as exposed by US Uncut) spent much of her career defending greedy Wall Street bankers and handing out paltry fines to banks caught out on her watch.

This horrific system is corrupt and fails ordinary people both in sport and in wider society and urgently needs a complete overhaul from top to bottom.

Fight devastating spending cuts

Tessa Warrington

At this point, it just seems like a sick joke. The Tories swing the axe down again in their grim carnival of cuts. In this financial year alone the government wants £3 billion of cuts from 'non-protected' departments.

First a March budget, now a surprise June budget. Closely followed by the July budget to detail £13 billion cuts over the next two years. This is on top of the previously announced £12 billion cuts in welfare spending.

Chancellor, you're spoiling us! I can't wait for August, September, October... although something tells me that pay rise I asked for isn't on the cards.

No justice

Tory Chancellor George Osborne's 'surprise' statement last week came as no surprise to anyone. In reality, £3 billion is a fraction of what the government want to fast-track before the big hit in the July budget.

The unveiling of fresh cuts heralds a special sort of dread. £450 million from education, £200 million from health, £230 million from local government - with potential cuts to protective children's services as the bitter taste of establishment sex abuse scandals still lingers in our mouths.

In the Ministry of Justice, where I work, £249 million is to be cut. A spokesperson gave 'renegotiating staff contracts' as an example of how cuts would be made. And that's what it boils down to - no jobs



photo Senan

and no justice.

Even the International Monetary Fund (IMF) has released a report stating that the approach of cutting the national debt 'may not be the best'.

However, the IMF is not rushing to the aid of the working class and poor, but rather the aid of the capitalist system. Their plea is not for governments to stop attacking workers but to make it less obvious!

Five more years of Tory misrule is not an option. Trade unionists will march on 20 June against Tory austerity, but we can't let it end there. More urgent than ever this struggle must be taken into our workplaces, to hit them where it hurts with coordinated strike action.

Through organisation in the anti-poll tax movement we brought down Thatcher. Cameron and Osborne are also ripe for the toppling.

Join the fightback! Join the Socialists!
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Royal Mail sell-off

Public service, not private profit

Rob McArdle
postal worker

Tory Chancellor George Osborne's sale of the remaining 30% government stake in privatised Royal Mail, is a desperate act to meet his commitment of clearing the budget deficit by 2018-19.

Working people are still being forced to pay for the banking crisis with unprecedented cuts to services, while the only cut the rich are experiencing are tax cuts to inflate their already bursting bank balances.

The government is hoping that this sell-off isn't botched like the 2013 privatisation which undervalued Royal Mail by a staggering £750 million - effectively lining the pockets of the Tories' rich City friends.

Ironically, during his recent sell-off announcement Osborne said:



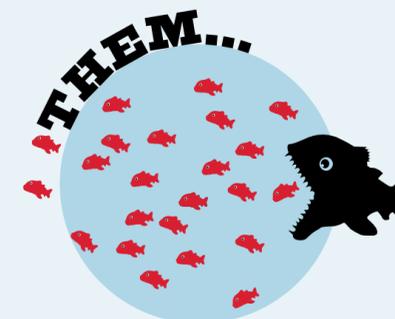
Selling off the final 30% public share of Royal Mail is estimated to raise £1.5 billion, although shares fell by 2.5% immediately upon the announcement, a £50 million drop in the company's value. photo Paul Mattsson

"It is not our money or the government's money, it's the money that people work for and pay in taxes and entrust to us to spend wisely."

Although he had no mandate to privatise Royal Mail, Osborne ignored the public and with Lib Dem help - bulldozed his plans through the last parliament.

Even Tory voters would sooner see a publicly run postal service, with just 8% "strongly supporting" the original sale in a YouGov poll. Osborne knows his decision is unpopular with voters as well as Royal Mail workers.

Royal Mail workers, with newly elected Dave Ward at the helm of the Communication Workers Union (CWU), need to send a strong message of opposition to the government's latest sell-off plans. Moreover, the CWU should continue to fight for its demand to take the industry back into public ownership.



Cash for iPads

In the run-up to the general election, 60 MPs went on a spending spree claiming £70,000 expenses on iPads and computer laptops shortly before the deadline blocking such purchases.

poor people are forced to fight each other for food. Over 25,000 people have signed an online petition calling for the programme to be pulled. Thanks to John Smithee

Bank on it

They may have fleeced the taxpayer of billions in bail-outs, enjoyed massive salary increases and bonus payments, cut thousands of lowly paid jobs, been fined billions for mis-selling financial products and rigging markets, but Britain's bankers have had enough of public criticism.

The British Bankers Association has called for an end to 'banker bashing' (not a euphemism) and demanded that the Chancellor scraps the bank levy on industry profits. As we go to press George Osborne, speaking to City bigwigs at Mansion House, is expected to do just that.

Do not pass go

Mayfair, in central London, lives up to its Monopoly game status as a prime location for the super-rich. According to a recent report 'Who Lives in Mayfair' the area is populated by "Middle Eastern princes, bankers, wealth managers, commodity brokers, advertising directors and students from ultra-wealthy families..." More than nine out of ten of all Mayfair properties sold went for more than £1 million, and 28% over £5 million.

Hunger games

'Poverty porn' appears to be the new success ratings formula for TV producers. Following Benefits Street, et al, the BBC has now commissioned a series, The Hardest Gifter.

Over five weeks 25 unemployed and low-paid workers are pitted against each other in various work roles for a £15,000 prize. The "least effective workers" will then be ousted until one winner emerges.

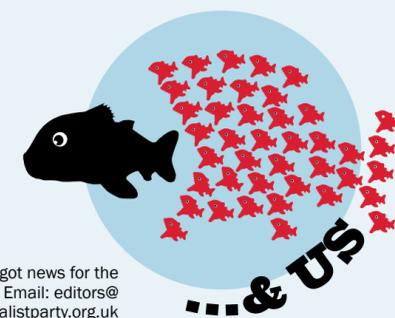
According to the Beeb it's a "serious social experiment for BBC2 which investigates just how hard people in the low wage economy work". Critics refer to it as a 'Hunger Games for the poor' - a reference to the dystopian sci-fi film in which

Social cleansing

While homelessness and 'social cleansing' evictions caused by high rents, low pay and welfare caps grows, in one expensive London street seven out of ten properties have been left unoccupied by their wealthy owners.

PFI fire risk

Eight schools in Knowsley, Merseyside, built under the last Labour government's mega-rip-off Private Finance Initiative (PFI) programme (Building Schools for the Future), have been labelled fire hazards. An inspection of the schools built by Balfour Beatty found fireproofing in all eight to be sub-standard. Meanwhile, Fire Brigades Union officials described PFI built Cumberland Infirmary as "the biggest fire risk in Carlisle". Cumberland Infirmary was the first of 101 hospitals built under Labour using PFI funding.



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'PROMISING FUTURES' WASTED BY CUTS

Build a mass movement to fight back

Thousands of "promising futures" are being put at risk by cuts. That's according to a survey of English councils by the Local Government Association (LGA). 90% have cut services for teenagers not in education, employment or training.

The massacring of council services since 2010 has included a reduction of a third to youth services, scrapping the Connexions advice service and closing youth centres.

The abolition of EMA student payments and trebling of tuition fees blocked off further and higher education to many. Benefit cuts, low wages and sky-high rents mean the poorest young people are stuck living with parents, unable to begin their adult lives.

Fightback

Young people's futures are being stolen by the Tories - and all the pro-cuts parties, including Labour. But we're not taking it lying down.

Tens of thousands have taken part in the wave of protests since the Tories snuck their way back into Number 10 in May, many called at very short notice and led by young people. We have to keep up this momentum and escalate the protest action.

Youth Fight Austerity is holding a 'Block the Billionaire's Budget' protest outside the Treasury Office in London on 11 June in the run up to the People's Assembly national demonstration on 20 June and the national day of action on budget day on 8 July.

The budget will include a further £12 billion of welfare cuts, including more attacks on benefits for young people.

These devastating cuts really are life and death - as shown by the (at least) 80 people who have tragically committed suicide in part because of benefit changes.

The "promising futures" that the LGA talks of being wasted have a real effect on our communities. How many potential social workers, teachers and nurses are forced to waste their talents and interests because of the effect of the cuts?

We need protests, walkouts, occupations and public meetings to take place in every town and city on 8 July.

Let's use the three key dates in the next month as a spring board to a mass movement against the Tories, against austerity, and against capitalism.

See youthfightforjobs.com



Join TUSC on the march against austerity

On 20 June many thousands of people will be taking to the streets of London on the People's Assembly national demonstration to 'end austerity now'. This will be the first national protest against cuts since the general election.

Many of the demonstrators will be among those who cast nearly 120,000 votes for the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC) candidates on 7 May, the only 100% anti-austerity alternative at the ballot box.

TUSC has written to the Peoples' Assembly to ask for a speaker at the demonstration in recognition of this.

We appeal to all TUSC supporters to bring your TUSC banners, placards and t-shirts to the demonstration, to make sure that there is a large, vibrant (and pink!) block of TUSC supporters which all those who voted for TUSC will be able to find and join.

End Austerity Now demonstration
Saturday 20 June
Assemble 12pm, Bank of England, Queen Victoria St, London (nearest tube Bank)

Gains for left in Unison elections

Seven additional left-wingers have been elected to public sector union Unison's leading body, the national executive committee. Although there is not yet a left majority on the executive, the results reflect growing support for greater industrial militancy.

A left coalition including the Socialist Party fought the elections under the title 'Reclaim the Union' (RTU).

Its excellent results brought the executive's left grouping from 18 up to 25 - against 40 others.

In the Black Member seats, Liverpool branch right-winger Calvin Smeda lost his seat to Socialist Party member Hugo Pierre.

In the North West, Roger Bannister held his seat with 6,824 votes - once again the highest vote for any executive member in a regional seat.

The five sitting Socialist Party members on the executive all held their seats.

A number of other Socialist Party members also stood. Glenn Kelly, who lost his seat 2010 during the leadership-led witch hunt against the left, fell 500 votes short of reclaiming it.

Rule breaking

RTU gains were in the face of rule breaking by right-wing branches. The returning officer deemed two to have broken rules by using Unison resources to campaign against RTU candidates.

The left swing resulted in six right-wingers losing their seats, including two committee chairs. The most prominent loss was Sue High-

Read more online at socialistparty.org.uk

ton, chair of the union's Development and Organisation Committee, whose Yorkshire and Humber side seat went to Sarah Littlewood.

Three of the four Greater London regional seats, and all but one in the North West, are now held by RTU.

All of this will unsettle the right wing and bureaucracy of the union. It could pave the way for the more independent-minded of the right-wing bloc to break ranks and occasionally vote with the left.



Seven additional left wingers have been elected to the NEC

Voting took place ahead of the general election; results came out after the Tories claimed a majority. This means the elections could not scrutinise the union's political strategy.

The leadership gave total, uncritical support to Labour, preceded by no real challenge to its pro-austerity manifesto.

However, the forthcoming general secretary election will do precisely that. The latest results auger well for a left challenge.



photo Senan

Unison local government 'Clear fighting strategy' needed

A Unison member

There is a mood of impending dread among millions of local government workers. The Tories are preparing to swing the axe once more on council budgets, unfortunately with the passive - or active - support of all Labour councils.

Last year's botched struggle over pay resulted in the hugely successful recall conference. We will still need to fight to win the supplementary

pay claim that conference forced on the leadership.

In any case, this illustrates two major factors. The anger of our rank and file at an appalling stitch up. And the abject failure of our leadership to measure up to the huge task now in hand.

Conference must draw up a new battle plan to head off the coming cuts, job losses and privatisation.

The vast majority of motions were written before the outcome of the election.

So a clear fighting strategy will need to emerge from debates, and some of the more important fringe meetings at Unison conference.

Clearly we can no longer operate in the same old way. The Socialist Party calls for the urgent convening of union 'councils of war' to meet the attacks.

We will renew our calls for more generalised and coordinated strike action, to prepare the way for a 24-hour general strike against austerity.

Labour leadership race

Can Corbyn's left challenge succeed?

Sarah Sachs-Eldridge

Left-wing backbencher and seasoned campaigner Jeremy Corbyn entered the Labour leadership contest on 4 June.

Until then all the contenders were in a race to the right, offering nothing to those angry with and suffering from Tory cuts. Jeremy has drawn the opposite conclusion from Labour's defeat to his competitors - offering 'austerity-light' failed to win them support.

But he faces an enormous hurdle to get on the ballot paper - securing the backing of 35 MPs. His stand, an attempt to show that there is some Left left in Labour, will confirm the opposite is the case.

In 2010 David Miliband and Harriet Harman 'lent' Diane Abbott

their nomination to get her on the ballot paper, in order to demonstrate the party's diversity. The more left-wing John McDonnell, however, was not able to get the nominations.



Jeremy faces an enormous hurdle to get on the ballot paper

But it is not likely Jeremy will be 'lent' nominations by the frontrunners - pro-privatisation, pro-war and pro-austerity Andy Burnham, Yvette Cooper and Liz Kendall.

A poll of Mirror readers has Jeremy steaming out in front of the

pack. He has 15,000 Facebook 'likes' to Burnham's 4,400. In fact, changes made under Ed Miliband to Labour's democratic structures make the process after nomination comparable to gathering Facebook 'likes'.

Unions

The collective voice of the unions has been removed. Instead, individual trade unionists who sign up to become 'affiliated supporters' can vote in the contest - as can anyone who pays £3 to become a 'registered supporter'.

Given this situation, the Blairite leadership is likely to see gifting Jeremy the nominations as an unnecessary risk.

Jeremy has support from bakers' union BFAWU. It makes sense that Labour-affiliated unions back the

Socialism Today

The Socialist Party's magazine

The June issue includes:

- **Britain** - Tory win will see harsh austerity but new waves of struggle by Peter Taaffe
- **Scotland** - SNP rise, Labour fall in political seismic shift by Philip Stott

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only candidate who represents their members. But this week Jeremy's nominations from MPs have not increased while those for the Blairite triumvirate have.

No doubt there are many workers, activists and trade unionists who hope Jeremy's stand will be a chance to reclaim Labour from the

Blairites who stole it from the working class.

If it proves impossible to even get on the ballot paper, all efforts must turn to building a new mass workers' party. The Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition is doing vital work to prepare for building such an alternative.

COUNCIL CANCELS UNION ORGANISING TIME TO PAVE WAY FOR CUTS

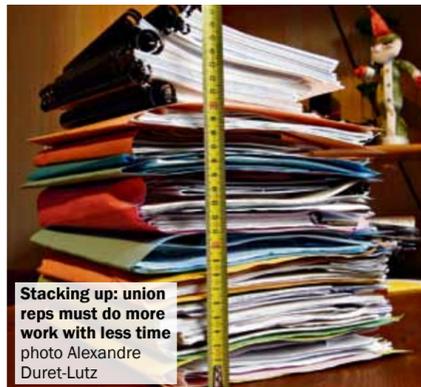
Onay Kasab
Unite regional organiser

A Tory council in south London has withdrawn vital time for staff representatives to do trade union work. Meanwhile, it is preparing to demolish council services. The timing is no coincidence.

Council workers, residents and service users in the London borough of Bromley are marching on 13 June. We will send a loud and clear message to the Conservative leadership: people and services first!

Trade union facility time - paid time off for elected stewards to organise and represent members - has been abolished. Not by rogue managers, but following a political decision by Bromley Conservatives.

These are no "shy" Tories. They oppose public services: they see them as a tax burden on the rich, which should be profit-making businesses instead. Councillors publicly stated that taxpayers must not foot the bill for trade union



Stacking up: union reps must do more work with less time
photo Alexandre Duret-Lutz

Unison trade union branch secretaries must request time case by case. Surprise, surprise - requests have already been refused.

This attack comes at the same time as a mass privatisation programme. In-house staffing will fall from over 3,000 to 300.

Proposals for libraries demonstrate the Tories' sheer arrogance: sell them off, and have volunteers take the place of paid professionals.

Consultation

The council undertook a public consultation. It asked - in light of the 'need' to make over £60 million of cuts over five years - did library users agree with the council's proposals?

An amazing 83% said they did not agree, and wanted services run directly by the council. Those few who supported the private-and-volunteer option likely did so because it was posed as stopping closures. Despite this result, the Tories are going ahead.

This is the same party which says over 40% of union members in

'core' public services must vote for a strike - or it can't happen. Such a system counts not voting as voting against! They clearly have no problem with this gross hypocrisy.

But we are not sitting back and taking it. Unite members have started a campaign, including strike action, to defend services and union rights.

What is happening in Bromley is what awaits the rest of the country. It is now essential the battles in council after council are joined up, and strikes co-ordinated.

The Tories are launching a national campaign to attack public services and trade union rights. That demands a national trade union response - starting with co-ordinated national strike action against all employers' attacks. This could be a step towards a 24-hour general strike against austerity.

Immediately, the Trades Union Congress must organise dissent against the proposed new anti-strike laws. This should include a weekday demonstration outside parliament at their first reading.



What is happening in Bromley is what awaits the rest of the country

'time off'. This was the sole justification for their attack.

The law makes clear that employers must provide this time. Leaving this aside, general union Unite called the council's bluff, offering to foot the bill - 'costing' the taxpayer nothing. The council refused!

In place of facility time, Unite and

DEBATE ON POLITICAL REPRESENTATION RAGES AT BAKERS' UNION ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Iain Dalton

Political representation for workers was the keynote for the first day and a half of bakers' union BFAWU's annual conference. Anger at Labour's election defeat and rightwards drift could break the union's link to the party.

Delegates made numerous references to BFAWU policies Labour doesn't support. These include a £10 an hour minimum wage and rationalising public services. As one speaker pointed out, the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC) backs all such policies.



You can't be a party of the employer and employee; you can't be a party of the landlord and the tenant

TUSC

TUSC is an anti-austerity electoral alliance including the Socialist Party, transport union RMT, and growing numbers of trade unionists. This May it mounted a historic challenge to Labour: over 130 anti-cuts, pro-working class parliamentary candidates.

A motion calling for support for TUSC candidates was ruled out of order, alongside a number of others. But four emergency motions kept political representation on the agenda.

Socialist Party member Steve Nev-in moved that the union explore both the reasons for Labour's defeat, and support for alternatives which back union policy. It was overwhelmingly carried.

A first time speaker commented that "you can't be a party of the employer and employee; you can't be a

party of the landlord and the tenant." Big applause greeted speakers who called for a new party for workers based on the trade unions.

A minority of speakers attempted to defend the Labour link. A number made points showing the party's inadequacies even further. One Labour councillor commented on his experiences: "Labour is so undemocratic it's unbelievable."

Conference voted to support Labour-left Jeremy Corbyn's leadership challenge (see page 5). Newly elected left-wing Labour MP and BFAWU member Richard Burgon was a guest speaker at the conference. Yet despite his appeals to join Labour, he concluded: "If Labour returns to Blairism - electoral oblivion lies in our future."

BFAWU president Ian Hodson called for trade unions to renew opposition to Tory attacks and new anti-union laws. He pointed out that unions have always had to fight for gains, and said: "We can't wait five years for Labour. The TUC should call a general strike."

Tamil Solidarity activist Janahan Sivanathan - a torture victim threatened with deportation - received a warm welcome. He thanked BFAWU for its support in the campaign to release him from detention.

Thirty delegates and visitors attended a fringe meeting with Socialist Party member and TUSC chair Dave Nellist. Many there signed up for more information about supporting TUSC. We sold over 80 copies of the Socialist.

Strike against sacking for saving kid's life



photo Yorkshire SP

Val O'Flynn and Alistair Tice

Train bosses have sacked a Yorkshire guard for potentially saving a child's life. Conductors are striking to have him reinstated.

More than 40 members of transport union RMT walked out for 24 hours on 7 June. The union has called one-day stoppages on the following three Sundays.

A boy - already banned from being near stations by police - had jumped onto a train and hung from it as it

left Grimsby. The guard stopped the train, and the kid jumped off.

As the train moved away, he jumped back on. By this time the guard judged it was safer for him to jump off than be thrown off by an emergency stop.

The guard was fired for not following correct procedure. He was even told that if he had, and the boy went under the train and died, he would still have his job.

Risk

The guard had reported it himself, or no-one would have known. Now any incident of risk is likely to go unreported.

First Group, which operates the line, has quashed all appeals. RMT organiser Gerry Hitchen said "I think our member was just in the wrong place at the wrong time. First are bidding for the franchise renewal and maybe they are showing they will take the union on, or preparing the way for driver-only trains."

The union executive has already agreed to extend the dispute. It will ballot all guard members across the franchise, which covers the north of England running into Scotland.

Dundee hospitals pay dispute

Striking porters 'a hundred times stronger' in bosses' 'nightmare scenario'



photo Socialist Party Scotland

Philip Stott
Socialist Party Scotland

In the city's longest-running strike for over twenty years, Dundee hospital porters are into their tenth week of action.

Porters at Scotland's Ninewells and Royal Victoria hospitals are fighting for a raise they were due over ten years ago. The Scottish Terms and Conditions Committee (Stac) is the official body where NHS Scotland unions and bosses negotiate. It will publish a review into porters' demands later this week.

General union Unite has made a clear, unarguable case. Porters should have moved from pay band one to two under the NHS 'Agenda for Change' - implemented in 2004.

Indeed, three Agenda for Change panels ruled porters should be on the higher grade. Management initiated a fourth, which concluded the porters should be in band one.

Despite repeated requests for documented proof that the union signed the agreement, NHS bosses have failed to provide it.

Speaking to the Socialist, senior steward Graham Nelson said: "Few of us have any real faith in Stac publishing a report that delivers for porters."

"If it does then fine - but we want face-to-face talks with NHS Tayside to ensure we get a band-two grading for all porters, and full-time, permanent posts for temporary porters. And compensation for being under-



Just this morning a guy stopped at the picket line on his motorbike and handed in £200 in cash - I've no idea who he was

paid for so long. Whatever Stac says, the strike will continue until our demands are met."

Striking porter Mark Gilligan told the Socialist: "The last ten weeks have been like one big learning curve and bonding session. We're a hundred times stronger as a group than when we started our strike action."

"One thing that is clear is when the time comes, we'll be going back more united and determined than ever before. I would guess that's a nightmare scenario for management. They'll get away with nothing from now on."

Porters are critical to running hospitals. Everything from patient movement to mail, medical records, clinical waste and supplying bedding.

Management

Management has been taking on portering duties - but failing to cope. Bosses had hoped to rely on other NHS staff to cover for the strike. But as one hospital worker exposed last week in the local press: "There is general support for the porters. The nurses have been facing their own pay dispute which has taken years, and it feels like the porters are striking on behalf of all of us."

"It is absolute rubbish when management say everything is under control. We're at the end of our tether."

Over 100 porters, striking Glasgow homelessness caseworkers and support workers protested at the Scottish par-

liament when the porters' case was raised. The so-called "anti-austerity" Scottish National Party and their public representatives have completely failed to back the porters.

However, the protest, and lobbies at MSPs' surgeries in Dundee, have had an impact. First Minister Nicola Sturgeon broke her silence, and said in parliament: "The porters are a fantastic bunch of people" and "I am hopeful that [Stac] will lead to a successful resolution."

Solidarity from wider NHS staff, trade unionists and the public has been crucial to the strike from the start. "The cheques and donations keep pouring in," Graham explained. "Just this morning a guy stopped at the picket line on his motorbike and handed in £200 in cash - I've no idea who he was."

"We went through to Perth last week to the EIS teachers' union conference, and delegates donated £300 in the buckets. We've had £100 from Glasgow City Unison, whose own homelessness caseworkers are in their eleventh week of action. £1,000 was also given from the Tayside Unite health branch. The public support is inspiring."

The porters' unity and solidarity was marked last week at the funeral of one of their own. There was a huge turnout for Graham "Findus" Nicholson, who died on 29 May.

Graham was buried with the red flag of his trade union and a striking porter's t-shirt. It is to Graham, his family and friends that this article is dedicated.

[News in brief]

Probation workers

Probation workers in England and Wales organised by public sector union Unison will take strike action for 24 hours on 11 June. Employers have failed to improve a 0% pay-rise offer.

Tata Steel

Steel unions have agreed 22 June as the date for industrial action at Tata Steel in their ongoing pensions dispute. The stoppage will be preceded by an overtime ban and a work to rule.

Docklands Light Rail

Members of transport union RMT continue to take strike action in a dispute over pay and working conditions.

Essex firefighters and 999 control workers

Firefighters and 999 control staff in Essex are preparing for further strikes on against job losses on 13 and 14 June. Alan Chinn-Shaw, secretary of the Fire Brigades Union in Essex, said: "These are unprecedented cuts which would see more than a quarter of all Essex frontline firefighters axed."

Yorkshire journalist victimised

Bosses at the Rotherham Advertiser have served a compulsory redundancy notice to only one staff member - National Union of Journalists representative Phil Turner. Members will strike against the move on 11 June.
Sam Morecroft

Messages of support to syorksnuj@hotmail.co.uk

London Royal Parks

Gardeners in London's Royal Parks are in dispute over changes to pay and conditions that leave them out of pocket. General union GMB has called a strike on 12 and 13 June.

National Gallery

Gallery staff organised by public sector union PCS continue to take action against privatisation and a victimised union rep.

European Union referendum

NO TO A CAPITALIST EU, YES TO A SOCIALIST EUROPE!

Peter Taaffe
Socialist Party General Secretary

There has been no honeymoon period for the Tory government. No electoral cavalry is poised to ride over the hill to save working class people from the Tory onslaught.

Workers and young people have concluded that they and their organisations are on their own and will need to energetically push back the bosses and the government's offensive.

Already, within weeks of the election, there have been unprecedented strikes and threats of strikes - most notably of rail workers and, for the first time in 30 years steelworkers, and others.

This, together with the outbursts of young people - in cities like Bristol, London, Liverpool and Leeds - is a forewarning of the resistance to come.

Tossed into this toxic mix for Cameron is the promised referendum on European Union (EU) membership, which has the potential to split the government and the Tory party itself from top to bottom.

It could even complete the work of the Scottish referendum in accelerating Scottish independence.

Nicola Sturgeon, leader of the SNP, has already proposed a 'double majority', meaning that exodus from the European Union would only be possible if England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland all agree, which is unlikely.

She also suggested 16-year-olds and upwards should be able to vote,

something that we would endorse.

And the Scottish referendum campaign should be the benchmark for the workers' movement approach to the EU referendum.

That was fought not just on the issue of independence, but on austerity - planned poverty - which was overwhelmingly rejected by the Scottish working class, as were the parties which supported it.

Workers' interests

A clear 'No' to the EU linked to a class and internationalist programme - emphasising the common interests of the European working class and rejecting capitalist nationalism - would be a shattering blow to Cameron, and could possibly hasten his departure and that of his government.

Not least of the effects of a rejection of the capitalist EU would be the encouragement this would give to all those who have felt the heel of 'Brussels' on their necks, beginning with the Greek workers.

The referendum is due to take place by the end of 2017 but could be held as early as 2016, to avoid coinciding with elections in France and Germany in particular.

The electorate in these countries will not be enamoured by the pleas of Cameron for special treatment for British capitalism, 'concessions' or even 'full-on' EU treaty changes.

'Me too', the people of other countries could demand if Cameron is successful, although his frantic dash around Europe to meet with his counterparts has met with a lukewarm response.

Nevertheless, a field day could be provided for virulent nationalism,



setting workers against one another other, to the benefit of the bosses.

Racism will also be whipped up by right-wing parties like Ukip demanding action against so-called 'scrounging' immigrants.

It is therefore crucial that the workers' movement in Britain starts from an independent working-class standpoint through a class campaign.

The EU is, in the final analysis, a bosses' club, with different wings of capitalism collaborating - like thieves chained together in the same cart - while also striking blows at one another, only differing on how best to defend their own 'national interests' and their system.

Our starting point on this issue is the exact opposite; what benefits working class people and helps to cement their unity can be supported and what acts against this must be implacably opposed.

This referendum takes place in a different political context to 1975, the last time when a vote on the 'Common Market' took place.

Then, the TUC justified its support for a 'Yes' vote by seeking to give a 'progressive' content to the EU.

It argued that the workers' movement would be able to extract benefits

from Britain's membership. But that argument has now been completely undermined as the EU becomes more and more a neoliberal tool against workers' organisations and rights.

Migration

The alleged benefits of the 'free movement of labour' are in reality a device for the bosses to exploit a vast pool of cheap labour, which can then be used to cut overall wage levels and living standards.

However, higher and higher barriers, 'wider' oceans, the bombing of boats used to carry refugees to Europe, which Cameron scandalously suggested, will not stop the flow of desperate workers fleeing terrible wars or demanding a better life for themselves and their families.

The war criminal Tony Blair, through the Iraq war, and Cameron, with his gung-ho bombing of Libya, and the resulting mayhem in the Middle East have directly contributed to this.

In general, no worker flees his or her homeland through choice, but only if the conditions of their lives become unbearable.

The only way to end this is to assist the masses in the Middle East to

“The EU is, in the final analysis, a bosses' club”

change their present conditions by fighting against the rotten dictatorships which have temporarily dashed the hopes raised in the initial wave of revolutions.

It is necessary to forge a unified movement which can combat the deadly sectarianism of Isis and its kind and open up a new socialist vista for the peoples of the region.

In Europe, the way to proceed against the bosses' attempt to split the working class is to demand fairness for all, above all 'the rate for the job', of at least a £10 minimum wage in Britain.

There is fear and resentment that scarce resources in housing, education and the NHS will not be sufficient if a new wave of immigrants comes to Britain.

Only a programme offering fully-funded services and a crash house building plan, driven by a publicly-owned and controlled programme of public works, can assuage all workers' fears.

Cameron and the Tories support the import of cheap immigrant labour while denouncing immigrants who are allegedly living on benefits, which the government knows quite well, is only a tiny minority.

In any case, even Cameron's attempt to limit Polish immigration to Britain was met with a flat rejection by the Polish Prime Minister, Ewa Kopacz.

The latter is only too happy to continue to 'export' her problems, encouraging poverty-stricken workers to flee the country.

If they were forced to stay, she and the Polish capitalists would be confronted by a massive rebellion of Polish workers, which is coming in any case.

Only common action across national boundaries, as well as within nations, can allow us to build a strong workers' movement to confront the bosses and stop them from exploiting and gaining from divisions within the working class.

This must include defending the rights of all workers who have moved across the continent in search of work to remain, if they wish to do so, with full rights in the country where they now live.

At the same time, if the workers' movement was taking on and defeat-



Cameron's attempts to negotiate special treatment within the EU have met a lukewarm reception

ing the bosses across Europe, many workers would choose to return to the country they were forced to move from by mass impoverishment and unemployment.

Alleged EU advantages

Those who will advocate a 'Yes' vote, to remain in the EU, will play on the alleged advantages for workers of the EU.

This was not true in the past but is even less so today. Nicola Sturgeon, who supports a 'Yes' vote, has said she will not share a common platform with Cameron. This reflects the pressure of the Scottish working class.

The EU's 'Working Time Directive', which sets limits on average working time, is a case in point. The British government has 'opted out' of that rule.

The Tories demand further 'opt outs', so furthering the process of slave-like wages and conditions in Britain.

Frances O'Grady, general secretary of the TUC, argues that "the TUC wants the UK to be at the heart of a fairer and more prosperous Europe... This will not be achieved if business leaders and politicians seize the negotiation of UK membership as an opportunity to weaken employment rights."

She is suggesting that the bosses cease acting like bosses, their governments are transformed from feeding the capitalist werewolves to extract greater and greater profits from working people and become instead harmless lambs!

The brutal oppression of the Greek, Spanish, Irish, Italian and Portuguese workers, through the 'Troika' and the EU in general, is entirely lost on the tops of the trade unions.

In reality, trade union leaders tried to franchise out the task of improving workers' living standards in the past through seeking concessions from Brussels rather than through workers' movement pressure, including strike action.

Now, however, they confront an entirely different beast, an EU that is openly wedded to neoliberal policies, the super-exploitation of the working class.

History

In the 1975 British referendum the Socialist Party, as Militant then, conducted an effective independent campaign under the slogan "No to a capitalist Europe, yes to a socialist Europe".

Through the Labour Party Young Socialists, meetings were held throughout the country culminating with a demonstration ending in Trafalgar Square of over 2,000 youth and

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

workers.

The Labour Party then was still a workers' party at bottom. Unlike others on the left (such as Tony Benn and the Communist Party) who spoke on platforms with Tory MPs and agreed to a simple common 'No' position, we refused to mix up banners and share common platforms with Tories, nationalists and pro-capitalist forces who also advocated a 'No' vote.

The EU was portrayed by its founders and is still seen even by many working class people today - particularly the young - as an expression of 'internationalism', a laudable attempt to overcome national antagonisms.

An additional advantage would be the development of the economies of Europe to the mutual benefit of all the peoples of Europe.

A 'united Europe' would also, it is argued, avoid a repeat of the two terrible world wars which left the continent and big parts of the globe in ruins.

Capitalism's limits

But capitalism will never be able to really unify Europe. Nor is it capable of avoiding war, as the Balkan catastrophe demonstrated - with its quarter of a million victims and hundreds of thousands of forced displacements, leaving in its wake an even more poisonous legacy of intensified ethnic conflict.

The European capitalists participated in the Balkan war alongside the US, not for 'humanitarian' reasons as Blair and Clinton argued at the time but in order to enhance the national and strategic interests of imperialism.

It is true that the intertwining and economic collaboration in Europe was taken very far - fuelled by the economic upswing of capitalism in the post-1945 period and then in the 1990s.

This even generated the illusion amongst many, including some Marxists, that unification of the continent was possible on a capitalist basis.

But the Socialist Party insisted that the European capitalists could never succeed in completely overcoming the barrier of private ownership of industry on the one side and national states on the other.

The 'national interests' of each capitalist class after more than 60 years of attempts to establish 'European unity' are still seen as primary, as Cameron has made clear through his demand for substantial changes to the EU.

Continued on page 10

“The brutal oppression of the Greek, Spanish, Irish, Italian and Portuguese workers, through the 'Troika' and the EU in general, is entirely lost on the tops of the trade unions”



The EU has more and more become a neoliberal tool against workers' organisations and rights photo Paul Mattsson

European Union referendum



RMT transport union members, including late general secretary Bob Crow (second from left holding banner) march in Brussels photo Paul Mattsson

Continued from page 9

The continent is riven with conflict, by separate states with their own armies, largely different legal codes, etc. Does this mean that Europe is destined to be Balkanised, divided for ever? No! But only the working class can really unify Europe through democratic socialism, eradicating poisonous divisions through real working class internationalism, leading to a voluntary democratic socialist confederation of the continent.

Capitalist nation state

The establishment of the first 'Common Market' and its extension as the EU and the 'single market', then the eurozone itself, are undoubtedly reflections of the real economic processes developing under capitalism.

The productive forces - science, technique and the organisation of labour - have outgrown the narrow limits of the nation state.

The transnationals, with their vast economies of scale, are not limited to the countries in which they originate, but within which they are still mainly based.

They organise on a continental and world scale. This process was even evident before the advent of the EU in the 1950s and 60s period, when the world boom enormously furthered the dismantling of tariff barriers and, to a limited extent, even partially overcame the obstacle of the national state itself.

This was reflected in a spiralling of growth that lasted for an unprecedented 25 years between 1950 and 1975. The advent of neoliberalism

- characterised by colossal intensification of the exploitation of the working class, low-paid part-time jobs instead of high paid and permanent jobs, etc - greatly reinforced this process.

Many were thrown off balance by this development and swallowed the illusion that capitalism could complete the process and unify Europe.

The establishment of the eurozone seemed to reinforce this. But the onset of the economic crisis, as the Socialist Party predicted, saw the exact opposite take place with the re-emergence of national divisions and nationalism with a pronounced tendency towards the eventual breakup of the eurozone itself.

Eurozone

The introduction of the euro was utopian in its aim of establishing a lasting common currency, something that could only be possible on the basis of a 'political union', which has not and will not happen.

Like the gold standard of the past, which the capitalists were compelled to abandon in the interwar period, the euro became a deflationary trap.

While Germany, as the strongest economic power, has been strengthened, the euro has economically crippled those weaker states like Ireland, Greece and Spain, and threatens to do the same to Italy and others.

In the past, these countries had

the option of devaluation of their currencies, which could cheapen their exports and therefore lead to a greater share of the 'market'.

Of course, the working class would suffer with a rise in the cost of imports and therefore cuts in living standards.

But with this option closed off by a 'common currency', their only option as their economic position worsens has been, in effect, to carry through an 'internal devaluation', savage cuts in living standards and austerity to meet the euro's criteria.

Euroceptics

In the case of Britain, the general dissatisfaction with the European 'project' has been aggravated through the resentment - felt particularly by the right of the Tory party - of British capitalism's historical decline.

This in turn has been reflected in the growth of euro-scepticism, particular manifested within the Tories.

These unreconstructed nationalists wreaked havoc in John Major's government through the revolt of the, as he called them, 'bastards'. This considerably restricted his government's room for manoeuvre.

Cameron now confronts a similar problem, magnified and aggravated by the long-term crisis of British capitalism.

His attempt to mollify them through the EU referendum will now be put to the test. But the political situation is much more complicated now than when Major was

in power. The eurosceptics in his party appear to be even stronger, while his European counterparts are less willing to make the necessary concessions which would enable Cameron to mollify his right wing than were Major's contemporaries.

Cameron faces a number of severe road blocks. Britain, particularly the financial power of the City of London, is the major channel for inward investment from international capital to the EU itself.

The idea of breaking from the EU and the 'City' therefore losing its leading role in Europe and the world, means that the majority of the finance sector is opposed to exit.

49% of British goods exports go to the EU, while just 37% of 'services' are exported there.

The combination of the pressure of the eurosceptics on one side and the intransigence of Cameron's 'partners' in the EU on the other to give sufficient concessions could lead to a breakdown, with the prospect of 'Brexit' therefore not ruled out.

However, there is some way to go before that point is reached. And, as in 1975, if there appears to be a real fear of being isolated and 'left outside', this will result in a massive scare campaign by the decisive sections of British capitalism - "jobs will be lost, conditions will deteriorate" - in order to achieve the 'right' result.

The workers' movement should intervene by revealing the gross capitalist reality behind the 'European project' and advance the case for a new socialist Europe and world.



Only the working class can really unify Europe through democratic socialism

Newcastle demo sets a striking tone

Elaine Brunskill

Around 1,000 joined the anti-austerity march and rally in Newcastle on Saturday 6 June.

Trade unionists, including stewards involved in recent disputes at Barbour, Tyneside Safety Glass and Kone, marched behind Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition banners.

The demo came to a halt outside both Vodafone and Sports Direct - companies that are renowned for tax avoidance and zero hour contracts.

Mick Joyce, shop steward from Kone and new Socialist Party member, was the first speaker at the rally.

He got a tremendous response when he held up the Socialist newspaper and declared the lesson from their dispute was summed up in its headline: "Strikes get results".

Public meeting

Immediately after the rally our Socialist Party public meeting was packed out. Everyone there was enthused by Hannah Sell's analysis of



Kone steward Mick Joyce speaks at the rally photo Elaine Brunskill

the general election and what needed to be done next. We raised £208 fighting fund. Two

people joined the Socialist Party and many others expressed an interest in joining.

LEEDS TUSC CALLS FOR NOT-FOR-PROFIT LETTING AGENCY

Iain Dalton
Leeds Socialist Party

Leeds TUSC met with council officials, on 2 June to call for a mass council house building programme and the introduction of a council-run not-for-profit letting agency.

The council representatives said they'd already put £100 million aside for 383 new council homes and around 800 refurbishments,

and secured cross-party agreement for lobbying government for the ability to borrow to build new council housing.

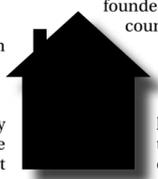
Baby steps

While these could be seen as baby steps in the right direction - Leeds has a huge council house waiting list of over 20,000 - they did also promise to examine the idea of a not-for-profit

letting agency.

A feasibility study from York University Socialist Society, where a not-for-profit agency has been founded, was passed on to the council to help make our case.

We will also continue collecting signatures at www.change.org/p/leeds-city-council-establish-a-council-run-letting-agency-build-council-houses



Protesters tell Labour councils to fight Tory cuts

Chesterfield

Disability, school crossing and other anti-cuts campaigners marched alongside people from Rethink Mental Illness and Our Vision Our Future self-advocacy groups to fight Tory cuts that are passed on by the local Labour council.

Speakers, including disability campaigner Gary Mathews, highlighted how people most in need of public services are the ones being hit the hardest, with some disabled people being reassessed and losing their care packages altogether.

Elaine Evans

Barnsley

On 5 June, a demonstration at Barnsley Town Hall was held outside the first council meeting since the local elections. We were there to show we won't tolerate any more Tory cuts imposed by Labour councillors.

Many organisations were represented including BFAWU food workers' union, Barnsley Against Bedroom Tax and the Socialist Party.

We also had coverage from the BBC's Sunday Politics programme.

Karen Fletcher



A protester at the Chesterfield demo photo Elaine Evans

Socialist Party Fighting Fund

	£ target	£ received	April to June 2015		Deadline 30 June 2015	
North West	1,200	1,526				127%
Northern	600	707				118%
South West	1,400	1,242				89%
West Midlands	2,100	1,739				83%
Yorkshire	2,900	2,033				70%
East Midlands	1,600	1,085				68%
Eastern	1,200	598				50%
South East	750	289				39%
London	6,100	2,303				38%
Southern	1,200	418				35%
Wales	2,300	733				32%
England & Wales	3,650	1,300				36%
TOTAL	25,000	13,978				56%

Donate today!

If you agree with what you read in the Socialist, consider making a donation to the Socialist Party's fighting fund:

■ pay by card via 020 8988 8777 or socialistparty.org.uk/donate

■ cheques payable to 'Socialist Party', PO Box 24697, London E11 1YD



Warrington TUSC

Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC) councillor Kevin Bennett has slammed proposals by Labour-led Warrington borough council that over £8,000 more should be spent on new chairperson 'allowances'.

Kevin said: "After years of cuts to jobs and services made by this administration, they are now advocating that even more council members receive an extra allowance on top of their basic councillor allowance."

"I find this very distasteful when even more cuts will be implemented over the coming years."

"This smacks of 'snouts in the trough'. "The £8,000 would probably go halfway to pay for an extra youth worker on the streets of Warrington."

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THIS SKYPE IS THE LIMIT!

Stan Herschel
RMT, retired

A neighbour of mine is married with two children and lives in a nice council house. His wife holds down three jobs.

Both have paid National Insurance and tax since they left school and started work. He has been made redundant three times since I first met him, once just two weeks before Christmas.

He has been with his current company for 11 months and in his words, "it's canny money".

Bright future?

At his interview he was advised that the company was a family run business, that orders were good and the future looked bright. The business employs about 120 people over two shifts.

About a month ago his shift was called into the canteen for "an ad-

dress" from the Managing Director (MD). There they are, sitting in the canteen, when a giant TV monitor is wheeled in.

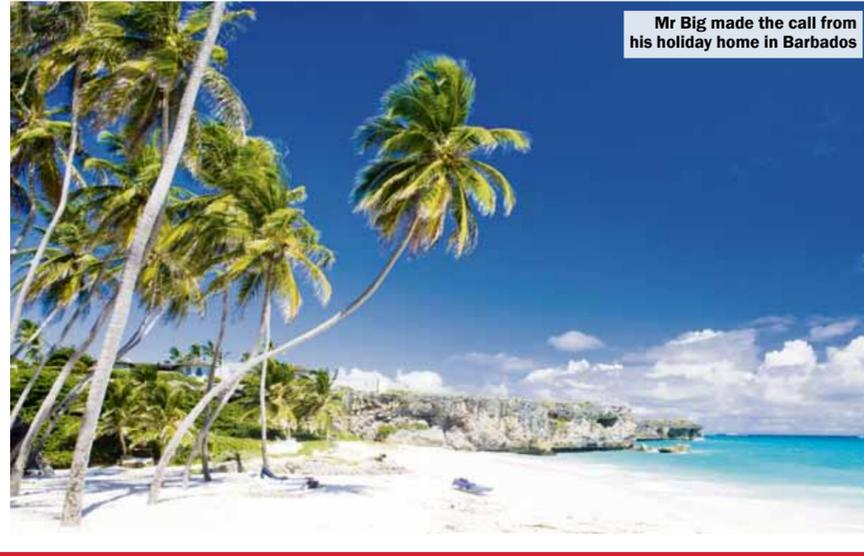
Up pops Mr Big, via Skype, to inform the staff that he was going to need 60 redundancies over the two shifts. But because he was such a good bloke he had whittled that down to 30.

The redundancies would be by selection and probably 'last in first out' unless you're crap at your job or your attendance is poor, in which case your days are numbered.

All in it together?

Some may say 'what's new' and the answer is probably nothing. But the clue is in 'Skype'. The MD was speaking from his holiday home in Barbados!

Osborne, Cameron and Labour MPs may say: "we are all in this together." It does not matter how you dress it up, this story shows it's us and them.



Mr Big made the call from his holiday home in Barbados

TV review

1945 – when Britain said no to Churchill

Geoff Jones (Socialist Party Wales) reviews 'Churchill – When Britain Said No'. (BBC2 TV 25 May)

Seventy years ago, at the general election of 5 July 1945, a historic Labour landslide swept Winston Churchill out of power, and gave Clement Attlee's government a big majority.

"Churchill – When Britain said no" tried to show why the 'great war leader', often called 'the greatest living Englishman', was unceremoniously turfed out of office at the first opportunity.

Establishment historians including Max Hastings and Antony Beevor, by no means left-wingers, analysed the facts using interviews and contemporary film, alongside the words of Churchill and his contemporaries in re-enacted scenes.

Wrong reasons

How did Churchill become 'the great war leader'? By doing the 'right things', for all the wrong reasons. In 1940, after Nazi armies smashed France and drove out the British Army, there was no way that Britain alone could dream of winning the war.

Rational members of Britain's ruling class already saw this. Some had always been sympathetic to Hitler's aims of crushing workers' organisations.

Others, like Lord Halifax (who had nearly defeated Churchill to the Premiership) were already putting out feelers for a deal with Hitler.

Although not unsympathetic to Hitler, Churchill would have none

of this, fearing that any deal would mean the end of the British Empire. For Churchill the Empire, carrying the "white man's burden" of 'civilising' – and exploiting – 'inferior' races had to be fought for at all costs.

This determination to fight on mirrored the attitude of the mass of working people.

Having seen workers' organisations being smashed in Germany, and mass executions of trade unionists in Spain, they knew a similar fate awaited them under any Nazi puppet regime.

So they, and Churchill, were for fighting on – for diametrically opposite reasons!

'War socialism'

But the dictates of war imposed a form of 'war socialism' under Churchill's nose – planning for war production required government control of major industries, while rationing meant a far fairer distribution of food than during the impoverished 1930s.

The feeling of 'we're all in it together' led workers to a determination after the war that 'we're not going back to the bad old days'.

This mood among the mass of workers, especially in the industrial areas, as well as among working class conscripts serving in the forces, was exacerbated by memories of Churchill's wars against strikers in the past, when he was prepared to use the army against them.

A newsreel showed Churchill trying to speak at a mass meeting in Walthamstow in 1945 and being booed off the platform. In cinemas in the Welsh Valleys, newsreels of



How did Churchill become 'the great war leader'? By doing all the 'right things,' for all the wrong reasons



Churchill's tours were booed off the screen.

Neither Labour, Liberal nor Tory parties, who had been in the coalition National Government throughout the war, expected the result.

Nationalisation

At the Labour conference before the election, the delegate moving a successful resolution calling for nationalisation of the commanding heights of the economy was told by a Labour right winger that his speech had "just lost us the election."

Quite the opposite! Constituencies which had never seen a Labour candidate fell to Labour. The number of Tory MPs was halved.

Even in Churchill's constituency, where the other parties had not stood candidates, a last minute



Independent, whose election material was in poetry, gained some 10,000 votes against Churchill's 25,000.

All this was spelled out in the programme, mainly by historians with impeccable establishment credentials and accents. It aroused howls of "character assassination" in papers like the Daily Telegraph – a recommendation in itself!

However, to view history from the working class angle and to understand the successes and failures of the 1945 Labour government, socialists should see Ken Loach's excellent film 'Spirit of '45' and the article in the Socialist issue 858.



In cinemas in the Welsh Valleys, newsreels of Churchill's tours were booed off the screen

Tories plan to block parents objecting but... Strikes and bold campaigning can beat academy plans

Martin Powell-Davies, secretary of Lewisham National Union of Teachers (NUT) branch and national executive member, explains how Lewisham's teachers, students and parents beat plans to make local schools into academies.

Successful governments have used the academies programme to fragment and divide education in England as part of a wider agenda to cut and privatise public services. Lewisham had largely resisted academisation, with only a handful of schools having converted so far.

However, last November, Lewisham NUT decided we had to act on rumours that several secondary schools could be under threat. If these became academies, there was a real danger that others could quickly follow

We said "don't wait until it's too late"! The NUT seized the initiative, calling a "No more academies" public meeting to explain why academisation would prove disastrous for parents, staff and students alike.

We set the tone that the academy steamroller could be stopped. We invited a speaker from Hove Park school, where a joint campaign by staff and parents had just successfully opposed academy conversion in Brighton. We were fighting to win in Lewisham too.

That meeting set up a joint 'Stop Academies in Lewisham' campaign uniting staff, parents and students. We produced a leaflet naming five schools that we understood were at threat. Now, after seven months of campaigning, none of those schools has been able to convert!

Collective strength

Our priority was to use our collective strength and organise strike action. At first, the campaign was mainly trade union based although a follow-up meeting quickly brought more parents and students on board too.

What better way to publicise the academy threat than to take strike action? As a parent explained: "Governors keep you in the dark, but when the unions strike, then we find out what's really happening."

We approached the NUT nationally to seek support for a strike ballot. The NUT's National Action Officers were supportive, seeing the threat of a change in employer to an academy trust as constituting a legal trade dispute. Until and unless that threat was lifted, we would take action to oppose it.



Sedgehill students protest outside Lewisham Town Hall photo Lewisham SP

A first indicative NUT ballot across all five schools recorded a 98% 'yes' vote on a 73% turnout. This was followed by the legal ballot needed to call ongoing 'discontinuous' strikes. Four days of strike action were called in total, with school unions NASUWT and GMB joining the action too.

Early success

The campaign had an early success when governors at the first school to publicly consider academisation, Bonus Pastor, withdrew their plans. Sedgehill school then became the centre of attention.

We knew school students will mobilise to defend their education too. Determined to oppose threats that Lewisham's Labour council might turn their school into an academy, hundreds of Sedgehill students protested outside the town hall. For now, Sedgehill is also still a maintained school!

A delegation of students from the Prendergast Federation, three other schools where governors were considering academisation, joined Sedgehill students that evening and then played a key part in the campaign to 'Save Prendergast'.

They demanded that governors heard their concerns about staff turnover and worse education if the schools converted.

Actions included 'work-to-rules' in class, walkouts and their own student ballot which showed over-

whelming opposition to the academy plans.

On strike days, strikers were encouraged to leaflet and build events to spread the message and were joined by students and parents too.

Governors were kept under pressure to think again through public meetings, two local demonstrations, press coverage, lobbies, leafleting and public campaign stalls.

A packed public debate between me and the Federation's Executive Headteacher showed how little community support there was for the academy plans and how unconvincing were their arguments.



The government may change the law but, as our battles showed, they cannot stop the opposition

That pressure must have worried the governors. However, the blow that finally forced them to retreat came from a legal challenge.

Parents found that the Department for Education and governors had ignored a regulation requiring a federated school to win the backing of parents and staff governors too. They

Academies aren't working

Academies, started by Labour, are state-funded schools but run by trusts accountable only to the government, rather than local communities.

They control their own pupil admissions and exclusions policies and don't have to follow national pay and conditions for staff.

Academies don't improve education. A cross-party Education Select Committee concluded in January that "Current evidence does not prove that academies raise standards overall or for disadvantaged children".

Fragmentation and privatisation worsen public services instead of improving them.

The Tories want to force through the academy conversion of another 1,000 schools.

Unless these plans are resisted they will result in chains of academies, run in the interests of their sponsoring businesses, totally replacing locally accountable maintained schools.

hadn't and so, for now, the Prendergast plans have been withdrawn too.

This challenge must have been in Tory Education Secretary Nicky Morgan's mind when she announced that she was closing 'loopholes' blocking academy conversions.

In reality, opportunities for parents' objections to be heard have already been extremely limited. Even Thatcher thought parents should be balloted over schools' 'opting-out' in the 1990s, but this Tory government wants to legislate to try and rule out any opposition.

Political voice

The government may change the law but, as our battles showed, they cannot stop the opposition. If campaigns put the arguments firmly, then the academy programme's real aims are easily exposed.

However, the kind of firm strike action and bold campaigning seen in Lewisham will be needed to give that opposition real strength. The Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition's (TUSC) election campaign in Lewisham, which backed our fight against academisation, showed the way.

TUSC activists played an important role in building community support. Academies' opponents will need to build a political voice, representatives that call for the academy programme to be reversed, unlike the Labour Party!

GREECE: CRUNCH TIME FOR SYRIZA?

Niall Mulholland
CWI

Recently Greece has appeared to move a step closer to defaulting on its debt and exiting from the eurozone. Athens has been trying to secure an agreement from the European Union, European Central Bank and International Monetary Fund - the Troika (now also known as the 'Institutions') - for access to more than €7 billion in bailout funds.

With Greece's money running out, it needs to secure funds by the end of June to avoid defaulting. But its creditors have put draconian conditions (more austerity) on any deal, which the left Greek Syriza government has, so far, refused to accept.

The Troika demanded pension cuts, privatisations, labour market 'reforms', VAT increases and more cuts to the already beleaguered welfare system. The counter proposals of the Greek prime minister, Alex Tsipras, were flatly rejected by the Troika.

The Troika's haughty neo-colonial attitude provoked the Greek government to declare it would not meet a debt repayment of €300 million due on 4 June. Instead it would 'bundle' the debt repayment, along with other payments due to the IMF, and pay the debt later in the month.

Deep tensions

Indicating the deep tensions between the Troika and Greek government, the European Commission president, Jean-Claude Juncker, responded with a furious verbal attack against Tsipras at the start of the G7 summit in Germany.

Tsipras is under immense pressure from ruling elites and international 'markets' to strike a deal with the Troika while, at the same time, he faces angry opposition to yet more cuts from the Greek working class and the left inside Syriza.

One third of Greeks already officially live below the poverty line (in reality more than 50%) and the average Greek household has lost 40% of its income since 2010.

Tsipras and the Troika argue over how big a budget surplus Greece should run. But taking into account the interest payments, the country's debts are unpayable. Its debt is 175% of national income (GDP).

Growth?

Yet the deluded neo-liberal ideologues at the EU institutions insist the Greek economy can grow by almost 3.5% on average in each of the next five years, bringing the debt ra-



The Troika is putting draconian conditions on any deal

tio down to 120%. At this point, it is unconvincingly argued, Greece might be able to turn to the financial markets again to raise money, despite the fact that the economy will be ravaged once more by further Troika-imposed cuts.

The BBC's Robert Peston estimates that even on the basis of the Troika's absurd growth forecasts it would take fifty years of austerity for Greek public debt to fall to 'sustainable' levels.

Even the IMF, seeing how ludicrous this position is, has in the past reportedly pressured for a partial write-off of Greece's debt.

This was strongly opposed by the eurozone powers, Germany, in particular, who believe debt relief would result in other indebted countries, like Portugal, Spain and Ireland, demanding similar treatment.

At the G7 summit, US President Obama called for 'compromise' between the EU and Greece, albeit with Athens taking "some tough political choices". Washington is concerned that Greece's exit from the eurozone would have negative knock-on effects on the anaemic world economy.

The White House (but also Germany and other EU powers) also fears that the Putin regime in Russia would use the opportunity to



step in with financial aid for Greece and use its influence on the Nato member to undermine the Western powers.

'Grexit'

A 'Grexit' is a real possibility, either by 'accident' or design. Under immense pressure from the long suffering Greek working class, the Syriza government could decide it cannot accept the Troika's new dictates and find itself thrown out of the eurozone.

Anticipating this possibility, Moody's bond credit rating agency announced a €5 billion loss of deposits from Greek banks in May, and expects a run on the banks will lead to capital controls.

Grexit would see an end to externally-imposed austerity and allow the Greek government to devalue and write off a large chunk of its debt. Exports would be cheaper. But imports would cost more, and this would have a negative effect on personal savings and living conditions.



900 attend rally to re-elect Kshama Sawant!

"Seattle is being turned into a playground for the rich, a profit machine for the big developers... I have a different vision for Seattle, one that is based on social justice, equality, and environmental sustainability... where all people are able to flourish and live in dignity... I think that is worth fighting for." - Kshama Sawant

On the evening of 6 June, around 900 supporters packed Seattle town hall to rally to re-elect Socialist Alternative (co-

thinkers of the CWI in the US) Seattle city council member Kshama Sawant.

The speakers addressed a range of crucial issues and included progressive journalist Chris Hedges, Green Party former candidate for president Jill Stein, local community and union organisers, Socialist Party member of the Irish Parliament Ruth Coppinger, and a Syriza

party activist from Greece. Although coming from varied backgrounds, the speakers converged on a single message: Kshama's presence on the Seattle city council is a powerful sign that corporate politics

can be defeated - and we must do all we can to help re-elect her.

The energy in Seattle's town hall was palpable, and was reflected in the nearly \$30,000 raised.

This commitment showed every sign of lasting into the campaign season (primary on 4 August), as supporters pledged their time and energy as volunteers for the campaign.

See a video of the rally at www.socialistalternative.org

On the basis of capitalism, Grexit on its own would not solve any of the fundamental problems of the Greek economy and society.

While the eurozone powers believe they have prepared enough so that a Grexit would cause fewer economic storms than a few years ago, they are worried about the possible political consequences: 'eurozone integration' and the austerity orthodoxy would face serious setbacks.

Unless Tsipras caves in completely to the Troika, with disastrous consequences for Syriza, it is still possible that Greece and the Troika will reach another 'fudged' deal.

This may involve Greece's creditors scaling down their austerity demands and giving Athens the money to meet debt repayments, with the added possibility of some debt 'forgiveness'.

No fudge

Tsipras has threatened to take such a deal to a referendum or to call elections. But for Greek workers and the poor, there can be no fudge over the calamitous effect of any more cuts.

Under the failed capitalist system, in or out of the eurozone, the great majority of Greek people face endless hardship.

Xekinima (CWI Greece) calls for

Syriza to be consistent with its pre-election anti-cuts pledges, to break with austerity and to adopt a socialist programme.



Xekinima calls for Syriza to be consistent with its pre-election pledges

This includes refusal to pay the debt; controls on capital flows and for the state monopoly of foreign trade; the nationalisation of the banks and the commanding heights of the economy, under democratic workers' control and management; reversal of austerity and jobs for all, with a living wage, and free, quality health, education and welfare.

Planning the economy for the needs of the people and not the profits of the capitalists - the socialist re-organisation of society - would see an end to economic crises, poverty, joblessness and forced emigration.

To achieve this it is essential to build independent class politics, inside and outside of Syriza. This

means the creation of popular assemblies and action committees of the rank and file in workplaces and communities.

The active participation of the working class and youth in the struggle against the Troika and for a socialist alternative is essential. This would appeal to workers and youth across Europe to fight austerity and for a socialist Europe.

Solidarity visit from socialist MP

Irish TD (MP) and member of the Socialist Party (CWI Ireland) Paul Murphy recently visited Greece to attend a 'study day' of the European united left, meet with lefts inside Syriza and speak at a branch meeting of Xekinima (CWI Greece). Here are some extracts of his report:

I spent an hour visiting 'Solidarity Pireaus', which is one of a number of solidarity centres that have been established across Greece. It has a model of solidarity instead of charity - around 350

families benefit from food, free tuition for their children, anti-eviction activities, and contribute what they can with their talents.

One participant in the movement explained that this solidarity centre is an "anti-depressant" - that it counters the ideological assault that says if you're unemployed, it's your fault, and gives you something productive to do, working together with others.



I was at two picket lines in Athens this morning at Vodafone. They fired these two trade union activists simply because they were activists, with completely spurious excuses. I am in discussion with them about what action we could take in solidarity with them. Picket lines were solid, over 90% of workers staying out.



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!

ENVIRONMENT

- Major research and investment into

Join the fightback!
Join the Socialists!

www.socialistparty.org.uk

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FIGHT AUSTERITY! FIGHT ANTI-UNION LAWS!

Come to the NSSN national conference



Dave Gorton
NSSN Communications Officer

The latest anti-union law proposal for strike ballots to need 50% turnouts is not about 'democracy' – it is a pre-emptive strike by the Tories to make it harder for workers to fight further cuts. Well, we should pre-empt the use of these laws!

On the day the proposals are being debated in parliament, the Trades Union Congress should call a huge demonstration in London. And then we need to threaten further action.

Legal attacks on trade unions are nothing new. Governments and their friends in the judiciary have always acted on behalf of big business to curb workers' rights.

Under capitalism, the accu-

mulation of private profit is king for which the ruling class will do anything – unless us ordinary folk stop them!

Crucial

That's why unions are increasingly crucial. Currently, they are the only mass organisations in Britain with the power to shift this government.

There are over six million workers in trade unions. There are potentially millions more who would flood into membership if the unions flexed their muscles and demonstrated they were prepared

to fight.

The next few weeks and months are vital in the struggle to demonstrate our ability to fight back. If you are a union steward, an activist, a campaigner or even if you're just considering the possibility of getting involved, then the annual conference of the National Shop Stewards Network is for you!

Come and join like-minded people in hearing some excellent speakers from the fighting wing of trade unionism and take part in discussing how we can build the anti-austerity resistance.

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, FBU general secretary Matt Wrack, BFAWU general secretary Ronnie Draper and anti-blacklisting campaigner Dave Smith

www.shopstewards.net

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