

£1/£2 solidarity price

Issue 941
23-29 March 2017



socialistparty.org.uk

the Socialist

Formerly **Militant**

NHS: Fightback!

- Campaign reports > page 11
- Strategy to win > page 16



#JobstownNotGuilty - Support the campaign > page 4



Northern Ireland - Divisive election is a warning to the workers' movement > pages 8-9



THE TORIES ARE ROTTEN: KICK THEM OUT!



photo Mary Finch

■ **Corbyn must lead fight against government and Blairites**

The appointment of former Tory chancellor George Osborne as editor of the *Evening Standard* is of a piece with the previous MPs' expenses scandal, the current Tory election campaign expenses scandal, the Panama papers revelations and everything that proves on a daily basis that pro-capitalist, pro-austerity politicians are in it for themselves.

Osborne, a millionaire heir and member of the landed gentry, does seem to be taking it to a new level. He now has six jobs for which he gets paid obscene amounts. His public speaking gig alone has reportedly netted him over £700,000 since he was sacked by Theresa May after the Cameron government lost the Brexit referendum last year.

He has a £650,000-job working four days a month for BlackRock, the world's biggest investment firm, a major investor in notorious private security firm G4S that has benefited from many government privatisations under the Tories and Blair.

This former member of the elite Oxford University Bullingdon Club also has a £120,000 fellowship at the McCain Institute for International Leadership in Arizona. And it's estimated he'll get £220,000 for a four-day week at the *Standard*. Oh yeah, and his £75,000 for being a MP.

However, it was on the Tory front bench that some of the greatest horror was felt at Osborne's new influential position. Quoted in the *Sunday Times*, a minister said Theresa May's aides are "obsessed and consumed by what he is up to".

May and her supporters correctly fear Osborne will use his new platform to attack the Tory leadership. Of course this won't be over cuts to services or tax breaks for the 1%. Rather this is about the huge split in the Tory party over Brexit, which they cannot paper over.

This split should give an advantage to Jeremy Corbyn's Labour. However, deputy leader Tom Watson's 'soft coup' is in full flow trying to undermine Corbyn.

A resolute and energetic campaign to drive out all the Blairites and re-found the Labour Party, reaching out to all Corbyn's supporters, could secure his position as Labour leader and enable the party to deliver urgently needed anti-austerity and socialist policies.

■ **Continued on page 2**

■ Brexit, Scottish referendum, grammar schools, National Insurance...

TORY SPLITS BROUGHT TO SURFACE - CORBYN MUST GO ON THE ATTACK



What we think

■ Continued from front page

Despite the unending attacks on Jeremy Corbyn, and the wall-to-wall coverage permitted to the Blairites, Theresa May is in a serious pickle. Last summer she was appointed in a manoeuvre aimed at bringing the warring sides of her party together after the Brexit vote. This is impossible.

George Osborne's new job is just one indication of the escalation of this war. A minister close to Theresa May said that "it looks like a platform for vengeance". May sacked Osborne after she was appointed prime minister, attempting to give the appearance of a break with the past. He and Cameron had led the Remain campaign to defeat. The Brexit vote at base was an unexpected strike back by the austerity-weary and angry.

Osborne is a Remainer. Unlike the millions who voted Remain in opposition to the racist and Little Englander leadership of the official Leave campaign in the referendum, Osborne defends the EU as an institution of capitalist exploitation, austerity and inequality.

Behind him is the majority of big business demanding a 'soft Brexit' including access to the single market.. 44% of British exports go to the EU single market area.

Increasingly unreliable

The Tory party is split between those who represent the majority of the capitalist class and want to remain in the EU, and those who see a switch to more 'little Englander' policies as the best way of responding to the era of capitalist crisis. This means the Conservative Party is increasingly becoming an unreliable political party for the interest of the capitalist class.

Osborne appears to hope that his new appointment will bring him influence in London, where there was a strong vote for Remain, to build a broad political base. But there is no chance of this happening among working class Londoners. Not least because of his association with years of brutal austerity.

So far, due in part to the media blackout of a left voice on the Leave side, most voters never heard the left opposition to the capitalist EU. This was aided by Jeremy Corbyn's switch to Remain instead of being the

“ ”
The Tory party is increasingly becoming an unreliable political party for the interests of the capitalist class



photo Paul Mattsson

voice for a socialist, internationalist, working class exit which could argue for defence of migrants and refugees while also opposing austerity from both Westminster and Brussels.

This crisis of political representation means there are attempts at realignment. Tony Blair's fulsome praise for Osborne on the Marr show offered a glimpse of this. Nicky Morgan, former education minister also sacked by May, argued that there's a liberal conservative point of view to be talked about. She co-authored an article with

former Labour education minister Lucy Powell and ex-Lib Dem leader Nick Clegg in the Observer attacking May's grammar school policy.

So hemmed in is May that a general election is possible. Writing in the Sunday Times, Adam Boulton quotes a "well connected activist" saying that "the prime minister cannot get on with her work."

The u-turn on the rise in National Insurance Contributions is an example of this. It's reported that the chief whip just couldn't get it through the revolting MPs - 'his



photo Policy Exchange/CC



Corbyn must mobilise the anti-austerity forces that were key to his leadership election victories photo Socialist Party

chaps wouldn't have it'. Such self-made disasters only bring the paper-thinness of May's majority, as well as her lack of a mandate, to the fore. In fact it was used by Nicola Sturgeon in the spat over a second Scottish referendum when she tweeted that the "PM is not yet elected by anyone".

Cameron had attempted to build stability in to his government with the introduction of a fixed term parliament. But that is far from an absolute obstacle. May would need a two-thirds vote in Parliament to overcome it and the Blairites hope for a defeat of Corbyn to get rid of him.

“ ”

The battle in Labour is currently being played out most dramatically in the trade unions

The battle in Labour is currently being played out most dramatically in the trade unions. Tom Watson's attacks on Unite general secretary Len McCluskey are an attempt to remove one of Corbyn's key supporters. Watson, who gets cheered to the rafters by the Parliamentary Labour Party (PLP), is echoing attempts by the Financial Times and other Blairites to sway the general secretary election in favour of the Blairite candidate Gerard Coyne.

As Len McCluskey wrote for the Huffington Post: "A world of skulduggery, smears and secret plots. That is where you will find Tom Watson. When Labour has needed loyalty he has been sharpening his knife looking for a back to stab... And now his sights are set on abusing the internal democracy of Unite."

The fact that the union has voted in favour of policies

that will aid the fight against austerity and the refounding of Labour as a democratic party under Jeremy Corbyn has drawn the ire of the Blairites. At last year's conference a democratic vote in favour of the right for Labour members to deselect MPs passed overwhelmingly. The union already has a position in favour of Labour councils passing no-cuts budgets to protect people against Tory austerity.

The attacks show that the Blairites are set on an all-out war to defend Labour as a party of big business. It is therefore a mistake for some on the left to call for 'unity' in the party. Even more so than in the Tories, it is impossible to unite the two wings of Labour - the pro-capitalist PLP and most councillors on the one side and the hundreds of thousands who joined to back Corbyn's anti-austerity stand on the other.

No compromise

Jeremy Corbyn has correctly spoke of the need for the party to be focused on fundamentally transforming the country in the interests of the people - but that won't happen on the basis of attempts to compromise with Watson and co. At Labour's conference last September Watson 'welcomed' Corbyn's re-election with a speech praising Blair and capitalism.

An indication that Corbyn's policies could win a general election was shown on the NHS demo and in the huge number of anti-cuts campaigns mushrooming across the country. There is no mood for making peace with the proponents of austerity - far from it.

A new poll reveals that four out of every ten adults say they prefer socialism to capitalism. This is in the context of people's experience since the 2007-8 world economic crisis where more than 99% of the wealth created has gone to the mega-rich. Mass support can and must be built for a bold, working class, socialist programme to bring down the Tories, austerity and capitalism.



Report: March Against Racism

photos Mary Finch



photo Sarah Wrack

Banging drums and chanting. Demanding the right to work, to stop deportations and end detention. Tamil Solidarity's Refugee Rights Campaign - with the Socialist Party and Socialist Students marching alongside - has to have been one of the liveliest blocs on the March Against Racism in London on 18 March.

Thousands of people, many young, took to the streets to oppose racism and to resist Trump on the UN's Anti-Racism Day.

Refugee Rights was one of the largest contingents of black and Asian people on the march. With no response from the Stand Up to Racism organisers to requests to speak on the official platform, the campaign used the Socialist Party's sound system to make speeches and even sing as the crowds gathered.

They also heard from socialists and trade unionists, such as April Ashley and Hugo Pierre, who both hold black members' seats on the national executive of Unison and spoke in a personal capacity.

The Socialist Party is proud to campaign alongside refugees who put forward a clear independent working class appeal.

These Tamil campaigners understand that to win refugee rights they need more than general pledges of anti-racism. They demand investment in job creation and for all workers to be paid decent wages. They call for a £10 an hour minimum wage and trade union rights. They fight to defend the NHS, and for homes and services for all.

The Socialist Party agrees. Starting with the energy of the young people who have taken to the streets in recent weeks, linked to the potential power of the organised working class in the trade unions, a mighty movement could defeat racism.

This must be built around demands and slogans that unite working class people in a fight for a decent life for all. Fight racism, fight austerity - fight for socialism!
Paula Mitchell
London Socialist Party

May Day greetings in the Socialist

Help fund the best workers' newspaper in England and Wales by placing a May Day greeting in the Socialist

- For prices and to place your greeting: socialistparty.org.uk/mayday
- For queries and resources, email jamesivens@socialistparty.org.uk
- 25% discount for payments made by 5pm on 31 March 2017; Final deadline for payments and greetings: 12 April

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

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

Editor: Sarah Wrack

News/letters: James Ivens
International: Dave Carr

Workplace/campaigns: Scott Jones
Sales/layout: Ian Pattison

Photographer: Paul Mattsson
Website: Judy Beishon

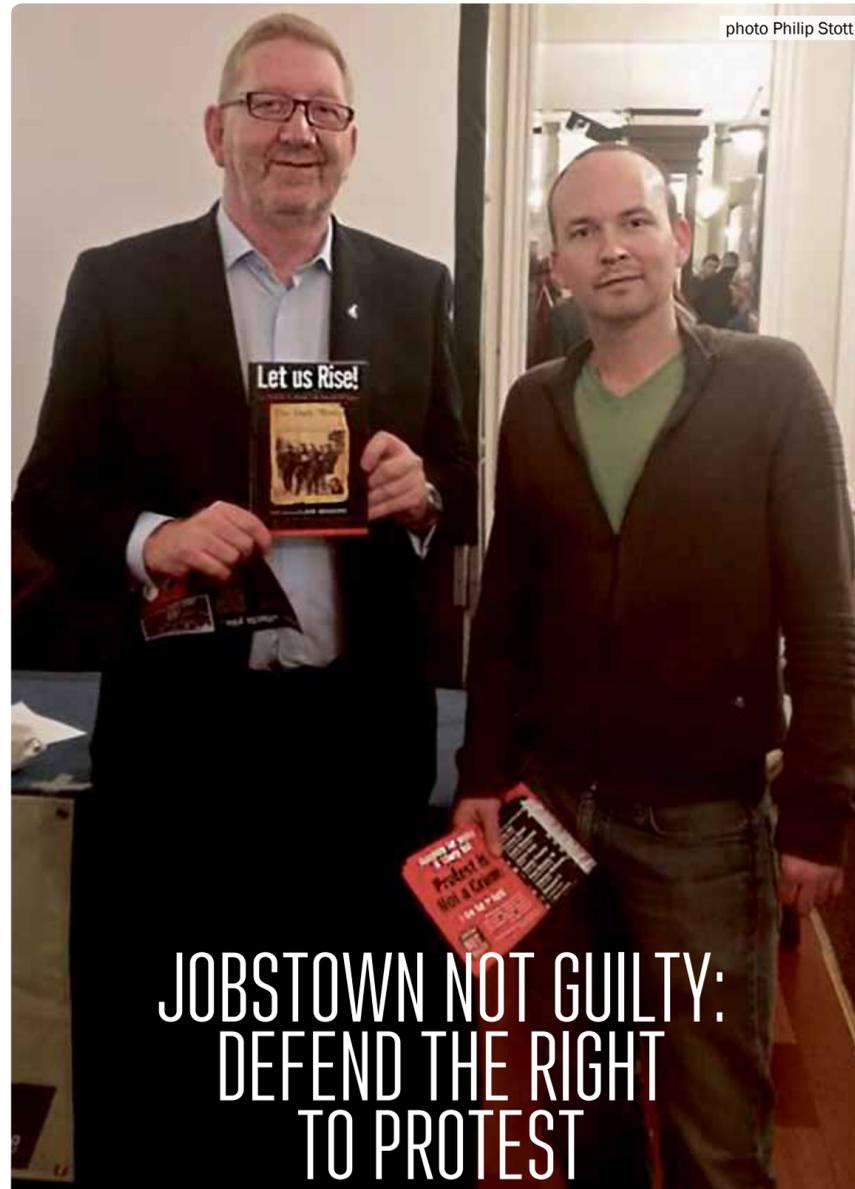


photo Philip Stott

JOBSTOWN NOT GUILTY: DEFEND THE RIGHT TO PROTEST

Unite the Union general secretary Len McCluskey (left) gives his backing to the 'Jobstown Not Guilty' campaign.

The Irish state plans to try 18 peaceful protesters for 'false imprisonment' of Labour former deputy premier Joan Burton. They were part of a sit-down protest and slow march around Burton's car during the successful campaign against water charges in Ireland.

The establishment wants to criminalise protest and take vengeance against the movement's leadership, especially Socialist Party Ireland. Paul Murphy (right), a member of Ireland's parliament and the Socialist Party, could lose office if convicted.

Read more about the campaign at socialistparty.org.uk, 'Dublin: Jobstown Not Guilty'.

Join the list of supporters! Email your name, address and postcode,

plus any workers' movement position, to jobstownnotguiltygb@gmail.com. As well as Len, the latest supporters of Jobstown Not Guilty include:

Noam Chomsky, academic and activist; **Jean-Luc Mélenchon**, French presidential candidate of the left; **Yanis Varoufakis**, former Greek finance minister; **Angela Davis**, US civil rights campaigner; **Sean Hoyle**, president of transport union RMT; **Ian Hodson**, president of food workers' union BFAWU; **Chris Baugh**, assistant general secretary of civil servants' union PCS; **John McNally**, vice-president of civil servants' union PCS; **Luis Mesina**, general secretary of the Chilean bank workers' trade union confederation; **Jason Manfred**, comedian; **Miguel Urbán Crespo**, Podemos MEP, Spain; **Tassia Christodouloupoulou**, Syriza MP and vice-chair of the Greek parliament; **Dimitrios Papadimoulis**,

Syriza MEP and vice-president of the European parliament; **Catarina Martins**, parliamentary leader of the Left Bloc, Portugal; National executive committee of **Die Linke**, German left party; Executive committee of the **Party of the European Left**; **Ertuğrul Kürkçü**, People's Democratic Party MP, Turkey; **"Long Hair" Leung Kwok-hung**, member of the Hong Kong legislative council; **Ged Grebby**, chief executive of Show Racism the Red Card; **Eamon Dunphy**, Irish journalist; **Meena Kandasamy**, novelist and poet; **K Satchidanandan**, Indian writer; **MPs and MEPs** from Belgium, Cyprus, France, Ireland, Greece, Sri Lanka, Sweden, Spain, Portugal, Italy, Germany, Denmark, Finland, Brazil, Turkey, Israel, Romania, Hong Kong and more; **trade unionists** from across Ireland, Britain and elsewhere...

Four million kids in poverty Single parents to lose £2,850 FIGHT TORY ATTACKS ON WOMEN AND CHILDREN



Women march in Madrid for International Women's Day photo Izquierda Revolucionaria

Suzanne Beishon
Working parent

"When I stood on the steps of Downing Street and said I wanted this to be a country that works for everyone - I meant it." Theresa May has Tory rhetoric down.

This was what she spewed on International Women's Day when announcing that a pretty measly £5 million would be put towards helping women back to work after taking time out to raise a family.

Except why would you want to go back to work when the grim reality is that working parents in Britain, especially single parents, will be some of the hardest hit by cuts in the Tory budget? A single parent of two who works 17 hours a week faces losing out on £2,850 a year by 2020.

The research for the Child Poverty Action Group has also shown that a single parent working 24 hours a week would lose £2,465; one working 16 hours a week would miss out on £2,205; and an unemployed single-parent would lose £1,538.

Researchers said these cuts will have a massive impact on child poverty figures. Figures which this week showed child poverty at its highest level since 2010. A devastating four million now living in relative poverty - an increase of 100,000 in 2015-16.

Household data published by the government showed 67% are from working families, with the biggest surge among children of single parents who work full time.

Despite Tory newspeak, work clearly doesn't pay. On the contrary, this vicious government and its big business mates are doing everything possible to pick the pockets of "hard-working families."

The May government isn't strong. The budget and its cuts aren't set in stone. Already Chancellor Philip Hammond has been forced into a humiliating climbdown on his tax raid on the self-employed.

We can force them back on these vicious cuts that plunge children into poverty - with a collective fight-back, including coordinated industrial action and campaigning for a working class political voice.

Socialists demand reply to Livingstone's smear of Militant

Former mayor of London Ken Livingstone has joined the likes of former grassroots campaign group Momentum's leaders in attacking genuine socialists.

His false comments on BBC Radio 4 accused Militant, now the Socialist Party, of reactionary positions opposite to our well-documented socialist politics.

Socialist Party deputy general secretary **Hannah Sell** served alongside Livingstone on Labour's national executive committee (NEC) from 1988-9. Hannah wrote to the BBC demanding the right to reply...

Tories scrap housing benefit for under-21s

- Reverse all benefit cuts - £10 minimum wage
- Fight for mass building of council homes now

Kieran Barlow
Young worker

A new rule change will end housing benefit for 18 to 21-year-olds from next month, leaving thousands of young adults with nowhere to go. The Tories have outdone themselves once again.

The Department for Work and Pensions has estimated that 11,000 people will be affected by these new changes, further widening the gap between the super-rich 1% and the 99%.

Although not on housing benefit myself, my mother's housing benefit was cut. Due to me working in a part-time job at the time, I had to pay the rent and support the family - at 18. I was not earning enough while also trying to save for my own home, so my grandparents took me in.

My situation now is not very different. Although still living with my grandparents and having a partner, the possibility of having our own place is far off due to high deposits and low wages and hours.

Under Tory leadership, the number of rough sleepers has more than doubled since 2010 according to government figures. These cuts will only add to the housing crisis caused by capitalism.

The government says this will cut a further £105 million from benefits spending by 2020 - on top of the deadly cuts already implemented. But researchers at Heriot-Watt University reckon the Treasury is unlikely to save much money - a maximum of £3.3 million a year once exemptions are counted.

We're already battling against



photo Erich Ferdinand/CC

zero-hour contracts, rising tuition fees and ever increasing rents. And it's the same the world over. In the US, a study by Harvard University found that 51% of 18 to 29-year-olds reject capitalism.

It's undeniable that this generation currently has the worst prospects for securing housing. Only 26% of young adults will be on the property ladder

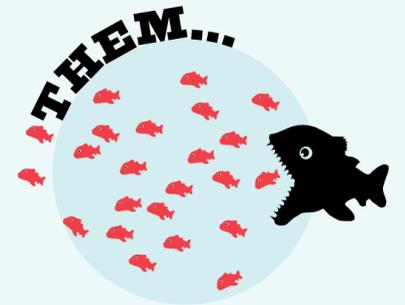
by 2025, according to financial services giant PwC; 60% will rent.

We need socialist change. We need a £10 an hour minimum wage, benefits that actually cover the cost of living, and rent caps. We need a mass party of the working class to campaign for mass building of publicly owned, good quality, low-rent homes.

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

socialistparty.org.uk/join 020 8988 8777

@socialist_party text 07761 818 206 /CWISocialistParty



■ Nine-zero wealth v zero-hour want

The world has gained 233 new billionaires in the last year.

There are now 2,043 capitalists with ten or eleven-figure riches, according to Forbes. This is the highest in the wealth magazine's 31-year history of compiling the figures.

The billionaires on Forbes' latest list are worth a combined £6.2 trillion. That's more than twice the UK's annual 'gross domestic product'.

Meanwhile, the number of UK

workers on zero-hour contracts for their main job is 905,000.

And these Office for National Statistics survey findings - for October to December 2016 - do not include workers on insufficient guaranteed hours.

Spare a thought, though, for BHS bandit Philip Green, Sports Direct zero-hour tyrant Mike Ashley and bigot-in-chief Donald Trump. All three have fallen to lower positions in the world billionaire rankings.

■ Super-rich inheritance v paupers' funerals

The global super-rich will transfer £3.1 trillion to their offspring by 2026.

This figure, from a 2016 report by market researchers Wealth-X, is equivalent to over one-twentieth of the planet's annual 'gross world product'.

Meanwhile, in London, the

number of 'paupers' funerals' has more than doubled.

In 2007-10, councils buried 1,000 people whose families were not able to pay.

Between 2010 and 2013, it was 2,153, according to a Freedom of Information request by the Evening Standard.

■ House prices v wages

London house prices rose by £105 a day between 2011 and 2017. Meanwhile, says estate agent the Savills, the average London salary rose by just 54p a day.

Even this wage-growth figure is

distorted by the preponderance of super-salaries in the Square Mile.

Real wages for workers in the UK actually fell by 10.4% between 2007 and 2015, according to the Trade Union Congress.

■ Butler v British Library

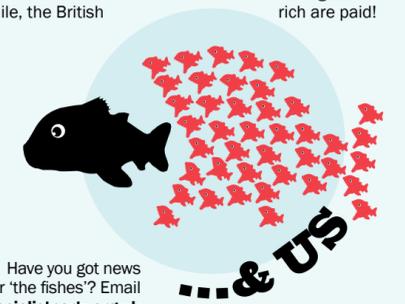
The Rothschild family's financial holding company advertised in January for a new assistant head butler to help run its pantry.

How rich do you have to be that even your staff have servants? Well, Rothschild & Co apparently had a yearly revenue of £1.4 billion as of March 2016.

Meanwhile, the British

Library was advertising for an event manager - with a doctorate - to organise celebrations for Karl Marx's 200th birthday.

The rate? The ad says "the library itself is not able to provide payment." What would Marx make of that? At least the butlers to the wealth managers of the super-rich are paid!



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

END THE SEVEN YEAR PUBLIC SECTOR PAY CAP!

Chris Baugh
PCS assistant general secretary

The Resolution Foundation think tank says public sector workers have suffered a cut in real wages since 2010. It goes on to say that the position of 5.4 million public sector workers will worsen over the rest of the decade.

By 2020, with the continued imposition of pay caps, and rising inflation, the average pay of public sector workers will be £1,700 lower than in 2010. The key point here is the continued operation of the pay cap and the need for the public sector unions individually and collectively to challenge its imposition.

Last year's TUC conference committed to actively supporting and coordinating strike action across the trade union movement against the pay cap. This motion was put forward by PCS which has recently called upon the TUC to implement this policy.

PCS commissioned its own independent research upon which to base its pay claim for 2017. This shows that since 2010 the value of civil service average earnings has fallen in comparison with prices by 8%.

Contrast

Workers can contrast this with the pay of architect of austerity George Osborne, Tory chancellor from 2010-2016. In addition to being an MP, he makes over £1 million a year from investment firm BlackRock and speech making, and this is before he starts his latest job as editor of the London Evening Standard.

If the pay cap continues to the end

of the decade, average civil service pay will fall in value by more than 20%.

Against this background of savage attacks on our members' pay and living standards, the union's national executive committee has put to the treasury a pay claim for 2017. It includes an end to government-imposed pay restraint, a significant pay increase - above the rate of inflation - of 5% or £1,200, whichever is the greater, and a living wage of at least £10 an hour.

Our claim also contains a demand for a return to national pay bargaining. Our members reject and can't understand why the pay of a worker in one department or agency can vary by up to £5,000 with a worker in another department on the same grade and doing the same job.

Day of action

We want common pay and grading across government services and equal pay for work of equal value. In support of our claim, and to publicise the effects of pay capping on our members' living standards, the PCS national executive committee has designated 31 March as a day of action on pay.

Pay capping is an issue across the public sector, which is why we call upon the TUC to coordinate action against the pay cap. Public sector unions should also cooperate at a local level in joint activities on 31 March and raise the call for national coordinated action.

I am confident the day of action will get a big response from our members, reflecting their anger at the real wage cuts and their confidence in the PCS Left Unity leadership to fight for members' interests.



photo Paul Mattsson



RMT protest in support of Martin Zee outside court photo RMT

Merseyrail guard found not guilty of "endangering safety"

Tom Woodcock
RMT member

Martin Zee, a train guard working for Merseyrail, has been found not guilty of "endangering safety by wilful omission" by a jury at Liverpool Crown Court.

The jury's unanimous verdict concludes two years of hell for Martin and his family during which he has faced the possibility of being sent to prison.

In July 2015, 89-year-old Edna

Atherton fell onto the tracks after attempting to board Martin's train at Hamilton Square station. He immediately rushed to her aid, correctly carried out his safety duties and thankfully Mrs Atherton survived, albeit having sustained injuries.

However two years after the incident he found himself in court being forced to defend himself and seeing his reputation put under the microscope in public.

The case was brought to court by the Crown Prosecution Service despite the fact that he had been exonerated following investigations by his employer and

the railway regulator.

The charge against Martin centres around his decision to reopen the train doors for a late passenger which the prosecution argued contributed to the injuries of Mrs Atherton.

But expert witnesses slammed the charge: "In 25 years of working in the rail industry, I've never once encountered someone falling from a train because of opening or closing doors", said one.

So what lay behind the decision to prosecute Martin, who had clearly done nothing wrong? We are currently in the middle of a fight for the very future of guards on trains. The

Aslef offer: Unity needed with the RMT to defeat DOO on Southern

Aslef member

Members of train drivers' union Aslef on Southern Rail are being balloted for a second time on an offer from the company to resolve the dispute over driver only operation (DOO) of trains.

The 'new' offer is apparently little different to the original one which was rejected. If that proves to be the case, Southern drivers should reject this offer as incompatible with stated Aslef policy that there will be no extension of DOO.

There are elements of DOO already across companies, that is why the policy is framed as no extension.

It is not just the jobs, pay and conditions and training of guards which

is at stake but the safety of all rail staff and users. It is true that Aslef does not represent or negotiate for guards, the RMT does. But drivers rely upon guards for our safety, so any change to their role affects us directly. Many newly qualified drivers have good reason to thank experienced guards for their support.

It is time to oppose any detrimental changes to working conditions in the rail industry as a whole. We can only defend ourselves if we defend others as well. Jobs and conditions should be defended whether they are on the train, the track, the signal box or the station.

There is an opportunity for the rail unions to work together against unpopular train companies which are

putting profits first, and against the government, to lay the basis for a publicly owned, democratically run rail industry.

Aslef and the RMT are taking joint action in a London Underground night tube strike on 8 April.

For more workplace news including fighting to save Liverpool jobcentres, Foundation workers walkout in Leeds and the latest Fujitsu strike see socialistparty.org.uk



photo Southern my another account/CC

BATTLE STEPS UP IN UNITE GENERAL SECRETARY ELECTION BEFORE START OF VOTING

Rob Williams
Socialist Party industrial organiser

Voting for the Unite general secretary and executive council election opens on 27 March until 19 April. The Socialist Party is backing Len McCluskey for general secretary and we have four members on the United Left slate - Suzanne Muna (London and Eastern), Jamie Cocozza (Scotland), Jimmy Tyson (Construction) and Kevin Bennett (GEMS).

It is no accident that a week before voting starts, Labour Party deputy leader Tom Watson was on Radio 4 attacking Len McCluskey, showing that the anti-Corbyn forces in Unite and Labour are coordinating their attack with the full approval and assistance of the media.

They understand the significance of the Unite election for the struggle in Labour. Behind the right-wing candidate Gerard Coyne are the Blairites and the whole capitalist establishment, who were defeated in last year's attempted coup against Jeremy Corbyn.

A Coyne leadership would also represent a retreat from the more fighting stance of the union under Len McCluskey's leadership.

Unite has become more militant and more responsive to rank and file pressure. Len has ended the practice of repudiating unofficial action, which has given confidence for unofficial walkouts, for example on Crossrail. He has consistently supported and resourced workplace battles against exploitative employers.

For example, the union is currently leading up to 3,000 BA mixed fleet cabin crew in a dispute

against poverty pay, which has so far taken 26 days of strike action. Last summer at Fawley Oil Refinery strike action ensured that migrant workers were paid the nationally agreed rate.

We believe that the left in Unite should support Len McCluskey. The Socialist Party has disagreed with Len McCluskey and others in Unite's leadership on occasion, and will continue to put forward an independent position. However, it is clear that the union has become stronger, more coordinated, more left-leaning and better organised since Len's election.

It must continue on this trajectory in the interests of Unite members and the wider labour movement. We should not ignore the seriousness of the challenge from Coyne. Nor do we agree with the third candidate, Ian Allinson and his supporters, who dismiss the right-wing challenge.

His campaign represents a needless risk which could split the left vote. In the current climate, any weakening of support for Len McCluskey will be trumpeted as disillusionment with socialist ideas and will be presented as a reaction to Unite's support for Corbyn.

The full United Left slate can be found on unitedleft.org.uk



Derby TAs strike suspended after new offer

Charlie Taylor
Derby Socialist Party

Following a new offer from Labour-led Derby council, public sector union Unison has now suspended the all-out strike action by teaching assistants and school support staff.

The offer will be put to staff in a ballot starting on 22 March. Unison is recommending its 1,200 members involved should accept the offer.

In November 2016 staff were made an offer of a one-off compensation payment. This was rejected as only a small number of staff would have been compensated.

Details of the new offer are yet to be revealed but it will still probably be a one-off compensatory deal.

Dozens of skilled and experienced support staff have already left their jobs as they cannot exist on their lower wages, with an average cut of £400 month. Despite any one-off offer, the wage cuts will remain.

There have been 16 different periods of strike action during the ten month dispute.

A teaching assistant approached the Socialist Party stall in the city centre on 18 March and said that if the deal is not good enough, the strike action can still be reinstated. The ballot will last a fortnight.

On Saturday 25 March Durham teaching assistants are staging a national day of solidarity to thank supporters and to ensure that the wider public are aware that they are still fighting against similar pay cuts.



[News in brief]

more information and to affiliate to NSSN visit shopstewards.net, and follow us on Twitter @NSSN_AntiCuts and @NSSN_NE William Jarrett, North East NSSN

POA victory

The POA union of prison officers and allied workers has won at an employment tribunal on behalf of three members, two for unfair dismissal and a third for trade union discrimination.

The POA took strike action despite a government ban on 13 November 2015, when the workers lost their appeals against dismissal. The tribunal remedy hearing awarded them in excess of £40,000 each. Steve Gillan, POA general secretary, said: "This was totally avoidable and I am glad our three members got justice and have cleared their names."

Deliveroo demo

The #Roosistence came to Leeds on 10 March as around 100 people, Deliveroo workers and their supporters, held a cycle protest around Leeds city centre demanding the reinstatement of the 'Leeds 7'.

These seven Deliveroo workers had been part of a WhatsApp group of riders discussing their terms and conditions, including a proposed change from hourly pay to payment per drop. When management gained access to this group in late January they dismissed two workers and five riders were left without fixed hours.

Since then, around 30 workers have unionised with the IWW union locally.

At the protest it was announced that the pressure so far had finally forced Deliveroo to act, sacking the local manager responsible for the dismissals. However, the workers have still not been reinstated.

The trade union movement in Leeds must rally in defence of the Deliveroo workers and support the campaign for reinstatement and union recognition. Please support the hardship fund at crowdpac.co.uk/campaigns/1303/the-leeds7

Iain Dalton, Leeds Socialist Party



photo Rob Williams

"No ifs, no buts, no Forest Hill cuts!" National Union of Teachers (NUT) members at Forest Hill School, Lewisham on 21 March taking their first day of strike action against compulsory redundancies and the impact on workload resulting from huge cuts to the school. Please send messages of solidarity to the rep Joe Cowley at josephcowley@hotmail.com NUT members at the school are set to take a further two days of action on 29 and 30 March.

Northern Ireland DIVISIVE ELECTION A WARNING TO THE WORKERS' MOVEMENT

Daniel Waldron
Socialist Party (Irish sister party of the Socialist Party in England and Wales)

A snap Northern Ireland Assembly election took place on 2 March. This was in the aftermath of the 'cash for ash' scandal which emerged in December, the most recent in a series of debacles that have left Stormont - and particularly the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) - shrouded in a smog of incompetence and corruption.

Ten years of DUP/Sinn Féin-led government has been characterised by neoliberal austerity and lack of progress on LGBT+ and women's rights. This has deepened cynicism and disillusionment towards the Orange and Green establishment and many workers and young people hoped that this election would deliver meaningful and positive change.

But the DUP and Sinn Féin further consolidated their positions as the dominant parties within their respective communities and the election has served to more deeply entrench sectarian division in society.

There has been significant change, with Unionism losing its overall majority for the first time in the state's history, but its impact will be of a negative character.

Sinn Féin

Sinn Féin framed the election around challenging the DUP's corruption and 'arrogance', despite having comfortably spent ten years in power with them.

They cited the DUP's dismissive attitude towards the aspirations of the Catholic community over issues such as an Irish Language Act and dealing with state crimes during the Troubles, as well their abuse of the Petition of Concern mechanism to undemocratically block same-sex marriage equality.

Sinn Féin again set its sights on becoming the biggest party at Stormont, which a widely publicised opinion poll suggested was within reach. This played into the DUP's hands. By focussing on the possibility of Sinn Féin emerging as the largest party - with their new leader Michelle O'Neill as the new first minister - the DUP was able to deflect attention from the Renewable Heating Incentive scandal.

While a Sinn Féin first minister wouldn't formally bring a united Ireland any closer, it would be seen by many Protestants as a body blow to the position of Unionism that would quicken the march towards being forced into a state where they fear their culture and identity would be threatened.

The DUP responded by taking a more nakedly sectarian tone, with representatives dismissing the idea they had ever or would ever agree to an Irish Language Act, for example.



The sectarian dance between the two main parties made this election campaign one of the most bitter in living memory. The result was highly polarised along sectarian lines, with many feeling compelled to go out and vote to block 'the other side.'

After years of slow decline, the nationalist vote rose sharply with Sinn Féin the beneficiaries. They came less than 1,200 votes and only one seat behind the DUP, who managed to maintain their position as the largest party in the face of the RHI scandal, despite losing 1.1% of their vote share. The smaller nationalist and Unionist parties were squeezed.

The left squeezed

The sectarian nature of the election - as well as the perceived pressure on voters to vote 'tactically' given a reduction in the number of seats - in general served to stall or knock back the development of forces seen to challenge the establishment from the left.

People Before Profit (PBP) said it was fighting to win two seats in West Belfast. They held one - though with a fall in vote share from 22.9% to 14.9% - and lost the other.

PBP was subjected to a sustained smear campaign from Sinn Féin, who distorted their correct call for a vote to

leave the European Union from a left perspective and attempted to lump them in with the DUP, Ukip and right-wing Tories.

Undoubtedly, this had an impact, particularly in Catholic communities, due to the widespread - but incorrect - perception that the EU is a guarantor of minority rights.

While PBP often talks about being 'neither unionist nor nationalist', 'neither Orange nor Green', this is not an accurate reflection of its actual political positions or of how it is perceived. PBP election literature boasted it is a '32-county party' which stands for a 'socialist republic' - language of the republican movement which would immediately alienate even the majority of left-leaning Protestants.

The positions taken by their representatives on flags, parades, housing, a border poll and other contentious issues put them firmly in the 'Green' (Republican) camp and this is how they are seen by many working class people.

This perception facilitated their growth at one stage but also meant they were particularly vulnerable to being undermined by a resurgent Sinn Féin seen to be 'taking a stand'. While they can redevelop momentum, the politics of PBP as currently

constituted have serious limitations as far as cutting across sectarian division is concerned.

Ahead of last year's election, the Socialist Party worked with other activists to launch Cross-Community Labour Alternative and point towards the kind of left that is needed. This must include challenging austerity, boldly fighting for LGBT+ and women's rights. It must be cross-community and advocate compromise and mutual respect on the divisive issues.

Our three young candidates - drawn from across the sectarian divide - had modest but important successes, winning the highest labour movement votes in their respective constituencies in a generation. This year, their votes were squeezed slightly by the sectarian nature of the election, polling between 1.1% and 1.2%.

Prominent pro-choice campaigner Courtney Robinson won 442 first-preference votes in East Belfast. Sean Burns took 531 in South Belfast, despite PBP's decision to contest the constituency. Community activist Conor Sheridan received 393 in East Antrim.

Standing for the first time in Fermanagh and South Tyrone, trade unionist and anti-fracking campaigner Donal O'Cofoigh won 643 first-preference



ference votes. This was more than a doubling of the vote received by the Northern Ireland Labour Representation Committee candidate last year.

These votes were won on the basis of vibrant campaigns which were genuinely cross-community in every sense and which clearly targeted the entire Stormont establishment.

The Labour Party

The Labour Party in Northern Ireland has grown dramatically and moved to the left since the rise of Jeremy Corbyn. The party has become an important reference point for a layer of workers and young people looking for a left alternative to the politics of sectarian division.

Unfortunately, the central leadership's ban on official Labour candidates standing here remains in place. Donal O'Cofoigh and his election agent were expelled from Labour for contesting the election under an alternative banner.

Only one Labour Party member - standing as an independent - was backed by the local leadership. Had a broader, wider and bolder Labour movement challenge been made, it could have made a real impact and laid down an important marker for the future.

It could have appealed to the tens of thousands who have been enthused by Corbyn's anti-austerity message and re-popularised the idea of class politics as an alternative to sectarian division. Regardless of the outcome of the current review into Labour Party policy on standing in Northern Ireland (due to report in the summer), local activists must not allow another such opportunity to be missed.

Fears of a capitalist united Ireland now loom large among the Protestant community. This dynamic will tend to sharpen the sectarian questions and polarise society further. Sinn Féin has adopted a triumphalist tone and

already stepped up their agitation for a border poll.

Many Catholics may want to express their right to 'self-determination' on unification in such a poll, but given that Protestants still make up a majority of the population in the North, it would not win and would only dangerously whip up sectarian tensions further.

In any case, on the basis of capitalism and the poverty, joblessness, sectarianism and fears it creates, there can be no simple 'majority' vote, either way, to settle the border issue.

Serious challenges can be posed for left forces in the coming period, particularly those with seats in Stormont. If they are seen to fall into either sectarian camp, they will fundamentally damage their ability to play a positive role in uniting the working class in opposition to the increasing tempo of the sectarian drumbeats.

The DUP no longer has the ability to wield the Petition of Concern mechanism by itself, which some hope means that marriage equality and perhaps even limited abortion reform may now be possible.

Unfortunately, this is far from guaranteed. The DUP will be able to rely on other conservative Unionists to help block marriage equality and also on the nationalist Social Democratic and Labour Party in blocking abortion in cases of fatal foetal abnormality or sexual crime.

Progress on LGBT+ and women's rights is still contingent upon building grassroots campaigns which mobilise popular support and make the politicians fear the consequences of standing in the way.

Executive

At the time of writing, talks are underway to try to establish a new Executive. A deal is possible, probably after a prolonged period of discussions and perhaps even another election, which would likely further entrench

the divisions.

However, it is by no means certain. Having raised expectations, Sinn Féin will find it difficult to return to power with the DUP without winning guarantees of progress on an Irish Language Act, equal marriage and more. Conversely, the DUP will be anxious not to be seen to roll over in the face of Sinn Féin's demands.

A return to direct rule with Tory Ministers installed is possible, which would likely accelerate austerity in an attempt by the Tories to cajole the local politicians into reaching an agreement.

The next period is likely to be difficult for the working class. We will bear the brunt of the consequences of the rising sectarian temperature in society. Whether from Stormont or Westminster, we will continue to face a steady tide of austerity.

Trade unions

The leadership of the trade union movement in Northern Ireland bears a big responsibility for this situation. On 13 March 2015, public sector workers in Northern Ireland took strike action against the austerity agreed by the DUP, Sinn Féin and the British and Irish governments.

Unfortunately, afterwards, the majority of trade union leaders stood aside rather than building upon the successful stoppage to develop a serious campaign of coordinated and escalating action.

Many see it as their role to prop up the Stormont institutions and particularly see Sinn Féin as a partner in government, rather than as another sectarian party implementing austerity. This approach has served to disarm the working class industrially and politically.

Trade union activists must campaign for a change of course, for the unions to use their power to actively fight cuts and support efforts to devel-



op a cross-community political voice for workers and young people.

The ongoing teachers' industrial action for a pay-rise should be developed into a public sector-wide campaign against pay restraint and austerity. This would raise the sights of working class people and bring the common interests of ordinary Protestants and Catholics to the fore, challenging the sectarian narratives of the Orange and Green parties.

To continue along the current abstentionist course would be a betrayal of the interests of the working class and make the next period all the more dangerous. Only united class struggle can challenge the rising tide of sectarianism and the attacks on the living standards of the 99%.

- See full article at socialistparty.org.uk
- As we go to press, it has been announced that former Sinn Féin deputy first minister Martin McGuinness has died - see online soon for analysis

Socialism Today
The Socialist Party's magazine

March issue includes:

- Politics Trumped US and Brexit shake up world, writes Hannah Sell
- A new movement As women protest worldwide, Sarah Sachs-Eldridge reports

£3 including postage: **Socialism Today** PO Box 24697, London E11 1YD. Subscribe for £25 a year at socialismtoday.org

"AFTER SEEING THE BRANCH'S EFFECT IN THE COMMUNITY, I DECIDED TO JOIN"



photo Müller/MSC/Creative Commons

Lee Armstrong
Waltham Forest Socialist Party

"I'm a product of New Labour, mate!" I remember proudly, maybe viciously, informing a fellow first year student in 2009.

He was a pedigree conservative, fresh out of the shire and had clearly misjudged his recently acquired course mate, me. Confused, he waffled an apology and skulked off to find Orlando, who he knew he'd be on safer ground with.

I'm from Newcastle, born in 1989 with one of my earliest memories being of my mam celebrating Gordon Brown's first budget because he "did something good for pensions that would help out nana".

In 2017 I look back on both these moments and think how much mine and the world's perspective has changed. New Labour's legacy, built on the foundation of Thatcher's free market society, is rotting at the roots.

Many of society's problems today come from this unleashing of the free market. The deregulation and empowering of the financial centre has resulted in an eleven year depression and a City of London-centric economy.

Instead of building council houses (or any houses) we have a generation locked in the private renting market. Our schools have been turned into businesses - and not very successful ones.

New Labour, started the privatisation of the NHS, further weakened the power of trade unions, hiked up student fees... I could continue.

The 1990s saw a period of boom in the West and New Labour filled me with an incredible optimism for the future but if I'd considered capitalism's history, I'd have seen what was to come. In the last 200 years capitalism has caused in Britain alone five major depressions.

Karl Marx reveals a lot about the structure of capitalism and predicted so much about our present-day lives. He acknowledged that capitalism was needed to drive the development of technology to a time in which society no longer needed to exploit workers' labour to prosper.

Karl Marx

And as the Bank of England recently warned that in the next decade 50% of the UK work force will be replaced by technology, another of Marx's observations seems to have been proven true.

At first I was sceptical of the Socialist Party, and went to a meeting after gentle persuasion from a friend. But I was shocked and humbled, after meeting a group of people who gave up their spare time after work, organising the working class and supporting the vulnerable.

I witnessed how action was being for my local community, more than sharing news articles on Facebook, or hoping Parliament's gears would turn into action from signing an online petition. After seeing the local branch in Waltham Forest's positive effects within its local community, I decided to join.

And came to an obvious realisation that it's better to try and make the world a better place, even in the tiniest way, than to continue sitting in a pub expressing misery.

Biggest ever protest by Orgreave campaigners outside Home Office



photos Rob Williams

Tim Jones
Sheffield North Socialist Party

The Orgreave Truth and Justice Campaign held its biggest and noisiest demonstration yet outside the Home Office in London on 13 March in protest at Home Secretary Amber Rudd's decision not to hold a public enquiry into what took place on the 18 June 1984 - at the 'Battle of Orgreave'.

Many miners were arrested and falsely imprisoned by the state for nothing more than defending their communities and the right to work. Later they were acquitted at Sheffield Crown Court.

These charges were falsified - statements were pre-prepared and the officers were forced to sign the statements. For example Mark George QC received six statements made by six constables and



these statements were identical. Amber Rudd compared the state collusion after Orgreave to the victims of the Hillsborough disaster. Her remark "nobody died at Orgreave" was sickening.

So we organised the protest to emphasise we are not going away and we want to be heard. Speakers at the demo included Labour MPs Andy Burnham and Diane Abbott. Another, Dennis Skinner, also attended.

The PCS samba band performed and we were joined by various other miscarriages of justice campaigns, including representatives of the Shrewsbury 24 campaign.

After the last speaker all supporters moved their banners to block the road for a short time, designed to humiliate Amber Rudd and recreate the road blocks used against striking miners in 1984-85.

SALFORD: INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY MEETING FULL OF INTERESTING DEBATE

Sally Griffiths
Salford Socialist Party

On International Women's Day, 8 March, Salford Socialist Party hosted a well-attended public meeting with some interesting debates. We kicked off with the Russian Revolution and how it was women's action that was the tipping point.

We had a discussion on how women are the section of workers who are more often starkly affected by austerity and in the Russia this

included the effects of World War One.

We discussed women today in the workforce and at home and the attacks by the Tories (and the Blairites) which are directly affecting women.

We discussed the lack of positive imagery regarding powerful women. How does that look today? What imagery do we see of working class women and the strength of women's solidarity?

Once the workers were in power in Russia the Bolsheviks used

imagery of strong women and their input to the workers' struggle with no sexualisation.

We heard about Alexandra Kollontai, a leader within the Bolshevik party who became a secretary of state after the revolution and introduced many changes in society to equalise the position of women, giving them powers and time and space to develop their ideas.

We raised nearly £30 fighting fund. See socialistparty.org.uk for more International Women's Day reports



photo Mary Finch

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 on 020 8988 8777
socialistparty.org.uk/donate

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



■ The Socialist Party's new fighting fund organiser in Worcester came up with a different idea for fundraising - a naff raffle! We sold raffle tickets for prizes, all of which were related to the topic under discussion at the branch meeting - the NHS. We are eagerly waiting to see what other ideas Calvin will come up with for raising money in Worcestershire.

Ruthie McNally, Worcester

Socialist Party Fighting Fund

| | £ target | £ received | January-March 2017 | Deadline 31 March 2017 | % |
|---------------|---------------|---------------|--------------------|------------------------|------------|
| Southern | 1,600 | 2,929 | | | 183% |
| Northern | 750 | 1,264 | | | 168% |
| West Midlands | 2,600 | 4,072 | | | 157% |
| North West | 2,100 | 3,219 | | | 153% |
| Yorkshire | 3,300 | 3,821 | | | 116% |
| East Midlands | 1,850 | 2,099 | | | 113% |
| Wales | 2,300 | 2,533 | | | 110% |
| South West | 1,800 | 1,847 | | | 103% |
| Eastern | 1,200 | 1,161 | | | 97% |
| London | 6,100 | 4,400 | | | 72% |
| South East | 750 | 438 | | 58% | |
| Other | 5,650 | 899 | | 16% | |
| TOTAL | 30,000 | 28,683 | | | 96% |

JOIN THE MARCH AGAINST NHS CUTS AND PRIVATISATION IN CUMBRIA

Carlisle Socialist Party

The background to the misnamed 'success regimes' in Cumbria - in reality closure of beds, hospitals and services - is creeping NHS privatisation, cuts, increased workload and pay freezes. Made worse by the private finance initiative (PFI) scandal that means we have to pay more than £1 billion for the Cumberland Infirmary which cost £67 million to build.

And now the government wants to cut £22 billion, which will lead to more hospitals and services closing. Mothers and babies will die or suffer brain damage if the maternity unit in Whitehaven is closed in a year's time.

The Tories have always been

against the NHS. They opposed its introduction in 1948 and formerly secret cabinet papers published last year show that in 1982 Thatcher wanted to bring in compulsory private health insurance.

They realised they couldn't get away with it, but in 1991 started the 'internal market'. The last health act got rid of the government's duty to provide health cover for the population.

Up to 49% of hospital beds can now be reserved for private patients. In Bournemouth a private GP practice now offers to see patients sooner and for longer if they can fork out £145.

Since bursaries for student nurses and midwives were abolished, applicants have fallen by 23%. The number of doctors and nurses,

already inadequate and far fewer per head than in other countries, is set to fall even further.

We don't want to lose our NHS, we want to improve it - we will fight to save it. Join the save our NHS protest march in Carlisle city centre, 12 noon on Saturday 8 April.

We stand for:

- No cuts, closures or privatisation
- Scrap PFI, nationalise the drug companies and return all privatised or outsourced services to the NHS
- Cumbria County Council should veto the sustainability and transformation plans and 'success regime' cuts and abandon its planned closure of care home beds
- For a fully tax-funded, high quality NHS under democratic control, free at the point of use - a socialist NHS!

BATTLE FOR WALLSEND WALK-IN NHS SERVICE

William Jarrett
Newcastle Socialist Party

Battle Hill walk-in centre in Wallsend, Tyne and Wear, is one of two walk-ins the clinical commissioning group chair and Richard Branson-admirer Dr John Matthews has slated for closure, following a sham consultation.

But Socialist Party members have initiated Save North Tyneside NHS to fight these attacks and the campaign is gaining support.

Word and deed

NHS activist and blogger Wendy Errington was the first Labour Party member to join the campaign, playing an excellent role, including marching with the Socialist Party at the recent national NHS demo. Now, Lesley Spillard, a Battle Hill ward Labour councillor and Corbyn supporter, has committed to join following the campaign's public invitation.

The Socialist Party welcomes Lesley to the campaign. We hope that



photo William Jarrett

she enjoyed reading the excellent coverage of the NHS demo in the copy of the Socialist, issue 940, she bought.

Our message to Labour councillors is clear - they must defend services, in word and deed. This includes voting against all cuts, closures, and 'sustainability and

transformation plans'.

A meeting of the campaign decided to affiliate it to Health Campaigns Together which organised the recent 100,000-strong national demo. Support the work of Save North Tyneside NHS - like us on Facebook and follow us on Twitter @SaveNTNHS



photo Pete Mason

EAST LONDON DEMONSTRATION AGAINST A&E CLOSURE

Dave Carr
East London Socialist Party

Several hundred demonstrators, including health workers, marched through Ilford on 18 March to stop the closure of the nearby King George hospital A&E department.

Under the Tories' sustainability and transformation plans cuts programme the A&E will close at nights from September and permanently by 2019 with the loss of 240 acute beds. This has provoked anger from people in east London who understand that King George's neighbouring hospitals are also facing hundreds of millions of pounds of cuts by 2020.

Socialist Party placards and leaflets calling for more protests, strikes and occupations to save NHS services were snapped up by marchers who rallied at Ilford town hall for speeches.

Non-fiction review

'Spain in our hearts: Americans in the Spanish Civil War'

PRECISE, VISCERAL ACCOUNT OF WORKING CLASS HEROISM

William Jarrett
Newcastle Socialist Party

Left-leaning academic Adam Hochschild's remarkable latest work collects the visceral stories of Americans and Canadians who fought fascism as part of the 'International Brigades' in Spain's 1936-9 civil war.

Hochschild also emphasises the integral role that US and European corporate interests played in tipping the scales in favour of the insurgent fascist dictator Francisco Franco.

Diaries of combatants and medical staff, archives, eyewitness testimonies, enemy intercepts, telegrams, clandestine service reports. Internal records from the Texaco oil company, and to lesser extents the Chrysler and Ford motor companies. All were forensically analysed by the author.

Like Henry Ford, who expressed fondness for Adolf Hitler, Texaco oil baron Torkild Rieber was apparently a fanatical acolyte of Franco.

Harrowing

Readers also learn about the soldiers of Spanish Morocco, long exploited by Spain's colonial masters. The revolution's official leaders failed to support them with assurances of national independence, which weakened the revolution's strength.

The familiar exploits of towering literary figures like George Orwell and Ernest Hemingway are eclipsed by the harrowing experiences of extraordinary working class and middle class fighters. Labourers,



Spain's brutal fascist dictator, General Franco

academics, taxi drivers, and World War One veterans get the same dutiful storytelling as more famous participants.

Hochschild documents Francoism's horrific barbarity with precision. The dates, locations, and methods of fascist atrocities range

from mass executions to the first episodes of destruction of entire cities by aerial bombardment.

He revisits Stalinism's betrayal of the revolutionaries in Spain. The civil war occurred parallel to the purges and show trials in the Soviet Union.

Hochschild goes out of his way to illustrate the persecution faced by the Workers' Party of Marxist Unification (Poum). Poum's leaders came from a Trotskyist position - although also made fatal political errors, which this work does not deal with.

We're frequently reminded of the complete failure of US president Franklin D Roosevelt - and all the liberal capitalist democracies - to support the revolutionary Republic. They later abandoned or attacked the heroic International Brigade fighters.

The book elegantly concludes with thoughtful portrayals of these fighters struggling to reintegrate into their respective home nations, often persecuted. The twilight of their lives is a touching factor in Hochschild's tribute to the people who sacrificed so much for the cause of a socialist world.



The Socialist Inbox

Do you have something to say?

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

Health cuts kill

Yet another tragic death happened on 3 March - an eight-year-old boy. Callum Cartledge suffered a cardiac arrest at home, and an ambulance arrived within five minutes. They immediately began treatment.

The Alexandra Hospital in Redditch was a two-minute drive from the boy's home. When the crew phoned through to announce their arrival, they were told that due to the fact there is no facility to treat seriously ill children - it was closed in September 2016 - they had to drive an additional 17 miles to the Worcestershire Royal Hospital, arriving 23 minutes after the ambulance left the home. He died, and the investigation of the tragic event revealed the ambulance crew did everything humanly possible to save the boy.

It came to light that the day before, Callum was admitted to the Royal with low blood pressure, but was discharged at 1.1pm the same day. Why wasn't he kept in overnight for observation? It is terrible how our NHS staff are overworked and underpaid, yet the Telegraph recently reported that more than 600 health chiefs are on six-figure salaries.

We need to organise a day of protest nationwide on May Day. Enough is enough. It's our NHS, let's fight for it!
Calvin Fowler
Worcester

However, reflecting his class bias, Hammond won't impose these charges on private schools! At the same as clobbering renewable energy - the industry already lost 12,000 jobs last year - Hammond will ensure profitable North Sea oil producers continue to receive tax breaks.

But Hammond and May are simply continuing the same environmentally damaging policies of the ousted Tory prime minister David Cameron. In 2013, Cameron notoriously told his aides: "We have got to get rid of all this green crap."

Simon Carter
Newham, east London

Fighting cuts is no 'failure'

Councillor Alan Walker describes the 47 socialist Liverpool councillors' 1983-7 defence of the city from the ravages of Thatcher as a "spectacular failure" (Liverpool Echo, 13 March).

His only weapon is the now-discredited 'redundancy notice' distortion, so beloved of Lord Kinnoch. He fails to mention in his myopic rewriting of history that the 47 never made a single worker redundant. He seems blind to the £330 million slashed from social provision, and the further £90 million of cuts, that he and his 'Labour' colleagues voted for in the last budget.

When the Liverpool 47 were removed from office, not via the ballot box but by Thatcher's district auditor, 30,000 worked for the council. That number is now less than 6,000.

In contrast to our record of building 5,000 affordable council houses, his council has built zero. In contrast to his supine collaboration with the Tories in, for instance, slashing thousands of care packages for the elderly and admitting that services will virtually disappear from the city, we mounted a campaign of opposition to Thatcher and succeeded in winning resources worth £60 million to the city.

Far from it being the "spectacular failure" claimed by Cllr Walker, our campaign, by any measure, was a spectacular success.
Tony Mulhearn
Former 'Liverpool 47' councillor

Feminist film

I would strongly recommend Anna Biller's fantastic new film 'The Love Witch' to anyone who considers themselves a feminist. Not only is it one of the most beautifully shot films I have ever seen, it carries a strong and unique feminist message. A perfect continuation of the International Women's Day celebrations.

Jordan Lee Smith
Manchester

'Jam' man. White van man.

A friend of mine, sick of the dole, went self-employed.

Got bank loan and bought van. Bought some advertising and went into light removal business.

The score is he is now bankrupt. Some weeks he paid himself less than minimum wage. There will be many more following him. Unemployment will rocket.

The Tory dream. Crucify the needy.
Stan Herschel
Newcastle

Getting rid of 'green crap'

In his budget, Tory chancellor Philip Hammond ignored a 200,000-signature petition to rescind the government's huge 800% tax hike on properties - including schools and hospitals - that utilise solar panels to generate renewable energy. Currently 44,000 'microgenerators' are exempt from business rates.

The tax rise, which starts in April, means schools are likely to be hit with almost £2 million in annual payments.



photo Mary Finch

Phone-y baloney

Telecoms giant BT was rocked by an accounting scandal in its Italian business recently, which discovered improper accounting practices and a complex of 'improper' transactions, which meant earnings in the Italian part of the business had been overstated for a number of years. The scandal has cost the company £530 million and profits have dropped by 37% this quarter.

What is so disturbing is that the malpractices were not picked up by either BT's own audit committee or the company's auditor, PwC. While BT's European head has been the ritual scapegoat, PwC is not being fired - and BT Italia and its workers face an uncertain future.

It is hardly surprising that PwC failed to spot the problems, despite the scale being totally disproportionate to the size of the business, because they give carte blanche to any and every money-making scam suggested. This isn't the first scandal in BT's overseas business. In 2008 a scandal in BT

Global Services (in which BT Italia sits) led to the axing of 15,000 jobs and BT's only trading loss since the 1970s. The CWU union should ensure, by industrial action if necessary, that the cost of this executive swindling isn't passed on to BT workers.

Nationalisation of BT - and taking away the obscene salaries of the likes of chief executive Gavin Patterson, who earned £5.3 million last year - could help sort it out.

Clive Walder
Former BT worker

Bosses' Brexit?

Anthony Bamford, owner of construction machinery firm JCB, is a Tory lord and has donated millions of pounds to the party. Bamford - unusually for a capitalist - was a Brexit supporter, and prior to the referendum sent a letter to all JCB workers encouraging them to vote to leave the EU. JCB employs many agency workers in its factories in the UK. In 2011, the 'Agency Workers Regulations' were introduced,

based on a 2008 EU directive. They included the potential for some improvements in conditions for agency workers. Under these rules, temporary workers are entitled to the same pay and conditions as permanent staff after 12 weeks of continuous employment. But Bamford and many other big employers in the UK used a loophole built into the directive - the 'Swedish derogation' - which excludes the right to equal pay if some other conditions are met. At JCB many agency workers have been moved from site to site and have effectively worked for JCB for many years without securing permanent contracts. They work alongside full-time permanent workers doing exactly the same work, but can be earning up to £4 an hour less.

No doubt JCB will announce another bumper year for profits, partly as a result of this discrimination on pay. It is clear the bosses will only use laws and directives - no matter where they originate - to further exploit workers, while ignoring any that actually benefit workers. The unions have to campaign for full employment rights from day one of employment with no pay discrimination for the same work.

A JCB worker



Marching against cuts to disability rights, benefits and services

Reader's comment: the fight goes on!

'I'm writing this to tell you about the plight of disabled people'

Debra Ergen
Warrington Socialist Party

First let me tell you why I joined the Socialist Party.

I got fed up with the main parties, mainly because they join forces against the working class, and I saw an alternative within the socialist movement. I'm an active member and find campaigning for a fairer society empowering.

I'm a single, disabled 50-year-old woman. I volunteer for the fire service, to keep my sanity and give something to the community.

So enough of this. Let me tell you the reason for me writing this. As with most disabled people, I found my benefits under review. I received my form, filled it in, got a letter saying they hadn't received it.

So I filled in another, and took it into the job centre, hand delivering it and receiving a receipt. But still they claimed not to have received it. On 11 November, my benefits were stopped. I was left with nothing. Christmas was a nightmare. No

money, no food... and for the most part no hope. I relied on family and friends for weeks.

Then I had no option but to resort to using the food bank. I have donated to the food bank for years through church, and was totally humiliated to get to this point in my life.

I phone the benefits agency every other day, and get the company line: there's nothing they can do. Bills have piled up. I sit worried about every knock on the door in case it's someone there to collect on a debt.

I've been so depressed, and often wondered why I should carry on at all. The pain of living was so great that ending it was an option.

But what would the point be in that? The bosses wouldn't care. The pain would pass to those closest to me.

So I'm still here, I'm still fighting for what I rightfully deserve. And I'm writing this to tell you about the plight of disabled people all over the country. We're not on the news separated from you, we're among you. The fight goes on for us all.



Subscribe to the Socialist

Get socialist, anti-cuts news, reports and analysis delivered to your door every week. Free Cuba book by Peter Taaffe with every new subscription.

Phone 0208 988 8777 or visit socialistparty.org.uk/subscribe to pay by card or arrange a Direct Debit. Or post cheques (payable to Socialist Publications) to PO Box 24697, London E11 1YD

Direct debit just £4.50 a month or £6.50 a month including Socialism Today magazine ■ 12 issues £20 ■ 6 months £35 ■ 1 year £60



NETHERLANDS: HEAVY DEFEAT FOR AUSTERITY GOVERNMENT

Build a mass workers' party that fights for socialism



Green Left leader Jesse Klaver. A fresh face but with establishment views photo Green Left/cc



Geert Wilders' racist PVV failed to become the largest party but remains a far-right threat photo Peter van der Sluijs/cc



Liberal leader Mark Rutte claimed his loss of eight seats a 'victory!' photo Jeroen Komen/cc

Pieter Brans
Socialist Alternative (CWI in Netherlands), Amsterdam

The most important feature of the elections is the colossal defeat for the outgoing austerity coalition government of the Liberal Party (VVD) and the Labour Party (PvdA). The VVD and the media present the Liberal's 33 seats as a 'victory'. But the VVD lost eight seats and its coalition partner, the Labour Party, was reduced to a rump of nine seats having lost 29. Neoliberalism has suffered a serious election defeat. Another important feature is that although it came second, the extreme right-wing Freedom Party (PVV), led by Geert Wilders, remained stuck on 20 seats. Even with the strong winds of the asylum seekers crisis of 2016, Brexit and Trump's victory in its sails, the PVV failed in its aim to become the largest party. It has more seats than in 2012, when it had supported the outgoing government, but in comparison with its high point in the polls the results were disappointing for Wilders. Wilders poured out endless hateful racist tweets and remarks during the election, including his shameful call for "less Moroccans" in the Netherlands.

His campaign consisted of tweets and flying visits to a couple of cities. He did not try to organise a mass rally. More often than not there was more security people and press than PVV supporters around Wilders during his visits. His bluff was called in a debate with VVD leader, Mark Rutte, when Wilders admitted that his demand for the policing of the 'use' of the Koran would never materialise. But the lack of a big breakthrough by Wilders does not mean that the danger of the extreme right is over. Other parties adopted some of his clothing including the VVD. Moreover, the PVV is the second largest party and so the right-wing threat remains. There is no reason for the EU leaders to congratulate themselves that the right-populist tide in Europe has been checked with the Dutch election results. The Green Lefts, apart from obviously promoting 'green' environmental policies, also called for higher spending on higher education - demands that are popular among young people. However, many workers are not enthusiastic about GL. One of the reasons for this is the fact that GL has been part of the political establishment for years. Those Dutch workers who have experienced the downside of globalisation and neoliberalism are concerned with the notion of 'progress' under capitalism that GL espouses.



None of the parties are going to change the system. Dutch workers and youth will have to do that through the unions and in a broad political socialist alternative

the GL does not put forward clear pro-working class policies let alone talk about socialism. The GL helped the last coalition government to win majority votes in parliament, including sending a Dutch military mission to Afghanistan. The Green Lefts, apart from obviously promoting 'green' environmental policies, also called for higher spending on higher education - demands that are popular among young people. However, many workers are not enthusiastic about GL. One of the reasons for this is the fact that GL has been part of the political establishment for years. Those Dutch workers who have experienced the downside of globalisation and neoliberalism are concerned with the notion of 'progress' under capitalism that GL espouses.

The Dutch Socialist Party's (SP) vote fell slightly, to just over 9%, losing one seat. It failed to make any headway, despite years of austerity governments. Voters failed to see the difference between the SP and the many other opposition parties. The potential of the party was clear in 2006, when it won over 16% of the vote and 25 seats. This potential still exists but to realise it the party needs to change course. A socialist programme is the only way to get the SP out of its present stagnation, otherwise it will enter a phase of crisis. The pressing problems facing the working class eg low pay, economic insecurity, expensive services, etc, will not ease with the election outcome. The VVD will try to continue its austerity government with new parties but not without difficulty. All possible coalitions have the disadvantage of involving complicated compromises and a lack of direction. New elections are not

excluded, but the VVD will be concerned that another election could lead to a comeback for Wilders, creating a new crisis. Workers in the Netherlands lack political representation. In spite of its stated intentions, the Socialist Party leadership failed in this respect. It is too eager to enter into coalition at local government level and makes little effort to mobilise against cuts. None of the 28 parties that participated in the election are going to change the system. Dutch workers and youth will have to do that, organised in unions at work and in a broad political socialist alternative, locally and in government, linking up with worldwide protests against austerity, Trump, and capitalism in general. A new workers' party is needed, which combines defence of workers' interests with the struggle for a socialist society.

Full article on socialistworld.net

During the election a diplomatic row broke out after the ruling Liberals banned Turkish ministers from entering the country to address Turkish referendum rallies. Turkey's president Erdogan wants to consolidate his authoritarian regime by changing the constitution in a forthcoming referendum and is keen to mobilise votes from Turks resident in EU states. Rutte's increasingly racist Liberals were fearful of losing votes to Wilders' party who would use such referendum rallies to fuel anti-Muslim/migrant prejudice. See socialistworld.net for reports on Turkey



CWI members organised solidarity action for Yemen workers photo GG

Yemen: Workers and their families left to starve by multinational companies

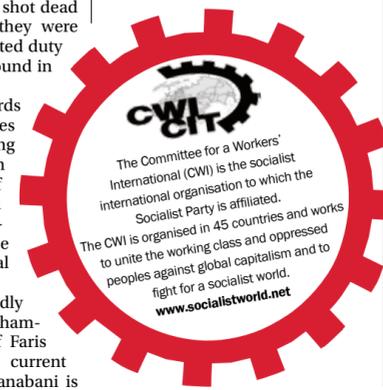
Cedric Jerome
Committee for a Workers' International (CWI)

It is in the nature of capitalism to turn every human disaster into an opportunity to make a profit. The war in Yemen has not only destroyed the lives of tens of thousands of civilians but created a landscape whereby multinational corporations can more easily behave like outright gangsters in robbing their workers. This includes the French energy giant Total and British security company G4S. G4S was named a "serial abuser of human rights" by the British trade union Unite. Total and G4S halted most of their activities in Yemen in 2015, but did so with utter disregard for the prevailing labour legislation. Total and G4S left without giving any compensation, nor even any notice to the 208 security guards who were working under their authority. They assumed they could get away with it thanks to the international media blackout on Yemen and to the dysfunctional and collapsing state infrastructure in the country. Following a judicial procedure in December 2015 before the Labour Arbitration Commission of Sana'a, Yemen's capital, the premises of Total were seized. The two companies were ordered to pay the workers' wages and other monies until the termination of their contracts. The guards were ordered to continue protecting To-

tal buildings until this materialises. But the court decision was wilfully ignored by both companies. Some workers, under duress, have given up the struggle. However, 115 of them have continued to work, unpaid, and to fight for the wages and other rights they are entitled to. They have stood firm in their heroic struggle, for example by holding several street protests in Sana'a, despite the ban on demonstrations imposed by the Houthi rebels who took power in the capital at the end of 2014. They have also courageously resisted death threats and kidnappings by armed gangs directly connected to the management of these companies. Last December, Mohammad Alzubide, Ali Al Sanhani and Abdurhaman Kieran, three security guards in their 20s, were shot dead by an armed gang as they were working on court-mandated duty protecting a Total compound in Sana'a. According to the guards who were eye-witnesses to the December shooting and barely escaped death themselves, the leader of the armed gang is Abou Mustafaa Mohammed Jameel, who happens to be the current vice-general manager of G4S Yemen. With him was allegedly another man called Mohammed Kilah, a relative of Faris Sanabani, the de facto current owner of G4S Yemen. Sanabani is

a rich magnate with a British passport, and former press secretary of the ex-Yemeni president, Ali Abdullah Saleh, who helped the latter's clan to stash its money abroad. G4S denies any links with the entity presently operating under its name and logo in Yemen. This may be true, but it does not exonerate the original company from its responsibilities - nor does it explain why G4S has not sued the fraudulent company. There is growing outcry about the Total/G4S case, spearheaded by the CWI's involvement in an international campaign of protests. What is happening to the Total/G4S workers in Yemen is inherent in a system where labour is exploited to inflate the wealth of private corporations.

Full article on socialistworld.net



The Committee for a Workers' International (CWI) is the socialist international organisation to which the Socialist Party is affiliated. The CWI is organised in 45 countries and works to unite the working class and oppressed peoples against global capitalism and to fight for a socialist world. www.socialistworld.net



What we stand for

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

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

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

Our demands include:

PUBLIC SERVICES

- No to ALL cuts in jobs, public services and benefits. Defend our pensions.
- No to privatisation and the Private Finance Initiative (PFI). Renationalise all privatised utilities and services, with compensation paid only on the basis of proven need.
- Fully fund all services and run them under accountable, democratic committees that include representatives of service workers and users.

- Free, publicly run, good quality education, available to all at any age. Abolish university tuition fees now and introduce a living grant. No to academies and 'free schools'!
- A socialist NHS to provide for everyone's health needs - free at the point of use and under democratic control. Kick out private contractors!
- Keep council housing publicly owned. For a massive building programme of publicly owned housing, on an environmentally sustainable basis, to provide good quality homes with low rents.

WORK AND INCOME

- Trade union struggle to increase the minimum wage to £10 an hour without exemptions as an immediate step towards a real living wage. For an annual increase in the minimum wage linked to average earnings.
- All workers, including part-timers, temps, casual and migrant workers to have trade union rates of pay, employment protection, and sickness and holiday rights from day one of employment.
- An immediate 50% increase in the state retirement pension, as a step towards a living pension.
- Reject 'workfare'. For the right to decent benefits, education, training, or a job, without compulsion.
- Scrap the anti-trade union laws! For fighting trade unions, democratically controlled by their members. Full-time union officials to be regularly elected and receive no more than a worker's wage. Support the National Shop Stewards Network.
- A maximum 35-hour week with no loss of pay.

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

ENVIRONMENT

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

RIGHTS

- Oppose discrimination on the grounds of race, 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.

MASS WORKERS' PARTY

- For a 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.

SOCIALISM AND INTERNATIONALISM

- No to imperialist wars and occupations.
- Tax the super-rich! For a socialist government to take into public ownership the top 150 companies and the banking system that dominate the British economy, and run them under democratic working class control and management. Compensation to be paid only on the basis of proven need.
- A democratic socialist plan of production based on the interests of the overwhelming majority of people, and in a way that safeguards the environment.
- No to the bosses' neoliberal European Union! For a socialist Europe and a socialist world!

Join the fightback!
Join the Socialists!

www.socialistparty.org.uk 02089888777

@socialist_party Text 07761 818206 / CWISocialistParty



WE'LL FIGHT TO SAVE OUR NHS!

Mary Jackson
Socialist Party Doncaster

I am struggling to believe how far the NHS has been run down over the past ten years, due to government spending cuts and costly privatisation measures.

It's meant that the majority of hospitals were in a crisis situation at some point over the winter, with patients at risk due to a lack of beds and staff.

By next year the expectation is that more than 1.8 million people will be waiting more than four hours in A&E for treatment.

The latest Tory cuts of £22 billion in NHS England funding by 2020 means that many hospital A&Es, along with other health services, will be axed altogether (see page 11).

In addition, councils have devastated home care services to comply with Tory cuts to their budgets. This means ill pensioners and those recovering from operations are stuck in hospital much longer than necessary because there's no care home place or home support funding available.

Despite the deepening NHS crisis, health workers - overworked and undervalued by this welfare-smashing Tory government - continue to provide a world class service for patients.

The recent national 'save our NHS' demo of over 100,000 people shows there's a strong determination to fight to defend and improve this vital service. This fightback must be built upon by the various campaign groups and health service trade unions.



photo Pete Mason

We say:

- No cuts, closures or jobs losses
- Stop the Tory 'STP' cuts plan. Councils should refuse to cooperate with STPs
- Big business out! Scrap all privatisation schemes. Renationalise our NHS
- Reverse council cuts to social care
- Decent pay for NHS staff. No attacks on NHS workers' pay and conditions
- Mass protest action to defend the NHS including strikes and occupations - a day of action in all STP areas on May Day
- Labour and trade unions to organise a massive national demo
- For a comprehensive, high quality NHS, under democratic control with care free at the point of use - a socialist NHS

ISSN 1366-9621



9 771366 962103