

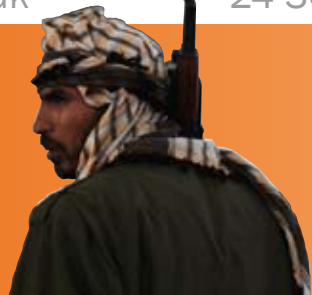
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Libya: no to western intervention

Build an independent movement of workers and youth!

See page 2

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GENERAL STRIKE



Join the demonstration: Assemble 11am, 26 March, Victoria Embankment between Blackfriars and Waterloo bridges.
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Libya: no to western military intervention

Build an independent movement of workers and youth!

The UN Security Council's majority decision to impose a 'no-fly zone', while greeted with joy on the streets of Benghazi and Tobruk, was in no way intended to defend the Libyan revolution. As ROBERT BECHERT, from the Committee for a Workers' International, writes, the air strikes' growing civilian toll is leading to increasing questioning of these attacks.

The longer this situation continues, the more questioning and opposition will develop. Already many are disgusted by the hypocrisy of governments proclaiming their willingness to defend Libyans while doing nothing when civilians are shot down in Yemen or attacked in Gaza.

The western powers' silence on Saudi Arabian backing for the Bahraini elite's repression confirms, in many people's eyes, that what they wish for in Libya is for that oil rich country to also become a client state.

Revolutionaries in Libya may think that this UN decision will help them, but they are mistaken. It is not a lifeline that could 'save' the revolution against Gaddafi. The major imperialist powers decided that they wanted to exploit the revolution, gain control over its leadership and thus try to replace Gaddafi with a more reliable (for them and their interests) regime. And they hoped that this demonstration of their military power would warn the Arab masses not to go 'too far' in their revolutions.

But it has already become clear that the imperialist powers' hope of a quick victory is disappearing. On the one hand, the forces around Gaddafi, for the moment, appear to be holding firm, while the rebel forces seem unable to advance around the Gulf of Sirte, let alone towards Tripoli.

This is the background to the growing tensions between the attacking powers, especially the arguments over who is controlling the operation, whether or not Nato should be involved and over what their overall aim should be. Some fear that they may get involved in a ground war, or that the country could break up.

Movement stalled

The stalling of the revolution is symbolised by the weakness of the self-appointed leadership of the Interim Transitional National Council (ITNC) which is dominated by recent defectors from Gaddafi and pro-capitalist elements. This body seems incapable of appealing to the masses in western Libya and is increasingly relying on the imperialist powers for aid.

While the intervention in Libya initially beat back an attack on Benghazi, it is clear that the attacking powers, with their growing calls for Gaddafi's removal, are already starting to try to shape the character of any post-Gaddafi Libya.

The regime was able to mount a counter-attack because the uprising's initial drive towards the west, where two-thirds of Libyans live, was not based on a clear revolutionary appeal. Despite popular support in the east, there was no organised mass movement, built upon popular, democratic committees that could offer a clear programme to

win support from the mass of the western population and rank and file soldiers while waging a revolutionary war. This gave Gaddafi an opportunity to regroup.

The growth in support for a no-fly zone was a reversal of the sentiment expressed in the English language posters put up in Benghazi in February declaring "No to Foreign Intervention - Libyans can do it by themselves!". This followed the wonderful examples of Tunisia and Egypt where sustained mass action completely undermined totalitarian regimes.

The Libyan opposition masses were confident that their momentum would secure victory. But, at least partly due to the character of the opposition's leadership, Gaddafi was able to retain a grip in Tripoli, the largest city, of nearly 1.8 million.

Gaddafi's counter-offensive led to a change in attitude among the opposition towards foreign intervention. That allowed the largely pro-Western ITNC to overcome youth opposition to asking the West for aid.

Now, if a stalemate develops and Gaddafi remains in power in Tripoli, it could mean a de facto breakup that goes back to the separate entities that existed before Italy first created Libya after 1912 and Britain recreated it in the late 1940s.

But, whatever effect this no-fly zone and military intervention have, any trust placed in either the UN or the imperialist powers threatens to undermine all the genuine hopes and aspirations of the revolution that began in February.

Until recently these Western powers were quite happy to deal with, and pander to, the murderous Gaddafi clique in order to maintain a partnership, especially in oil and gas. The day after the UN took its decision, the Murdoch-owned Wall Street Journal lamented that: "the close partnership between the Libyan leader Colonel Muammar Gaddafi's intelligence service and the CIA has been severed" (18/3/2011).

Now imperialism is trying to refurbish its 'democratic' image while working to help install a more 'reliable' regime in Libya, or at least a part of Libya. Libya, with its huge oil reserves, is a special prize as its small population and its geography make it easier to exploit.

Role of the working class

Gaddafi's first reaction to this year's dramatic revolutionary events was to side with the dictatorial, corrupt autocrats. Just after Ben Ali fled from Tunisia, Gaddafi told Tunisians that they had "suffered a great loss" because "there is none better than Ben Ali to govern". Perhaps revealing how he viewed his own future, Gaddafi added that he had hoped that Ben Ali would rule "for life".

Nevertheless, it cannot be ignored that, since 1969, on the basis of a large oil income and a small

The fate of the revolution will be decided in Libya itself

population, there has been a big improvement in most Libyans' lives, especially in education and health. This is something which at least partly explains why Gaddafi still has some basis of support amongst the population.

Unlike Egypt and Tunisia the working class in Libya has not, so far, begun to play an independent role in the revolution. Furthermore many workers in Libya are migrants who have fled the country in recent weeks.

The absence of a national focal point which, for example, the Tunisian UGTT trade union federation provided (despite its pro-Ben Ali national leadership), complicated the situation in Libya. The huge revolutionary enthusiasm of the population has not, so far, been given an independent organised expression.

Now, in addition to anti-imperialist rhetoric, Gaddafi has made concessions to maintain support. Each family has been given the equivalent of \$450. Some public sector workers have been given 150% wage increases and taxes and customs duties on food have been abolished.

But these steps do not wipe away all that has happened over the past years. Furthermore they do not answer the demands for real democratic rights or an end to the growing frustration of Libya's youthful population (average age of 24) against the regime's corruption and suffocating grip.

Gaddafi's use of the threat of imperialist intervention to divide the country did gather some support. Now it may gain more if the country does actually become divided, especially if the air attacks continue and widen out to civilian targets, as happened in Serbia in 1999.

Gaddafi's promise that, "If needs be, we will open all the arsenals", indicates that he can attempt to rest on anti-colonial feelings or simply try to threaten imperialism that it's 'me or chaos'. Gaddafi will try to make sure he or his family keeps hold of the reins of power, but impending defeat could persuade more of his top officials to jump ship and join the INTC. Internationally millions, who

have watched and supported the revolutions across the Middle East, will ask: 'what can be done to genuinely help the Libyan revolution internationally?' Firstly, there can be no support for the no-fly zone and military intervention. It is not in the interests of Libyan people.

On its own the no-fly zone will not automatically lead to the overthrow of Gaddafi. In fact, like Saddam Hussein, he could entrench his position for a time in those parts of the country that his regime controls, so long as the intervention did not go onto the offensive.

However, the growing unofficial calls for 'regime change' show that sections of the imperialist powers are looking to use their intervention to create a client regime that will, they hope, extinguish the fires of revolution, at least in Libya.

Those on the left who argue that 'there is no realistic alternative' to stop Gaddafi's attacks are precisely ignoring what happened in Tunisia and Egypt, namely that a determined mass movement of the working masses and youth can overthrow a dictatorship. A broad mobilisation of Benghazi's one million plus population could have blocked Gaddafi's small forces.

Active opposition to this imperialist attack and solidarity with the Libyan workers and youth needs to be organised. Trade unions internationally need to block the export of Libyan oil and gas. Bank workers should organise the freezing of all the Gaddafi regime's financial assets.

Revolutionary programme

The fate of the revolution will be decided inside Libya. Its victory requires a programme that can cut across tribal and regional divisions and unite the mass of the population against the Gaddafi clique and in the struggle for a better future.

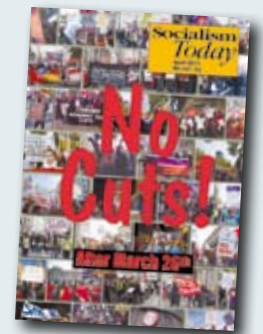
There can be no support for the imperialist intervention, despite its UN colouring. The Libyan working masses and youth should show no trust whatsoever in the so-called democratic Western powers.

A programme for the Libyan revolution that will genuinely benefit the mass of the population would be based on winning and defending real democratic rights, an end to corruption and privilege, the safeguarding and further development of the social gains made since the discovery of oil, opposition to any form of re-colonisation and for a democratically controlled, publicly owned economy planned to use the country's resources for the future.

The creation of an independent movement of Libyan workers, poor and youth that could implement such a real revolutionary transformation of the country is the only way to thwart the imperialists' plans, end dictatorship and transform the lives of the mass of the people.

see www.socialistworld.net

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Government health 'reforms' The Con-Dems' future doesn't work

Tens of thousands of health workers' jobs are being axed by NHS trusts. This is a result of billions of pounds of 'efficiency savings' initiated by the previous Labour government and carried on with a vengeance by the Con-Dem coalition. These spending cuts are also leading to the closures of wards and A&E departments in hospitals.

The drive to convert all NHS hospitals to 'Foundation Trust' status – again, initiated by the last Labour government – will cement the NHS's 'internal market' (in which private health care companies now have a significant stake) and accelerate cutbacks and closures.

On top of this assault on the NHS comes the latest health 'reform' plans of the government in its misnamed white paper: 'Equity and excellence: Liberating the NHS'. Its envisaged changes will effectively hand over the bulk of the health budget to privately run corporations whose profit-driven motive will result in further cutbacks and the break-up of the NHS as we know it.

However, the government will face enormous opposition from NHS workers, trade unions, and the wider community in trying to implement this privatisation programme.



Growing anger will greet Con-Dem attacks on the NHS photo A.Hill

Rob Rooney

Plymouth health workers have been treated to a glimpse of their future – privatised or disappearing services for patients and worse terms and conditions for staff.

Unelected, unaccountable health bosses were due to meet on 17 March to rubber-stamp their decision to turn 1,984 Plymouth primary care trust (PCT) employees over to a 'social enterprise'.

Recently, a meeting of approximately 60 members of Unison Plymouth Community NHS Trust branch heard a health worker from Hull, tell of her experience since Hull PCT became the first in the

country to transfer to a social enterprise in June 2010.

She explained that staff were constantly told there was nothing to worry about, that they wouldn't notice the difference. "We thought 'we've had three changes of name and three changes of people in seven years, this is just another re-structure'. Then slowly people realised 'Oh my God, this is really different'."

The limited safeguards negotiated under Agenda for Change, such as annualised hours, soon went and the number of disciplinary hearings went through the roof.

The health worker warned: "Don't think your contracts will be protected because they won't."

Already, custody nurses have gone over to a private company; the award-winning sexual health service is rumoured to be next. "If it's not profitable, if it costs too much in staff or you can't easily see how it makes money, cuts will be made."

Staff treating drug and alcohol-affected patients have been told it's too expensive to stock bandages.

There has been expansion in one direction – a smart new finance suite, housing an expanded human resources staff, who are looking at existing terms and conditions and policies.

Health bosses have ignored the opinions of staff and have not consulted with the public. In the South West (where there are seven PCTs

set to transfer) Unison had a staff survey with 1,100 responses, all saying 'no'. The strategic health authority (SHA) has no survey at all of public opinion.

Plymouth Unison full-time officer, Claire Jones, said the plan is for PCT staff to be registered as a "community interest company" from 1 April. Staff will be issued with new fixed-term contracts but Claire said they will not be worth the paper they are written on. Unison has obtained a letter from the Department of Health which confirms this.

"You will not be able to enforce it – services will be market-tested and opened up to the private sector. Make no mistake, it's not the NHS any more."

Fast news

Mail closures

Royal Mail bosses plan to axe another 1,700 jobs and close two mail centres – Nine Elms Lane and Bromley-by-Bow – in London. The projected job losses are on top of the 65,000 posts the company has shed since 2002.

The closures are the first tranche of cuts that will result in half the country's mail centres being closed by 2016 unless stopped by workers' action. The closures announcement follows on from the Con-Dems' decision to privatise Royal Mail later this year or next. Clearly Royal Mail bosses, with the government's blessing, are cutting costs to make the company appear more profitable to potential buyers. The Communications Workers Union (CWU) says the closures will mean compulsory redundancies and flies in the face of national agreements between the CWU and Royal Mail.

Yemen crisis

The regime of Yemen's beleaguered president Ali Abdullah Saleh is nearing collapse and civil war amidst continuing state orchestrated violence against street protests that led to at least 45 demonstrators being shot dead by plain clothes police firing from rooftops in the capital, Sanaa on 18 March.

In a desperate bid to retain power Saleh has dismissed his government but continues to see support from his close allies haemorrhage. The latest defection is army chief General Ali Mohsen al-Ahmar who now claims to back the opposition! Army tanks are now positioned outside the presidential palace, central bank and key ministry buildings. Saleh, who has ruled for 32 years, has said he will defend his regime "with every drop of blood".

But his days could be numbered after a month of continuous protests from demonstrators demanding democratic and social reforms. He also faces a separatist movement in the south as well as trying to suppress Shia tribes in the north.

EDL thugs threaten socialists

Elaine Brunskill

Our Socialist Party campaigning activity at Newcastle's Monument was going well on Saturday 19 March. One of us was dressed up as a 'banker in need', thanking people for the billions handed over in bonuses. We had loads of people coming up to our stall, signing our petition, buying our paper. Then suddenly we were surrounded by around 60 English Defence League (EDL) thugs. It seemed as if they had a regional mobilisation.

Initially, they tried to put their racist material on our stall, we threw it off. We asked them why they were targeting our stall, we were fighting the cuts and opposing the massive bonuses being given to the bankers. One of them shouted they didn't mind bankers getting bonuses, as long as they were English!

We were joined by another left group, and a passer-by who stood in front of our stall to help us defend it. We decided to continue campaigning and not leave the EDL unopposed to peddle their reactionary filth to the people of Newcastle.

During a period of a couple of hours we were verbally abused. One of our young female members was completely surrounded by them.

I was told that I was a coward. I replied that maybe it wasn't so very brave of him to be shouting at a 50+ year old woman. I was also covered in EDL stickers and told they were going to 'smash socialists'.

A young person passing by carrying a pro-uprising Libyan flag



EDL thugs photo Paul Mattsson

was met by shouts of "scum, scum, scum". While this was going on people were still approaching our stall, telling us they thought the EDL were a disgrace.

One of the police who was present posed smiling with the EDL. When I criticised her for doing this she told me she often had her photograph taken with tourists and young people at the Monument and could see nothing wrong with what she had done!

The EDL at the Monument seemed intent on having a celebration of ignorance. They were anti-trade unionist, anti-student and anti-working class.

For decades the Monument in Newcastle has been where trade unionists, community activists and socialists have had Saturday stalls. The EDL will face a mobilisation of local trade union members and other lefts if they try to bring their bully tactics back again.

Pickles wages war on services

By a Unison member

Tory communities secretary Eric Pickles has declared war on what he calls councils' 'barmy rules and regulations' by conducting a 'review' of the 1,294 statutory duties placed on local authorities.

Most of these arise from Acts of Parliament and cover areas such as housing, social care, fire and rescue, town planning, local democracy and finance, environmental health and so on.

Pickles knows that removing many of these statutory duties is a prerequisite for the mass closure or privatisation of council services. Closure would leave most local authorities with a few hundred staff carrying out commissioning activities or monitoring the much reduced statutory duties that remain.

The Tory/Liberal coalition is already preparing the ground for this with their 'Big Society' Decentralisation and Localism Bill that will introduce a general power of competence. The Bill is already at the report stage in the House of Commons. Local authorities will be able to act in any way they see fit provided it falls within the law. For example, community groups assuming control of services that would otherwise close, the merger of essential services across council boundaries and alternative ways of funding local government such as invest-to-save bonds.

How far Pickles, Clegg and Cameron could go is illustrated by the in-

clusion of 37 adult social care duties that support disabled people and family carers in the Bill. Particularly the duty under section 2 of the Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970 (CSDPA) to provide services to disabled people in order to meet their needs.

Although this duty has been significantly weakened by central government underfunding of councils over 30 years, and House of Lords judgements which allow councils to consider their financial position, it is still the foundation stone for the social services relied on by hundreds of thousands.

The Labour peer Alf Morris who wrote the CSDPA has promised to fight 'tooth and nail' to save this duty. But without mass pressure he is unlikely to find much of an echo in his own party.

It was New Labour that introduced the 2003 Fair Access to Care Services policy with differing levels of eligibility which has just been used by Birmingham council to justify ending services to 4,100 disabled and older people.

And Gordon Brown's government supported a Law Commission review that has now recommended a single law for adult social care that would replace the already weakened duty in the CSDPA with a much weaker 'statement of principles'.

Unless Pickles's war on councils is stopped, local government will change beyond all recognition, and disabled and older people, their families and millions of others will face a very bleak future.

Fast-tracking the rich

Immigration minister Damian Green has made it easier for oligarchs and the super-rich from abroad to fast-track settlement in the UK. Those who invest £5 million in government bonds will be allowed to settle here after three years, and those investing £10 million or more will be allowed to settle after two years. This compares with the current minimum five-year requirement. "Entrepreneurs and investors can play a major part in our economic recovery, and I want to do everything I can to ensure that Britain remains an attractive destination for them", said Green. Clearly these are the type of people the Tories see as priority immigrants. Not those who labour in the fields picking fruit, nor those who care for our elderly on the minimum wage but the very group of super-rich people - speculators and oligarchs - who were key in wrecking the economy two years earlier!

Construction workers fight lockout

Alistair Tice

400 engineering construction workers have been locked out from work since 14 March at BP Saltend near Hull. They were told by managers that the contract of their company, Redhall, was terminated by Vivergo that runs the new bio-ethanol plant there.

On 2 March, these same workers took unofficial strike action and blockaded the BP site gates to win a victory, forcing Redhall to abide by the national industry agreement over redundancy procedures (NAECI).

On 14 March police were there in force, which means that the company must have tipped them off. And a prepared letter was handed to workers urging them to "go home peacefully... and return the next day ready for work".

Workers returned on Tuesday to be told they were locked out. Electricians and scaffolders working for two other contractors have been stood down and will be paid 38 hours this week as per the NAECI Blue Book.

But Redhall workers have been promised nothing and will only be paid 38 hours for 46 hours of work!

This is a lock-out and a tearing up of the national agreement. If the bosses can get away with this here,



Construction workers at Lindsey oil refinery strike to defend the NAECI agreement photo Sean Figg

then they will try it everywhere.

This dispute is as important as the Lindsey Oil Refinery (LOR) strikes in 2009. Redhall's workers have set up a strike committee including LOR

strike leader Keith Gibson.

At a mass meeting of 400 locked-out Redhall workers at Saltend on 21 March, the company's offer of £3,000 each was unanimously re-

jected. It was not seen as satisfactory in compensating for loss of earnings and severance and crucially it did not ensure any TUPE (transfer) rights or future employment on this

contract.

The dispute will now be escalated and the mass meeting agreed to call for national strike action throughout the industry to begin on 22 March in solidarity with these workers and to defend the national agreement. They are also calling for a national mobilisation for a demonstration at BP Saltend on 28 March.

Keith Gibson, from the Lock-Out committee, said in a personal capacity: "This lock-out represents a tearing up of the NAECI agreement and if not resisted, will give the green light to other employers to do the same on other sites and jobs. Then the Blue Book would be a worthless bit of paper."

"Therefore our fight is for every construction worker in the country. Solidarity strike action defeated the employers at LOR in 2009, we can achieve that again!"

• Messages of support to Keith Gibson: geminis@geminis.karoo.co.uk or 077431 35183

• Stop press.

At the Westburton power station construction site in Nottinghamshire on 22 March, 200 workers refused to go into work. They joined the demonstration by the Saltend workers who had travelled down to seek support. At 9am a mass meeting voted to join the mass picket at Saltend on 28 March.

Trade union victory over anti-strike laws

Alex Gordon

President RMT

On 4 March, the Court of Appeal handed down definitive judgements in two important industrial action cases.

In both *Aslef v London Midland* and in *RMT v Serco Docklands Light Railway*, High Court judges had previously granted injunctions banning strike action after finding union strike notices "defective" and union explanations about their membership data "inadequate".

The superior court has now overturned those injunctions and comprehensively disposed of arguments originally used in the High Court.

Government policies threaten to destroy up to 750,000 public sector jobs and an estimated 900,000 private sector jobs through cuts and outsourcing, while attacking wages, pensions and public services. Demands for trade unions to lead a fightback are growing, so the effect of this Appeal Court judgement is potentially explosive.

RMT general secretary, Bob Crow, described the judgment as: "not only a victory for staff on Serco Docklands and RMT's 80,000 members but also a massive victory for seven million trade unionists in the UK."

In the London Midland case, the union mistakenly sent ballot papers to two members not entitled to vote - out of 604 balloted, 86% voted to strike. But this was sufficient for the High Court to grant its injunction.

The Appeal Court ruled that this should have been dealt with as a small accidental failure. Similarly, the Appeal Court said the union's explanation of its membership data was simply for employers "to understand something about the reliability of the data supplied. Something, but not necessarily very much".

The implications of the Appeal



Lobbying parliament against the anti-union laws photo Suzanne Beishon

Court's ruling are significant and immediate. While employers will continue to apply for injunctions against strike action on spurious and vexatious grounds, many of the avenues used in recent years which relied on legal hair-splitting and nit-picking trivia are now closed.

Common law recognises no right to strike in Britain, however the Appeal Court confirmed that international law does confer a right to strike under International Labour Organisation Conventions 98 and 151. In addition, the European Convention on Human Rights upholds the right to strike as an element of Article 11(1) on freedom of association.

In a further case, RMT is taking the British government to the European Court of Human Rights for breaching international law through prohibiting the right to take sympathetic (or solidarity) action banned as 'secondary action' by the Tory government in 1980.

It is likely the Tory/Lib Dem government will propose new legisla-

tion further restricting the right to strike. There may be an attempt to extend the 'proportionality' concept, which has been imported from European law in a number of recent cases. This gives judges power to decide what forms of action (if any) are appropriate in lawful industrial disputes, something not even Thatcher's anti-union laws achieved.

For workers facing the onslaught of European Union and UK government austerity policies, the lessons are clear. The successful legal appeal by Aslef and RMT allows trade unions to fight back using strike action to defend jobs and services.

The policy of coordinated strike action to defeat austerity cuts agreed at last year's TUC conference can now be a practical reality.

As cuts start to bite in 2011, trade unions need to plan for a strike movement - generalised strike action to defend trade union members, their families and communities from the impact of government policies. There are now fewer legal impediments to doing so.

Stopping the cuts with the NSSN

Rob Williams

NSSN anti-cuts convenor

The National Shop Stewards Network (NSSN) is at the forefront of the battle against the Con-Dem cuts. The NSSN was initiated by the transport union RMT in 2006 so that rank and file trade unionists could organise together across the union movement and ensure that workers in struggle would be supported.

This role was important in 2009, when workers in the private sector fought a series of disputes at the Lindsey Oil Refinery, the Visteon and Linamar car plants and the Vestas wind turbine factory.

Now it's the turn of all workers, their families and communities as the Con-Dems look to make us pay the price for the bankers' crisis to the tune of £81 billion! They want to take us back 70 years by decimating the NHS, education, public services and the welfare state.

The NSSN has played a key role in the growing anti-cuts movement by lobbying the TUC last September to call a national demonstration against the cuts and initiating marches in London, Bristol, Cardiff, etc on 23 October.

We think that our pressure did

help in getting them to organise the 26 March demo - even though it's taken them six months!

From the beginning, our supporters have played a leading role in setting up local anti-cuts campaigns. To aid our anti-cuts work, in January, at a conference of 600 trade unionists, community campaigners and young people, the NSSN launched its anti-cuts campaign with a majority trade unionist committee which includes RMT president Alex Gordon.

We are working with the other national anti-cuts organisations but have insisted that we must fight ALL the cuts, including those of Labour councils, who shamefully have passed on the cuts. Now we must fight the implementation of these cuts - library by library if necessary.

The NSSN has a unique role to play in that we believe that the organised trade union movement has the power to stop Cameron and Clegg's cuts. But the TUC demo can't be the end - instead it should be used to give a lead to all those young and old, inside and outside the trade union movement, to coordinate national strike action to defeat the Con-Dems and their cuts.

• www.stopcuts.net

Industrial news in brief

College strikes

University lecturers and support staff at Cardiff University, Swansea University, Aberystwyth University, Trinity-St David and Bangor University went on strike on 18 March as part of rolling action called by the University and College Union (UCU).

This was part of a series of rolling strikes around the United Kingdom on pension cuts, building up to a UK-wide

day of strike action in post-16 education on 24 March on cuts to pensions, jobs and pay. Employers continue to reject the UCU's offers of negotiation or ACAS-led mediation to end the dispute.

Edmund Schluessel, Cardiff University UCU, personal capacity

May Day Greetings

Celebrate international workers' day with May Day greetings. See page 14

No education cuts: We can win the battle!

Ben Robinson

Not content with pushing through a trebling of university fees and cutting EMA, this government is planning to cut £1 of every £8 it contributes to teaching and research in higher education in England - a total of £940 million.

Our schools and colleges are under attack too. In further education, 20,000 jobs could go because of the government's cut backs.

All universities bar one are set to have their teaching funds slashed savagely. Poorer universities will be hit the hardest. London Metropolitan University, recently threatened with bankruptcy, is facing a 7.6% cut in its budget.

If these cuts go through courses will close, fees and class sizes will increase, and services will be cut. But not if we resist.

The fantastic movement against fees and cuts last year showed the potential that exists to fight back. The mass movement beat the Welsh Assembly and Scottish Parliament into retreats and brought this 'coalition of cutters' to within 22 votes of defeat.

Academic staff in colleges and universities, organised in the UCU union, have taken strike action. This action brought many places to a halt and was supported by Youth Fight for Education (YFE) and many student activists on the picket lines.

The massive 26 March demonstration will see students and workers marching side by side against all the cuts.

Universities are setting out plans for implementing the cuts. Oxford, Cambridge, Exeter and more are looking to charge the full £9,000 a year. The student movement has a clear opportunity to respond and



Students protest in London in November photo Senan

show management how much resistance these cuts will meet.

Already, Glasgow University has seen 2,000 march and students at Liverpool University have occupied to stop management meetings taking place. This resistance has to be linked to a campaign to inform and involve other students. What services are faced with cuts? Is your lecturer threatened with the sack?

University managements have been and can be forced back. Many universities regularly go into debt temporarily on the basis that they will receive increased income in the future.

Students and staff must raise the demand that universities set a budget based on no fees increase and no cuts. Just one university following this route would strike a serious blow to the government's plans for higher education. Ten would throw them into chaos.

The battle is not lost on EMA ei-

ther. A mass anti-cuts movement could win its restoration.

YFE demands that the government reverses the cuts in education, restores EMA and repeals sky-high university fees. But to achieve this a mass and sustained campaign is needed. Further national days of action must be organised. They have the potential to be bigger and bolder even than the protests last winter.

With both the National Union of Teachers (NUT) in the schools and sixth forms and the UCU discussing coordinated strike action, there is the potential for staff to link up with students and have a one-day education shutdown.

We need a national student movement that brings together representatives from the anti-cuts groups that exist and will spring up across the country. This is urgent in order to build a united, coherent fightback with the power to defeat the cuts.

Young people and staff protest against Connexions closure

Tom Jousselein
Lewisham Socialist Party

With 36% of 16-24 year olds unemployed, Lewisham, South London, has one of the worst youth unemployment rates in the country. Despite this, New Labour Mayor Steve Bullock has decided to completely withdraw funding for Lewisham Connexions - a service that gives advice on everything from unemployment to housing to people aged between 13 and 19.

On the day that Connexions was scheduled to be shut, 30 service users and staff members protested to show opposition to the council's plan. With slogans calling for the unity of workers and students, it gained a lot of attention from passers-by and gave many young people their first experience of action to fight the cuts.

Miriam Brown, a protester and service user, said that she always found the service very useful and had grown very attached to staff members. Shocked at the removal of this service, Miriam sent an reply directly to the mayor of Lewisham, but received only a very brief reply from his personal assistant, showing the disdain that he has for all of us!



Outside Lewisham Connexions photo Paul Mattsson

The staff have been treated appallingly. One employee explained that they simply have no idea whether or not they will be made redundant.

Connexions workers have not officially been sacked but are instead in a state of limbo. Employees who have been delivering frontline services for over 20 years and are known by young people across the borough for their work may simply not have a job.

If local councils and the government care about the future of young people at all, these services must be kept open. There is also a pressing need for the trade union movement

to help young people, through unemployed centres for example, with advice on jobs and to link it to the trade union movement and the wider fight for decent jobs for all.

But the services by themselves will not solve the problem of youth unemployment. Councils and the government should be funding services to create work and keep people off the dole queue.

The government's token gesture of creating 50,000 apprenticeships is far from what's needed to help the 974,000 unemployed young people across the country.

Join Youth Fight for Jobs!

Youth Fight for Jobs was launched at a national conference in November 2008 to fight back against the way young people are being made to pay the price for the bankers' crisis. The campaign fights against all cuts and for free education and training leading to socially useful jobs with decent pay and conditions. Six national trade unions - Unite, PCS, UCU, Bectu, CWU, RMT - as well as many local branches and student unions support the campaign. As well as hundreds of local meetings, protests and demonstrations, the national events we have organised include:

2 April 2009: 600 march to G20

As its first national event, Youth Fight for Jobs organised a march of 600 young people as part of the protests around the pro-big business G20 summit. We marched through four of the poorest London boroughs to a rally outside the G20 meeting at the Excel Centre in east London.



"Gordon Brown, stop the rot! Give us what the bankers got!" photo Paul Mattsson

28 November 2009: 1,000 march for real jobs and free education

Students and young people from around the country, including contingents from Day-Mer Youth, Cypriot Youth Platform and Tamil Solidarity, marched and delivered a petition of 10,000 signatures to 10 Downing Street.



"Students and workers, Unite and fight!" photo Sarah Mayo

13 March 2010: 500 march in Barking for jobs and services not racism

Marching past services and public buildings being closed we highlighted that it was the failure of any mainstream politicians to address the problems facing ordinary people in the area that allowed the far-right racist BNP to gain votes in Barking and Dagenham.



"When the BNP tell racist lies, We fight back and organise!" photo Paul Mattsson

See www.youtube.com/youthfightforjobs for videos of all these events.

www.youthfightforjobs.com

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We can stop the cuts!

Nobody, apart from the super-rich, can hope to avoid the impact of the government's brutal attacks. Across these two pages HANNAH SELL, Socialist Party deputy general secretary, sets out a strategy for defeating the Con-Dems' cuts.

Just some of the many services that would be affected by cuts: adult education, benefits for the disabled, bus services, CAB, children's services, coastguard services, domestic violence services, ESOL, EMA, fire services, flood

defences, help for rough sleepers, highways maintenance, hospitals, housing benefit, housing repair budgets, social rents, tuition fees, leisure centres, libraries, magistrates courts, museums, music teaching grants, national parks staffing, passport service, pest control, police budgets, public toilets, refugee council, school buildings, school crossing patrols, sheltered housing, street cleaning, swimming pools, theatres, waste collection, youth services. But they can be stopped!

If this government gets away with it, the clock of history will be unwound with levels of poverty returning to those of the 1930s. But it will not get away with it. This government is deluded if it imagines it will be able to carry out its programme without meeting an avalanche of opposition.

Before Christmas, we saw the magnificent student movement, the biggest for 25 years. The students inspired workers, but there are many who are not yet sure how cuts in jobs and services can be defeated.

Nonetheless, the majority oppose cuts. The latest opinion polls show that only 34% of people believe cut-backs are necessary. A huge demonstration on 26 March can be the start of a mighty movement that can defeat this government.

The government is trying to cow the working class by the sheer scale of its brutality. Two thirds of public sector bodies are reported to be shedding jobs. Every week a new slaughter of public services is announced.

'Plan B'

Yet, like the Wizard of Oz, behind the curtain of shock and awe, a very weak coalition government, trailing in the polls, is pulling the strings. Chancellor George Osborne's declaration that there is no 'plan B' has never been more than propaganda.

It is clear that the government has no choice but to have a plan B in reserve as the Financial Times editorial put it on 3 February: "Given the uncertainties, the government may have to adjust its plans in the light of events. To refuse to do so would be irrational."

In the face of mass outrage, the Tory/Liberal coalition has already



With the right strategy our movement can be successful photo Socialist Party

shown that it is capable of retreat. In one week in February it delayed the plans to privatise Britain's forests, continued the threatened funding of debt counsellors for a year, and demagogically warned universities against charging the £9,000 a year fees, introduced by the very same government just two months before.

These are not major retreats, but they give a glimpse of how scared the government is of potential opposition. Prime minister David Cameron has had to admit openly that: "It is not possible to make those cuts without cutting some things that are important. It will not make us popular. It will make

us unpopular. It will make me unpopular."

It already has! Some opinion polls now show Cameron as being as hated as Maggie Thatcher, the 'Iron Lady', was at her most unpopular.

The Con-Dems are far weaker than Thatcher's governments. Yet the Iron Lady was reduced to iron

filings by a mass movement of 18 million people refusing to pay the flat rate tax (poll tax) that her government had introduced.

That movement ended the tax and brought down Thatcher (see page 12). Today again, with the right strategy, our movement can be successful.

Organise, demonstrate, occupy!

Step up the community campaigns

Most campaigns to save local services rightly start with petitions and meetings. To win, however, usually requires further action.

There have already been local examples of community campaigns succeeding, such as hospital campaigners in Redbridge, London, who, by demonstrating and campaigning, have forced the local trust to back off - at least for now - from closing their local A&E department.

There are the parents in Kirklees, Yorkshire, who stopped their children's school becoming an academy by organising a petition, but also by threatening to stand candidates for the council election and to picket the school if it became an Academy.

Across Europe all kinds of bold and innovative methods are being adopted by the anti-cuts movement. In Greece over a million people have refused to pay the motorway tolls, just getting out of their cars to push the barriers aside.

In Britain, students have used occupations as an important strand in the struggle against university fees. In Manchester swimming pool users

are already threatening to occupy their local pool to prevent it closing. Many similar campaigns will develop. Rent strikes will also be on the cards as housing benefit is cut and social housing rents increase.

A mighty struggle to defend the NHS is required. A movement of benefit claimants is urgently needed, as the vicious cuts literally drive those worst affected to despair. According to the Disability Alliance nearly one in ten of those claiming the threatened Disability Living Allowance say that losing the benefit may make "life not worth living".

Political alternative

One important strand of the campaign is to demand that councillors vote against cuts. Local anti-cuts campaigns should demand that Labour councillors, who vote for cuts, stand aside for those who are prepared to really defend jobs and services. If they don't stand aside - anti-cuts campaigns should stand against them, preferably as part of the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (see page 13). All of these movements and more

are essential and inevitable, but to maximise their effectiveness they need to be linked to building a mass movement against the cuts in general and in particular to the enormous potential power of the organised working class in the trade unions.

Strike action

Brendan Barber, general secretary of the trade union leadership body (TUC), has said that "the days of protests being solely about unions going on strike are over" and has welcomed "peaceful civil disobedience".

We agree, but only if community campaigns and civil disobedience are an addition to, rather than a replacement for, strike action.

When community campaigns and workers unite together, they can win big victories. One local example of that is in Renfrewshire, Scotland where 60 teaching jobs were to be cut. Over 1,000 local people demonstrated against the cuts and, given confidence by the size of the demo, 96% of teachers voted for strike action. The cuts were immediately withdrawn!

Oppose all cuts!

United we are strong, divided we will be defeated. The government knows that and is desperate to divide us - public sector from private sector, old from young, benefit claimants from everyone else, and so on.

To avoid the government's trap, and build a united movement, it is vital that we oppose ALL cuts in jobs and services.

If we fall into the trap of accepting pay cuts on the spurious grounds that they will stop a local library or swimming pool closing, or fighting to save one local hospital but not another, we will allow the anti-cuts movement to shatter into a thousand pieces.

Of course, we will not always succeed, but our starting point must be to fight every single cut. This includes cuts implemented



See www.stopcuts.net

by Labour councils, who are willingly wielding the axes handed to them by the government. Across the country hundreds of local town or citywide anti-cuts campaigns have already been founded. They have organised numerous local demonstrations and lobbies of councils. The 26 March demo will give the anti-cuts movement oxygen and confidence. This is an opportunity to further strengthen local campaigns which can bring together the different parts of the anti-cuts movement - trade unionists, young people fighting against university fees and education cuts, local residents fighting to save their libraries, swimming pools and so on. Nationally, the National Shop Stewards Network (NSSN) - an organisation of militant trade unionists - launched an Anti-Cuts Campaign and is appealing to all local anti-cuts campaigns to get involved in its work.



A massive national demonstration can give workers confidence that they are part of a powerful movement against cuts. photo Paul Mattsson

For a 24-hour public sector general strike!

In 2010 workers across southern Europe took generalised strike action in order to stop the savage cuts being inflicted on their living standards. Spain, Italy, Portugal, France and Greece have all seen mass strike movements. In Greece there have been eight general strikes over the last year.

Here in Britain we are facing attacks on a similar scale. In response the TUC congress last year agreed to support "coordinated strike action" against the cuts. The demo on 26 March needs to be the launch pad for such coordinated strike action, for a 24-hour public sector general strike.

A massive national demonstration can give workers confidence that they are not alone but are part of a powerful movement against cuts.

A public sector general strike, even a partial one, would do even more to raise confidence and prepare the ground for an all-out 24-hour general strike.

Even more than is the case in southern Europe, where general strikes are more frequent, it would terrify the Con-Dem government.

How can such a strike be organised?

Every part of the public sector is affected by the cuts. In most cases strike action is going to be needed to stop cuts.

While local action and action by individual trade unions cannot be delayed until we get generalised strike action, there is no objective reason why trade union leaders cannot discuss together in order to set a date on which everyone plans to come out. This would be a significant step towards a 24-hour general strike.

Pensions

The attack on pensions is clearly an over-arching issue around which unions can coordinate strike action, although this does not preclude also coordinating action against other aspects of the cuts. The civil servants' union, PCS, is discussing balloting for action on pensions to take place in May or June.

The NUT and UCU are also discussing action before the summer. To have these three unions - one million workers - strike together over pensions would be an important step forward.

Mid-week demonstration

Unfortunately, however, the biggest public sector unions have not yet made any proposals to ballot on pensions. Some of them, at least, are arguing that no strike action should be organised before September, when the government finalises its attacks on pensions. But we should not wait.

Whenever the first public sector union takes national strike action there should be a national mid-week demonstration against cuts and attacks on pensions - so that workers from across the public sector can show their support for strike action. This could also increase the pressure on other public sector unions to build for a one-day public sector strike.

Such a strike should also appeal to those in the private sector to join who will be affected by the switch from Retail Prices Index (RPI) to Consumer Price Index (CPI), which doesn't include housing costs. This alone will mean pensions being cut by up to 25% over time, hitting round five million members of defined benefit pension schemes.

No to the anti-trade union laws

We have the most repressive anti-trade union laws in Europe, introduced by the last Tory government and maintained by New Labour. However, this is not enough for the Con-Dems, who dream of following the Republican Governor of Wisconsin, in the US, and attempting to completely destroy trade union rights.

But the US working class has responded with an enormous movement - of trade unionists and non-organised workers and students - in defence of workers' rights. On 12 March up to 200,000 marched in Madison, capital of Wisconsin, who are state of less than six million people.

In Britain we have to be prepared for the likelihood that the courts would be used to sabotage such a strike by finding, for example, something spurious with one or more union's democratic ballot in order to try and stop everyone striking on the same day.

The government is terrified of the prospect of coordinated strike action over pensions, and it is preparing for battle - even setting up a 'war quango' to combat strike action. We must be equally determined. We need to build a movement so powerful that they think twice before using the anti-union laws and, if they do, the movement is strong enough to sweep them aside.

We are not in favour of taking unnecessary risks with the trade unions' resources and funds. However, such is the severity of the cuts that action is essential. The oil refinery construction workers' strikes in 2009 and again at Saldent this year show that if a strike is powerful enough it is very difficult to use the anti-union laws against it. The battle for the right to organise effective trade unions, is an essential part of the struggle to stop the cuts. This must include the right of all workers to join trade unions and to go on strike, including the prison officers, who are currently denied the right to legally strike, and the police, who cannot even form a trade union.

The growing opposition to the cuts, as the reality of what they will entail bites, means that any strike against cuts could win enormous support from workers and young people.

In reality, if several public sector unions defied the anti-trade union laws, in the context of a public sector general strike, and with the other unions promising solidarity action in the case of any legal threats against them, the government would be powerless to stop them and, in the process, the anti-trade union laws would be broken asunder.

to defeat the cuts it will also mean campaigning to transform the unions into democratic and fighting bodies.

Find out more at shopstewards.net

This will mean campaigning to commit the trade union leaders to action, or if that proves impossible to replace them with leaders who will fight in their members' interests.

For fighting, democratic trade unions

If the whole of the trade union movement, from top to bottom, was to launch a serious struggle against the cuts it would be impossible for the government to implement its programme. Unfortunately, that has not been the case up until now.

In the coming months hundreds of thousands of workers, perhaps even millions, will be attracted to the trade union movement as they look for a way to fight back. If they

are lucky they will join a trade union whose leadership has a clear and determined strategy to fight every cut. But in many cases, this will not be the case.

Over the last 20 years an increased tendency in the leadership of the trade union movement, at national and sometimes at local level, has developed towards accepting the 'logic of the market' - that is, the so-called logic of cutting workers' pay

and conditions! Many trade union leaders have become used to negotiating defeat rather than leading a struggle to defend their members' interests.

This does not mean that workers should turn away from the trade unions. As the 26 March demo shows, the trade union movement - which organises over six million workers - has enormous potential power. However, in many cases in order

Other demands that will form an important part of the struggle will be for unions to be democratically controlled by their members and for all full-time officials to be regularly elected and to receive a workers' wage.

The National Shop Stewards Network has an important role to play in bringing together militant trade unionists from different sectors in order to share experiences. It will also be necessary, however, to building fighting union lefts in every union.

What has socialism got to do with fighting the cuts?

Each week members of the Socialist Party sell copies of the Socialist newspaper at workplaces, colleges, stations, town centres and working class estates all over England and Wales, as well as at protests and meetings. Sellers are often questioned about socialist ideas. Here TOM PEARSE records such a discussion.

Socialist seller (S): Fight the cuts – no ifs, no buts, fight all cuts!

Potential buyer (B): Ok, I'm against the cuts but what is the alternative? The government says there is a massive public sector deficit and, if we don't cut it, then it will grow to unacceptable levels. Then the country will go bankrupt.

S: Well, the first thing I'd say is that we, the working people, who are the majority in this country, didn't create this deficit. The rich and their system of capitalism, particularly the bankers, are mainly responsible for this deficit. The previous government stepped in and bailed them out to the tune of about £80 billion directly, with up to £1 trillion in loan guarantees etc.

Also, because of the crisis of capitalism – which again we didn't create – over 2.5 million people in Britain don't have a job – including a million young people between the ages of 16 and 24.

It's the largesse handed out to the bankers and the increased cost to the state in unemployment and other benefits which accounts for most of the deficit.

B: Yes, yes - but this deficit exists. How are we going to pay for it? How can we ultimately eliminate it?

S: Did you know that the total deficit could be wiped out if the rich paid taxes like ordinary people do? Tax avoidance by the rich, according to the PCS civil service union, comes to £120 billion a year, which is almost equal to the total government budget deficit, £143 billion, to be eliminated over four years.

But the Con-Dems are using this situation to pursue a scorched earth policy against all the historical achievements of working class people, the NHS, pay and conditions etc.

This represents an attempt to turn back the wheel of history to the 1930s and in some senses to the 19th century. Working class people are being made to pay for rescuing capitalism in a severe crisis.

B: But if we try to make the rich pay for the deficit, won't they just take their money out of the country?

S: Yes, they might attempt that. But then they would be openly acting selfishly by seeking to flout the democratic wishes of the majority of the British people. We would therefore have every right to introduce measures to prevent them from doing so.

B: But isn't that to attack the principle of private property?

S: When socialists talk about 'private property' we're not talking about the personal possessions of ordinary people – houses, cars, fridges, etc. The private property of the rich and the super-rich comes through the super-exploitation of us, working class people.

They would argue that their profit, which is what Karl Marx called "the unpaid labour of the working class", is necessary in order to keep the system going. We should never forget that profit is achieved by exploitation – sometimes ruthlessly so in China and elsewhere today – of

the labour power of the working class.

B: Don't we need rich people to create jobs and anyway, doesn't competition drive invention?
S: There is a grain of truth in the arguments of the bosses. In the past, by investing this surplus - profits if you like - in industry, they played a role in developing society, providing jobs and increased wealth for a time.

But for the last 20 years investment in factories, in what we would call the 'means of production' - the organisation of labour, science and technique – and the actual making of real things, has dropped dramatically.

Instead they sought to boost their profits in a massive orgy of 'financialisation', the building up of the financial sector at the expense of real production and the creation of jobs. This created a massive financial bubble which has now burst, resulting in the present devastating crisis.

This is a real indictment of the failure of capitalism. The International Monetary Fund has calculated that during this economic crisis, in 2008 alone, the total loss in assets devalued worldwide came to \$50 trillion – roughly equal to the value of one year's global output of goods and services! This wealth is being destroyed because capitalism is a system based on production for profit for the few and not the social need of the many.

B: OK, the capitalists failed. But you still haven't said how you would stop them from avoiding any attacks on their wealth.
S: If they tried to continue with evasion, if they tried to take their loot out of the country, then a radical socialist government should introduce state controls of all capital coming in and out of the country.

This would be accompanied by the 'opening of the books'. The accounts of all companies should be inspected by mass committees of workers and consumers. This would be a form of workers' control, which is vital as a means of revealing the real wealth and how it is to be controlled for the benefit of the majority.

B: How can you do this in an open and free economy?

S: By nationalising the banks and finance houses.

B: Didn't the British government try this at the beginning of the financial crisis when they took big stakes in the banks?

S: Up to a point yes. But it was not complete nationalisation. And it certainly wasn't carried out in a way that was beneficial to the majority of the people of this country. New Labour left control in the hands of big business managers.

B: Well there we go. You can't do anything.

S: Now, I didn't say that. If we, the Socialist Party, have majority support, we could do a great deal to counter the undemocratic defiance by a handful of capitalists, seeking to thwart the wishes of the majority.

Harold Wilson and the Labour government, because they would not go outside the framework of capitalism, bent the knee to the bosses' pressure and capitulated. We would have called their bluff and proposed to Parliament a bill to take over these big companies who were threatening to defy and blackmail the elected representatives of the people.

Instead we want real democratic nationalisation, conducted in a socialist manner through workers' control and management. This would involve the workers

Capitalism is a system which cannot utilise the full productive potential of its own system.



Sellers are often questioned about socialist ideas photo the Socialist

in the banking and financial sector, together with representatives of workers in general and government representatives, as well as depositors and other users, controlling and managing the banks on behalf of the people as a whole, providing cheap loans, mortgages, etc.

B: Won't big business take fright and sabotage any efforts to rein them in?

S: It is entirely possible that this could happen or be threatened. In the past, when minimal measures were taken against them, the capitalists threatened a strike of capital. When the Labour government in the 1970s – led by Harold Wilson as prime minister – introduced a tax on capital, big business, with the help of the newspapers, conducted a ferocious struggle which resulted in 174 amendments to the bill, and effectively nullified the proposed tax increases against the rich.

B: How can you possibly guarantee that, by waving some kind of magical 'socialist' wand, things will improve in the way you describe?

S: There will be no hocus-pocus; there is no mystery in how a socialist planned economy would be organised and will be superior to outmoded capitalism.

Capitalism is a system which cannot utilise the full productive potential of its own system. The output of the world economy is back to the levels of 1989.

But in the 17 countries forming the eurozone, joblessness among the young now officially stands at over 20% (although it's much higher in many areas) alongside closed factories.

In Ireland we have the phenomena of empty 'ghost estates' while millions throughout the world lack basic shelter. One billion people on the planet go to bed hungry every night, an increase of 150 million compared to 15 years ago.

A planned economy would use all the resources which now lie idle, as well as cutting out the colossal waste from unnecessary

plan of production. This plan would be drawn up through the involvement of working class people, representatives of the middle class, such as small shopkeepers, small businesses etc, the users and customers of industry, etc.

B: Two questions spring to mind. Wouldn't nationalisation be, in effect, 'expropriation' of the assets of people who, through diligent work, have built up this wealth over generations? Secondly, if you take over industry, don't you also 'nationalise' the savings of many, not necessarily wealthy, people who invested in stocks and shares – for instance trade union members who have their pensions invested on the stock exchange?

S: Firstly this wealth and power of big business has been built up, as we showed earlier, by the exploitation of the labour power of the working class.

In the past there was some justification for this – despite the horrors of capitalism in the Industrial Revolution, the slave trade, etc. This was because it built up industry and was therefore ultimately laying the basis for abolishing shortages and boosting living standards.

But capitalism is a system which cannot fully utilise the full potential of the productive forces, as has been shown by the series of crises throughout its history and particularly the present crisis. Karl Marx pointed out that when it begins to hold back production, to destroy wealth, capitalism betrays its "historical mission", which was to develop production.

When it begins to hold back production it becomes obsolete. This does not mean, however, that capitalism will 'automatically' disappear. It needs to be 'helped' off the stage of history by the actions of the working class and the labour movement. So we need a new social system – one that involves a state acting for the majority and not the privileged minority – which is democratic at every level both in the running of industry and society.

But we, that is the working class and the labour movement, are not impervious to the interests of the small investors. Even to the big investors we will be more generous than they are to the poor, those on benefits, etc. Compensation will be paid on the basis of proven need to all whose assets are being taken over by a democratic socialist workers' state.

B: But again, would that not mean violating the age-old principles of private property?

S: To invoke this alleged 'principle' is a smokescreen to mask the colossal and undemocratic concentration of power in the hands of a handful of the rich.

A few figures to illustrate this: of the hundred largest economies in the world 52 are corporations and 48 are countries; the top 500 companies control 70% of world trade; the top 200 companies' combined sales are equal to 28% of world GDP but employ only 0.82% of the world's workforce.

B: And the ordinary people?

S: It goes without saying that, of course, trade union members and their pensions will be safeguarded; in fact, pensions will be rapidly increased from the current miserable level which the coalition government intends to cut further. All workers – as well as the unemployed, those on low wages, pensioners etc – will enormously benefit from a socialist planned economy.

B: But didn't 'socialism' fail in Russia? Instead of democracy there was dictatorship by people like Stalin.

S: The Russian revolution, in the period immediately after 1917, when the October revolution took place, established the most democratic state in history. It proceeded to take into public ownership the land, industry and finance.

For the first time the majority – that is the working class and the poor peasantry – were in power. They ruled through a system of workers' and peasants' councils.

There were no privileges for the representatives of the people, who lived on the average wage, were subject to recall, etc. These councils, for the first time in history, raised the working class to power and allowed them to rule.

capitalism. This would be as absurd and as utopian as anybody today hoping to return to feudalism, to the hardship of the middle ages.

B: But do you think that the capitalists will just allow you to go ahead and expropriate them without resistance?
S: We will have a democratic majority and under the rules of democracy a minority should abide by the will of the majority. Of course the rights of minorities would be protected. Not just the working class but the intermediate layers of society can be won to socialist system.

Once the mass of working people come together in struggle, a huge social movement, all of those layers of society who are subject to attack by the system, gravitate to the workers' side. This was shown, after all, in the revolutions in Egypt, Tunisia and throughout the Middle East.

The Con-Dems are attacking the police by proposing to cut their numbers. Even servicemen, on returning from Afghanistan, could be thrown on the dole. Many then can be open to the idea of fighting the cuts. But also this can open up for them the vista of a new society where all the talents can be used.

Nevertheless we are realistic. History has shown that it is not the left, it is not the working class movement, which resorts to force to attain its ends. We are absolutely opposed to the methods of terrorism. But we're not pacifists; we will defend all democratic rights from any forceful attempt to take them away. We fight with democratic means for a democratic majority. But the ruling class does not always abide by even its own 'rules' when its vital interests are threatened.

B: Ok, you've made the case for a socialist Britain. But what kind of set-up will you have in relations with Europe and the world?
S: We don't believe in socialism in one country. Russia shows that there is no possibility of any one country moving towards socialism by itself. Leon Trotsky, the great socialist theoretician of the workers' movement, continually argued against this idea and he was proved right.

The development of the productive forces has completely outgrown the narrow limits of the nation state. The failed attempt of the capitalists in Europe to come together through the European Union is one expression of this.

If Egypt can detonate and assist the movement in Wisconsin, in the belly of the beast, the US itself, imagine if Britain was to go socialist. It would begin to transform the world. The same would apply in any country in Europe, or for that matter the relatively developed countries in Latin America or Asia.

B: Well you've made a convincing case. I'll buy your paper.
S: Thanks very much. You should think about joining the Socialist Party now!

B: But won't those in power just get greedy?
S: Yes, there is always a danger of a bureaucratic layer seeking to control everything. Look at the trade unions today. There are leaderships sometimes on salaries several times that of trade union members. There are leaderships who fear the active participation of the members, particularly militant fighters like members of the Socialist Party fighting to transform the unions so that they reflect the real will of working people.

The only way to check this bureaucracy is through democracy. Trade union and other officials should be elected subject to recall. Such will be the advantages of socialism, particularly implemented democratically, that there would be no possibility of going back to



Students sign up on a protest against education cuts photo Senan

The world's top 200 companies' combined sales are equal to 28% of world GDP but employ only 0.82% of the world's workforce.

To find out more about joining the Socialist Party visit: www.socialistparty.org.uk or see page 14

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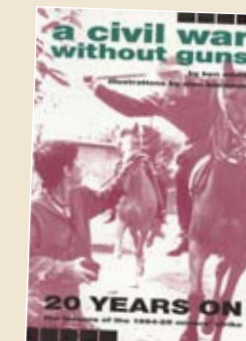
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Organise the fightback – from Tahrir Square to Wisconsin

Stephan Kimmerle

The Committee for a Workers' International (CWI – the socialist international organisation to which the Socialist Party is affiliated) fights for an alternative to cuts, crisis and capitalism worldwide.

Public spending cuts and attacks on the living standards and rights of the working class people are the only things on offer from capitalist politicians like Cameron, Obama and Merkel. They are attempting to solve the world economic crisis at the expense of working people and the poor. But this is meeting with resistance.

However, protest is not enough. Determined struggle is necessary to block the assault on living standards. Trade union and community fightbacks can be successful, especially if activists in these struggles are linked and organised. Faced with an economic system that cannot maintain, let alone improve, living standards, the question is: what is the alternative?

The CWI has activists, groups and parties in over 45 countries and six continents who struggle both for immediate improvements in living standards and rights and to win support for socialist ideas to change the world.

Wisconsin revolt

In the last few weeks a mass movement in Madison, USA, sprang into action to defend trade union rights and the conditions of public sector workers against Wisconsin's right-wing governor, Scott Walker. As the radical film maker Michael Moore said, this Tea Party Republican has declared "class war" which will "arouse a sleeping giant" ie the working class. In a small state of less than six million people, demonstrations of up to 200,000 showed the fury and determination to defend union rights.

There was widespread support, both in and outside the trade unions, for the call for a one-day general strike. Socialist Alternative, the CWI in the USA, advocated concrete measures to make that next step a reality. Unfortunately the trade union leadership is more interested in rotten compromises than concretely defending working class people.

We have seen this in a lot of countries where many trade union leaders make verbal protests and, sometimes, organise mass protests and strikes simply as a way of 'letting off steam', but not as measures to mobilise for a serious struggle. This is why the CWI fights to build democratic and fighting trade unions. Members of the CWI all around the globe are involved in trade unions fighting

Trade unionists' solidarity protest in Wisconsin, USA.

back and, where necessary, in the struggle to re-build them.

For example, the Socialist Movement Pakistan (CWI) has played a decisive role in the formation of a new, independent and combative 500,000-strong national trade union confederation. Socialist Resistance, the CWI in Kazakhstan, leads the struggle of 'Kazakhstan 2012' against the country's dictator, president Nazarbayev, and has helped to form a new independent national trade union confederation.

The Arab revolution

The desperate act on 17 December 2010 of a young man setting himself on fire in Sidi Bouzid, Tunisia, triggered a revolutionary wave which spread across the Maghreb and the Middle East.

One month later, the dictator Ben Ali had to flee from Tunisia, the following month the brutal 'pharaoh' Hosni Mubarak was ousted, three months later the struggle still continues in Bahrain, Libya, Yemen, Oman, Jordan and Syria.

To end neocolonial oppression the power of the multinationals and imperialism has to be broken.

The CWI fights for full democratic rights. They cannot be separated from the social needs of working people. Only a socialist transformation of society will guarantee a lasting basis to defend democratic rights against all attempts of the remnants of the old regimes and the rich elite to roll back time.

The decisive force to fight and overcome brutal oppression is the organised working class. A glimpse of that was shown in the events in Egypt and Tunisia.

In neocolonial countries like Pakistan, Nigeria and Sri Lanka, the parties of the CWI fight for this way

out of poverty, hunger and communist war and terror.

With www.chinaworker.info and a magazine in Mandarin, the CWI supports the first steps of the new developing giant, the Chinese working class, to independently organise itself.

Resistance in Europe

In Greece the regime of austerity has been met by eight general strikes. A general strike last September, with ten million on the streets, brought Spain to a halt. Hundreds of thousands have recently protested in Portugal. Mass action and strikes in France, Italy and elsewhere show that no government in Europe is stable or immune to the growing anger of youth and workers.

But, so far, these protests and actions have not yet fundamentally blocked the assault on living standards. Therefore a clear plan of action to stop the immediate assault and an alternative to the crisis-ridden capitalist system is needed. This is why we argue for the nationalisation of all banks and the commanding heights of industry under workers' control and management.

Mass movements and struggles can bring to power governments that truly represent working people and that implement socialist policies and break the power of big business and the super rich. To succeed in that, the working class needs its own party.

In most countries the old parties, once rooted in the labour movement, like the Labour Party, now fully support capitalism, including accepting the need for cuts.

As Joe Higgins, newly re-elected member of the Irish Parliament from the Socialist Party (CWI Ireland) expressed it: "There is a huge vacuum on the left. There is a need for a new movement to represent the working class in its widest sense".

The CWI is active in the development of new mass workers' parties. The CWI in France, Gauche Revolutionnaire (GR), is a critical part of the NPA (New Anti-capitalist Party). GR argues within the NPA for a principled left-wing force which also offers a strategy for the working class and the trade union movement on how to fight the pro-big business government of Nicolas Sarkozy.

Sozialistische Alternative, the CWI in Germany, fights for a socialist programme in die Linke (the Left party).

The Socialist Party (CWI) in Ire-

land uses its two members in the national parliament and one member of the European parliament to support worker and community struggles, but also to build a new political representation of working class people in forming the United Left Alliance.

CWI parliamentarians make no personal gain from their positions, living on a worker's wage and giving the rest of their bloated parliamentary salaries to the workers' movement.

In rebuilding the workers' movement, including new mass parties of the working class, the CWI seeks to organise the resistance and to spread Marxist ideas within these new formations – the ideas of the CWI to end capitalism and the dictatorship of the markets.

Socialist alternative

With the nuclear crisis in Japan following the earthquake and tsunami disaster it is again clear that governments who put big business profits first cannot be relied on to efficiently allocate resources to those in need, let alone provide safety and security.

CWI supporters in Japan demand the nationalisation of all energy plants and companies. Then this sector could be reorganised under democratic workers' control and management based on renewable energy sources.

As the revolutionary socialist Karl Marx explained 150 years ago, for the capitalists, profit is all and everything: the "self-expansion of capital is its only purpose". Today, a super-rich elite, big business and multinational corporations control the wealth of society.

The only way out of exploitation, unemployment, poverty, hunger, war and environmental destruction is to fight capitalism.

On the basis of a socialist society the economic resources can be used in a democratically planned way by, and in the interests of, the vast majority of people. This has nothing to do with the dictatorial, privileged bureaucratic Stalinist elites like those regimes in the former USSR and Eastern Europe.

Since 2008 the capitalist crisis has pushed working people into a new era of austerity. It is also a new era of mass movements which are increasingly challenging the ruling classes and capitalism itself.

Be part of the international resistance and join the CWI!

The Committee for a Workers' International

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. For more details including CWI publications write to: CWI, PO Box 3688, London E11 1YE. email cwi@worldsoc.co.uk

www.socialistworld.net

The CWI website contains news, reports and analysis from around the world. Recent articles include:



Portugal: Explosion of protest on 12 March

A country in ferment...

Danny Byrne, CWI, and Francisco Oliveira Raposo, Socialismo Revolucionario (CWI, Portugal)



Hong Kong: Protest against nuclear power

Protesters marched to the city's Japanese consulate chanting "against nuclear power" and, "be active not radioactive".

Chinaworker.info



Lebanon: "Revolt against sectarianism! Revolt against corruption!"

20,000 take to Beirut's streets - a workers' alternative is needed.

CWI Lebanon



Workers protest against EU governments' austerity measures
photo Paul Mattsson

The earthquake off Japan's east coast and the giant tsunami wave that followed on 11 March has, at the time of writing, officially killed over 8,500 people with another 13,000 people still missing. Hundreds of thousands of survivors have been left homeless, many are without basic human needs, including food. On top of this tragedy the tsunami also crippled the ageing nuclear power station in Fukushima, triggering a major nuclear crisis.

As the following articles show, the ongoing nuclear disaster has been compounded by the failure of a profit-driven, privately owned energy company and a pro-nuclear energy government, both of whom failed to plan for such a contingency. And despite the nuclear catastrophe in Japan, big business and the Con-Dem government continues to promote a new generation of nuclear power stations in the UK.

A deadly combination

With each passing day the environmental disaster at the stricken Fukushima nuclear power plant in Japan becomes more alarming. High levels of radioactive steam and materials have been spewing out of the damaged reactors and are carried by winds over large population centres, including Tokyo to the south. Already, milk and vegetables produced from areas some distance from Fukushima contain radioactive iodine above legal limits and other cancer causing substances.

A British nuclear scientist who is advising the Japanese authorities told the Times: "There could reach a point where we could have to leave the plant to evolve on its own."

Nothing as frightening as this has occurred since a reactor at the Chernobyl nuclear plant in the Ukraine exploded in 1986. That incident led to an estimated 4,000-60,000 extra cancer deaths.

The doomed Fukushima plant, which houses six nuclear reactors, was severely damaged by the earthquake and giant tsunami on 11 March which devastated a huge swathe of Japan's north east coastline.

Attempts by the plant's owners – the Tokyo Electric Power Company (Tepco) – and the Japanese authorities to prevent the escape of radio-

active gases and materials have, so far, failed. This is despite the heroic efforts by workers at the plant and firefighters to stabilise the situation.

The Japanese government has responded by imposing a 12 mile exclusion zone around the site. But TV news reports have shown hospital patients and staff abandoned by the authorities within this quarantine area. Meanwhile, the US administration told its citizens in Japan to stay outside a 50 mile zone. The UK foreign office told British citizens in the Tokyo area to consider leaving.

Tepco and the Japanese government have continually played down the scale of the disaster, as the head of the US Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Gregory Jaczko, has publicly stated.

The disaster has revealed both the inherent flaws in the reactors at Fukushima – which were designed by the giant US company, General Electric – and the falsification of the site inspection records by Tepco.

The Economist described Japan's nuclear industry as "a shameful record of cover-ups, lackadaisical crisis management and an inbred complicity between regulators and utilities..." (17/3/11).

Above all it shows that profit-driven capitalism and suspect technology is a deadly combination.

After Japan's tsunami disaster - Nuclear power, no way!

Japan's environmental crisis is becoming more alarming

Anger over electricity blackouts

Seizo Shimamura
Kokusai Rentai, (CWI Japan) in Tokyo

A series of blackouts being imposed by the Tokyo Electric Power Company (Tepco) is causing confusion and seriously disrupting the lives of people in the metropolitan (Tokyo) area.

These 'planned blackouts' are on an unprecedented scale. Public transport, hospitals, schools, day nurseries as well as ordinary homes are all affected by the rolling cut-offs of electricity for three to six hours a day, apart from central Tokyo where

the central offices of the government and the big monopolies are situated.

The blackouts have provoked large-scale resentment amongst the population in the metropolitan area and also widespread criticism of Tepco and the government who have arranged them. The policy appears to be promoting the idea that 'nuclear power is essential to our lives after all'.

The International Atomic Energy Agency has pointed out that it is actually possible to supply sufficient power with the other thermal power plants in Japan even if all of the country's nuclear power plants were

shut down. The blackouts start to look like a big conspiracy to impress people with the necessity of nuclear power, even after this horrific man-made disaster.

The chaos of the power cuts has exposed the incapacity of the electrical industry to care for the needs of the people. Not only Tepco, but all the electricity and power generating companies should be taken into public ownership under democratic workers' control and management. This is the key to changing the nuclear power-oriented policy which does not care about people's health and lives but serves the interests of big business.

Business enthusiasm for nuclear power 'undimmed'

John Sharpe

Despite the unfolding nuclear catastrophe in Japan, bosses in the UK nuclear power industry are determined to press ahead with the building of five new nuclear power stations with at least ten new reactors, costing a staggering £50 billion.

Vincent de Rivaz, chief of French multinational EDF, is confident that the construction of plants at Hinkley Point, Somerset, and Sizewell, Suffolk, will proceed. His enthusiasm "was undimmed". Neither is his enthusiasm for the profits to be made along with selling plants to China and India.

The programme was drawn up by the previous New Labour government, after a u-turn by Tony Blair's cabinet and his then energy secretary Ed Miliband.

Lib Dem energy minister, Chris Huhne has commissioned a report from chief nuclear inspector Dr Mike Weightman into the safety of nuclear power generation.

In 2007 Huhne said: "Nuclear is a tried, tested and failed technology and the government must stop putting time, effort and subsidies

into this outdated industry."

Since getting his backside onto a cabinet seat he became a cheerleader for the nuclear power building programme "as part of the mix". Reportedly, officials in Whitehall are privately trying to reassure energy firms and their contractors that the nuclear programme is not under threat.

Huhne, like some environmentalists, believes that the threat of climate change means that 'carbon neutral' nuclear power has a role to play.

But as Walt Patterson of think tank Chatham House observed: "Nuclear power needs climate change more than climate change needs nuclear power."

In contrast, the German chancellor Angela Merkel, faced with mass demonstrations and with elections looming, has shut down seven of Germany's oldest reactors.

She told the German parliament: "When, in Japan, the apparently impossible becomes possible and the absolutely unlikely reality, then the situation changes." Indeed.

There are regularly earthquakes in Britain (very small ones) and there have been tsunamis (a long time ago) but there are also increasingly

violent storms and floods. Nuclear reactors in Britain aren't necessarily immune from a natural disaster. In any case the two most serious nuclear disasters - Three Mile Island and Chernobyl - weren't caused by natural disasters but by technical failures within the plant.

In the deregulated energy sector can you trust cost cutting, profit hungry multinationals to avoid all technical failures?

The question of how to safely store long term nuclear waste (for tens of thousands of years) has still not been resolved despite many decades of debate. Big business refuses to foot the bill.

When things go wrong it is workers, like those firefighters in Japan, who heroically risk their health and their lives to try to prevent a catastrophe.

The thousands of workers in the nuclear energy industry have a vital role to play in the (horrendously expensive) decommissioning of old plants, the safe treatment of toxic waste and the development of alternatives.

And for a safe, clean, alternative energy programme we need the working class to make decisions, not pro-big business politicians.

Rescue workers and survivors pick their way through the devastation

Socialists call for:

- Immediate self-organisation of working people and local communities in quake-hit areas to oversee relief tasks and determine democratically the needs of reconstruction. International solidarity and active support for the Japanese people's earthquake relief work.
- No to nuclear power! A socialist plan for energy production designed to guarantee cheap and safe energy for all whilst protecting the environment.
- No confidence in the profiteers, speculators and capitalists to organise the relief and reconstruction work.
- Fight for socialism and nationalisation of the Japanese economy, including the energy industry, under democratic workers' control and management. This is the only way to meet the needs of workers and the environment.

When organised mass action defeated the Tories

Liverpool city council's historic victory over the Thatcher government

"Two unlovely black eyes" declared the Daily Mail. It was condemning Thatcher's environment secretary Patrick Jenkin for his retreat over extra funding for Liverpool. It wrote: "The Trotskyites and others of the hard left who run Liverpool have had the best of the fight with him in their threat to defy the law on that city's overspending." That headline was just one of the reactions to

the Militant-led Liverpool city council's success in securing funding worth £60 million from the Thatcher government on 9 July 1984. Socialist Party member TONY MULHEARN, one of the leaders of that epic struggle and one of the 47 councillors, who were surcharged and disqualified from office in revenge for their humiliation of the Tories, writes.

The victory which secured the extra funding enabled the council to carry out its electoral programme. This included the building of 5,000 houses, opening six new sports centres, creating 2,000 jobs and refusing to carry out £10 million-worth of cuts. These cuts had been the legacy of the Liberal/Tory alliance which had ruled Liverpool for the previous 20 years, with a short interregnum of Labour rule.

This victory was particularly significant as, like now, it occurred at a time of national and global capitalist upheaval. An additional factor now is the mind-boggling revelations about the greedy bankers stuffing their pockets with gold.

The latest fat-cat payouts dwarf even those paid out last year: Barclays' Rich Ricci, for instance, picks up a tasty package worth £44 million, Bob Diamond picks up £27 million, and that loot is not the biggest.

Against these figures, the frame-up against the 47 by the district auditor, who charged them with losing the Liverpool rate payers £106,000 was truly grotesque.

The passage of time has not diminished the achievements of the 47, nor undermined the importance of the struggle. In spite of the distortions of establishment spokespersons, aided and abetted by the lies of right wing parliamentarians and trade union leaders, the record of the 47 remains stubbornly intact.

The Liverpool struggle had as its background the Thatcher government's dislike of local government or, more precisely, Thatcher's antipathy to locally provided public



Tony Mulhearn (right) photo Dave Sinclair

services, an outlook shared by the present millionaires' cabinet. The Tories' programme, when they were elected in 1979, included using the device of the block grant system which penalised local authorities that exceeded government's prescribed spending limits; for every £1 breach of expenditure, £2 would be lost in rate support grant.

Initially, all Labour-controlled local authorities had agreed to support a campaign against this policy. Amongst the leaders of this campaign, it is incredible to recall, were David Blunkett and Ken Livingstone.

So, the government's policies meant that in order to balance the books a local authority would either have to increase the rates, sometimes massively, to compensate for Tory cuts, or savagely cut back on jobs and services. Again history repeats itself, now on a more savage level.

The Liverpool District Labour Party's policy was to reject both of these options and instead to carry out its electoral promises. In the elections of 1983 a key component of the party's electoral programme was "No rate or rent increases to compensate for Tory cuts."

The massive financial crisis which the 47 inherited was seen as a reason for the implementation of the electoral programme rather than, as is usually the case in British politics, a reason to retreat.

But the victory was not achieved merely by slick negotiation between the councillors and Patrick Jenkin. He was conscious of the magnificent electoral support, as well as the physical support, shown by the great demonstrations that marched through the city in support of the council's policies.

The demonstration on budget day in March 1984, when a one-day strike took place, was supported by 30,000 local authority workers. 50,000 marched through the city in support of the council's proposed deficit budget.

The support for the council was based on concrete changes, for the better, to people's lives. Moreover, the spin-off effect of the city's housing programme on employment had been publicly recognised by building companies who are not usually friends of Labour. In the three years from April 1983 to May 1985 it was estimated that 6,489 jobs had been generated in the private sector as a result of the house-building programme.

Also the Liverpool 47 attracted the highest Labour vote in history. Higher than any election since the war, even though the population of the city had declined from 700,000 in 1945 to 460,000 in 1983. While the turnout for local elections in previous years had ranged from 11% to 20%, the turnout between 1983 and 1987 was 45% to 55%. A clear mes-

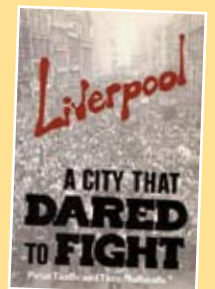
sage that if policies which correspond to the needs and aspirations of the working class are implemented, then the support will be forthcoming.

In spite of its unparalleled record of achievement, the power of the state eventually prevailed. Thatcher's district auditor, supported by the House of Lords, removed the 47 from office, cheered on by the Labour leaders. Neil Kinnock, then Labour leader, and his lieutenant, witchfinder general Peter Kilfoyle, finished the job on behalf of the capitalist state by expelling the majority of the 47 from the Labour Party.

Since then many gallons of ink and newsprint, and speeches by right-wing charlatans have attempted to denigrate the 47's period of office. But the record has been written in concrete and stands as a monument to the socialist achievements of the Liverpool city council of 1983-87.

Liverpool A City that Dared to Fight

By Peter
Taaffe
and Tony
Mulhearn



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Mass non-payment - how the poll tax was beaten

Steve Score

Former secretary of the
Leicestershire Anti-Poll Tax
Federation

The campaign against Thatcher's hated poll tax is an example of how a mass movement can defeat a government. The 18 million people who defied the law and refused to pay the tax, organised through the Anti-Poll Tax Federation, forced the Tories to scrap it and ended Margaret Thatcher's career as prime minister.

The campaign is also an example of the role that can be played by socialists in putting forward a strategy and tactics to win.

The poll tax was a standard charge on rich and poor alike and was levied on each individual over the age of 18, including the unemployed, students and those with no personal income at all, who had been exempt from the poll tax's precursors, the rates. In fact a rich person living in a rural area could end up paying far less than a poor family in a city.

Led by Militant, forerunner of the Socialist Party, mass non-payment was built by community based anti-poll tax unions in cities, towns and

villages across the country. These were linked up nationally into the Anti-Poll Tax Federation.

Militant predicted the anger the tax would cause, and saw the huge potential to build a mass movement. The trade union leaders and the Labour Party leadership opposed the tax verbally, but did nothing to fight it, actively opposing the non-payment campaign. Labour councils ultimately went the whole way and sent bailiffs into working-class people's homes to impound their property and jailed people for not being able to pay.

The tax was introduced in Scotland a year earlier than in England and Wales; perhaps because the Tories had so little support there that they felt free to experiment! But it ignited the anger of Scottish workers, and the method of mass non-payment was tested out.

Militant supporters had to argue against those who said mass non-payment wouldn't work, or would only get working class people in debt. Some advocated non-payment only for a few prominent individuals who 'could afford it'.

On the contrary, only a mass movement would work. In fact mil-



Mass non-payment defeated the poll tax photo S.Gardiner

lions would not be able to afford it and we planned to unite the 'can't payers' with the 'won't payers'. That way an organised campaign could defend people.

Mass demonstrations developed around the rate-setting council meetings. On 31 March 1990, the day before the poll tax was introduced in England and Wales, massive demonstrations were held simultaneously in London and Glasgow involving

a quarter of a million people. When the London demonstration reached Trafalgar Square, police actions provoked a big battle which became known as the 'poll tax riots'.

Some claim it was these big demos which beat the poll tax. They were important, but it was organised mass non-payment which was the real reason for its demise. We kept the confidence of the movement up by discussing and answering every

question, in meetings and in millions of leaflets.

We clogged up the courts by mobilising non-payers to attend their hearings and assisted people by asking questions in court. Court rooms were unable to cope.

We mobilised to stop the bailiffs from seizing property. We organised to stop poll tax jailings - the ultimate sanction.

Hundreds were sent to jail, including many Militant supporters. Terry Fields, a Liverpool MP and Militant member, was sent down for standing in solidarity with his constituents. However, the number of jailings, compared to the millions who refused to pay, was far fewer than would have been if there was no organised campaign.

The government announced in March 1991 that they would be scrapping the tax by 1993. We continued to support people and campaigned for the writing off of the debts. Many were actually secretly dropped by councils at a later date.

This movement showed that working class people can win battles. It also showed the critical role that a party with the right ideas can play in the struggle.

Elect working class fighters!

TRADE UNIONIST AND
SOCIALIST COALITION



Coventry Socialist Party councillor Dave Nellist speaking at a TUSC rally photo Alison Hill

Councillor Dave Nellist

Acting chair, Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition

On 5 May millions of voters will pass judgement on the Con-Dem coalition in elections to local councils, the Scottish Parliament and the Welsh Assembly. But as all three establishment parties say "cuts are inevitable," the only debate could be over the speed of cuts. Council seats being shuffled between the three main parties will not slow the axing of council jobs, which the GMB union now estimates puts over 170,000 jobs at risk.

Last month in Coventry, for example, Labour brought forward a cuts package that accepted the £38 million reduction in government grants and core funding and sought to cut 500 jobs this year alone. Coventry's Tories proposed an amendment accepting the total amount to be cut, but varying the detail by £1.5 million.

The main parties accepted 100% of the austerity, but argued about 4% of the detail.

We need councillors who refuse to implement cuts in jobs and services. The Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC), established in 2010, with the Socialist Party's full support, (see right) is organising a challenge in many towns in May's local council elections.

That challenge will bring together socialists, trade unionists and anti-cuts campaigners to argue against cutting tens of thousands of jobs and massacring essential local services.

The May elections are the chance to elect councillors who could stop many of the cuts being implemented locally. 30 years ago, 20 Labour councils united in a strategy to fight the then Tory government's plans for cuts in local services. Unfortunately today there aren't even 20 Labour councillors on Labour run councils prepared to vote against cuts. So we have to find new councillors we can rely on.

Today's Labour councillors say they can do nothing until a general election in 2015. By that time, if the cuts package is not successfully challenged, councils will be spending £8

billion a year less on local services, a cut of almost 28% in four years.

But councillors do have a choice. And electing even a single radical councillor could make a difference, provided they used that position (as we try to do in Coventry) to help organise community campaigns and trade unionists to fight against the cuts.

TUSC councillors would pledge to oppose all cuts in council jobs, services, pay and conditions. We will campaign against the idea that 'some cuts' are necessary.

We refuse to allow divisions between council staff, service users and communities, which are inevitable unless we oppose all cuts. TUSC councillors would vote against privatisation of council services, or the transfer of services to 'social enterprises' or 'arm's-length' management organisations.

28 28% cuts
in four
years

TUSC councillors would seek to use all the legal powers open to councillors to delay or obstruct government policies which lead to cuts or the transfer of public services to private bodies. For example, councils could refer local NHS decisions for further scrutiny.

They could initiate referenda, public consultations (for example of parents over the creation of divisive academy schools) and commissions as part of a wider campaign.

Councils with housing stock, or with representatives on a social landlord's board, could refuse to use the government's proposed fixed term tenancies, oppose raising social rents up to 80% of market rents and make a policy not to evict tenants in arrears due to housing benefit cuts.

TUSC supporters will work with every anti-cuts campaign, and fight the implementation of the cuts agenda, library by library, swimming pool by swimming pool, youth club

by youth club. It's one thing to pass a budget, it's another to implement it!

We will support working class communities in those fights. But out of many such campaigns will emerge new TUSC candidates for those struggles themselves to challenge the big three parties in future elections.

Campaigners in many towns successfully challenged the main parties over issues such as PFI hospitals and the closure of comprehensive schools in favour of academy schools. In Kidderminster, Barrow in Furness, Preston, Wigan, Walsall, and Wellingborough independents, socialists and trade unionists have captured seats. In Coventry, Lewisham and Huddersfield, Socialist Party members have won seats.

These small but significant victories show the possibilities of a wider challenge. And whilst TUSC's initial results may be modest, breakthroughs cannot be ruled out.

At the very least, candidates standing on an open anti-cuts platform will pull the debate towards the left - and away from the overlapping agenda of the big three parties.

Socialist policies

TUSC was set up last year with the backing of fighting trade unionists, including RMT general secretary Bob Crow, leading national officers of the PCS civil service union, and Nina Franklin, vice president of the National Union of Teachers.

TUSC is a federal 'umbrella' coalition with an agreed core policy statement. Its core policies include opposition to public spending cuts and privatisation, student grants not fees, the repeal of the anti-trade union laws, and the clear socialist commitment to "bringing into democratic public ownership the major companies and banks that dominate the economy, so that production and services can be planned to meet the needs of all and to protect the environment".

• See those detailed policies on the coalition's website - www.tusc.org.uk.

Nominations to stand in May's council elections have to be submitted to your local council by 4 April.

Organisations and groups that want to be involved in the 2011 TUSC local council election challenge should urgently contact TUSC at: electioncoalition@btinternet.com

We're backing TUSC



Bob Crow photo Paul Mattsson

"The Tories, Lib Dems and Labour all support cuts, privatisation and the anti-union laws. They all want us to pay for a crisis we didn't create.

"The bankers pay themselves millions in bonuses and big business taxes go uncollected while our jobs and servic-

es are savaged. These cuts are unnecessary and can be defeated. We need to build an alternative. That's why I'm helping to build TUSC."

Bob Crow

RMT general secretary and TUSC national steering committee

Labour councillors in Cumbria hold up placards opposing the cuts on demonstrations then put the placards down, pop into county hall and vote through the cuts in an unholy alliance with... the Cumbrian Tories!

Labour in government introduced tuition fees, brought privatisation into our NHS, developed expensive and wasteful PFI schemes, extended rail privatisation and privatised Tyne and Wear Metro, pushed privatisation across our key public services, made Tory anti trade union laws even worse, pushed council housing into the hands of private landlords, handed over billions of taxpayers' money to greedy, bonus grabbing bankers and took us into an illegal war.

We need a socialist alternative to all this rubbish when it comes to the forthcoming elections - that alliance is being built now. It's called the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition - it's getting my support.

Craig Johnston

RMT national executive member Manchester and North West of England

It's clear what the government's policy is on the NHS and that is complete privatisation and the biggest financial cuts for 60 years.

The consequences will be a massive reduction in NHS services, closure of wards, hospitals, and mass redundancies.

The employers also intend to launch an unprecedented attack on health

workers' wages, conditions and living standards while they seek to establish a low paid, low skilled, exploited workforce.

Unfortunately, the last Labour government also pursued policies that undermined the founding principles of the NHS, through PFI, private treatment centres and laying the foundations for a health care market.

None of the mainstream parties is willing to defend the NHS or its staff so it is vital an alternative is put in the upcoming elections.

That is why health workers should consider standing as Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition candidates; standing on a platform of opposing all NHS cuts and privatisation.

Roger Davey

Secretary, Wiltshire and Avon Health Unison branch

Suraj Shah, an 18-year old Socialist Party member is to be a TUSC candidate in Leicester's city council elections as part of the Vote Against Cuts in Leicester alliance.

Suraj's mother Reishma, who works for the council, is threatened with redundancy.

He said: "I was already considering standing, but when my mum said the council are thinking about making her redundant I knew I had to stick up for her and many like her.

"I am out there to tell the people they do not have to accept the savage cuts. Together we can make a difference and say no to this madness."



Suraj Shah (centre) photo Paul Mattsson

TUSC election campaign launch meetings

Coventry

Sunday 3 April, 3pm
Concert room, Charterhouse club,
David Road, Stoke, CV1 2BW
Speakers include:

Alex Gordon - RMT president

Dave Nellist - Coventry Socialist Party councillor

There is a canvassing/leafleting session for Rob Windsor, the Socialist

Party candidate in St Michaels ward before the rally. meeting at 11.30 at the Charterhouse club if you would like to help the campaign.

Lincoln

Tuesday 29 March, 7pm
St Mary-le-Wigford's Church, St Mary's Street, next to Lincoln train station

Want to fight the cuts? Join the socialists!

The relentless pursuit of profit brought about the banking crisis and recession. Our world is run on that basis – the short-sighted, chaotic capitalist system that exists only to enrich the fat cats.

We need an alternative. Taxing the rich, such as the bankers, and cancelling projects like Trident nuclear weapons would be a start. But more fundamental change is needed.

We need socialism! The banks and major industries would be publicly owned and

democratically controlled.

It would mean democratic planning of the economy to meet the needs of all and to protect the environment.

The Socialist Party has a proud record of struggle and currently plays a leading role in the campaigns against cuts, putting forward both a strategy for the fightback and a socialist alternative.

If you agree with what you read in the Socialist – then you should join us!



Socialist Party public meetings - Where next for the anti-cuts movement?

www.socialistparty.org.uk/26march

London 020 8988 8786

Central London

Thursday 31 March, 7.30pm
Small Hall, Friends Meeting House, 173-177 Euston Road, NW1 2BJ, opposite Euston station

East London

Corrected date: Thursday 7 April, 7.30pm
Durning Hall community centre, Earlam Grove, Forest Gate, E7 9AB

Greenwich

Thursday 7 April, 7.30pm
Glyndon Community Centre, 75 Raglan Road, Plumstead, SE18 7LB

Hackney

Wednesday 6 April, 7.30pm
General Browning MOTH Club, Valette Street, E9 6NU

Haringey and Enfield

Tuesday 5 April, 7.30pm
North London Community House (also known as the Day-Mer centre), Moorefield Road, N17 6PY

Hillingdon

Thursday 7 April, 7.30pm
Friends Meeting House, York Road, Uxbridge UB8 1QW

Lambeth

Wednesday 6 April, 7.30pm
Ruby Room, Vauxhall Griffin, Wyvil Road, SW8 2TH

Lewisham

Thursday 7 April, 7.30pm
The Toads Mouth Too café, 188 Brockley Road, SE4 2RL

Leyton and Leytonstone

Wednesday 20 April, 7.30pm
Giggles Nursery, Grove Green Road, E11 4AP

Tower Hamlets

Wednesday 6 April, 7.30pm
Oxford House, Derbyshire Street, E2 6AG

West London

Thursday 7 April, 7.45pm
West London Trade Union Centre, 33/35 High Street, Acton, W3 6ND

Walthamstow

Thursday 21 April, 7.30pm, William Morris Centre, Greenleaf Road, E17 6QQ

Eastern 07905 167 703

Basildon

Wednesday 6 April, 8pm
Pitsea Leisure Centre, Northlands Pavement, SS13 3DU

Stevenage

May elections: vote for a future
Monday 18 April, 8pm
Shephall Centre, Shephall Green, SG2 9XR

East Midlands 07737 978 057

Derby

Tuesday 29 March, 7.30pm
Old Spa Inn, 204 Abbey Street, DE22 3SU

Leicester

Tuesday 29 March, 7.30pm
Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate, opposite Sainsbury's, LE1 1WB

Northampton

Wednesday 30 March, 7.30pm
Upstairs room, Old Black Lion pub, Black Lion Hill, NN1 1SW, near railway station

Nottingham

Tuesday 29 March, 7.30pm
YMCA (formerly International Community Centre), 61b Mansfield Road, NG1 3FN

Northern 07841 144 890

Carlisle

Wednesday 30 March, 7pm
Club 35, Lowther Street, CA3 8EJ

Newcastle

Thursday 31 March, 7.30pm
St John's Church Hall, Grainger Street, NE1 5JG

North West 07769 611 320

Birkenhead

Monday 28 March, 7.30pm
Ring/text 07846 951 656 for details

Chester

Wednesday 30 March, 7.30pm
Old Custom House Inn (upstairs), Watergate Street, CH1 2LB

Liverpool

Tuesday 29 March, 7.30pm
Casa pub (downstairs), 29 Hope Street, city centre, L1 9BQ

Greater Manchester

Wednesday 30 March, 7pm
Room 1, Friends Meeting House, Mount Street, central Manchester, M2 5NS

Southern 07833 681 910

Aylesbury

Tuesday 29 March, 7.30pm
Railway Club, HP21 8HH

Reading

Tuesday 29 March, 7.30pm
Great Expectations, London Street, Reading, RG1 4PS

Southampton

Thursday 31 March, 7.30pm
Room B, Nuffield Theatre, University Road, SO17 1TR

Winchester

Wednesday 30 March, 7.30pm
East Winchester Social Club, 50 Chesil Street, SO23 0HX

South East 07894 716 095

Brighton

Monday 28 March, 7.30pm
Upstairs, Phoenix Community Centre, Phoenix Place, opposite St Peter's Church, BN2 9ND

Hastings

Tuesday 29 March, 7pm
Unitarian Church, South Terrace, TN34 1SA

Kent

Thursday 31 March, 6.30pm
Sunlight Centre, Richmond Road, Gillingham, ME7 1LX

South West 07759 796 478

Bristol Central

Tuesday 29 March, 7.30pm
Cheltenham Road Library, Cheltenham Road, BS6 5QX

Bristol South

Thursday 31 March, 7.45pm
Bedminster Library, Bedminster Parade, BS3 4AQ

Exeter

Wednesday 30 March, 7.30pm
Great Western Hotel, near St David's Station, EX4 4NU

Gloucestershire

Wednesday 30 March, 7.30pm
The Café Room, Subscription Rooms, George Street, Stroud, GL5 1AE

Plymouth

Wednesday 30 March, 7pm
Plymouth Social Club, 38-39 Tavistock Place, PL4 8AX (behind Plymouth central library)

Swindon

Thursday 31 March, 7.30pm
Great Western Hotel, opposite railway station, SN1 1DH

Wales 07855 936 859

Cardiff

Wednesday 30 March, 7.30pm
Cardiff Bus Sports and Social Club, Tudor Street, CF11 6AD

Carmarthen

Tuesday 29 March, 7.30pm
Drovers Arms, Lammas Street, SA31 3AP

Llanelli/West Wales

Thursday March 31, 7.30pm
Railway Tavern, Station Road, Llanelli, SA15 1YS

Newport

Tuesday 29 March, 7pm
Cedars Café, Skinner Street, NP20 1HB

RCT and Caerphilly

1926 General Strike - lessons for today
Wednesday 30 March, 7.15pm
The Otley Arms, Treforest, upstairs meeting room, CF37 1SY

Swansea

Thursday March 31, 7.30pm
Dyfatty Community Centre, top end of High Street, SA1 1NB

West Midlands 07929 395 884

Birmingham

Monday 28 March, 7.45pm
Meeting Room, Briar Rose, Bennetts Hill, B2 5RE

Coventry East

Tuesday 29 March, 7.30pm
Charterhouse Club, David Road, Stoke, CV1 2BW

Coventry West

Thursday 31 March, 7.30pm
Vicroft Court, Queen Victoria Rd, city centre, CV1 3JB, opposite Argos and IKEA

Nuneaton

Thursday 31 March, 7.30pm
Hatters Space community centre, Upper Abbey Street, CV11 5DN

Shropshire

Tuesday 5 April, 7.30pm
Hobbs Room, Shrewsbury Library, SY1 2AS

Stafford

Save the NHS

Tuesday 29 March, 7.30pm

Pie and Ale House, 36 Crabberby Street, ST16 2BA

Worcester

Thursday 31 March, 7.30pm
St Andrews Church, Pump Street, WR1 2QT

Wolverhampton

Tuesday 5 April, 7.30pm
City Bar, Kings Street, WV1 1ST

Yorkshire 07706 710 041

Barnsley

Thursday 31 March, 7.30pm
Shaw Inn, Racecommon Road, S70 6AE

Doncaster

Wednesday 30 March, 7.30pm
Railway Inn, West Street, DN1 3AA

Grimsby

Wednesday 30 March, 7.30pm
Walters, Old Market Place, DN31 1DT

Halifax

Wednesday 30 March, 7pm
Three Pigeons Pub, South Parade, HX1 2LX

Hull

Tuesday 29 March, 7.30pm
Gilson Hotel, Ferensway/Anlaby Rd, Hull, HU1 2PJ

Leeds

Monday 4 April, 7.30pm
The Adelphi, 1-3 Hunslet Road, LS10 1JQ

Leeds Headingley

Election campaign launch
Monday 28 March, 7.30pm
Weetwood Room, Headingley Enterprise and Arts (HEART) Centre, Bennett Road, LS6 3HN

Rotherham

Wednesday 30 March, 7.30pm
Bridge Inn, Greasbrough Road, S60 1RB

Sheffield

Wednesday 6 April, 7.30pm
University Arms, Brook Hill, S3 7HG

Wakefield

Tuesday 29 March, 7.30pm
Black Rock Pub, WF1 1PQ

York

Thursday 31 March, 7.30pm
The Golden Fleece, Pavement, York city centre, YO1 9UP

Join the socialists

I'd like to join I'd like more information

Name _____

Address and postcode _____

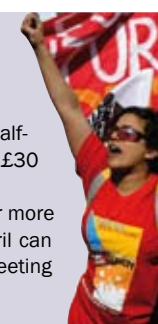
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Return to: Socialist Party, PO Box 24697, London E11 1YD

Celebrate International Workers' Day in the Socialist with a May Day greeting

Greeting prices include: £500 for a whole page; £300 for a half-page; £170 quarter-page; £90 one-eighth; £50 one-sixteenth; £30 1/32; £20 small box; £15 for up to 30 words; £1 a word.

Email editors@socialistparty.org.uk or phone 020 8988 8781 for more information or to give your greeting. Greetings paid for by 8 April can be doubled in display size for no extra cost. The deadline for greeting messages is 13 April.



the Socialist postbag

Do you have something to say?

Send your news, views and criticism in not more than 150 words to Socialist Postbag, PO Box 24697, London E11 1YD, or phone 020 8988 8771, email: editors@socialistparty.org.uk. We reserve the right to shorten letters. Don't forget to give your name, address and phone number. Confidentiality will be respected if requested.

'Pregnant, cranky, in a union'

I saw a photo recently of a protester in Wisconsin holding a sign that said 'pregnant, cranky and in a union!' I'm sure women here in Britain will have plenty of sympathy for the sentiment!



ist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC) local election candidate for Dunchurch, were the only people to receive applause at the meeting. We explained that there are alternatives to cuts and firmly stated that it wasn't acceptable to replace workers with community volunteers. We pointed out that this weak coalition government can be forced into u-turns, giving the example of the protests in the Forest of Dean which forced the coalition to reverse its decision to sell off the country's woodlands.

Where a lead is given and a fighting strategy to resist cuts is put forward people are determined and willing to fight back.

Clive Dunkley
Brownsover South TUSC candidate

No country for old people

Privatisation stinks! We all know it but every so often there is such proof of it that it needs to be remarked on.

We now have something in Britain called the 'care home industry!' Apparently it is struggling to turn a profit and is demanding that the state helps it out. Heard that one before?

Southern Cross, 'Britain's largest provider' has begged the NHS to transfer patients to its beds so it can raise income for rent and loan repayment to Barclays and Lloyds banks.

And what of those who rely on care? They appear to be a secondary factor in this picture - at least for the five landlords who own most of the homes.



On 26 March and beyond as we fight the cuts, let's demand an end to all privatisation and for those services that are rotting in private hands to be taken back into public ownership and properly funded.

Emma Smith

Council revelations outrage

On 17 March an article appeared on the WalesOnline website explaining that Rhondda Cynon Taff's Labour-led council had a £2 million surplus. This is the same council that only weeks ago threatened the entire workforce with dismissal unless they accepted worse pay and conditions. The council claimed they had no other choice to balance the budget.

The fact that this Labour council has forced through these savage cuts to the pay and employment conditions of its 10,000-strong workforce whilst maintaining a surplus of £2 million shows exactly how sincere the Labour Party is to opposing cut backs!

The council should use the current surplus as a temporary measure in order to avoid the cuts for now.

The council could then build a mass campaign to demand the money necessary for all the jobs and services needed.

Glyn Matthews

Letting companies with less than 250 employees opt out of regulations allowing parents to work flexible hours will make having a job with young children virtually impossible. Unless the government plans to provide free childcare for the people they force to work nine-to-five? I think not.

The Con-Dems should beware - the British Wisconsin could be at the door of Number 10 quicker than they think!

Louise Campbell
East London

Stop LGBT scapegoating

The cuts will affect everyone in society except the super-rich who caused the crisis. Some groups will be hit especially hard.

Cuts to housing benefit will force claimants to share flats and houses until they are 35. This makes it even more difficult to find suitable housing.

Many Lesbian Gay Bisexual and Trans people could end up sharing with homophobic or transphobic flatmates, with the stress and dangers that brings, including the risk of domestic violence.

The NHS 'reforms' will chop the service into little bits and hand health care over to big business, putting services we depend on, such as safer sex advice, free condoms and lube, at risk.

Cuts and recession always lead to the growth of reaction as capitalist politicians and the far right look for scapegoats, putting LGBT people at risk.

We can't buy our way out with the fabled but non-existent pink pound. We have to fight to save and improve services and to end the rotten system that gives us cuts and prejudice.

Greg Randall
Socialist Party LGBT group

Unpopular 'Big Society'

A meeting of over 100 angry residents packed into Dunchurch Infants School, just outside Rugby, to hear the Liberal Democrats declare the only way to save the local library from closure was to staff it using 'big society' volunteers.

The meeting was told about the Tory-controlled Warwickshire county council's cuts which will result in 16 libraries being closed, including the local one in Dunchurch.

Myself and Pete McLaren, Trade Union-

Little to laugh about in 'Carry On Cuts' budget

Sean Figg

Like so many sequels, George Osborne's second full budget as Chancellor will be a disappointing re-run of the first. Working class people will find little to cheer them.

Osborne's ludicrous headline promise that he "is not going to be asking for more tax rises or spending cuts" will be laughable to most. After having already announced cuts of £81 billion and put up taxes, for example the regressive VAT by 2.5%, are we supposed to thank him for not walloping us yet again?

No one will be fooled by the usual sops he will throw at us. Promises of extra money for apprenticeships and vocational training would be welcomed by the Socialist if they were genuine, ie paid a living wage and guaranteed a job at the end. But this is virtually ruled out. In every budget since the economic crisis hit, whether Labour or coalition, promises to help young people into work have

been made, yet youth unemployment remains stubbornly around the one million mark.

Why should we expect that Osborne is doing anything other than going through the motions yet again on this issue? And are these announcements meant to compensate for the bonfire of jobs in the public sector?

The Con-Dems' bizarre policy of "creative destruction" - the idea that the private sector will step in as the public sector is slashed - is a fiction, as the contraction of the economy in the last quarter of last year starkly demonstrates.

Osborne promises that this budget will be the "most pro-enterprise and

Anti-cuts meetings

Stevenage Anti-Cuts Union
Thursday 31 March, 7.30pm
Shephall Centre, Shephall Green, SG2 9XR

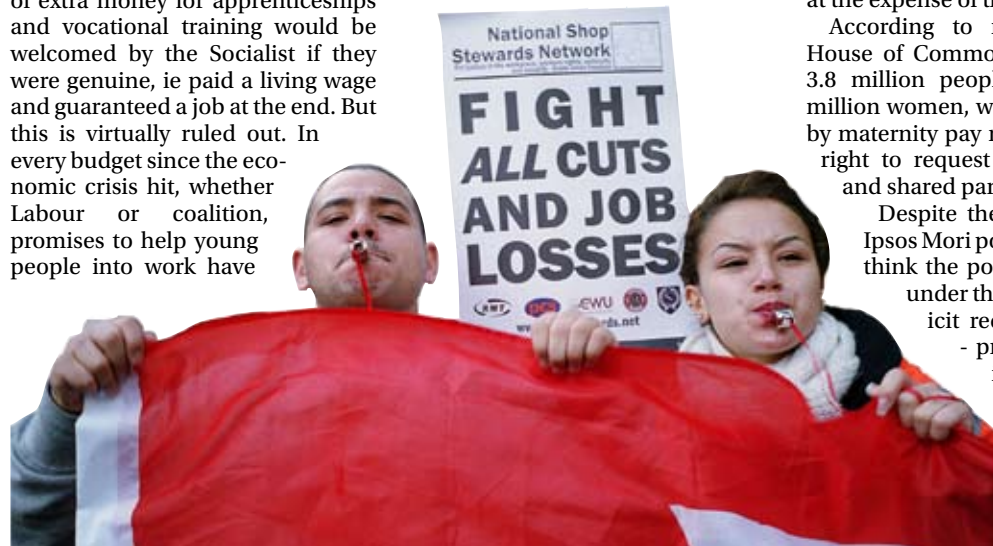
Waltham Forest Anti-Cuts Union
Thursday 7 April, 7.30pm
William Morris Centre, Greenleaf Road, off Hoe Street, E17 6QQ

Stopcuts.net

business-friendly in a generation". Hardly news from a millionaire, Oxbridge Tory! But his promised cutting of "red tape" will almost certainly be to the benefit of businesses at the expense of their employees.

According to research by the House of Commons library, up to 3.8 million people, including 1.8 million women, will not be covered by maternity pay regulations or the right to request flexible working and shared parental leave.

Despite the rhetoric, a new Ipsos Mori poll shows that 71% think the poor will fare worst under the Con-Dems' deficit reduction - ie cuts - programme. Working people and young people are not buying the lie that 'we are all in it together.'



Help support the fightback

Ken Douglas
Socialist Party treasurer

Can you make a donation to help us with our work? The Socialist Party depends solely on financial support from ordinary working class people to produce this paper and other material, like the leaflets we are giving out on 26 March.

Unlike other political parties we have no rich backers, no other sources of funding.

Why should you give your money to us? Read through the pages of this special TUC demo edition of the Socialist and hopefully we can convince you.

We have a history of militant working class struggle as you can see from the articles on Liverpool and the poll tax. We want to fight the Con-Dem cuts, as do the majority of ordinary people being hit by them, and we put forward a strategy of how we can fight and win.

But it doesn't stop there. We want

to change the way that society is organised and how resources are distributed. This means that we have to challenge the profit-driven capitalist system itself.

We are internationalists who link up with the struggles taking place across the globe to fight for a socialist world.

We need your support. If you agree with our ideas can you donate £5, £10, £100 or more? We can guarantee that every penny will be used in the fight for socialism.

Subscribe to the paper that fights all the cuts



On the 10 November 2010 student demo photo S. Wrack

Every week, the Socialist brings you news, analysis, comments and reports from around the country and the world. It shows a strategy to defeat the vicious cuts being implemented by the Con-Dem government.

In autumn 2010, the Socialist raised the idea of students walking out of school, college or university in protest at attacks on education. And when the government announced its plans for tripling tuition fees and scrapping EMA, that's exactly what students did! When the extent of the government's cuts became clear, the Socialist was almost alone in saying that an important demand of the anti-cuts movement had to be that local councils passed 'needs' budgets - a demand that many local anti-cuts campaigns have now adopted.

As well as reporting the anti-cuts fightback and putting forward the socialist alternative, the paper also carries reports from socialists involved in struggle around the globe.

So subscribe today to get the Socialist delivered straight to your door every week and join the battle against the Con-Dem cuts and for a socialist world.

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JARROW
SATURDAY 1 OCTOBER
NORTHERN DEMO

MARCH FOR JOBS 2011

Leeds
Sheffield
Nottingham
Leicester
Coventry
Milton Keynes
Luton
Watford

LONDON
SATURDAY 5 NOVEMBER
SOUTHERN DEMO

75 Years ago 200 Jarrow workers were forced to March for Jobs
Why is sky-high unemployment back?

Dylan Hussey

David Cameron recently labelled the 20.5% youth unemployment rate a matter of "great regret". More than one in five 16 to 24 year olds is unemployed. The inescapable truth is that big business, the banks and the fat cats are returning to profit while young people are being "shunted into the sidelines".

This October is the 75th anniversary of the 1936 Jarrow march when 200 unemployed men marched from Jarrow, a town in Tyne and Wear, to the Houses of Parliament in London. These men were marching against the extreme poverty that was tearing apart north east England.

So why do I find myself interested in the Youth Fight for Jobs Jarrow March? Well, it resonates with me because the Jarrow march is something my family members have talked about since I was a child.

My great grandfather was one of those men who marched from Jarrow to London. My nan used to tell me stories of her life in Jarrow in the 1930s when she had no shoes except for one pair of black pumps for church on Sundays because no one had money for their kids' shoes.

And here I am, almost 75 years later, living in Britain with nearly one million young people without a job or the slightest hope of getting one. If we could dissect the figures I am pretty sure that a vast majority of these young people would be working class.

I hope to go to university when I finish college but I don't know if this is going to be possible because of the threefold increase in university fees. You see, like my grandad, I too am working class. So I'm pretty scared for my future.

It seems to me that we're in a similar situation to 1936 when my grandad crusaded for the right of working class people to have a future. I can't imagine the despair he and all those other men and women must have felt at the time but they were still brave enough to stand up and be counted.

And that's why I want to join the Jarrow March - I want to stand up and be counted. I want the same chances as those with wealth and power. Nobody will remember Cameron or Clegg in 75 years time but I bet people will still be talking about the Jarrow marchers.

Youth Fight for Jobs calls for investment in a programme of job creation rather than job cuts.

See www.jarrow2london2011.wordpress.com and www.youthfightforjobs.com for more details and information on getting involved.

What we stand for

The Socialist Party fights for socialist change - a democratic society run for the needs of all and not the profits of a few. We also fight, in our day-to-day campaigning, for every possible improvement for working-class people.

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 democratic, socialist international that organises in over 40 countries.

Our demands include:

Work and income

- Trade union struggle to increase the minimum wage to £8 an hour without exemptions as an immediate step towards £10 an hour. For an annual increase in the minimum wage linked to average earnings.
- All workers, including part-timers, temps, casual and migrant workers to have trade union rates of pay, employment protection, and sickness and holiday rights from day one of employment.
- An immediate 50% increase in the state

retirement pension, as a step towards a living pension. Reinstating the link with average earnings now.

- Reject 'Welfare to Work'. 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.
- A maximum 35-hour week with no loss of pay.

Public services

- 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!
- 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.

Environment

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

Rights

- Oppose discrimination on the grounds of race, sex, disability, sexuality, age, and all other forms of prejudice.
- Repeal all laws that trample over civil liberties. For the right to protest! End police harassment.
- Defend abortion rights. For a woman's right to choose when and whether to have children.
- For the right to asylum. No to racist immigration laws.

New workers' party

- For a new mass workers' party drawing together workers, young people and activists from workplace, community, environmental and anti-war campaigns, to provide a fighting, political alternative to the pro-big business parties.
- Trade unions to disaffiliate from the Labour Party now and aid the building of a new workers' party!

Socialism and internationalism

- No to imperialist wars and occupations. Withdraw the troops immediately from Iraq and Afghanistan!
- Tax the super-rich! For a socialist government to take into public ownership the top 150 companies and banks 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' neo-liberal European Union! For a socialist Europe and a socialist world!