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the Socialist

Formerly **Militant**

Ireland: voters reject 'two-and-a-half party system'

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Should women support Hillary Clinton?

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Stop the war on the kurds!

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- **3 members of Socialist Party's sister organisation elected to Irish Parliament**
- **Poll shows socialism more popular than capitalism in Britain**

SOCIALISM BACK ON THE AGENDA

Socialism is bursting open the straitjacket of big business politics across the planet.

In Ireland, the Socialist Party has won three TDs (MPs) for the Anti-Austerity Alliance. Our Irish sister party charged to a commanding lead in the Dublin South-West constituency.

Electors have routed establishment politicians - in particular, the treacherous Irish 'Labour' Party. Reelected Socialist TD Ruth Coppinger speaks to the Socialist about this historic shift in Irish politics on pages 2 and 3.

In the United States, self-declared socialist and presidential hopeful Bernie Sanders fills sports stadiums. Up to 28,000 packed the terraces in Los Angeles, with the same number in Portland, Oregon.

Back in his Vermont home, Sanders holds an astonishing 65-point lead over right-wing Democratic opponent Hilary Clinton (more on pages 8 and 9). Our co-thinkers in the US, Socialist Alternative, have won and retained a Seattle

city council seat with national profile.

And here in Britain, a new YouGov poll shows growing support for socialist ideas. Respondents aged between 18 and 39 were likely to hold favourable views on socialism, and negative views on capitalism.

Jeremy Corbyn's anti-austerity leadership victory has opened up an exciting new space to discuss and fight for socialist change.

Junior doctors are joining

the battle too, striking against attacks on the NHS.

Politics is on course for a change - resurgent working class engagement and militancy. The Socialist welcomes this fight. Socialism is back on the agenda.



Socialist Party and CWI members, including Seattle City Councillor Kshama Sawant and newly re-elected Dublin West TD Ruth Coppinger

“Real change, not spare change” IRISH VOTERS REJECT TWO-AND-A-HALF PARTY SYSTEM’

Three members of the Socialist Party (Irish sister party of the Socialist Party in England and Wales) have been elected to the Irish Parliament as part of the Anti-Austerity Alliance. The elections, which took place on 26 February, saw the decimation of the vote for Fine Gael and the Labour Party which had been in a coalition government implementing ruthless austerity since 2011.

Ruth Coppinger, who was re-elected in Dublin West, spoke to the Socialist on 29 February.

What do the results show, particularly about the previous government parties?

The results of the election overall showed a continuation of the rejection of the ‘two-and-a-half’ party system that we’ve had in Ireland for many decades. The two big parties of capitalism - Fine Gael and Fianna Fail - between them don’t have 50% of the vote.

In the past Fianna Fail on its own would have had 40% of the vote, now it’s down to below 25%. Similarly Fine Gael suffered the loss of some of its former ministers in the election because there was a huge reaction against the idea of their slogans “keep the recovery going” and “stability vs chaos”.

People didn’t feel the recovery to the extent that Fine Gael and Labour had estimated.

They also didn’t buy the idea of stability vs chaos. We’ve had chaos in terms of a massive housing crisis raging in our cities in particular and especially in Dublin. There’s been a continuation of the water charges, property tax and other austerity taxes introduced during the banking bailout.

We’ve also had an erosion of our public services - health, education. For example, the

health services had about €4 billion taken out of it since the bailout of the banks and bold-holders began in 2008.

A clear feature of the election was a further decimation of the Labour Party - punished severely for its role in an austerity government.

The reason there was such anger against Labour was particularly because of the issue of the water charges. The policy of Labour in its last election campaign was that it opposed water charges but then when it went into government it implemented them.

In Dublin West I polled ahead of the leader of the Labour Party, Joan Burton. She was in danger of losing her seat but narrowly scraped the last seat in the constituency.

Currently, Labour has six members of parliament. There are some counts still not complete because they’re very tight, they may emerge with seven.

Coincidentally, the left block that the Anti-Austerity Alliance (AAA) formed for the election with another left group, People Before Profit (PBP), also has six at the moment.

And one count is still ongoing which a PBP candidate has a chance in. Seven seats gives you an entitlement in the Parliament to be a parliamentary group of your own, with your own speaking rights and the ability to do leaders questions every day and put more bills, etc.

It’s not ruled out that we’ll get the seven but either way we’ll have doubled our representation and be similar to the Labour Party’s representation.

And what is the situation with Sinn Fein?

Sinn Fein was poised to do much better in the elections than they did in the end - at one point they were on 20% of the vote and they emerged with less than 14%.

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A clear feature of the election was the further decimation of the Labour Party - punished severely for its role in an austerity government

Throughout the campaign Sinn Fein put forward what you could call an ‘austerity-critical’ stance. They said many of the same things we would, that they would abolish the water charges, the property tax, invest in public services etc.

But what Sinn Fein was proposing throughout the campaign was extremely minimal. They called for 50 cent increase in the minimum wage - that’s extremely minimal. A lot of the



they were the largest party, they would be open to going into a coalition with Fianna Fail or Labour, but that they wouldn’t prop up such a party.

What’s likely to happen now in terms of a government being formed?

Well it’s still early days because there are some seats still to be filled.

There’s pressure on Fianna Fail and Fine Gael to form a coalition, which would be unprecedented. It would be the two parties of capitalism having to join together, which is actually a sign of weakness because the system and the establishment would prefer to have two teams.

So they’re very reluctant to do that. They want to maintain the illusion that there’s some major difference between them and they would fear the growth of the left in that scenario.

They may end up having to do that, or they may seek to have some arrangement with either the large group of independents or the Labour Party, all of that remains to be seen.

How did AAA do across the country?

Overall it was a very good result. AAA stood 13 candidates and PBP stood 18 - so between our combined platform we had 31. In many cases they were first time candidates in places we’d never stood before and it was a case of flying the flag and being seen to provide a bigger alternative.

As well as retaining my seat in Dublin West and Paul Murphy’s in Dublin South West, the AAA has won a seat in Cork with Mick Barry. So we’ve broken out of the capital which is important.

And the AAA in Limerick had an excellent and very successful campaign for Cian Prendiville, polling a couple of hundred votes short of Labour. We’ll definitely be poised to have a left seat there in the future.

We also had results of 2,000 or over in three or four areas which is considered very good.

There’s a huge yearning for change, but that’s not been fully reflected in the elections. We need a new party, a real left party, to replace Labour.

The process of building that will involve more people be-

“We have a very positive vision of a different sort of society. A society where the wealth doesn’t flood to the top which is what is currently happening. But where instead it’s used to provide everybody with decent public services, to build a national health service, to resolve the housing crisis, to invest in education; where everybody has a living wage and where our economy and society are democratically controlled and used in the interests of the majority - putting people’s needs before profit.”

Paul Murphy interviewed on UTV Ireland during final week of the election campaign

coming involved in political activity and that’s something we have to convince people of - not just passively voting but taking part in campaigns.

What were the main issues for AAA?

The issue that the AAA would be most headlining on would be the water charges.

We have played a leading role in this movement and bringing it into the Dail, particularly with winning two by-elections (of myself and Paul Murphy) on the basis of this issue at the beginning of the water charges battle.

Potentially any new government that comes in could be forced in the direction of abolishing the water charges because all of the parties, except for Fine Gael, have been forced to take the position that they would abolish Irish Water, the company that was set up to administer the charges.

Although, they’re all being mealy-mouthed about it and saying it will be a freezing of the water charges or a suspension of the water charges.

Either way, that’s something that will be the top item for any new government coming in. If a new government doesn’t abolish water charges I could see the re-emergence of protests to force them to do so.

We shaped and dominated the national debate on housing. In the last number of years the Irish state has completely cut back on council home building to such an extent that there’s now 130,000 families on the housing waiting list. There’s also been a huge growth in homelessness in Dublin and some other cities.

This has been a huge issue in Dublin West - 40% of the homeless population in Dublin hail from this constituency - so it was definitely something that AAA has been really



associated with.

One other issue that we featured in the election was the campaign to repeal the 8th amendment (the constitutional ban on abortion). Interestingly it was definitely an issue in the election.

People were actually asking our opinion on it, probably for the first time. AAA has given a commitment to bring the issue into the Dail [Irish Parliament], with the idea of raising another bill calling for a referendum on the issue.

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We were the only force to point to the wealth that exists globally and its expression in Ireland

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The Anti-Austerity Alliance has won a seat in Cork with Mick Barry. So we’ve broken out of the capital which is important

The agenda of the campaign from the establishment’s point of view was extremely narrow throughout - just focussed on the four biggest parties tinkering with the system rather than any idea of transforming it.

We were the only force to point to the wealth that exists globally and how it takes its expression in Ireland where the top 1% have seen their wealth grow enormously during the recession. The richest 300 people have €84 billion between them, for example.

The country is generally used as a tax haven by the likes of Apple. At the beginning of the election it emerged that Apple owes €19 billion in back taxes to Ireland.

AAA pointed to this as an example of where we can find the resources to build the houses that we need, to replenish our health services, to reverse the austerity cuts, etc.

■ See www.socialistworld.net for more analysis of the Irish elections including ‘Ireland: government routed in general election’





Credit calls

Phone lines for the Tories' new 'Universal Credit' reduced welfare system are not even free. Empty-handed benefit claimants must fork out between 12p and 45p every minute to discuss their cases.

Employment Minister Priti Patel reports the 0345 line has received 2.2 million calls, lasting an average seven minutes, 29 seconds. This means operator BT will have made between £1.49 million and £6.6 million from society's hardest up.

The Socialist says: scrap Universal Credit. For liveable benefits and guaranteed, well-paid employment for all, without compulsion. Nationalise BT and the telecom firms under the democratic control of workers and customers.

Family finance

A third of children are anxious about their family's economic security, according to recent research.

The survey of 1,000 kids for a discount voucher website found 33% sometimes worry about family finance. A tenth worry about it frequently.

No one of any age should have to face the stress and uncertainty of financial instability. It is particularly unacceptable for children to carry this burden.

The Socialist campaigns to totally reverse austerity and privatisation: for free education, well-paid jobs and guaranteed housing for everyone. Let's take the wealth off the 1%, and plan our economy to meet the needs of all. Then none of us will have to worry about financial security again.



■ Solidarity from Dagobah as Yoda is spotted with a Socialist Party anti-Trident placard in London's Trafalgar Square. (Photo by Scott Jones)

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

International Women's Day takes place on 8 March. The Socialist fights to end the oppression of women, and the root cause of all oppression: capitalism.

We stand in the tradition of International Women's Day's originators. Militant women textile workers in the United States marched for the vote and an end to child labour in 1908. They struck against sweatshop conditions in 1909 to 1910. Coordinated, escalating strike action, and a political alternative to the establishment's sexist, anti-worker programme, are just as necessary today. Feature on women and politics: pages 8 and 9.



Lianne Hunter, from Socialist Students, addresses the 8,000-strong A&E march in Huddersfield
photo Iain Dalton

Thousands march for Huddersfield A&E

Aaron Bailey and Iain Dalton
Huddersfield Socialist Party

"If this doesn't make them listen, I'm not sure what will!" One protester summed up the mood of the biggest demonstration Huddersfield has seen since 1918.

8,000 people marched on 27 February against plans to close the A&E department at Huddersfield Royal Infirmary (HRI) and downgrade the Yorkshire hospital.

The rent for the smaller replacement site at Acre Fields comes to £670,000 a year. This has led many to conclude the change is funnelling our money to big business, just like the Private Finance Initiative (PFI) deal at Calderdale hospital in the same NHS trust. PFI is seen as responsible for Huddersfield losing its consultant-led maternity unit several years ago.

More and more people are coming to the Socialist Party's conclusion that the PFI deal must be scrapped.

Socialist Party members have played a key role in this campaign, particularly among students and young people, including pushing the student union beyond just holding an initial protest.

Socialist Students member Li-

anne Hunter is the official representative of the student union on the campaign steering committee. Socialist Students member Jenny Goldman is a college student who got Jeremy Corbyn to pose with a #HandsOffHRI poster when she recently visited parliament.

The local clinical commissioning group is running scared. It has already delayed the launch of its 14-week 'consultation', and cancelled a planned 'roadshow' at the university. Protesters are organising to attend each roadshow.

Doctors

Platform speakers expressed support for junior doctors striking against unsafe working hours. This also found expression in the hundreds of copies of the Socialist bought, as well as a packed post-demo Socialist Party public meeting.

As Mike Forster, Huddersfield Socialist Party secretary and chief steward of the demonstration, said: "This was a terrific response and a great start to the campaign."

We are determined to win this campaign. Lives are at stake from increased journey times to A&E. Defeating this attack on our health service would be a huge confidence boost for workers locally and nationally if we manage to.



photo Sarah Wrack

Tens of thousands of marchers took over central London's streets to demand an end to atomic bombs on 27 February. Many stopped to discuss with Socialist Party activists calling for Trident nuclear workers to be reemployed on green technology projects. The Tories and Blairites back retaining nukes.



Butterfields won't budge! Defiant residents on east London's Butterfields estate publicly launched their campaign to defeat rent hikes and evictions

on 24 February. Their 'charity' landlord has sold their homes to profiteering developers. Butterfields tenant Toni speaks out on page 12.

photo Sarah Sachs-Eldridge

Fifa: invest in working class sport, not profits

Jane Nellist

Fifa, football's corruption-ridden international governing body, elected its new president on 26 February.

I'm a lifelong Baggies supporter (West Bromwich Albion). Like millions of working people across our planet, I enjoy the thrills, as well as the frustrations, of a game of football. It offers 90 minutes of escape from the drudgery of living under capitalism and the pressure of work and austerity.

But just as workers in their workplaces are exploited by big business, those at the top of the organisations that run football exploit the fans.

It's often described as the 'beautiful game'. But behind it lie ugly, bribe-taking, pro-big business organisations, the biggest being Fifa itself.

Even a scene from the new Sacha Baron Cohen film Grimsby refers to this. The main character, Nobby, a football hooligan, is told by his brother, a top spy: "Meet the head of the biggest crime syndicate

in the world." Nobby replies: "What, she runs Fifa?"

The big question for football fans around the world is: can Fifa reform itself? New president Gianni Infantino spent €500,000 of European football organisation Uefa's money to travel the world in the run-up to the election.

Can Infantino fumigate this multi-billion pound organisation of the stench of corruption? I don't think so. It's too infected with greed and bribery for us to have any faith in it. Football's huge profits should be democratically controlled by fans, and invested in local communities across the world. To enable boys and girls to enjoy the true spirit of the game. The social interaction, team work, discipline, exercise - the joy of playing.

As the Socialist Party's John Reid has excellently argued in his sell-out book Reclaim the Game: "the fight to democratise football is linked with getting rid of big business domination within it." It's time to show Fifa the red card!

■ 'Reclaim the Game' by John Reid: a socialist approach for football - £3 from leftbooks.co.uk
photo James Boyes/
Creative Commons

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Rough sleeping flies up 30% in one year

Beth Sutcliffe

The number of people sleeping rough in England has risen by 30% in the last year, according to new government figures. This confirms the suspicions of many of us who have noticed a rise in homelessness in our own towns and cities across the country.

The ruthless benefit sanctions that have come in to effect under the Tory government are one of the causes for this increase. Even if claimants miss only one job centre appointment, they can have their payments stopped.

People end up struggling to pay for essentials like bills, food and a place to live. The severe lack of council housing worsens the problem, as the extortionate price of renting privately makes it so much harder to make ends meet.

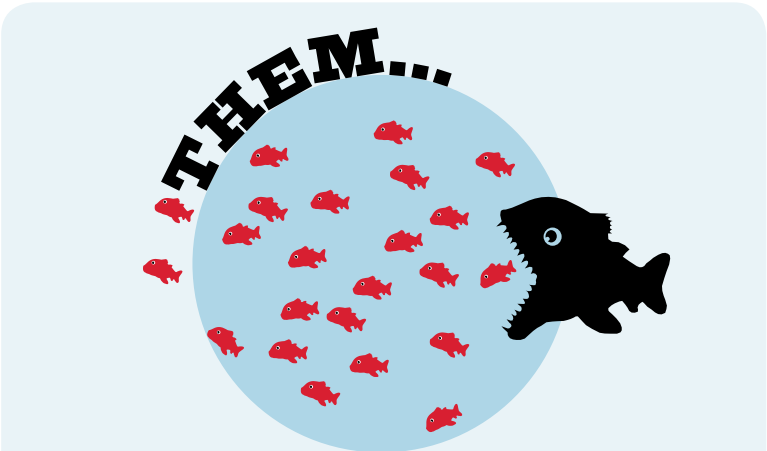
The security of owning your own

home is also increasingly out of reach. The National Housing Federation found that Londoners would on average need a 266% pay rise in order to think about buying a home in the capital! This makes the recent minimum wage increase for over-25s to £7.20 look even more laughable.

Homelessness disproportionately affects those with mental health problems. Four in ten rough sleepers now have a mental health issue.

Cuts This has coincided with cuts to NHS mental health services and supported accommodation. Vulnerable people have been left unable to access the support they desperately need.

The Socialist Party demands cuts to homeless support services be reversed. We call for a massive building programme of publicly owned housing with democratic rent controls, affordable for everyone.



Baffled Blair

Labour's top Tory infiltrator, Tony Blair, has admitted "I really mean it when I say I'm not sure I fully understand politics right now".

The pro-privatisation warmonger is bewildered by plunging support for his anti-worker politics. He cannot understand why self-described socialists like Bernie

Sanders and Jeremy Corbyn are making headway.

But while some of the super-rich scratch their heads, socialism makes more and more sense to workers across the world. The excellent support for Ireland's Anti-Austerity Alliance, including the Socialist Party, proves that yet again (see pages 1-3).

Parliament's pay

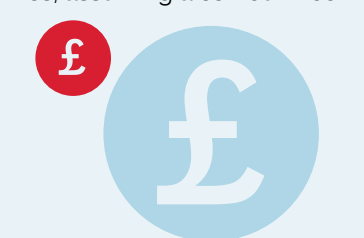
Bloated MPs are on course for yet another pay rise in April: a cool grand.

The inflation-busting increase brings the basic MP's salary to £74,962 a year. That's before expenses, any ministerial or shadow ministerial allowances, plus outside consultancies, directorships, speaking fees and the rest.

The Socialist demands MPs take no more than the average wage of a skilled worker. The three MPs who supported Militant, the Socialist's predecessor, did just this in the 1980s.

Meanwhile wage growth for the rest of us has been negative since the Great Recession. And when it comes to pensions - millions will be worse off under Tory changes.

5.7x
MPs have decided they need to earn nearly six times as much as the National 'Living' Wage they have approved for over-25s, assuming a 35-hour week

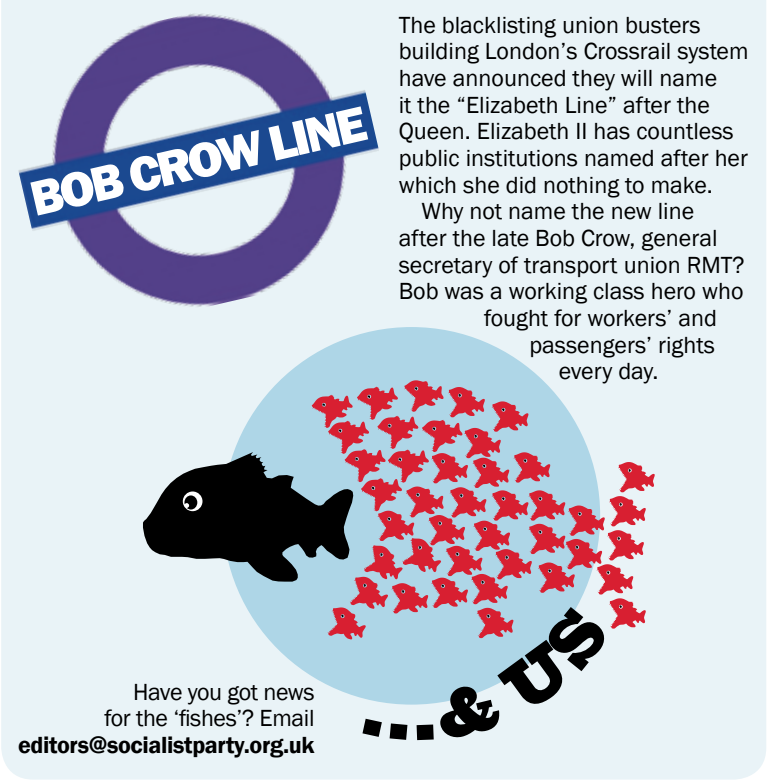


16 million workers, mainly younger, will lose thousands. MPs will take home a tidy amount based on career average earnings.

Queen v Crow

The blacklisting union busters building London's Crossrail system have announced they will name it the "Elizabeth Line" after the Queen. Elizabeth II has countless public institutions named after her which she did nothing to make.

Why not name the new line after the late Bob Crow, general secretary of transport union RMT? Bob was a working class hero who fought for workers' and passengers' rights every day.



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

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Council cuts

Tories propose endless austerity... We say: 'No way!'

Tory Chancellor George Osborne is planning more cuts to achieve a budget surplus after admitting that the UK economy is faltering. Former Bank of England chief Mervyn King upped the ante by warning that a repeat of the 2008 financial crash is likely because of an 'unreformed' financial system.

So, eight years of austerity has not solved the systemic problems of capitalism. Yet the

ruling classes propose more of the same - more cuts in vital services, more hardship for millions of low income and vulnerable people.

As the reports below point to, the trade unions and local communities must coordinate action to pressure councils, in particular Labour-led councils, to refuse to make more cuts. Instead, Labour councils should pass no-cuts budgets, using reserves and

borrowing powers. This would buy time to organise a mass revolt against Tory austerity. This government is weak and has already retreated over tax credits. It can only last if an opposition allows it to do so. Additional reports of fighting council cuts, including lobby protests at Reading and Tower Hamlets, are online - www.socialistparty.org.uk - as well as details of more budget lobbies



George Osborne is planning more cuts photo altogetherfool/Creative Commons

Swansea Council 'delivering misery'

Swansea's Labour council recently took out full page adverts in the local press, under the headline "Delivering for Swansea", to convince the public of the brilliant job they are doing despite Tory cuts.

Before the council budget debate on 25 February, Alec Thraves, speaking on behalf of the Socialist Party and Swansea Trades Council, told councillors that if this cuts

budget of £21 million was passed then they would be "delivering misery" for the 640 council workers and their families whose jobs are going, and Swansea residents who will see their services slashed and privatised.

Predictably, Labour's 'realistic' councillors acting as Osborne's 'mini butchers' dutifully lined up with the Tory 'big butchers'.



Young musicians protest against cuts in Swansea photo Ronnie Job

But the sound of protest is the music of the future

I doubt any Swansea Socialist Party members have been on a more musical protest than the one against council cuts that took place at Swansea Guildhall.

By far the biggest contingent was of teachers, pupils and supporters of West Glamorgan Youth Music Service who are facing devastating cuts in funding. They were angry, determined and they brought their instruments!

Despite the cold they maintained

an upbeat musical accompaniment to the lobbying of councillors making their way into the annual budget-setting meeting.

If these councillors think their cuts will go unchallenged then they are very much mistaken.

The protest represents the music of the future - uniting workers, trade unionists and the public to fight back.

Ronnie Job
Swansea Socialist Party

THE ISLE OF WIGHT NEEDS SOCIALISM!

John Hustler
Isle of Wight Socialist Party

A large group of anti-cuts protesters, including Socialist Party members, gathered outside county hall in Newport on the Isle of Wight last week. Inside, the council met to decide on where to make £12.75 million of cuts this year and further millions over the next four years.

The impressive turnout (which attracted much media attention) was bolstered by a fantastic reaction from passing pedestrians and honking traffic. One driver even pulled over his car to shake my hand and add his support.

A school bus filled with high school students, stopped at traffic next to the protest, drew cheers as they held up hand written anti-cuts signs in the bus window. If Tory austerity is going to affect anyone, it will



photo John Hustler

be this generation.

Many of the people at the protest were not political before the cuts hit but after witnessing the damage being caused felt they had no choice but to make their voices heard.

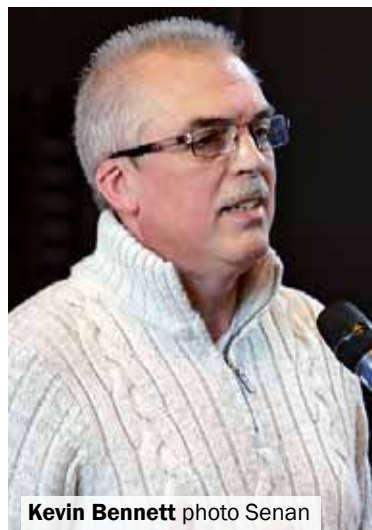
A care worker told me that she feared not only for her job but for the service users as the threat of care

home closure loomed ever closer.

Despite the opposition to austerity, the Independent-led council voted through the cuts.

Bizarrely, Tory opposition council leader Dave Stewart complained that the cuts didn't go far enough blaming the council's "socialist ideology"!

ACTION TO FIGHT CUTS, NOT JUST WORDS



Kevin Bennett photo Senan

Kevin Bennett, Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC) councillor in Warrington, moved a no-cuts 'people's budget' in opposition to the ruling Labour group's cuts budget.

Kevin told the Socialist: "I focused on this year's budget of £20.5 million and put together an emergency budget to stop cuts this year. Councils have the legal and financial powers to delay cuts by drawing on reserves, using borrowing powers, and working with tenants and trade unions to avoid evictions and privatisation. This can all be done within the law and cannot be overruled by central government.

"None of these policies mean setting a deficit budget, though that in itself is not necessarily illegal. But

later in the meeting, Labour councillor Terry O'Neill launched into a personal, abusive attack on my character. It appears that instead of attacking the Tories, his argument seems to be with TUSC.

"Councillor Bowden also attacked me for 'repeatedly pushing to use the reserves'. Next year's budget will be even harder to deliver and that is why we need to pressure the government to provide extra funding. We cannot carry on cutting at the expense of our most vulnerable. In the words of councillor Bowden, 'we need to support the most vulnerable', but actions speak louder than words."

Needless to say, Labour agreed to make more cuts.

EU referendum

YES CAMPAIGNERS CRANK UP PROJECT FEAR



Steve Score

Project fear is back with a vengeance! Pro-European Union (EU) campaigners in the run up to the June referendum are copying the strategy of the anti-independence bloc in Scotland last year. We are told a vote to leave will mean economic catastrophe, higher prices and the loss of jobs, trade and workers' rights.

Tory Prime Minister Cameron's scaremongering is backed up by large sections of big business. A letter signed by the chief executives of a third of the top 100 stock exchange listed companies said leaving would "deter investment and threaten jobs." Of course it is these very companies who have sacked workers and refused to invest over many years!

Labour's stance

Unfortunately the official Labour campaign echoes Cameron. The Trades Union Congress (TUC) leaders have also weighed in on the side of the EU. The TUC says that if we leave "no one can say what will happen" to workers' rights such as "paid annual holidays, health and safety protection and rights to unpaid parental leave."

However, they do admit that the EU has limited the ability of unions to organise industrial action and undermined collective bargaining agreements. What they don't mention are the treaties of the EU that are designed to enforce cuts, privatisation and the driving down of



The TUC in sub-contracting defence of workers' rights to the EU betrays their lack of preparedness to take on the Tories

workers' pay and conditions. Also, there's no mention about workers in Greece and other countries having their living standards, public services and employment rights devastated by the EU.

Over many years our employment rights have been fought for by workers taking collective action, they have not been handed to us by benevolent bureaucrats or negotiations between the pro-big business governments that make up the EU.

Where the Tories have been able to get away with it they have opted out of the EU's supposed 'progressive' legislation.

The only guarantee of keeping our limited rights, in or out, is by the struggle of working people. The TUC in sub-contracting defence of workers' rights to the EU betrays their lack of preparedness to take on the Tories.

Jeremy Corbyn, prior to his election as Labour leader, opposed the EU because it is a bosses' club. Now, under pressure from the Labour establishment, he has u-turned. He met Social Democrat leaders in Eu-



Workers rights in Europe have been attacked by EU neoliberal policies photo Paul Mattsson

rope and called on them to link up with 'left' parties such as Die Linke in Germany and Syriza in Greece for "progressive reform" of the EU.

He argues that he isn't on the same side as Cameron who wants a "free market Europe". Instead he wants "jobs and social protection." But the EU is all about the 'free market'. It has no real democracy, its parliament is toothless, it cannot be reformed. It is based on horse trading between capitalist governments and is fundamentally against the interests of the working class.

Unfortunately Jeremy Corbyn's support for a vote to remain only hands the leadership of the out campaign to Ukip and right-wing

Tories, which is why the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition's (TUSC) campaign for a working class response against the EU (see below) is so important.

The Socialist Party, a key part of TUSC, stands for a genuine internationalism, linking the workers of Europe and worldwide for a struggle to defend living standards and change society. We call for a vote to leave the capitalist EU, and to build a socialist Europe.

■ Also see the article 'Don't give taxpayers' money to Ukip and Tory EU campaigners!' and the TUSC petition online at socialistparty.org.uk/issue/888/22188

No to EU/TTIP dictats

Called by 'No NHS Sell-off', Carlisle trade unionists, including Socialist Party members, lobbied local Tory MP John Stevenson's office against the proposed Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership. If TTIP is agreed between the US administration and EU, it will result in the privatisation of the National Health Service and allow corporations to dictate government policies solely in the interests of their profits.

Brent Kennedy

Young Labour conference

Left and right lock horns

Hundreds of young people attended Young Labour's national conference in Scarborough on 27-28 February.

A new leadership was elected and policy was debated and decided for the first time since Jeremy Corbyn's leadership victory. Drawn to the anti-austerity programme of his election campaign, the youth section of the Labour Party has tripled its membership. Conference was clearly important in the fight for an anti-austerity, socialist Labour Party at all levels of the party.

'Corbynistas' made gains, winning many elections including the position of chair, and passing a motion affirming Young Labour's support for free education. Only an hour and a

half of conference time was dedicated to deciding the political direction of the organisation - it was a conference designed for the pre-Corbyn age.

What was clear was that those new and enthusiastic young people came up against a powerful organised right wing. The Blairites, who represent the past, remain well organised and have many resources at their disposal. They are well funded by those who want to keep a pro-big business grip on the Labour Party.

This was apparent in the vote for Young Labour's representative on the Labour Party National Executive Committee, which the right won by a margin of just 0.1%! Calls for a recount were dismissed, and allega-

tions of smear campaigns have been reported, showing who holds the reins in the Labour Party machine.

Young people should be pleased at the shift towards the left at the conference but what is clear is the need to stand firm on left policies. The idea of compromising with the right will win them over to Jeremy Corbyn's anti-austerity message, is mistaken. The right is completely opposed to genuine socialist ideas and are biding their time, waiting to move against him.

The left must get properly organised to fight for socialist, anti-austerity politics and remove the Blairite rump from the Labour Party.

A conference delegate



photo Paul Mattsson

Socialism Today

The Socialist Party's magazine



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- No retreat - no Trident
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photo Wikimedia

Sarah Wrack
Editor, the Socialist

Confusion, soul-searching and outright horror. These words could accurately describe the response of the establishment press and political figures, world over, to the growing support for Bernie Sanders.

The self-proclaimed socialist has bulldozed through what most thought would be a breezy stroll to the Whitehouse for Hillary Clinton, his rival in the race for the Democratic Party nomination for US president.

In particular, and of most distaste to the Clinton camp, Sanders has won huge support from young women. In the New Hampshire primary, where Sanders won the nomination with 60% of the overall vote, he stormed ahead of Clinton in this demographic – 82% of women under 30 voted for him.

How can this be, ponder many ‘feminists’ (from both the right and the self-declared left). Surely women should want to fight for Clinton as potentially the first woman president? Especially women who’ve grown up in the 1990s and 2000s – the era of ‘smashing the glass ceiling,’ and of the idea that women in the boardrooms and parliaments are ‘doing it for us all’.

This isn’t just a US phenomenon. Some in Britain have been similarly aghast to see thousands of young women flock to rallies for Jeremy Corbyn during his campaign for the Labour leadership. How can these old, white men be winning such vibrant



RoseAnn DeMoro with Sanders

support from people who should on first glance identify much more with Hillary Clinton or Labour’s Yvette Cooper?

But the majority of young women seem to agree more with actress Susan Sarandon who, after backing Sanders and boldly criticising Clinton for her corporate backing and her votes for war, said: “I don’t vote with my vagina.”

We should fight for more women representatives. But the patronising idea that women should be concerned only with gender has no place in 21st century politics.

This is a generation of US women who occupied Zuccotti Park against the rule of the super-rich 1% – which funds the Clinton campaign. A generation who are fighting for and winning a \$15 an hour minimum wage – which Clinton doesn’t support. A generation who are leading militant trade union struggles like those of the Chicago teachers.

Less feminist?

Does this mean that the majority of young women are not concerned with women’s issues?

The Democratic National Committee chair, Debbie Wasserman Schultz, certainly thinks so. When asked why she thought Clinton was losing ground to Sanders among young women she blamed, “a complacency among the generation of young women whose entire lives have been lived after Roe v Wade [legalising abortion] was decided.”

Yet this doesn’t correspond to recent history in the US when there have been big movements for reproductive rights and against sexism and violence against women. In reality it’s not the case that the younger generation of women are less feminist than their mothers.

Their views may be more summed up by US nurses’ union leader RoseAnn DeMoro who wrote in the Guardian: “In my mind there has never been a better feminist than Bernie Sanders in a serious run for the White House, even if he’s not the female candidate.”

Some think back to the enthusiasm there was from many black Americans for electing Barack Obama in 2008. And therein lies the answer to these confusions. Just look at the huge let down felt by many of those who took part in that campaign. Because during the term of the first



Kshama Sawant (second from left holding banner) marches for \$15 in Seattle photo Alex Garland

black president of the United States, they have seen a proliferation of mass incarceration and police killings of black youth and an increase in wealth inequality between black and white.

Hillary Clinton’s policies will advance nothing for the majority of women. The same was shown through the bitter experience of workers in Britain during the tenure of the first woman prime minister, Tory Margaret Thatcher. She carried out policies which devastated the lives of millions of working class women.

Clinton has supported cuts to welfare, privatisation in education, policies that contribute to mass imprisonment, and imperialist intervention and war.

The fact that there is even a question that this would be a candidate worthy of support from the women’s movement is indicative of the dominance of ‘identity politics.’

It is also a sign of how the victories

won by movements of workers and of women in the past are now being distorted. The right wing has been forced, on the surface at least, to accept this progress to a degree but it appropriates the ideas of feminism for its own ends.

Distortion

When a talk show host commented that everyone is looking for an ‘outsider’ in this election, Clinton – the epitome of an establishment candidate – replied: “I cannot imagine anyone being more of an outsider than the first woman president.”

She hopes that being a woman can help get her to the White House and allow her to continue the work of her predecessors of waging war against the poor at home and against regimes that don’t toe the line of US imperialism abroad.

Feminism has also been used as a hypocritical smokescreen by those

organising against Jeremy Corbyn and those fighting to make his stand a success. Blairite Labour MP Jess Phillips, one of those inside the party desperately trying to undermine his leadership, accused Corbyn of “low level non-violent misogyny” on the basis that the ‘top jobs’ in the shadow cabinet are all filled by men.

When 66 Labour MPs shamefully voted against Corbyn for the bombing of Syria, a movement of opposition erupted both inside and outside the Labour Party. Many joined the Socialist Party in calling for mandatory reselection of MPs to enable rank-and-file Labour members to hold their representatives to account.

There was an attempt by some women MPs to subtly link this to a tiny minority who had sent abusive or sexist messages. In this way they hoped to use ‘feminism’ to brush un-

der the carpet the huge mood against the war in Syria as well as calls for accountable democracy inside the Labour Party.

To counter these distortions, socialists must take a lead in asserting what is needed to advance things for the majority of women. There is still a long way to go. In Britain, one in four women will experience domestic violence at some point in her life. Women workers earn on average 19.7% less than men.

Women are more likely to live in poverty and more likely to be the main carers for children or disabled or elderly relatives – meaning austerity hits women harder. The House of Commons Library estimates that 85% of the money taken from working class people since 2010 through benefit cuts and tax changes has come from women.

Similar statistics, if not worse, could

be given from most countries. And the lack of an independent working class political voice for the 99% has been a major factor in holding back progress for women to this extent. A mass socialist party would have helped fight back and prevent the development of a situation where one in three American women is either in poverty or on the brink of it.

That’s why Sanders’ programme, if implemented, would represent a material step forward for women and all working class people. He supports a \$15 an hour minimum wage, single payer NHS-style healthcare, free higher education and the end of mass imprisonment.

In explaining why her (majority women members) union was the first to back Sanders, RoseAnn DeMoro said: “Nurses recognised Sanders as one of their own as soon as he got into the race, because they, like he, believe that all people should be treated equally – especially when it comes to healthcare – regardless of race, gender or ability to pay.”

Back Sanders

Women are backing Sanders because he unashamedly challenges the establishment neoliberal consensus and advances causes and policies that speak to the experiences of working class people. For this same reason, despite the limitations of his programme and his mistaken approach of seeking the Democratic Party nomination rather than standing independently, Socialist Alternative (US co-thinkers of the Socialist Party) is backing him too.

Socialist Alternative has initiated #Movement4Bernie campaigns around the country which are attracting thousands to rallies where Socialist Alternative members put forward a strategy of what would be necessary to achieve Sanders’ programme – including fighting for a new, independent political party for the working class.

Through this kind of movement, party and programme, candidates that represent the 99%, including many many fighting working class women, will be thrust into elected positions in the future.

Socialist Alternative member Kshama Sawant was elected to Seattle City Council in 2013 and reelected in 2015. She has been a staunch fighter for all working class people in Seattle and beyond.

She played a leading role in the suc-

cessful fight for a \$15 an hour minimum wage in the city which has lifted thousands of low paid workers, a majority women, out of poverty.

But as Kshama has written: “My being a woman and a person of colour was not unimportant, but my emphasis was then and is now, as one of the only elected US socialists, on the political ideas I advocate for in the interests of working people and all the oppressed.”

Socialism

The Socialist Party and Socialist Alternative think working class people, including women, need more than representation in capitalist political institutions; more than equal (low) pay; more than an end to cuts to domestic violence services.

We fight for a socialist alternative to the capitalist system which propagates the oppression of women. If the working class collectively owned and democratically controlled the banks and biggest corporations, we could plan resources and production to meet the needs of the majority rather than produce profit for the few.

This would ensure all material needs could be met and would begin to undermine the basis for sexist ideas and the oppression of women as a whole.

■ For more on identity politics, see ‘Unpacking the rucksack: Identity politics and the struggle against oppression’ by Hannah Sell at www.socialismtoday.org/192/identity.html

Through a radical movement, party and programme many fighting working class women will be thrust into elected positions

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HISTORIC FURTHER EDUCATION STRIKE IN ENGLAND

On 24 February, lecturers' union UCU and public sector union Unison took joint strike action across England in the further education sector for the first time. The unions' pay claim, which amounts to just £1 an hour extra for further education workers, had been rejected by the employers. 74% voted to strike. Below are reports from some of the picket lines:

Leeds City College

Picket lines were literally drawn on the pavement outside the college entrances at two sites and the mood was strong among the striking UCU and Unison members who assembled from 7am. The strike saw good support for those taking action and from members of the public and

students, including Socialist Students members and local council shop stewards.

Many drivers beeped their horns in support. We had conversations with students who had never experienced a picket line and explained why it was necessary to take action. Some joined us when we said that this was not just about pay but the quality and privatisation of their education.

Manny Dominguez and Iain Dalton, Leeds Socialist Party

Waltham Forest College, east London

In Walthamstow one striking worker said she had no option but to strike for better pay. She is struggling to help her son through university and couldn't even afford to help him pay the rent.

He'd been forced to couch surf at

university this year. College workers have suffered under a pay freeze for six years.

Despite teaching responsibilities alongside many other roles the college has classified her job to guarantee her pay remains low. Five of the 12 pickets bought copies of the Socialist and were pleased the paper carried an article on their strike.

Ian Pattison, Waltham Forest Socialist Party

Warrington College

A small, but determined, band of pickets from UCU and Unison were outside the college gate when I visited. Some members had gone into work due to fear of the consequences of stepping out of line but some workers turned back when they saw the pickets. There is a feeling that the college management is simply riding roughshod over the workforce.

Andy Ford, Warrington Trades Council

Southampton City College

"This dispute cannot be allowed to end in one day of protest, we need to keep up the pressure by escalating action. The government will not



photo Iain Dalton

back down when faced with a one day strike!"

These were the words of a striking UCU member in Southampton. With continued reductions in funding in the last few years, student numbers have been plummeting along with the loss of courses. These

include a vital trade union education department.

Pickets arrived from 8am and were still outside the college at midday. Spirits were high and support was given by staff and students.

Declan Clune, Southampton Socialist Party

Socialist Party video



Striking FE workers

www.socialistparty.org.uk/videos



Junior doctor Jeanna Strutinsky-Mason
photo Sarah Sachs-Eldridge

Determined junior doctors fight on

Junior doctors are preparing for three 48-hour strikes to fight the imposition of a new contract. As part of that preparation 25 junior doctors presented a petition to the Department of Health with 50,000 signatures on 24 February. **Sarah Sachs-Eldridge** spoke to some of them:

Jeanna, a junior doctor from Leicester, explained that the BMA is very firm: "I think that we're determined. Morale has been affected by the government deciding to impose the contract, despite 54,000 junior doctors acting as whistle-blowers saying it isn't a safe contract. Now we have a bit of renewed purpose."

She explained that "we're part of a grassroots effort called 'Meet the Doctors'. We've been campaigning across the country, engaging with the public and collecting signatures for a petition addressed to David Cameron about the unfairness of the contract."

"So that's what we're doing today - delivering the 50,000 signatures we've collected since November to the Department of Health. A lot of times people asked to sign - we didn't even approach them!"

Hunt

But this is not just aimed at Jeremy Hunt, Jeanna said. "It's more than just about Hunt. David Cameron is the prime minister and he doesn't have to impose this on us."

We discussed the new round of action and the potential for uniting with other workers. Jeanna said: "I'm from the East Midlands and

May Day greetings with the Socialist

Formerly Militant

International Workers' Day is a time when we express solidarity with all sections of our movement. The Socialist newspaper consistently champions trade union struggle, covering the stories the mainstream press ignores or misrepresents, and putting forward a fighting strategy to improve workers' lives.

Our writers are not professional journalists but real working class fighters, actively involved in the struggles they report - from workplaces, communities, universities and schools.

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locally I've been getting quite a lot of interest from local branches of different unions asking me to come and speak and explain to them what the issues are. I don't think this is just about our contract but about the very future of the NHS."

I asked Jeanna what trade union members can do to back them up. She said: "The first thing to do is to talk to people about it - get in touch with us."

"We'll happily come and chat to people about the dispute. I know there's been some growing interest in having demonstrations that are multi-union and if people think they have something that is worth balloting their membership for regarding industrial action then I think they should go for it."

I also spoke to Max, a junior doctor from Manchester. "There's no secret that if this contract is imposed

then they'll roll it out to the rest of the healthcare profession."

"From there it will only be rolled out further in terms of the public sector. We're worried that if we allow the conditions of our work to mean that every day is the same and there's no weekend you end up living to work. We think that's completely wrong."

See back page for more

“Two women a week are murdered by a partner. My job is to prevent that”

A day in the life of a Women’s Aid worker

An independent domestic violence adviser in Wales

I come in to the office at 8.30am as usual. I am the first one in, so I open up.

I make myself a cup of tea to calm my nerves before checking my emails. I am always a bit worried about what I will find.

Two women a week are murdered by a partner or ex-partner in England and Wales. My job is to try to prevent that, but there is only so much I can do.

All the women I support are at high risk of domestic homicide. As I come in to work every morning I can only hope they are OK.

Today I am on ‘duty’, which means it is my job to deal with any new women who contact us looking for emergency accommodation or for

general advice on what to do. I call the refuge to check if we have space.

If not I will have to refer people to the council homeless department or for refuge outside of our area (there is a national refuge database). Unfortunately there is a big shortage of refuge places. There are more animal shelters in Britain than refuges for women and children.

Refuge

It turns out that we do have one room available in our refuge for tonight. It does not take long until someone calls wanting it, a woman who says she is too frightened to leave the house, so we agree to do an assessment over the phone. In the end we refer her to another area as our refuge is close to her house, so she would not feel safe there.

This means that when the next person calls we do have space. She

has been in an abusive relationship for eight months.

Her children are now in care due to this. Her and her abuser were evicted from their flat after he trashed it and they have slept rough for two months.

He made her shoplift to fund his heroin addiction, giving her a criminal record. He is in prison on remand, but could soon be released.

This is her chance to escape. We accept her and the refuge is now full. It is 2.30pm and I have not had lunch.

Another woman comes into our office, but our room is gone so she will have to leave town or go to a homeless hostel. This is the reality for many women across Britain.

There is a constant race for refuge spaces and not everyone makes it. My day is coming to an end but tomorrow we start all over again.



photo Louise Whittle

[News in brief]

photo Rob Williams



BA battle

Workers at British Airways (BA) rallied against attacks on terms and conditions and against outsourcing at a 500-strong mass meeting called by the GMB trade union on 29 February. The meeting at Heathrow heard commitments of support from Shadow Chancellor John McDonnell and the GMB itself. British Airways is attempting to outsource IT jobs which would result in job losses and worse contracts as well as aiming a “broadside” at all BA workers over pensions. The company that owns BA is expected to make profits of £2.3 billion this year but is passing new automatic workplace pension costs onto staff by forcing employees to pay their own national insurance contributions from 5 April. The campaign intends to fight these new attacks off, as previous outsourcing attempts have been, and intends to raise the issue in parliament.

Senior GMB steward at British Airways

CCTV conflict

Glasgow CCTV workers are to take 48-hour strike action over pay. 18 members of Unison employed as CCTV operators and supervisors by Community Safety Glasgow (CSG), an agency of Glasgow City Council, will take strike action from 4 to 6 March and again from 17 to 19 March. The current hourly rate is the Scottish living wage of £8.25 an hour. They work 12-hour shift patterns, providing a 24-hour service. Other workers in CSG on similar shift patterns receive an additional payment of £7,500 but the CCTV workers do not. The purpose of the action is to force CSG into offering an acceptable payment for working shifts and unsocial hours. Messages of support to enquiries@glasgowcityunison.co.uk

HULL LABOUR COUNCIL ATTACKS TRADE UNIONS

Mick Whale

Hull City council trade union chair

At a time when the Labour Party is attempting to fight the Tory’s anti-trade union legislation, Hull Labour has agreed measures to remove Unite and GMB union convenor facility time.

The Labour councillors are claiming that Unite and GMB do not have enough members to justify the cost of a full-time convenor, and the posts have to go. This is despite the fact that there has been no formal agreement between the council and the trade unions about membership.

The council argues this is about council finances but this is shot to pieces because the convenors have been offered alternative posts in the authority. Where is the financial saving if the council continues paying their wages?

Workers understand this is an attack on the unions. Hull council’s trade unions have fought over the last five years against cuts

and to defend workers’ terms and conditions which has been partially successful. Council leader Steve Brady recently moaned: “everything is always such a battle in Hull.”

Battles

Well Steve, you had better get ready for more battles! If you think that workers will tamely accept a further £800,000 of cuts in terms and conditions plus a move to save £750,000 through “more flexible working” in this year’s budget, then think again.

If ever there was a need for Jeremy Corbyn and John McDonnell to show some leadership on these issues it is now.

The battle against the cuts is likely to be one of the defining issues of Jeremy’s leadership. Jeremy is approaching a crossroads, however. He cannot be against cuts and austerity in words but allow Labour councils to implement cuts in practice.

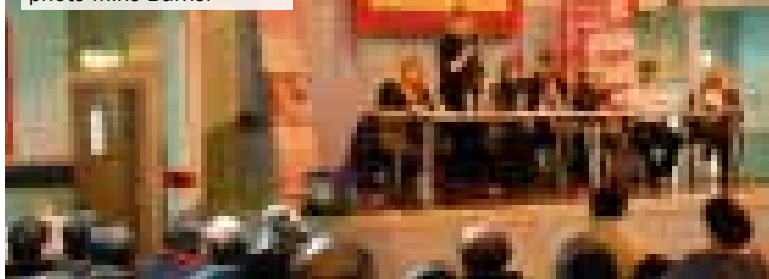
A Unite activist on the lobby said: “I rejoined the Labour Party after Jeremy won. I am now starting to wonder if it was such a good idea.”

speech delivered by a local doctor, who brought a message of support from members of the British Medical Association who have been forced into taking industrial action against the government.

The doctor, Jeanna Strutinsky-Mason (interviewed opposite), pointed out that “a lot of our

contract issues are very similar to your own issues.” She made it clear that in order to win in the fight for justice, all workers need “to stand together,” and suggested that in Leicester, “joint demonstrations” might be organised in the future between doctors and Samworth employees.

Tessa Warrington gives solidarity from the NSSN
photo Mike Barker



FOOD WORKERS “ADAMANT” IN FIGHT AGAINST PAY CUT

Mike Barker

Leicester Socialist Party

Workers at food manufacturer Samworth Brothers are adamant that their bosses should be forced to recognise a union in their workplace as employees in many cases stand to “lose thousands of pounds in wages.”

More than a hundred workers gathered at a vibrant public meeting on 26 February to learn more about how their joining the Bakers Food and Allied Workers Union (BFAWU) will enable them to fight for decent, just and fair treatment at work. They eagerly took away union membership forms for themselves and their co-workers.

This followed a 300-strong union meeting on 12 February as reported in last week’s issue and another packed meeting in Melton Mowbray the following weekend.

Speakers included Tessa Warrington, from the local National Shop Stewards Network (NSSN), who offered “solidarity from shop stewards up and down the country who want to support you in your efforts to unionise your workplaces and fight off the massively unfair changes to pay proposed by Samworth Brothers. Your fight is our fight, and we will stand with you.”

One Samworth worker put it simply: “it is us on the shop floor, working hard for Samworth Brothers, and we are not happy about the cuts.”

The highlight, however, was a

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McCarthy Momentum

In February I sent a short note to Momentum organisers in Hackney, east London, saying I had filled in their on-line registration form - "but I do strongly disapprove of the use of the exact wording used in the McCarthy trials in the US: 'Are you or have you ever been...!'" I received a very rapid apology saying "any similarities to that tragic period in history was completely coincidental and without intention or malice". They said they had changed the wording and "hopefully it is now more neutral".

I have not seen the new wording, but I'm also not sure their idea of a 'broader movement' is going to stretch to include me anyway - a one-time member of the Labour Party, expelled for socialist activities as a member of Militant's editorial board. But... we'll see!

Clare Doyle
Hackney

Butterfields buyout

I live on the Butterfields estate in east London on what is called a 'registered tenancy'. Our leasehold has been sold off, like many others on the estate, to a company called Maidenway, although the previous landlords, Glasspool Trust, still own the underlying freehold. Residents face rent hikes and evictions as a result.

I have lived on this estate my entire life.

I was actually born in number 32 Butterfields, and lived there until I moved into my present flat after I got married. All the tenants on the estate have my full support. The 'assured shorthold' tenants have been sold out to Butterfields E17 Ltd.

While this may be legal, it does not make it right or worth going unchallenged. My next door neighbour is one of those affected, although she has lived here for some 14 years. Our unity towards each other in this current situation is something we should all focus on. United we stand, divided we fall. Make our campaign one that truly stands out. We need everyone's support.

Toni
Tenant, Butterfields estate

Socialist situations

On a positive note, it is encouraging that so many people are completely fed up with years of right-wing, pro-capitalist policies with virtually no opposition. Unlike Labour's leadership, not only does the Socialist Party have the appetite to fight for workers, it is a party that can interpret situations for what they are.

At the recent Socialist Party North West regional conference, Kevin Bennett, Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC) councillor in Warrington, commented that joining TUSC felt like coming home. As a socialist, I identify with this



Women members of the Socialist Movement Pakistan lead a march against religious extremism on International Women's Day 2014 photo CWI Pakistan

because the Socialist Party speaks to people like me who are sick of years of capitalist wars, austerity, the war on social housing and poverty pay. The best Jeremy Corbyn is currently offering is to implement change if he wins the 2020 general election, and that's if the right wing hasn't seen him off by then. Whereas the Socialist Party will respond to changing situations and fight for workers' rights now.

Julie
Salford

'Women's work'

What, cleaning? Silly, that's women's work!

The capitalist system reinforces the notion of 'women's work' for every new generation entering this world. Yes, we may not be living in the 'Mad Men' era. But the majority of unpaid housework and family care still falls on the shoulders of women - even though society very much knows it is happening. It is indeed an unjust bummer.

As long as the capitalist class can find someone to do this work for free, oh boy they won't half take advantage of that. It's not like women can protest against the establishment by not bothering to take care of their kids or let their houses become dumping grounds.

Under the capitalist system, unpaid work isn't valued. Generations are conditioned into thinking it is lesser work and not as important as say a banker or surgeon. This makes it so employment related to 'women's work' is low paid: home carers, nursery staff, cleaners. This low pay adds to the vicious cycle of undesirability and worthlessness, and reinforces negative attitudes and behaviour towards women. So how can we permanently end this cycle? Socialism, that's how!

A democratic workers' state would provide free childcare and domestic services to ease the burden on women. Workers in these jobs would be well paid - as they deserve to be. And as a result, future generations would come to value the work more highly.

New opportunities would open up for

'Butterfields Won't Budge!'
photo Sarah Sachs Eldridge



Militant (predecessor of the Socialist Party) members expelled from the Labour Party in 1983 including Clare Doyle (left) photo Militant



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everyone. Parents would no longer lose huge chunks of money to pay for childcare.

Single parent? No problem. Go and spend a nice day with your family while a council-employed cleaner helps tidy up so you don't have to let the TV babysit your kids again while you try to get all the laundry done.

Even more wonderful, why not drop your kids in a free creche for a few hours so you and your partner can go and enjoy some time together? The only conversation you've been able to have in the past five years is how little Jimmy has an unhealthy obsession with 'In the Night Garden' while one of you is trying to put him to bed and the other is washing dishes. Some argue referring to it as 'women's work', and associating these jobs with women, in itself causes or perpetuates

the stigma. But we could stop calling a cold a cold, and people would still get runny noses.

If we don't eradicate the root cause of 'women's work', how will it ever become a thing of the past?

Capitalism placing the burden of domestic work on working class women has a direct impact on every single person. Cooking, cleaning and family care are things we cannot live without, so it's about time they got the value they deserved.

Socialism would value these roles, and create a society with many more opportunities and freedoms for working class women and men. It would release us all from the vicious cycle of 'women's work'.

Corinthia Ward
Birmingham

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

WORKERS' FIGHTBACK SETS THE TONE FOR EAST MIDLANDS CONFERENCE

Judy Beishon speaks at East Midlands conference
photo Mike Barker



Lucy Nuttall
Leicester Socialist Party

Throughout the East Midlands we have seen an upsurge in the willingness of workers to fight back against unfair conditions and low pay. The Samworth Brothers food workers in Leicestershire (see page 11), school support staff in Derby and the local junior doctors, to name a few.

On 28 February, members of the Socialist Party from across the region came together for a conference in Nottingham.

Judy Beishon, a member of the Socialist Party executive committee, opened the discussion on Britain, emphasising the need to put forward an internationalist socialist viewpoint opposing the EU and fighting for workers' rights.

Dave Gorton talked about organising workplace paper sales and

the need for trade unions to line up against local government cuts.

Discussing how to appeal to more women, Karen Seymour suggested holding Saturday morning meetings, to make it as easy as possible for women to attend and get involved in party activity.

The workshop on building the party among students, led by Matt Whale and Theo Winston, discussed how to reach out to young people in schools and colleges.

Anti-cuts campaigns have been a major focus of the Socialist Party's work in the region, as reported by regional organiser Steve Score. The fight against fire service cuts has been hugely successful as well as campaigns against the closures of adult social care homes and children's centres.

Over £500 was raised for the fighting fund appeal. This shows the commitment of members to building a strong revolutionary party that fights for socialism.

Why I joined “The same values that I believed”

Annette Egan
Staines Socialist Party

I have always had socialist values. I went to the big trade union demonstration in London last year with Save Our Services in Surrey and to the Refugees Welcome protest last September.

I bought a copy of the Socialist on both marches and reading the 'what we stand for' section (see page 15) I

realised that these were exactly the same values that I believed.

I saw the advert at the bottom of the page and decided to contact the Socialist Party and see what being a member involved.

The response was great, really positive. I spoke to local and national organisers on the phone and attended Socialism 2015.

At Socialism 2015 I was really impressed by the speakers and contributors from the floor about what

campaigns they were working on locally and the impact they were having.

Afterwards I knew that I wanted to be a part of this.

I met Paul Couchman, from my local branch, who helped me join, and talked to me about our work in Staines.

Union rep

He also helped me get elected as a Union rep in the school where I work.

One of the first Socialist Party meetings I attended was about Jeremy Corbyn and his ideas.

It was exciting to see such a great turn out in Staines and to hear speakers from Plane Stupid and a junior doctor.

I'm really pleased to have made the decision to join.

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

www.socialistparty.org.uk 02089888777

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HOUSING NIGHTMARE THE FOCUS OF STUDENT CAMPAIGN

"Excuse me, I've just read this and I agree with every word. Our landlord's taking the piss with me and my housemates, how do I get involved with this?"

That was the response of just one person after taking my leaflet to become vice president for welfare at Leeds Beckett student union.

I have had one of the most visible campaign's on campus with banners calling for free education and affordable rents. The banners offended one letting agency so much they messaged my Facebook page explaining they wanted to 'shed some light' on the housing situation locally.

But we know all about the night-

mare of student accommodation in Leeds. No wonder everyone's had enough.

Students were particularly attracted to the idea that we would use the seat that the vice president for welfare has on the board of Unipol (the university lettings company) to push for lower rents.

Socialist Students is throwing all our energy into speaking to over a thousand students before voting takes place.

We're confident that if we can get our ideas to enough students, we can make a real breakthrough at Leeds Beckett.

**Amy Cousens,
Leeds Socialist Students**



Donate to help us seize every opportunity to fight austerity

Heather Rawling
East Midlands Socialist Party treasurer

Fighting austerity is expensive. Socialist Party members are actively out there on the streets publicising socialist ideas, petitioning for change on campaign stalls, leafletting and selling papers on demonstrations against wars, against hospital closures and council cuts.

We also support workers like the junior doctors on picket lines, campaign in trade unions for action to fight austerity and defend jobs and wages, organise meetings to discuss socialist ideas and support international workers' movements.

We cannot do this without funds. This year we will be mobilising support in the local elections for candidates that will oppose cuts and we will be promoting a socialist alternative in the EU referendum.

Socialism is back on the agenda and we need to be able to seize every opportunity to take our programme to the working class.

We have a proud record of sacrifice and raising funds because we are confident in our ideas. Last year, we smashed our target - it was the best achievement this century! Yet we need to raise £123,000 this year, £30,000 this quarter.

Congress

We have a fantastic opportunity to raise fighting fund at this year's national congress on 19-21 March. Delegates will be discussing crucial issues facing our movement. If every branch approaches its supporters and members for a donation to give to the fighting fund appeal then we could confidently reach our target.

The appeal at congress is vital to our work. Has your branch set a target? What is your plan to reach it? We are asking everyone who reads the Socialist and agrees with our ideas to consider how much they could give to support our struggle.

Please make a donation, whether large or small, to help the Socialist Party build a socialist alternative - visit socialistparty.org.uk/donate



Socialist Party Fighting Fund

	£ received	£ target	January-March 2016	Deadline 1 April 2016
North West	3,435	1,800		191%
South West	1,933	1,400		138%
Yorkshire	2,843	2,900		98%
West Midlands	1,913	2,100		91%
Wales	1,753	2,300		
Northern	391	600		65%
East Midlands	955	1,600		60%
Southern	709	1,200		59%
London	3,490	6,100		57%
Eastern	223	1,200		19%
South East	109	750		15%
England and Wales	69	3,050		2%
TOTAL	16,420	25,000		71%

STOP THE WAR ON THE KURDS!

Paula Mitchell
Socialist Party executive
committee

A horror is being perpetrated on Kurdish people in south east Turkey. Since summer 2015, the Turkish government has declared curfews in seven provinces, enforced by tanks and heavy artillery. There have been hundreds of deaths and arrests, and a massacre in the town of Cizre.

Housing has been shelled and tens of thousands displaced. Civilians are shot at while looking for food. People die in base-ments, while blockades deny ambulances entry.

Offices of the HDP (People's Democratic Party - a left, pro-Kurdish party) have been de-faced, burnt and bombed. Nearly all mayors of mainly Kurdish towns have been arrested. Ser-vices such as education and healthcare are defunct.

As the Socialist Party's sister party in Turkey, Sosyalist Alternatif, describes it: "President Erdogan and his government ended a 'peace resolution' process and started a war".

This onslaught comes at the same time as major terrorist bomb attacks.

In June, an HDP rally was bombed in Diyarbakir. In July, 33 young people were mas-sacred in Suruç. In October at least 128 people were killed in Ankara when two bombs de-vastated a trade union and HDP peace rally.

The Turkish state has failed to investigate those responsible for attacks. In Ankara, the police blocked ambulances while the crowds were tear-gassed.

This February a military convoy was blown up, kill-ing at least 28; the government blamed Kurdish organisations the PKK and YPG (see below), which they deny.

Eventually, the attack was claimed by TAK, a Kurdish na-tionalist group, exposing the lies of the Turkish government's supposed "proofs". Nonetheless the Turkish military had already started bombing Kurdish tar-gets in Iraq and Syria, using the Ankara bombing as an excuse.

Stateless nation

The Kurds are a stateless na-tion, divided across Iraq, Iran, Syria and Turkey since the 1916 Sykes-Picot post-war agree-

ment between imperialist pow-ers to carve up the region.

Kurds have been oppressed everywhere, but in the insta-bility created since the 2003 Iraq War they have developed autonomous areas in Iraq and Syria. The spectre the Turkish regime sees now is that the on-going crisis in Syria is breaking down Sykes-Picot, giving the Kurds the opportunity to pro-gress further with implications for Turkey itself.

President Erdogan's Jus-tice and Development Party (AKP) lost its majority in the 7 June general election and the recently-formed HDP made an unprecedented breakthrough with 13%. New elections were called for 1 November, which Erdogan prepared for by declar-ing war on the Kurdish people, while stirring up anti-Kurdish nationalism.

In the second elections, the AKP emerged strengthened and able to form a government, but the HDP still managed to get over the 10% threshold for MPs. The violence and intimidation meted out on Kurdish provinces has continued.

Erdogan equates the PKK with Isis. There is no compar-ison, but the Socialist Party be-lieves that individual armed actions are counterproductive, used by the state to cleave a huge division between Turkish and Kurdish people.

There is the risk of civil war - a risk Erdogan is prepared to take to maintain his own position and thwart Kurdish national as-pirations.

Refugee crisis

Turkey occupies a key loca-tion between Europe the Mid-dle East, extremely important to European powers struggling with both a refugee crisis and catastrophe in Syria.

EU powers have made deals with Erdogan's regime, includ-ing financial sweeteners, in return for Turkey preventing refugees crossing into Europe. In addition, Turkish and the US administrations reached an agreement to conduct joint op-erations against Isis, allowing the US to launch air strikes from the Nato air base at Incirlik. Tur-key's prime minister recently visited Britain and met with David Cameron about "resolving" terrorist activities in Syria.

In July Turkish planes bombed Isis bases in Syria for the first time. But using the ex-cuse provided by the west's so-called 'war on terror,' it used

these attacks as cover for a bom-bardment of Kurdish areas.

These are the same Kurdish forces that, with some success, have been fighting Isis on the ground! Last year, the coura-geous defence of Kobanê by the YPG (People's Defence Force), the fighting forces of the PYD (Democratic Union Party), beat back Isis - although not without the almost complete destruc-tion of Kobanê following US bombings.

The PYD is linked to the PKK, the Kurdistan Workers Party, a guerrilla organisation with mass support in the Kurdish areas of Turkey. Its standing has grown in comparison with the corrupt capitalist regime of Barzani in the autonomous Kurdish area of northern Iraq. It was the PKK that entered Iraqi Kurdish ar-eas when the Yazidi community was under attack and played a large part in repelling Isis.

Now, as Russian airstrikes bombard Aleppo and the groups fighting Syria's President Assad, the YPG has advanced into new areas. Russian air-strikes have not only targeted terrorist groups but (as with the strikes of Western powers) also inflicted civilian casualties, the destruction of infrastructure and a mass exodus of refugees.

For the YPG to secure popular support in those areas, it is vital to dissociate itself from such methods. Russia and Assad are only interested in re-establishing a brutal dictatorship. An appeal to the mass of the popu-lation, be they Turkmen, Arab or Kurd, to organise together is vital.

The Turkish state would rather see Isis win out than a Kurdish victory. Erdogan mobi-lised troops and teargas against Kurds and Turks gathering on the border wanting to get through to join the fight against Isis in Syria, yet has allowed large numbers of pro-Isis jihad-ists to cross its border.

Turkey and the Kurdish issue is now added into the mix in the struggle between the US and Russia in Syria. Tensions with Russia's Putin regime erupted when Turkey shot down a Rus-sian warplane in November.

Russian officials blame Tur-key for contributing to the fail-ure of Syrian peace talks in Ge-neva, after Erdogan vetoed PYD participation. Now the PYD has opened an office in Moscow at Putin's personal invitation.

The greatest fear of the rich, the big bosses and landowners, and their political representa-

tives in Turkey, is the coming together of Kurdish and Turk-ish workers in a movement that could challenge the whole Turk-ish regime.

The Socialist Party supports the right of communities to defend themselves - whether in Turkey or Syria. We call for democratic, non-sectarian, multi-ethnic defence commit-tees, giving the population an active role.

We support the right of the Kurdish people to self-determi-

nation including, if they so wish, full autonomous democratic rights within the state they live in, the establishment of inde-pendent states, or of a common state of all Kurds.

But the most important chal-lenge facing Kurdish people - essential if civil war is to be pre-vented - is to make an appeal to working class people in Turkey. Many Kurds now live outside the traditional Kurdish areas and could build united action.

In such a terrible situation this

NATIONAL DEMONSTRATION



STOP TURKEY'S WAR ON THE KURDS! BREAK THE SILENCE!

**ASSEMBLE 12.00 NOON BBC.
SUNDAY 6TH MARCH.
DEPARTS 13.00PM.
TRAFALGAR SQUARE 14.00PM RALLY.**

could seem remote. But such an appeal, with a programme to defend democratic rights, for jobs and homes, for the region's vast resources to be owned and controlled democratically for the benefit of all, could break through the fear and hate.

Workers and the poor in Tur-key have nothing to gain from the Kurds continued oppres-sion, which only strengthens the government and bosses that also exploit and oppresses them; or from descent into civil war, which would mean more death and destruction.

Turkish workers and young people have shown their readi-ness to fight. Three years ago a mass movement rose up around the environmental protests at Gezi Park.

In 2014 workers struck against mine bosses after a mining dis-aster, and in 2015 car workers went on strike. Crucially, in October 2015, mass demon-strations and a two-day general strike took place in response to the Ankara bombings.

The HDP, along with the trade unions and socialists, should call mass protests and strikes against the war on the Kurds, racist attacks, police repression and terrorism.

It is a good step for Kurdish organisations in Britain to appeal to people here with a national demonstration. Socialists and workers organisations here need to build move-ments against imperialist interven-tion, and demand rights and decent con-conditions for refugees.

The different imperialist or regional powers, including the US and Russia, do not have the interests of Kurdish people at heart, they are purely interested in their own power, and will abandon the Kurds when they have no use of them anymore (as happened in 1991 when US president George Bush encour-aged a Kurdish uprising against Saddam Hussein in Iraq only to leave them to be massacred).

However, by standing firm against all imperialist forces and reactionary regimes, and by championing the rights of self-determination, a movement could be built that would reach out to workers and the poor across the whole re-gion.

A socialist pro-gramme could unite people in Turkey, Syria, Iraq and across the region to repel Isis, the corrupt regional powers and imperialist forces in the region.

A voluntary social-ist confederation of the Middle East would en-able all people to freely and democratically decide their own fates.

photo Lindsay T/Creative Commons



What we stand for

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

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

The Socialist Party is part of the Committee for a Workers' International (CWI), a socialist international that organises in over 40 countries.

Our demands include:

PUBLIC SERVICES

- No to ALL cuts in jobs, public services and benefits. Defend our pensions.
- No to privatisation and the Private Finance Initiative (PFI). Renationalise all privatised utilities and services, with compensation paid only on the basis of proven need.
- Fully fund all services and run them under accountable, democratic com-mittees 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 every-one'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 pro-gramme of publicly owned housing, on an environmentally sustainable basis, to provide good quality homes with low rents.

ENVIRONMENT

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

RIGHTS

- Oppose discrimination on the grounds of race, gender, 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. 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 own-ership the top 150 companies and the banking system that dominate the British economy, and run them under democratic working class control and management. Compensa-tion 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 Eu-ropean Union! For a socialist Europe and a socialist world!

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

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Stop Tory attacks on NHS

SUPPORT JUNIOR DOCTORS' STRIKES

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photo Paul Mattsson

Health unions must coordinate action

Jackie Grunsell

Health minister Jeremy Hunt has declared war on junior doctors by imposing a contract which will remove safeguards to them working more unsocial hours, and for less pay.

It's a contract that the public knows will put patients' safety at risk. It's a hard pill to swallow when there are massive shortages of doctors and nurses across the National Health Service (NHS). How does Hunt intend to fill these vacancies when junior doctors have been

made to feel undervalued and demoralised by the stance he has taken, and when student grants for nurses have been axed?

No option

Doctors didn't pick this fight but make no mistake, they are determined to win it. Left with no other option the BMA doctors' union has announced an escalation of action to three 48-hour strikes in March and April.

Does Hunt think that junior doctors who are used to working upwards of 70 hours a week won't have the stamina to keep up this action?

No junior doctor disagrees with the call to improve cover in the NHS over the whole of the week. To do this requires more staff and extra funding. But this is not what the government proposes.

It's clear that this dispute is over so much more than pay and hours. Junior doctors know the NHS is under threat. This contract is part of the Tories' plan to destabilise the NHS, run it down, claim it is failing, and then pass it over to the eagerly waiting hands of the private sector.

Junior Doctors know what's at stake. It is essential for all health workers and all of us who use the

NHS to support them in their fight. Other health unions need to show the determination of their BMA colleagues and come together to organise coordinated action to save the NHS.

Emergency protest

A national demonstration in March should be called as an emergency to galvanise support behind health workers and build for an intensive campaign to defeat the government.

■ Junior doctor talks to the Socialist - see page 10

We say

- Joint trade union meetings to discuss support action on the new strike days
- Local union and community protests to compel health trusts to maintain existing nationally agreed contracts
- Jeremy Corbyn and the TUC to call a mass demonstration and for solidarity action in support of the junior doctors and to save the NHS
- Coordinated strike action across the NHS in defence of pay and terms and conditions as a step towards a 24-hour general strike