



## 10 July

# ALL OUT TO END POVERTY PAY



**Rob Williams**  
Chair, National Shop Stewards Network

It's official: local government workers in Unison have voted to strike on 10 July (J10) against the Con-Dem government's pay freeze. Over one million public sector workers - council workers, civil servants and teachers - could strike together.

Many of the firefighters who were on strike again last Saturday will also be hoping that their union, the FBU, will call them out on the biggest day of coordinated strike action since 30 November 2011.

That two million-strong strike against the government's attacks on public sector workers' pensions was arguably the biggest single day of strike action since the 1926

General Strike.

It could and should have been the platform for decisive action that could have won a victory on pensions and blown a hole in Cameron's austerity offensive.

Instead some union leaders, particularly of Unison and the GMB, with the support of the TUC and its then general secretary - now 'Sir' Brendan Barber - stopped the struggle in its tracks.

Undoubtedly, that loss of momentum only emboldened the government to unleash the most vicious package of cuts since the 1920s.

But the huge anger and frustration resulting from the Tories' continued assault on jobs, pay, pensions and public services, means there's huge backing for J10 action.

The London tube strikes had massive public support because, as opposed to all political parties

signed up to austerity, workers want to see someone fighting back.

Unions should organise J10 rallies to bring behind them all those suffering from these brutal cuts.

The N30 demonstrations that took place in most towns and cities were massive and on J10 they could be bigger. The main lesson of N30 is that 10 July has to be the start - not the end - of sustained action that takes in all the public sector, spreads to the private sector and also to workers currently not organised in unions. This could and should result in a 24-hour general strike of millions opposed to austerity.

Just over the last few months we have seen a rash of disputes, from Doncaster Care UK workers to the Safety Glass workers in Tyneside, from One Housing workers to the indefinite strike in Lambeth

College.

These, along with the big protests by the law profession against cuts to legal aid, the protests and stoppages by construction workers and the first-time protesters attracted to the People's Assembly march, show the potential that the unions could realise if they put themselves at the head of the anti-cuts movement.

The eighth annual National Shop Stewards Network conference is meeting on 5 July, five days before the pay strike. I appeal to all trade union and anti-cuts activists to come along to discuss how to have the biggest strike possible on 10 July and build that struggle into the autumn and beyond.

### National Shop Stewards Network conference

11am-5pm,  
Saturday 5 July  
Conway Hall  
Red Lion Square,  
London WC1R 4RL  
Delegate/visitor fee £6

Speakers include Seattle \$15 minimum wage organiser Ginger Jentzen, RMT president Peter Pinkney, BFAWU bakers' union general secretary Ronnie Draper, POA general secretary Steve Gillan and PCS president Janice Godrich.

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



# Western hypocrisy as Iraq disintegrates

The Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (Isis) continues making territorial gains, controlling much of western Iraq along the border with Syria and has captured Iraq's largest oil refinery.

Iraq's army, riddled with corruption and reviled as a sectarian Shia force by Sunnis, ignominiously fled in the face of the better-armed and disciplined Isis-led forces. Isis was lavishly funded and armed by the reactionary Sunni Gulf states in its fight against the Assad regime in neighbouring Syria. Now the Frankenstein's Monster, which began life in Iraq during the western occupation, has surged back into Iraq, exploiting the hatred of Sunnis for the sectarian, corrupt and oppressive Maliki regime in Baghdad.

Isis's initial force of around 6,000 has been bolstered with new recruits, including foreign fighters arriving from Syria and hundreds of freed prisoners. No wonder the Cameron government fears the 'blow-back' of jihadist fighters re-

turning to Britain.

In response, Moqtada al-Sadr, leader of the Mahdi Shia militia, and Iraq's highest Shia authority, Ayatollah al-Sistani, made a call to arms. Twenty thousand volunteers took part in Shia militia parades in the vast Shia slums of Sadr City, in Baghdad, on 20 June, promising to act "in defence" of Shia shrines in several cities. Kurdish military forces have clashed with Isis but have also taken advantage of the crisis to capture territory they dispute with Arabs.

## Sectarian divisions

The Isis offensive has features of a general Sunni revolt. But the jihadist's alliance with Ba'athists, former army officers and Sunni tribal leaders is very shaky. They are also unlikely to make big advances into Baghdad or other majority Shia areas. For the moment, many residents in 'liberated' areas welcome the back of the sectarian Iraqi armed forces but

these communities will fall foul of ultra-reactionary Isis rule, which is already oppressing women.

The military situation is fluid but it is clear that Iraq is in the process of disintegrating along sectarian, national and ethnic lines, with catastrophic consequences for the region. "Iraq has effectively broken up," wrote Patrick Cockburn, the veteran Middle East journalist, and ominously adds, "and some people are on the wrong side of the line," (Independent, 22 June). The White House and former prime minister, Tony Blair, both absurdly claim that the current Iraqi crisis has nothing to do with western policies. But western imperialism is primarily to blame for the sectarian division and bloodletting. Iraq's sectarian and ethnic fault lines became a chasm after George Bush and Tony Blair's 'blood for oil' 2003 military invasion and occupation.

Since 2006, the western-supported Shia prime minister, Nuri al-Maliki, presided over sectarian

discrimination, torture and imprisonment without trial. Maliki deployed sectarian rhetoric to take attention away from the atrocious conditions facing all Iraqis. The forcing of a leading Sunni minister into exile triggered popular protests in Sunni areas in December 2012 and early 2013, which the authoritarian regime brutally suppressed.

In the absence of a united workers' movement to draw together general opposition to Maliki from all quarters, the reactionary Isis was able to step into the political vacuum.

Proving the dictum attributed to Lord Palmerston, "We have no permanent allies, we have no permanent enemies, we only have permanent interests," the US and Iran - whose competition for influence in Iraq is greatly responsible for today's catastrophe - find they have common purpose, saving Iraq from Isis takeover.

Shia militias closely linked to Tehran are resisting Isis. Obama sent 300 special advisors to aid

the Iraqi army and warships to the area in possible preparation for air strikes. However, air attacks will not dislodge Isis from its urban bases but will only kill many civilians and widen the conflict.

US Secretary of State John Kerry calls for a 'unity' government in Iraq and the idea of a 'federal' government is touted. Such a proposal would be strongly opposed by neighbouring states with minorities that are either restive or in open revolt, like Turkey and Syria.

## Socialist programme

The working people and poor of Iraq can only rely on self-organisation to end war and misery. An independent, united working class movement is needed to organise self-defence of all communities. With a socialist programme, such a movement could find many regional and international working class allies in its struggle to overthrow the rotten Maliki regime, to expel imperialism and to sweep away all the sectarian, reactionary politicians and militias.

# Miliband - the emperor with no clothes

Dave Griffiths  
Coventry Socialist Party

Labour leads in the opinion polls, just, but normally, a year before a general election, if an opposition is to win it should be further ahead. So, the knives are out for Ed Miliband, under attack for his low popularity ratings. With a net poll rating of -39%, he is even more unpopular than Nick Clegg!

He is clearly struggling, his posing with a copy of the Sun a recent idiotic move. Someone in Labour's Westminster bubble obviously considered it a good idea, as surely all these rough football followers read the Sun! You'd think the Hillsborough insults and cover-up, or the inquiry into a venal, phone-tapping Murdoch press empire had never taken place.

Miliband struggles to connect with voters, appearing to belong in a world different from the rest of us. But in that sense he is no different to other establishment politicians, Cameron, Clegg and indeed Farage. The truth is it's hard to connect as a person when you offer no policies of change that people can identify with.

## No point in Labour

'Does Labour stand for anything?' is frequently asked. But there's no shortage of issues with workers' living standards under attack, the greatest inequality in living memory and crises in housing, NHS funding and the private energy robbery. Despite many people's cynicism with 'politics,' clear pledges to act on those issues could mobilise millions, but don't hold your breath waiting for that.

Miliband's failure to offer change appears to parallel the disastrous Kinnock leadership of the early 90s.



Inventive artwork on the anti-austerity demonstration photo A Tice

With a 20%+ lead and Thatcher on the rocks during the anti-Poll Tax struggle, he opposed the non-payment campaign, attacked Liverpool council and expelled my popular socialist local MP Dave Nellist. The Tory press loved him for it, and no wonder. Moving to the right he allowed John Major - whose personality hardly surpasses Ed Miliband's - to win a 4th term for the Tories.

Labour's pro-market policies are a dead-weight. Blamed for the crisis by the Tories, Labour took the blame! Had Labour said 'alongside other parties we were too supportive of the market and banks and we won't do that again,' they might be listened to. They have supported coalition attacks on services and living standards rather than resisted them. No wonder they are not moving clear of the Tories, despite most of the population being clobbered for a crisis made by the rich and powerful.

Labour's adoption of Tory policies

including the latest attack on young people who can't find work (way to win the youth vote!) has left it nowhere to go.

## Lesser evil

While Labour candidates may fear being deprived of Westminster privileges, working people are terrified by the prospect of a Tory return, but few hold much hope of change from the 1% getting ever richer at the expense of the many.

Even when Labour summoned the guts to challenge the energy companies they soon retreated, consequently few believe that they'd really change things and growing numbers don't even vote.

A party determined to challenge the system and change things to benefit all could mobilise huge support. But, as said, don't hold your breath for Labour. Better to help build a socialist alternative to all the establishment parties.

# GMB members question Labour link

Kim Hendry  
GMB London region delegate  
(personal capacity)

You can tell the general election is less than a year away when Ed Miliband, Rachel Reeves and three other senior Labour politicians descend on GMB congress to whip up the Labour vote.

But an earlier debate revealed the real feelings of GMB activists with heavy applause and whistles greeting a motion to stop all Labour Party funding (excluding party affiliation fees) "until the manifesto reflects GMB policies". This motion was lost after opposition by the central executive committee.

Time and again delegates criticised Labour policies, but this anger and frustration lacked direction and focus because the union leadership has no clear anti-cuts strategy but to campaign

for a Labour victory next year.

General secretary Paul Kenny failed to mention the 10 July national coordinated strike action.

Apart from when I moved a motion on fighting austerity and building for a general strike, the only other reference I heard to 10 July was a question put to Miliband who failed to clearly support the strike.

Kenny reported progress on signing a recognition agreement with ASDA which will ultimately cover some 200,000 workers. He also stressed that 'lay members lead the union' and that the union needs to move away from full-time officers, employed by the GMB, running branches!

GMB members are at the sharp end of many of the worst austerity cuts and this was reflected in many motions, including on zero-hours contracts, benefit cuts, work capability assessment and bedroom tax.

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# NHS: The world's best - but for how long?

Jackie Grunsell

The National Health Service (NHS) is the best healthcare system in the world!

Despite the constant propaganda of the Con-Dem government that our publicly funded health service is failing and must 'reform or die', the NHS has come top in a study by the Commonwealth Fund, (a well-respected Washington based research organisation) comparing eleven of the wealthiest countries in the world.

The NHS scored highest on quality care which is safe, effective, coordinated and patient centred, and on access to care regardless of cost.

Of the eleven countries, the UK spent the second lowest per capita on health care but was the most efficient and scored top for equity. The US on the other hand, spends the most on health yet came bottom of the eleven particularly for poor access, efficiency and equity.

In the past few years NHS staff have faced a barrage of attacks, being told they don't work hard enough or care enough. While there is room for improvement, the report confirms the benefits of a universal health care service, free at the point of use.

The report commended the NHS for providing universal coverage with low out-of-pocket costs while maintaining quick access to specialist services. The NHS also ranked highly in managing care of those with chronic health problems.

The worrying thing is that for all its benefits, the NHS may not be around much longer. The so-called 'funding freeze' imposed by the government is in reality a year on year cut in spending, with staff being told to find first £20 billion then an additional £30 billion in 'savings' by 2020.



**Cuts and privatisation are wrecking the NHS** photo Paul Mattsson

The Nuffield Foundation has calculated the NHS faces a £2.5 billion shortfall in funding next year. Anyone working in or using the NHS knows the lack of funding is already a reality. Staff shortages and a summer 'A&E crisis' are signs the NHS is creaking under the pressure of trying to maintain care with shrinking resources.

## Privatisation

Labour and Con-Dem governments have been taking our health care in exactly the direction proven not to work, ie moving towards the US model of for profit healthcare provision.

Encouraging, if not insisting, on the use of the private sector in health has diverted more and more money away from frontline services and into the pockets of private companies, which have seen an opportunity to rip off the NHS.

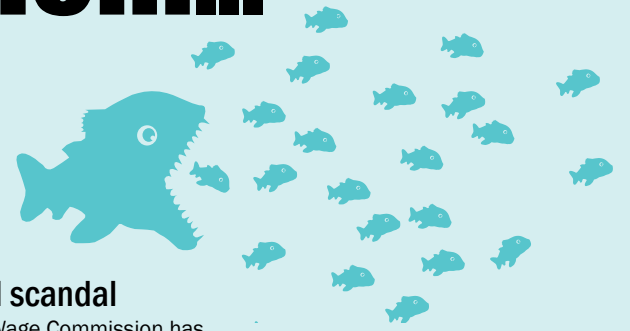
There is a growing realisation among some that this isn't sustainable. It costs us more but we get less of a service.

Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust has managed to escape the crippling cost of a Private Finance Initiative (PFI) scheme used to build Hexham General Hospital. By taking a loan from Northumberland county council to buy out the private consortium known as Catalyst, it will save around £3.5 million a year over 19 years, which the trust has pledged to put back into frontline services.

This example shows the outrageous cost of PFI. Hexham was one of the first, relatively small, PFI deals. Many trusts now have newer multimillion pound contracts to run for 20-30 or more years, leaching more and more money from NHS funds at a time we are told savings are essential.

In the Hexham buy out, the private contractors still made a huge profit from the deal. We demand all PFI contracts be returned to the public sector. This would save billions for use in NHS services allowing its status as 'best in the world' to be maintained and even improved on for the future.

# Them...



## National scandal

The Living Wage Commission has called for one million workers to enjoy a 'living wage' by 2020. Chairman Archbishop Sentamu said: "Working and still living in poverty is a national scandal."

Currently, the living wage is £7.65 an hour and £8.80 in London - 20% higher than the minimum wage of £6.31. The Socialist Party campaigns for a £10 an hour minimum wage. Across the UK only 712 employers are accredited as paying a living wage, while the biggest employer of low paid people is the government.

was halted after a 780,000 backlog built up, with many claimants having to wait more than six months for a decision.

## Bad news

Three Al-Jazeera journalists have been jailed for seven years in Egypt after a farcical trial found them guilty of spreading "false news" in support of the ousted Muslim Brotherhood government of President Morsi.

It was a political trial as Al-Jazeera is funded by the Gulf state of Qatar which backed the previous Muslim Brotherhood government.

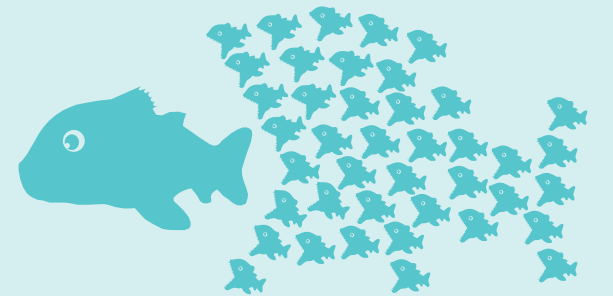
Since a military coup led by armed forces chief al-Sisi seized power in July 2013, hundreds of Brotherhood and other opponents have been killed and thousands arrested. 65 journalists have been imprisoned, and 14 are currently languishing in Egypt's notorious jails.

US Secretary of State John Kerry described the sentences as "chilling and draconian". However, it hasn't stopped Barack Obama's administration from unblocking \$1.5 billion military and financial aid to the Egyptian regime.

**Stop Press:** David Cameron's former spin doctor, Andy Coulson, has been found guilty of phone hacking charges while he was editor of the News of the World. Unbelievably, his predecessor, and friend of the prime minister, Rebekah Brooks, was cleared of four related charges.

Coulson had previously given evidence as a prosecution witness in the libel trial which convicted Scottish socialist Tommy Sheridan. More in a future issue of the Socialist.

# ...& Us



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

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# Poverty Britain

Mary Jackson

Since the defeat of the miners' strike 30 years ago (see page 11) successive governments have continued the work started by Thatcher to take back all the gains in living standards previously won by workers.

The Poverty and Social Exclusion project carried out jointly by eight universities and two research agencies has just published its findings from the biggest study ever undertaken. It makes grim reading of increased inequality and poverty in the UK.

The percentage of households in poverty has more than doubled to 33% since the miners' strike.

18 million people cannot afford adequate housing, 2.5 million children live in damp homes, 1.5 million children live in cold homes, 4 million children and adults are not properly fed.

One in three cannot afford to heat their homes in winter; one in four consider themselves to be poor. 17% of adults in paid work are defined as poor and 21% are in arrears on essential household bills.

It is an outrage that in one of the richest countries in the world there is so much poverty, desperation and misery.

It's not all bad news, for some. Billions of pounds are being handed over to a few fat cats and companies to throw sick, disabled and dying people off benefits; billions to companies to privatise chunks of the NHS, and billions in tax cuts to the richest.

Chancellor George Osborne tells us his policies are working and we're coming out of recession. He must be talking about the fat cats, he's certainly not talking about the thousands suffering malnutrition in Britain. He's certainly not talking about the massive debt from the



photo Paul Mattsson

banks' bailouts... Or maybe he's just lying again!

We need a united working class fightback against the whole austerity package being pushed by the three main parties and the racist, populist Ukup.

The 10 July strike by low paid workers against the government's wage freeze could be the start of just such a campaign.

## What we saw

### South Yorkshire 'Freedom Riders' attacked by police

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=Svv9YcyZ60s&feature=youtuube\\_gdata\\_player](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Svv9YcyZ60s&feature=youtuube_gdata_player)

Two pensioners were arrested and another two taken to hospital as transport police grabbed and pushed elderly and disabled protesters at Sheffield railway station. 60 Freedom Riders had travelled into Sheffield by train without paying as part of a campaign, already partly successful, to win back travel concessions withdrawn in March.

After wrenching a loudhailer from the hands of a pensioner addressing the protest, police dragged him onto a bench and put him in handcuffs. The other elderly man arrested was grabbed by five police, his head being pressed downwards while - bent double - they pushed him along. Disabled people were pushed to the ground.

An ambulance was called as one elderly man collapsed and lay unconscious. A blind woman needed A&E after being pushed over a wheelchair.

The two arrested protesters have been charged and will appear at Sheffield Magistrates' Court on 7 July at 9.45am.

**Sharon Milsom**



# Supermarket price wars

**Iain Dalton**

Usdaw shop workers' union member

In March Sainsbury's posted the first drop in like-for-like sales in nine years, the Co-operative group went into meltdown, and Morrisons announced £176 million in pre-tax losses for 2013.

Over the last few years high street names such as Woolworths, Borders, MFI, Comet, JJB Sports, Zaavi and others have all disappeared from the high street, taking thousands of retail jobs with them.

Despite the doom and gloom headlines, retail industry as a whole remains profitable, particularly the

Despite still being hugely profitable Tesco over the last two years has launched an assault on staff terms and conditions

big supermarkets. Much of Morrisons' losses this year were due to £900 million worth of one-off write-downs - indeed shareholders' dividends went up! Despite Tesco talking of a 23.5% drop in profits for the half year to last October, it still made a whopping £1.39 billion over that period.

Of course, employers are always out to maximise profit. So despite still being hugely profitable Tesco over the last two years has launched an assault on staff terms and condi-



The big supermarket chains have announced drops in profits

tions, raising the pension age, introducing 'Ideal Scheduling' where workers' hours are fitted to store needs, as well as driving down pay and conditions in distribution. Now Morrisons has also announced a cull of 2,600 'middle managers'.

## End of the Superstore?

But lately the growth of the big stores has slowed down. The big four chains have turned to the convenience sector, where there are 3,000 convenience stores run by Tesco, while Sainsbury's run 523. Such shops are not affected by the

Sunday trading act, and therefore can open when and for as long as they like.

Another major trend over the last few years has been the rapid growth of the discounters, particularly Aldi and Lidl. Since first opening a store in 1990, Aldi now has over 500 across the UK, and at the time of writing is recording a growth rate of 33.5%.

This has been achieved by ruthlessly squeezing most costs - no frills for customers and Aldi is among those who pay farmers the lowest price for milk.

While the discounters grow,

the big supermarkets' market share is squeezed. Tesco's share of the UK grocery market dropped below 29% for the first time in a decade. This has sparked a price-cutting war as Tesco and Morrisons try to arrest falling sales and market share and Sainsbury's have just announced a joint venture with Netto.

The other major growth is in the online sector and 'dark' stores, those stores laid out purely for picking online orders. Almost all the major retailers offer some sort of online shopping now, and the floor space

of such 'dark stores' is set to double over 2014.

An estimated 15% of purchases in the four days running up to Christmas 2013 were made online. In the next five years the market is set to double to £13 billion of sales per year.

This doesn't mean the end of superstores and hypermarkets. They still accounted for the bulk of sales in the food and grocery market, over £70 billion in 2013, and are set to grow to £80 billion by 2018. What has changed is that these are no longer expanding at the same pace.

Despite the difficulties of the big supermarket chains, they are all still highly profitable, accounting for 8% of the UK's GDP with sales of around £300 billion a year.

## Socialism

Under the system of capitalism, production will always be organised on the basis of profit. Pay, working conditions, good customer service, the environment - all other concerns are secondary to that of maximising profit.

Socialists believe that the economy should be run in the interests of ordinary people. The vast amounts of data from loyalty cards, staff surveys, and production plans within certain supermarket departments - all currently used to maximise profits - could be used to ensure we can democratically co-ordinate the production of goods and services to meet the needs of society.

If the supermarkets were brought into public ownership, then the wealth we produce could be used to ensure improvements in our living standards as well as reducing the working day.

## A day in the life of a supermarket worker



*Every little helps PROFITS!*

### Tesco worker

I work for Tesco in a busy city centre shop. Sales figures in my shop are high, but morale is low. Like all retail workers, we are underpaid (basic rate £7.28 an hour and an 'offer' of a pay freeze this year), overworked and undervalued.

Tesco does not currently use zero-hour contracts, but that does not stop crafty managers from hiring lots of young staff members on four or five hour contracts.

When the payroll budget is high, managers will bully, coerce and pressure staff into working overtime shifts everyday. I have personally been phoned up at 5am by managers who have tried to bully me into working on my days off.

When the payroll budget runs out, staff are once again back to working four or five hours a week. How are the young people who work for Tesco meant to build a life in such insecure and unpredictable conditions? How are the older workers meant to maintain mortgages or support their families?

When the shop first opened in



A protest stunt calling for wages of £8.80 an hour (the London living wage) for Tesco workers

2012, my manager told me that there were over 800 applications for 20 vacancies. We are all made to feel so grateful for these jobs so that we don't complain or cause trouble. Even the Usdaw union reps in many stores are afraid to stand up to management.

People who can't manage the workload often leave and are hardly

ever replaced, which has left our store extremely understaffed. This is dangerous, given that in the UK a shop worker is verbally or physically abused every minute of the working day.

In my shop, we have been told by senior management that we cannot afford to employ another guard to work mornings despite consistently

have to deal with drunk and abusive customers entering the shop when we open first thing. It is clear to see that Tesco cares more about profit than the safety of the hardworking staff.

### Union

I am an Usdaw shop steward for my shop, and I know that the union has a 'partnership agreement' with Tesco. What this means in reality is that Usdaw get to come into stores to recruit members, while putting up with or turning a blind eye to decisions that Tesco makes that will negatively affect staff.

Usdaw is one of the largest trade unions in Britain, and it is strongest in Tesco. We need a fighting union that will do more to hold Tesco to account and to force them to pay decent wages and make sure staffing levels are appropriate. We need to campaign to end underemployment and to stop management from getting away with bullying staff.

We retail workers are many, but we don't yet realise the power that we have.

A young McDonald's worker on a zero-hour contract received this email from his boss:

"Sickness, no shows, absent days are becoming far too much of a store culture for my liking. I have had enough of it and it must end now. Anyone averaging more than 1 day a month absent or sick will be going down to one 4hr shift a week."

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# People's Assembly demo shows anti-austerity anger

On 21 June, a demonstration called by the People's Assembly marched to parliament to show opposition to austerity. Despite around 20,000 people assembling outside the BBC's central London offices, as with many previous protests, the BBC again ignored this one.

The demo was lively and there was a lot of support for the upcoming 10 July strike action which could bring out well over a million public sector workers. However, unfortunately, there was little comment from the platform on how to take the struggle forward from there.

National Union of Teachers general secretary Christine Blower wrongly described lobbying MPs as "every bit as important" as strike action. With MPs from all the main parties backing the Tories' austerity policies, simply appealing to their better nature will have little effect. Industrial action will force them to sit up and pay attention, as PCS assistant general secretary Chris Baugh made clear in his speech.

Unite general secretary Len McCluskey echoed this, arguing for a general strike "when that is necessary". With the butchery of jobs and



Youth Fight for Jobs on the demo photo Sarah Wrack

services already in full swing it is more than necessary already! The Socialist Party's call for a one-day general strike found a lot of support.

One of the rally speakers was comedian Russell Brand who last year pointed out that none of the main parties offer anything to ordinary

people and called for 'revolution'. This struck a chord with millions of people, particularly youth.

One after another speakers laid into the Tory/Lib Dem government and the purple Tories of UKIP but the only criticism of the Labour Party - which has also pledged to inflict

austerity - took the form of mocking Miliband for holding the Sun, mainly by his own MPs Diane Abbott and Jeremy Corbyn.

## Unions must give lead

This demonstration was yet more evidence that there is a mood for a fight against austerity. It had been promoted and funded by Unite, the NUT and other unions. But it was a step back from the hundreds of thousands who marched in 2011 and 2012 in demonstrations led by the Trades Union Congress (TUC).

In March 2011, 700,000 people marched, led by the trade unions, calling for strike action. The massive two-million strong public sector pensions strike that followed on 30 November should have been a step towards a 24-hour general strike to seriously challenge austerity. Instead, in December 2011, the leaders of Unison and GMB retreated.

We're now in the fourth year of austerity, hundreds of thousands have lost their jobs, and been hit by the bedroom tax, cuts in pay and benefits. A mass movement against austerity is even more necessary, whichever government tries to en-

force it. Such a movement would need to draw together all sections of the working and middle classes, but the Socialist Party has argued from the start that it is the working class, organised in trade unions, that has the greatest power to challenge the government and bosses, and should be at the heart of the struggle.

However, having stepped back at the end of 2011, union leaders have contracted out the fight against austerity to the 'broad' People's Assembly. Saturday's march had a turnout of thousands partly because it had some trade union backing. But at the same time it lacked the authority of a union-led struggle and there was no clear direction put forward by People's Assembly leaders. Mass strike action, the most powerful and unifying weapon the anti-cuts movement has, is considered by them as simply one option in a list of protest methods.

The trade union leaders have a responsibility to lead. The national pay strike on 10 July is another opportunity for coordination and should be a springboard for a renewed drive for a 24-hour general strike. The TUC should step up to the plate and name the day.

## Winning recruits for socialism



The Socialist Party's recruitment week was very successful. We carry reports on two of the best results. Val O'Flynn from Grimsby says: "After our success in gaining almost 500 votes in May's elections, Grimsby Socialist Party's 16 June public meeting brought together many new people we met during our campaign.

Iain Dalton made the case for socialism and there was a lively debate. This was our third public meeting this year and another great result with two new members wanting to join and several others interested.

Six months ago our branch barely existed, so our growth of 20 new members since December has established us firmly as part of the political make-up in Lincolnshire.

Unfortunately, the local Labour Party banned TUSC activists from their premises, forcing our unions to find alternative meeting rooms. However, we are now well placed to build on our success for 2015. As the cuts bite harder, people are becoming increasingly aware that the main parties are not on their side.

The success of UKIP locally, (at Labour's expense), and having Grimsby identified as a UKIP target seat in 2015, give us additional energy to reach out to those looking for a real alternative."

**From Plymouth Ryan Aldred reports:** "Our Socialist Party branch held a Saturday stall where two experienced members, three new recruits and two volunteers who haven't even joined up yet, asked people to join the party.

We sold around 20 newspapers and got the interest of an RMT member and an NHS worker who were both fed up with austerity measures and attacks on conditions in their workplaces. Both wanted to do something about it.

We've invited them along to our next branch meeting and hope they will join and end this quarter on a high, having already recruited nine new members in recent months.

By being confident in our ideas, showing we are effective at fighting cuts and putting forward a genuine political alternative, we've inspired many new people to join.

The mood in Plymouth is very positive. If you want to be part of a party for the millions not the millionaires, join the Socialist Party!

South East London TUSC Public Meeting: **The Fight for Affordable Housing** Speakers include **TOMMY SHERIDAN**, Scottish socialist Thursday 10 July, 7.30pm Barnes Wallis Community Centre, 74 Wild Goose Drive, New Cross, SE14 5LG



### Socialist Party Summer Camp 2014

August Bank Holiday weekend Starts Friday 22 August 3pm to Monday 25 August 1pm Westmill Farm, Ware, Hertfordshire, SG12 0ES

Speakers and subjects still to be finalised. Watch this space! Single working (£50), Single unwaged (£30), Family of 4 waged (£100), Children (£12.50), Day tickets (£15)

Facebook: Socialist Party Summer Camp 2014



## Tax dodgers feel the heat

Grimsby Socialist Party members supported UK Uncut protests against Vodafone on 14 June. The local store was forced to shut up shop that afternoon due to the protest's success. We wore tax-dodger Gary Barlow masks to make our point and highlighted Vodafone's tax dodging, estimated at around £6 billion.

Socialist Party member Roy Crampton, founder of Grimsby UK Uncut, said: "Too many corporate companies are allowed to get away with this. We've had enough. Collecting taxes from companies such as Vodafone would go a long way to paying for the cuts this Con-Dem government imposed on the poorest members of society."

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### SOCIALIST PARTY FIGHTING FUND

	£ target	£ received	April-June 2014	Deadline 30 June 2014
North West	1,200	1,339	████████	████████
South West	1,400	1,434	████████	████████
Wales	2,300	2,303	████████	████████
East Midlands	1,600	1,438	████████	████████
Northern	600	512	████████	████████
West Midlands	2,100	1,246	████████	████████
Yorkshire	2,900	1,557	████████	████████
South East	750	340	████████	████████
London	6,100	2,484	████████	████████
Southern	1,200	466	████████	████████
Eastern	1,200	455	████████	████████
England & Wales	3,650	1,864	████████	████████
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>25,000</b>	<b>15,438</b>	████████	████████

# Hong Kong: Pro-Beijing newspaper launches attack on socialists

**Dikang**  
Socialist Action (CWI Hong Kong)

The pro-Beijing newspaper, Ta Kung Pao, recently ran a front-page attack on pro-democracy legislator Leung Kwok-hung (known as 'Long Hair') and Socialist Action.

This propaganda piece in a daily newspaper infamous as a Hong Kong mouthpiece for the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) dictatorship, comes as Hong Kong's struggle for democracy enters a crucial phase in the run up to the annual 1 July mega-demonstration against the government. The Chinese regime is stepping up its psychological warfare against 'political instability' and 'illegal' demands for free elections in Hong Kong.

Socialist Action is seeking legal advice over the article's slanderous nature, a hallmark of this newspaper, while at the same time conducting a vigorous political campaign to expose its lies.

The newspaper falsely claims 'Long Hair', who is currently serving a four-week jail sentence on trumped up political charges, masterminded the creation of Socialist Action in 2010 to be a more extreme force in the democracy struggle.

### Slander

Absurd accusations and slanders of this type run throughout the article, which tries to whip up fear of "foreign forces" (the CWI). Ta Kung Pao accuses the CWI of advocating "very violent methods" and accuses its sections in Brazil, Sweden and Turkey of fomenting riots last year.

Ta Kung Pao's concern over violence is worthy of an 'Oscar' given its silence over the military massacre of protesters in Tiananmen



Socialist Action member on a demonstration and (inset) the Ta Kung Pao front page photo Socialist Action

Square in 1989. It attacked this year's 180,000-strong commemoration of the 4 June massacre victims as an "act of national betrayal".

The article rails against Trotskyism which it describes in quasi-Maoist language as an "ultra-left, violent" political trend: "Many countries regard them as extremist organisations second only to terrorism". It attacks the theory of permanent revolution, which it converts into a doctrine of 'permanent rioting'.

In reality, the permanent revolution is Leon Trotsky's brilliant conception of how the capitalists in colonial and semi-colonial countries are incapable of solving the problems left over from feudal society, such as achieving parliamentary democracy and national unification.

Hong Kong, China and many other parts of Asia are living proof of the

correctness of Trotsky's theory, which explains why workers need to organise a mass socialist alternative and not leave the struggle against dictatorship or foreign imperialist domination to any wing of the capitalists.

### Propaganda offensive

Ta Kung Pao's article is part of a wider CCP propaganda offensive to discredit the most radical sections of the democracy struggle. The aim is to link 'Long Hair' with the CWI and tar both with the brush of 'violence' and 'political extremism'. Among the more outrageous accusations, it claims that Socialist Action cooperates with Civic Passion, a right-wing 'nativist' (Hong Kong nationalist) group which conducts a vicious smear campaign against Socialist Action.

In contrast, while representing different political organisations and programmes, Socialist Action and 'Long Hair' have cooperated in many struggles for workers' rights and against the Chinese dictatorship.

The CCP's propaganda offensive is linked to the more charged political situation in Hong Kong and China. It is clearer than ever that Beijing has no intention of allowing free elections (universal suffrage) in Hong Kong in 2017 as people were once led to believe (but Socialist Action warned would not be the case).

Instead a rehash of the current 'controlled' election model is being served up, causing widespread anger. China's state council (cabinet) has unveiled a white paper on Hong Kong that spells out that the territory's "high autonomy is not full autonomy".

This document, unprecedented since the 1997 handover (from Britain), is widely seen as the Chinese regime putting its foot down over demands for greater democracy. Its publication follows a string of warnings by pro-government politicians that martial law could be imposed in Hong Kong and China state troops deployed to quell protests.

At the same time, the capitalist democratic opposition parties (pan democrats) have enormously complicated the democracy struggle through their desire to avoid and limit mass struggle and pin all their hopes on a compromise with the CCP.

### Impact

Ta Kung Pao's attack is, for all its venom, a twisted recognition of the impact Socialist Action is having and the Chinese dictatorship's fear of socialist ideas. The article mentions the 2011 District Council election campaign when Socialist Action ran Sally Tang Mei-Ching as a candidate, and even mentions that she went to Taiwan on Socialist Action's behalf during the mass 'sunflower' protest movement earlier this year.

While Ta Kung Pao is highly discredited in Hong Kong as a newspaper kept afloat by CCP money, there's no escaping the implicit threat in its attack on CWI members. Hong Kong and China are moving into stormy times and the dictatorship is identifying and vilifying its political enemies.

Rather than being intimidated, however, socialists will be even more determined to fight for genuine democracy, including a democratic and publicly owned media, and to build mass organisations of the working class and the youth, to finish off capitalism and dictatorship.

# Protest in Tel Aviv against military raids

## Nationalist thugs physically attack CWI members

**Socialist Struggle Movement (CWI in Israel/Palestine) reporters**

On 21 June dozens of protesters - Jews and Arabs, including Socialist Struggle Movement (SSM) activists - held a demonstration in front of the defence ministry in Tel Aviv.

The protest was held against the Israeli government's use of the tragic kidnapping of three Israeli teenagers in the West Bank as a pretext for military escalation and imposing collective punishment on the Palestinian population.

So far five Palestinians, including two children and one teenager, have been killed during the military offensive in the West Bank. Hundreds have been arrested and imprisoned without trial. The number of Palestinian 'administrative detainees' in Israeli jails has nearly doubled in a week.

The main Palestinian towns in the West Bank, and especially Khalil/Hebron, are being held under siege. In parallel to the daily military raids in the West Bank, the Israeli army has conducted a number of air strikes in Gaza.

During the demonstration SSM activists explained that none of those grotesque steps of repression and collective punishment will bring security for the Israeli public or the kidnapped teenagers. On the contrary, the policy of the government is setting up the stage for potentially new rounds of bloodshed.

### Confrontation

A small number of Israeli nationalists came to the demonstration looking for a confrontation with protesters. Two cowardly thugs, who did not dare to confront us during the demonstration, followed four of us as we were walking back home.

When we were walking through a car park, they attacked us from be-



Eyal Yablonko

hind, hit three SSM activists with their fists and immediately ran away as we tried to push them back.

Three of the activists had to receive medical treatment in hospital. One of them, Eyal Yablonko, had to have stitches in his eyebrow and his glasses were broken. We managed to identify the attackers in photos and videos that the other demonstrators helped us to find. A complaint was filed at the police station.

The attack was not aimed only at SSM but at any voice of criticism or opposition to the government action. It occurred on the background of incitement by government representatives and big parts of the pro-establishment media against anyone who dares to question the motives behind



The protest against military escalation photos SSM

the recent military raids.

Israeli prime minister Netanyahu and his government are trying to use the kidnapping to silence the growing criticism against their policy of occupation, expansion of colonial settlements, and detention without trial abroad and at home.

This includes racist slandering against the representatives of the Arab-Palestinian population in Israel and Arab-Palestinian members of the Knesset (parliament) like Haneen Zoabi who received death threats and is due to be interrogated by the police.

But these acts and the cowardly attack on protesters will not silence the protest against the Israeli government's actions or stop the growth of discontent in society with the policies of the government and Israeli capitalist ruling elite.

Alongside the need for mass resistance in the West Bank to the military raids, SSM activists call for the organising of more determined, well protected, and bigger protests inside Israel against the military operation, the ongoing occupation, the colonial settlements and imprisonment without trial.

### 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



# Gerry Conlon

## Fighter against state injustice

Gary Mulcahy  
Belfast Socialist Party

The death of Gerry Conlon in Belfast has been met with mass sympathy across the world as people are reminded of the British capitalist state's vile injustice against the Guildford Four and the Maguire Seven.

Conlon and three other Irish immigrants were arrested by police following the IRA bombing of a pub in Guildford in 1974 resulting in the

deaths of four British soldiers and one civilian. Without any evidence of any involvement in the bombing, the Guildford Four were tortured and coerced (including threats against family members) into signing confessions while in custody.

Conlon later wrote that they may have been able to withstand the beatings and not confessed if the Prevention of Terrorism Act (1973) had not extended detentions from a maximum of 48 hours to five days. This repressive legislation was passed in response to the IRA's indi-

vidual terrorist campaign.

The consequent trial was rigged from the start with key evidence and alibis exempted in court. During sentencing, Judge John Donaldson - once a chairman of the Federations of University Conservative and Unionist Associations - regretted that he could not sentence the four to hanging before handing them life sentences.

The Maguire Seven were unjustly sentenced to life imprisonment on the false allegations that they had handled explosives connected with the Guildford bombing. This Maguire Seven included Patrick "Giuseppe" Conlon, father of Gerry, who died after 12 years in prison aged 64.

Throughout the 15 years that the Guildford Four remained in prison, many organisations ranging from trade unions and socialists to human rights groups campaigned for their release.

Incredibly, a statement issued by four IRA men on trial in 1977 which made it clear that the Guildford Four had nothing to do with the bombing and were completely innocent was ignored. It took 15 years before



Gerry Conlon on release from prison in 1989

the Guildford Four were freed after a consistent and determined campaign by the prisoners, their lawyer Gareth Pierce and their supporters.

Despite Tony Blair's public formal apology in 2007, a 75 year immunity order remains on the case - itself an indication of how high up the chain of power the corruption and injustice went. Judge Donaldson was awarded and promoted to the Head of the Appeal Court.

Up to his final weeks, Gerry Con-

lon tirelessly campaigned against cases of state injustice and also publicly supported struggles of working class people across Britain and Ireland.

His fight and that of the Guildford Four and Maguire Seven should be a reminder to all working class people that the capitalist establishment, including the political and judicial elite, are willing to use grotesque methods against anyone they deem a threat.

### 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.

#### Library saved

Anti-cuts campaigners scored a victory when Birmingham council said they will rebuild the currently closed West Heath library. The library was housed for 40 years in a prefab only designed to last 12 years which was then closed on health and safety grounds.

Many thought the Labour council deliberately ran the building down to justify closing it as part of their cuts programme. A demonstration of about 40 local residents was held just before the local elections and the sustained anti-closure campaign contributed to Labour convincingly losing a seat they expected to win.

But will the new library be staffed by volunteers or qualified library staff? One local Tory councillor made a commitment to staffing it with trained staff but a local Labour councillor suggested staff should be sponsored by a multinational company! Labour are clearly now a big business party with no alternative for working people.

**Clive Walder**  
Birmingham

is unacceptably high, with almost 40,000 or 31.8% of the district's children living in poverty as defined by the government", says Bradford council's child poverty strategy 2011-2014. Millions of children are being sentenced to a lifetime of poverty if action is not taken quickly.

This was one of many subjects discussed when guest speaker Carol O'Keefe spoke at the Hands Off Our Homes campaign in Leeds. Bedroom tax hits Bradford people very hard. One woman told us she had to make harsh decisions whether to heat or eat after her housing benefit was slashed. The effects are £766 on average for each person in the district.

But Bradford has many three-bed-roomed social houses but fewer one- and two-bed-roomed houses. We committed ourselves to supporting tenants who want to challenge decisions on their houses or indeed appeal against decisions.

**Peter Robson**  
Bradford

#### Baron ideas

Baron Michael Ray Dibdin Heseltine, (estimated personal fortune £300 million) believes people who challenge the myth that 'more people are working' are talking 'crap'.

Speaking in Liverpool the man ludicrously credited with saving the city after the Toxteth riots in 1981 (it was Dibdin as minister of the environment who slashed £100 million from Liverpool's budget between 1979 and 1983) said "more people are in work in this country today than any other time in our history".

He said "the public sector has lost 400,000 people ... but the private sector has created 1.5 million jobs." 1.5 million corresponds with a conservative estimate of people 'working' in zero-hour non-jobs. He claims people want these jobs. Clearly he's never had to hang about a bar all day then be told to work for an hour when it gets busy.

The Baron believes Cameron is doing a wonderful job in enriching the wealthy at the expense of those who did not cause the economic crisis. Equally he is delighted at the £330,000 cut in Liverpool's social provision being implemented by his protégé Joe Anderson. This aristocrat was given the Freedom of the City. That's a dark stain on Liverpool with its proud traditions of fighting to defend its ordinary citizens.

**Tony Mulhearn**

#### Crimes against disabled

On 17 June Labour-controlled Derbyshire county council's cabinet voted through cuts and charges to adult social care services. Derbyshire Disabled People Against the Cuts (DPAC) spokesman, Gary Matthews, who is registered blind, together with other disabled people, gave out leaflets saying: "These recommendations are an attack on disabled people across Derbyshire. Increasing the eligibility threshold for those who need care will hit the sick, the vulnerable and disabled."

"The report admits there will be more accidents at home and people will no longer be safe if their care is cut. It also predicts worsening personal health for those deprived of care in the future. The proposals on co-funding (paying for care) and on charging £5 for transport trips will drive hundreds of disabled people into poverty. 30% of disabled people already live in poverty and this will just add to it."

"We called on the Labour cabinet to delay these cuts for 12 months and lead a campaign against Coalition cuts together with trade unions and disabled groups. Their cuts are crimes against humanity."

#### Bedroom tax fight

"The level of child poverty in Bradford

## Victory! York socialists win university letting agency

Megan Ollerhead

York Student Socialist Society recently won a major victory. Our proposal for the student union at York university to open its own letting agency will become reality from August. This is after eighteen months of hard campaigning and organisation, including winning an official union referendum on the issue.

Students face huge problems in getting safe, affordable housing and rents in York are well above national average. The letting agency, as the Socialist Society has demanded, will not be run for a profit. All surplus money will go straight back into the union, with some donated to the university's hardship fund for students struggling with their rent.

Unlike its other major competitors, there will be no hidden or admin fees, which often cost students up to £60 a time. All deposits will be capped at £200, regardless of rent

charges, and all legal documents (contracts, inventories, etc.) will be uploaded onto the letting agency website for prospective tenants to read before they consider a property. It will even be cheaper for landlords, offering better rates than almost all other competitors as an incentive to get the area's best landlords to join.

The student letting agency will be the only agency with a mandatory accreditation scheme on the quality of its properties, and will only consider properties approved by standards set by York city council.

These features, all demanded by the Socialist Society, will make this letting agency a real solution to the problem of exorbitant rents and frankly dangerously low-quality housing for students in the city. It shows what a dedicated team of socialist activists with strong ideas and a programme based on the real needs of young people can achieve. This is a victory won by students for students!

## Socialist alternative for Blackwall ward

Ellen Kenyon Peers

The Samuda Estate on the Isle of Dogs in London's docklands and its dilapidated 1950s ex-council blocks contrasts with the privilege of nearby Canary Wharf. This 'rejuvenated' docklands area attracted young professionals, bankers and property developers to a previously industrial part of London's East End.

But Tower Hamlets council shows little interest in the long-term residents, forcing them to rely on food banks whilst bankers themselves are supported through huge financial loss by taxpayers living in overpriced and under-maintained flats. Samuda estate residents find this a

hard pill to swallow.

Blackwall and Cubitt Town ward has a by-election on 3 July. John Peers and myself are Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC) candidates. TUSC's youth-oriented election campaign agent is 18 year-old Kris Statham. Tower Hamlets has cut its youth budget for teenagers by 65% in the last two years, which will inevitably lead to more young people falling back into a cycle of poverty.

We are the only truly anti-cuts candidates on the ballot paper. TUSC is the only party promising private rent caps, more council housing and a decent living wage of £10 an hour: the first steps towards a brighter future for today's young people and the wider community.

## Tottenham: Stop fascist attacks



Over 300 people gathered for a protest vigil in Tottenham on 23 June after a small music festival in Markfield Park was attacked by Polish fascists. One person was stabbed. Around a dozen people threw flares, rocks and bottles.

At the vigil speakers expressed outrage and a commitment to protect all parts of the community from fear of attack. Supporters of TUSC were present along with a TUSC banner as were local community groups including Day Mer. The vigil was covered on London television; Polish TV cameras were also present.

There will be an antifascist solidarity demonstration at Markfield Park at 3pm on Saturday 28 June. Many speakers emphasised the events were not a 'Polish problem.' The rapid response and the vigil's size shows that local people are determined that they won't let fascist groups intimidate people in the area. The organised labour movement must play a central role, starting by ensuring a visible presence on the 28 June demo.

# 30th anniversary of the miners' strike When Thatcher unleashed her attack dogs

Members of the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) during their year-long (1984-85) battle against pit closures and mass redundancies faced the full might of the state from the Tory Thatcher government. In particular, thousands of striking miners at a mass picket outside the Orgreave coking plant in south Yorkshire on 18 June 1984 were subjected to brutal assaults by

police in riot gear and on horseback. Hundreds were injured, some seriously, many arrested and 95 charged with unlawful assembly.  
**Below, Barbara Jackson, secretary of the Orgreave Truth and Justice Campaign, explains the struggle to secure justice for the 95.** Also, below, two miners present at Orgreave share their memories of that day.

Despite the heroic resistance of the miners and the enormous solidarity of trade unionists and the wider working class, the strike was defeated. This was not a failure of industrial militancy but the consequence of the refusal of the TUC leaders to call wider solidarity action and the conscious betrayal of the Labour Party leadership around Neil Kinnock.

## Orgreave: seeking truth and justice

**The Orgreave Truth and Justice Campaign was launched in November 2012. What are its aims?**

The aim is to have a full public inquiry into the policing of the Orgreave coking plant on 18 June 1984 when 95 miners were arrested that day and charged with riot and unlawful assembly.

**What support have you received, and what progress has the campaign made?**

We've had support, obviously from the NUM, and recently support from Unite and GMB who are also calling for a full public inquiry. And, in the last six weeks, full support from Ed Miliband to have an investigation or an inquiry (he's not using the same terminology as us).

We've had a lot of support in South Yorkshire and North East Derbyshire because the campaign is run from Sheffield. We've also got support in Scotland where Labour SMP Neil Findlay is running a campaign about what happened to the miners in Scotland during the strike, particularly at Ravenscraig.

We are now making connections with the Welsh miners and we've got connections with the ex-Kent miners. Interest in the campaign is spreading throughout the country. We get trade union donations particularly from Aslef and the RMT transport unions.

Since the campaign started we've had really favourable media coverage - three Observer articles, and several articles in the Guardian re-

of the campaign to work with media and to trust them until they gave us a reason not to. So far that is working for us.

Recently we've had support from Vera Baird, the police and crime commissioner from Northumbria, because she is now realising that the Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC) has seriously dragged their feet on the scoping exercise (preliminary investigation) that they're undertaking.

In this year, on the 30th anniversary of the strike, we've worked our socks off to push the campaign. But it's not just about our campaign; there has been a massive rethink among the intelligentsia, and more sympathy and more clarity of the issues.

Of course the Hillsborough tragedy reverberates constantly. Every major injustice involving the police strengthens the belief that what the police did at Orgreave was wrong.

**What is the legacy of Orgreave and the miners' strike?**

I think the defeat of the miners' strike has been devastating for working people's confidence, their history and collective memory. Only in the last 18 months, particularly among the miners and their supporters, have people lifted up their heads and think that there might be something done about it.

It was always said during the strike that if the NUM was defeated then there would be massive reverberations around the trade union movement. That happened, and such a defeat takes a generation to work its way through and for people to realise what it meant.

People have to grasp the reality of state power in this country - the 'iron fist in the velvet glove'.

Young people today are in a very difficult position with unemployment, scarcity of good jobs - the minimum wage has become the maximum wage! There's no security of employment, zero-hour contracts, temporary work, etc. There's no discussion now about what employers will pay unless you're a professional.

Since the abolition of the union closed shop and the anti-trade union laws were put into place, people are not in a very revolutionary state of mind - those in work now consider themselves lucky. They



**Police arrest miner, 1984** photo Jacob Sutton

are determined to hang on to a job and not become 'benefit scroungers' - as the Tories have successfully labelled people claiming benefits.

But if we can get justice for the mineworkers, and if we can get the truth out into the public domain, we would hope people gain huge

### ► 'With banners held high'

Next March, at the newly refurbished Unity Hall in Wakefield, along with the Press and Broadcasting Freedom campaign, the NUM and the National Justice for Mineworkers campaign, OTJC will be holding a day-long event (film, speeches, workshops) to commemorate the end of the 1984-85 strike.

confidence that eventually things do come right. But you have got to organise and to fight for it.

We hope that if we can achieve success like the Hillsborough campaign and in individual justice campaigns, then that will give people confidence to organise and come together.



### A Civil War Without Guns The lessons of the 1984-85 miners' strike

by Ken Smith

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### The battle of Orgreave - eyewitness reports

I remember that it was a beautiful sunny English summer's day. But that was as good as it got. As I arrived the amount of pickets was surprising as getting to a picket was very difficult in 1984, everything was put in your way by police road blocks etc. The police at first were very accommodating, directing pickets to specific areas. Today we know this is 'kettling'. The pickets were in good spirits. Against us were lined the massed ranks of police, in ordinary uniform at first. These officers soon stood down for those kitted in full riot gear.

These storm troopers soon weighed into the pickets who fought back manfully at first but all we had were fists and feet against batons, shields and helmets. The blows were relentless, bloodied pickets were everywhere.

The memory that has stuck with me to my 51st year is the look on the faces of the police, they were loving the pain and terror that they were paying out to people fighting to save their communities.

One comrade from my pit was trampled by a horse and even after the end of the year long strike couldn't return to work for another three months due to the extent of his injuries. Another comrade was jailed in Lincoln prison for 'unlawful assembly'. What a price to pay for wanting to secure a future for your family.

The Orgreave Truth and Justice Campaign is doing a great job, but could we spare a thought for the men and women we have lost over the years? They will never see justice for their fight and carry the stain of the lies from the media, police and politicians to their graves.

La lutte continue!

**Ian Whitehouse  
Sheffield**

'Destination Orgreave' we were told. In the van we rode, fear, sweat and methane gas followed us on the road. Out we got, bold as brass to face Thatcher's army who had amassed.

A whisper then a shout, Arthur Scargill was about, our leader, my hero was here today. I shouted "Arthur sign us this", a pound note was all I had, worried of its return, Arthur signed and gave it back.

Then they came and took Arthur away, our leader had been taken. We said no way and like warriors in the sun we charged that day singing our song, "here we go".

Thirty years on and as the memories fade I look at that pound note Arthur signed that day and I am sure I can hear the words, "here we go".

To the cowards and traitors, history knows who you are. To the heroes of Orgreave I say: "Better to have tried and failed, than never to have tried at all, one day all this will not have been in vain."

The workers united will never be defeated.

**Rebel with a cause  
Rotherham**

lating Orgreave to the Hillsborough tragedy. We've had substantial support from the Morning Star and papers such as the Socialist.

We've had two programmes on BBC Radio 4 this year. We get a lot of support from Radio Sheffield and from Look North, and recently ITN news has been in touch with a view to running a news item.

Nicholas Jones, the BBC's former industrial correspondent, is very angry about being misled by the government's propaganda. He says he honestly believed that if only 20 pits closed that would've made the coal industry economically viable. Now, he feels deceived as the government's real aim (revealed in recently released Cabinet papers) was the complete decimation of the industry and the NUM - in order to make way for privatisation and their neoliberal economic agenda. We made a decision at the start



## Miliband attacks young unemployed



# BLAME THE PROFIT SYSTEM NOT ITS VICTIMS!

Laurence Maples

In the same week that a new TUC report showed the dismal job prospects for young people in Con-Dem Britain, due to the miserable failure of British capitalism to invest, Labour leader Ed Miliband has launched yet another attack on us.

In a move that shows Labour's determination to demonise the unemployed even more viciously than the Tories, he has outlined plans to strip Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA) from 18-21 year-olds who lack qualifications. This would be replaced by a lower

'youth allowance', conditional on completing training and means tested against parental income.

This builds on the government's attempts to destroy the welfare state and force workers to rely on their families, explicitly recognising that the welfare system will not meet everyone's needs.

Of course, under the pressure of compulsion, young people won't be able to pick the most suitable training courses, but Labour only cares about serving the interests of big business.

The implicit message is that young people are lazy and will look for an easy life on benefits, but at £57 a week JSA is barely enough to survive on. Hardly a life

of excess, unlike the six Labour MPs sent to prison for stealing tens of thousands in expenses!

In reality there are not enough jobs to go round, with millions more jobseekers than vacancies. To change this situation, we need a massive programme of investment in public services to build houses, schools and hospitals

Instead, the government is cutting public spending and sacking hundreds of thousands of public sector workers - and Labour is doing its dirty work where it controls local authorities.

As a young unemployed person, I know what it's like to send off endless job applications with no response, while the threat

of benefit sanctions constantly hangs over you.

To see wealthy, establishment politicians lecturing us just adds insult to injury. We weren't the ones who let the banks trash the world economy then bailed them out scot-free, or the ones who helped construction companies blacklist workers. That was the fat cat politicians - too busy lining their own pockets to stop their own system collapsing on itself!

If Ed Miliband thinks we're lazy, he should come and debate with young, socialist activists and see the energy that young people have to fight back.

All this demonstrates that the Labour Party does not represent

working class people any longer and we need a new party. Having just fought the biggest left of Labour electoral challenge in a lifetime, the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition are fighting for a decent future for young people.

We demand:

- Benefits you can live on, not just exist on
- Jobs for all who are capable of working
- £10 an hour minimum wage with no exemptions
- Scrap zero-hour contracts
- Full trade union rights in all workplaces
- Free education and full maintenance grants not loans

### What we stand for

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

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

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

Our demands include:

#### PUBLIC SERVICES

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

- Free, publicly run, good quality education, available to all at any age. Abolish university tuition fees now and introduce a living grant. No to academies and 'Free schools'!

- A socialist NHS to provide for everyone's health needs - free at the point of use and under democratic control. Kick out private contractors!
- Keep council housing publicly owned. For a massive building programme of publicly owned housing, on an environmentally sustainable basis, to provide good quality homes with low rents.

#### WORK AND INCOME

- Trade union struggle to increase the minimum wage to £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.
- Reject 'Workfare'. For the right to decent benefits, education, training, or a job, without compulsion.
- Scrap the anti-trade union laws! For fighting trade

unions, democratically controlled by their members. Full-time union officials to be regularly elected and receive no more than a worker's wage. Support the National Shop Stewards Network.

- A maximum 35-hour week with no loss of pay.

#### ENVIRONMENT

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

#### RIGHTS

- Oppose discrimination on the grounds of race, 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! Support the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition as an important step towards this.

#### SOCIALISM AND INTERNATIONALISM

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