

## SNP and Corbyn-Labour must refuse to implement the cuts

# DEFY TORY AUSTERITY



**Philip Stott**  
Editor, *The Socialist*

From November 2015 the Scottish Government and then local councils will begin drawing up their budgets for the coming year.

They have a choice: defy the Tory cuts and stand up for the people they represent or implement another savage round of austerity that will be a disaster for our communities.

The line in the sand in this battle must be, do you fight every measure that punishes the working class, the young and the poor - or do you swallow the Tory lie that cuts are necessary and therefore nothing can be done?

We know the Tories plan to push

through devastating cuts to tax credits, welfare and public services that will destroy the benefits and services we all rely on.

They also plan to ramp up their war machine over Syria. And they want to remove the democratic right to strike because the unions represent the biggest potential challenge to their austerity agenda.

For the Jeremy Corbyn-led Labour Party and the SNP this is the test for their "anti-austerity" credentials.

Jeremy should immediately call on his councillors, MPs and MSPs to vote against all cuts and back the setting of no cuts budgets. The SNP leaders should do the same.

But in reality the overwhelming majority of the Labour MPs and councillors have been voting for

and implementing Tory austerity since 2010.

Similarly, the SNP leaders have no intention of defying Tory cuts, despite being elected as an "anti-austerity" political alternative.

They are letting down hundreds of thousands of people who backed the SNP looking for a fighting opposition to cuts.

We cannot accept SNP and Labour MSPs and councillors continuing to slash more.

### no cuts policy

Socialist Party Scotland is part of the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC), which was co-founded by Bob Crow the late general secretary of the transport

workers' union (the RMT) in order to stand anti-austerity candidates in elections. TUSC will work with any SNP or Labour councillors MPs and MSPs who back the call to refuse to implement the cuts, calling on them to produce people's no-cuts budgets.

But we will also be ready to stand against any politician who votes for cuts no matter what party badge they wear.

The five Glasgow council trade unions - Unison, Unite, GMB, EIS and UCATT - are calling for a no cuts budget.

They are demanding that the Labour council refuse to make the Tory cuts and help build a mass campaign of political opposition to win back the over £350 million stolen from Glasgow since 2010.

This is exactly the policy that the heroic Liverpool socialist councillors, led by supporters of Militant - the forerunner of the Socialist Party - fought for between 1983 and 1987 when they defeated the Thatcher government and won tens of millions in extra funding for the city.

Socialist Party Scotland and Scottish TUSC are preparing to stand in the Scottish elections on this central policy.

We call on the rest of the socialist left in Scotland to take a similar bold stand and help build the biggest possible 100% anti-austerity alternative.

The Scottish Government and councils must refuse to do the Tories dirty work and instead be a fortress for a mass campaign of defiance against austerity.

## What We Think

## LAUNCH THE FIGHTBACK AGAINST ENDLESS AUSTERITY



Left: Jeremy Corbyn speaking at his public meeting in Edinburgh

If the word had an accurate definition in a dictionary it would read: Austerity; a government policy that seeks to make the working and middle classes pay for the greed of the bankers and big business.

Despite claims of an economic recovery, the policy of endless austerity continues. Hand-in-hand with a further £30 billion in cuts to public services and welfare over the next five years is widening and deepening inequality.

According to Oxfam, the top four billionaires in Scotland have more wealth than the poorest 20% of the population. That's over 1 million people.

Almost half of those - 488,000 - are in work and currently earning less than the Living Wage. In addition, as we report below, the onslaught against tax credits will further impoverish hundreds of thousands of low paid workers in Scotland.

Tory health minister for England, Jeremy Hunt, blurted out the attitude of the political elite at the recent Tory conference: "We have to proceed with these tax credit changes because they are a very important cultural signal. We want to be one of the most successful countries in the world in 20, 30, 40 years time. Are we going to be a

"The conscious policy of this wing of the British capitalist class is to lower workers' living standards closer to the level of China, so as to be able to compete with their rivals."

country which is prepared to work hard in the way that Asian economies are?"

The conscious policy of this wing of the British capitalist class is to lower workers' living standards closer to the level of China, so as to be able to compete with their rivals.

This is a declaration of war and will lead to a huge collision with the working class and the trade unions. Another reason, of course, why the Trade Union Bill is being rushed through parliament in an effort to undermine the inevitable mass opposition that this policy of

"planned poverty" will unleash."

## no confidence

The "stewards" of capitalism no longer have any confidence that they can return their system to economic health. The IMF reported in October 2015 that, "Six years after the world economy emerged from its broadest and deepest post-war recession, a return to robust and synchronised global expansion remains elusive."

Austerity has, inevitably, failed to jump-start the economy and some, including the IMF, are in favour of stimulus measures to do just that. But they are in a minority at this stage. Dominant among the ruling elites internationally are the "austerians" rather than the "Keynesians". Yet continuous austerity is only paving the way for a new downturn, as the Guardian's economic editor Larry Elliott pointed out: "The world is one recession away from a period of stagnation and prolonged deflation in which the challenge would be to avoid a re-run of the Great Depression of the 1930s."

But neither do the Keynesians, who base themselves on a fairer capitalism, have a long-term solution. As Marxists have pointed out

"If a significant number of councils - and especially the Scottish Government - defied the government on the cuts, they will receive mass backing"

many times, under capitalism government spending to overcome the crisis leads to increased debt. Wage increases for workers must inevitably come from a reduced share of profit by the capitalist who will also resist tax increases on their wealth and that of big business.

Socialist Party Scotland campaigns for mass public investment in public services, house building, job creation and a real living wage of £10 an hour. But this is only sustainable in the long-term by breaking with capitalism and implementing socialist measures, including bringing the banks and big corporations into public ownership under democratic working class control and management. Such a policy, alongside capital controls and a government monopoly over trade to defeat the attempts of big business to move "their" wealth, would lay the basis for an end to austerity and the reversal of the cuts.

## Political alternative needed

Even those parties that claim they are opposed to austerity but insist on working within the limits of the capitalist system are inevitably forced to implement cuts. This was clearly the case in Greece recently when Syriza carried out a betrayal of the Greek working class by implementing the new austerity memorandum.

In Scotland, it is also true of the

SNP government who despite being "anti-austerity" in words have passed on billions in Tory cuts since 2010. Indeed John Swinney, the SNP Deputy First Minister, has stated that it is "highly unlikely" that they would reverse the planned benefit cuts. Swinney went further by saying that even in an independent Scotland "not very cut could be reversed" and that it was important to run a "sustainable budget".

Only a refusal to implement austerity by setting no cuts budgets and launching a mass campaign to win back the money stolen from public services would it be possible to force the Tories back.

This is precisely the policy that is needed today if the bosses' austerity offensive is to be defeated.

We welcome Jeremy Corbyn's election victory as Labour leader on an anti-austerity platform. Yet, currently, he is a small minority among the Parliamentary Labour Party who are opposed to his policies.

The Corbyn surge is a potential new mass party in formation. It is not at all guaranteed it will succeed if the resistance from the Labour right-wing is not fought and defeated.

The massive cuts that are coming are the defining issue. As John McDonnell said at the Labour Party conference: "Austerity was a political choice not an economic necessity." But that therefore means a policy of refusing to implement cuts and drawing up a needs budget.

If a significant number of councils - and especially the Scottish Government - defied the government on the cuts, they will receive mass backing.

Socialist Party Scotland and the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC) is fighting for this policy. We are calling on all left forces - particularly the trade unions - to give this demand an organised expression.

This should include, at local level, urgently convening conferences of all those who want to fight the cuts to discuss the way forward. Events are moving rapidly, there is no time to lose.

## Join Socialist Party Scotland

VISIT [www.socialistpartyscotland.org.uk](http://www.socialistpartyscotland.org.uk) click on JOIN or MORE INFO

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## STOP THE TAX CREDIT THIEVING TORIES

Richard Neville  
Renfrewshire

As a working single parent with three kids, I watched George Osborne deliver the Tories first budget with an overall majority with dread.

After years of austerity cutting my local public services and living standards, the Conservative manifesto pledge to cut £12 billion from the 'welfare' budget didn't seem like one of those promises that would be dropped. I work, pay tax and have to have my low pay subsidised by the tax credit system.

For the very lowest paid, there was a shift in the burden from the state to the employer with an increase to the minimum wage from £6.50 to £7.20 an hour. While this would on

the face of it be welcome, this tiny increase will not be felt in the pockets of those who receive it. As those who receive tax credits know, it is means tested and any increase in wages means a reduction in benefit.

Low pay households like my own will not benefit from this increase to the minimum wage, but will be devastated by the cut to tax credits that was announced.

My own family will lose out on about £1300 a year. The average loss of income for 2.7 million families will be £1700. A further 6 million families will lose an average of £700 a year.

This cut to the income of millions of working class people was passed in parliament by a majority of 35 votes. This is only £4.4 billion of the

£12 billion that they are looking to remove from our pockets.

A campaign is needed to put real pressure on this government in order to galvanise all those who oppose this and other cuts. The trade unions should act immediately to organise those who oppose austerity into a mass campaign to demand decent living wages and an increase in living standards.

The anti-austerity mood that has expressed itself through the SNP here in Scotland, and through Corbyn's campaign, could be harnessed and organised alongside the trade union movement who should be demanding that the TUC act now.

Working class people have had enough, they want a change, all that is needed is to organise the fight.



The paper of Socialist Party Scotland

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# GLASGOW'S TRADE UNIONS DEMAND A FIGHTING NO CUTS STRATEGY FROM LABOUR



Glasgow Unison caseworkers were on strike for 17 weeks earlier this year

**Ian Leech**

*Glasgow City Unison social work convener (personal capacity)*

Glasgow City Council is facing the biggest cut to its budget in living memory. An "eye-watering" £103 million will be cut by the Labour controlled council in 2016 and 2017.

This huge sum is in addition to £250 million cuts that have taken place over the past five years, leading to cuts in Disability and Mental Health Services, Home Care Support, education for children

As a result around 4,000 jobs have been lost to the city. Jobs that could have employed the next generation of school, college and university leavers.

The cuts, part of the Tory Government's austerity (planned poverty) agenda, have been demanded by Westminster and passed on to Glasgow by the SNP-controlled Scottish Government without any demonstration of opposition. In turn the Labour council will carry through the cuts as demanded.

Services are already creaking at the seams with budgets being

slashed, leading to services being terminated or eligibility criteria being tightened severely.

In response the trade unions in the city (Unite, UNISON, GMB, EIS and UCATT) have acted in a co-ordinated manner and agreed upon an alternative "No Cuts" budget to campaign around and put to the leadership of the council. We are calling for support from any group or individual councillor to demonstrate support.

The alternative budget proposes that the council uses all available financial mechanisms to hold-off any further cuts whilst organising a fight to win more money for the city. The trade union's propose that the council should utilise its reserves and borrowing powers, supported by a legal process called "capitalisation" to fill the two year £103 million hole, whilst leading a city-wide campaign involving trade unions, communities and user groups with the objective of winning more money from the Holyrood and Westminster Governments.

This approach, based on the struggle of Liverpool City Council in

the 1980s, is the only effective method in the struggle against cuts.

Since 2010 the Tories have inflicted brutal austerity on the working people but in response, the majority of the union leadership have only expressed opposition in speeches.

Even now they remain of the view that austerity is a course that can be altered through rational argument that poses a reasoned, common sense alternative.

The ruling class are hell-bent on destroying or privatising public services and attacking the welfare benefits system. It is an ideological attack that has its roots in the 1930s with the aim being to drive working class people into poverty and destroying organised opposition.

With the election of Jeremy Corbyn as Labour leader, Labour should be standing on a clear anti-austerity platform. Which in practice means refusing to implement the Tory cuts.

As well as demanding politicians refuse to make the cuts, unions must build toward a 24-general strike that can act as the beginning of an organised and determined fightback.

# SAVAGE CUTS PLANNED FOR EDINBURGH

**Jimmy Haddow**

*Lothian Socialist Party Scotland*

The City of Edinburgh Labour/SNP coalition council are considering axing at least 2000, possibly more, council jobs in their cost cutting exercise to shave £140 million over the next four years.

That is the equivalent of 10% of the council workforce as well as its knock-on effect to council services.

The council unions have warned that there could be strike action if compulsory redundancies go ahead.

Councillor Alasdair Rankin, finance convener and SNP councillor, considers it the beginning of a long process, but John Stevenson of the City's Unison Branch judges that whole services will go and not in the thin slices of past but in big chunks.

The Unite City of Edinburgh branch rightly says that the financial crisis engulfing the council is the result of political choices. In their view there are three clear alternatives: cut outrageously high debt interest payments to the banks and George Osborne's Treasury; Introduce a Hotel Bedroom Tax (or Transient Visitor Levy); Legislate for a more progressive form of property or land tax-



Councils should do a Liverpool (opposite) and refuse to inflict the Tory cuts

tion to replace the regressive Council Tax.

According to Unite's research, over the next three years the UK Treasury and the banks will get over £230 million in interest alone from the same Revenue Budget.

Redundancies or an increase in council tax or a hotel tax is not getting to the root of the problem of the cuts that are taking place. The root of the problem is the Tory Government on the one hand, who are car-

rying out a vicious austerity programme on the working class and the SNP Scottish Government and local councils who are implementing Tory austerity.

Socialist Party Scotland calls on Edinburgh council unions to follow Glasgow's example and campaign for a no cuts budget and to use all available financial mechanisms to hold-off further cuts and build a campaign to win more money from the Scottish and UK governments.

# LIVERPOOL: THE COUNCIL THAT DARED TO FIGHT THE TORIES



From 1983 to 1987 Liverpool City Council was led by supporters of Militant (predecessor of the Socialist), who at the time were members of the Labour Party. When faced with cuts from central government, they refused to pass them on. Instead, with the slogan "better to break the law than break the poor" they made huge advances for working class people in Liverpool. At the same time they led a mass campaign which successfully demanded funding back from Thatcher's government.

Here we republish an edited version of an interview carried out last year with Tony Mulhearn (pictured above), one of the councillors and leaders of the movement.

The interview gives an idea of what is possible when socialists are elected and also of the need for Jeremy Corbyn to re-democratise the Labour Party to give those who support his anti-cuts stand a say in the politics of the party's elected representatives.

**When the council was elected big cuts were being made to council budgets by the Tory government. How did you avoid making them?**

Between 1979 and 1983 the Tories had slashed £120 million from Liverpool City Council's budget. In addition to that the outgoing local Tory-Liberal administration had left unallocated cuts of £10 million and was making 2,000 redundancies.

We had the choice of either saying there's nothing we can do and implementing the cuts or to fight back. We chose not to implement the cuts and instead to set a 'needs budget', and we launched a fighting campaign.

So, we were in the position that councillors are in today, but we took an entirely different stance.

Militant supporters were not actually a majority on the council - how did your ideas get carried through?

In those days the local party determined policy. Militant and its predecessors had conducted a campaign over decades inside Liverpool Labour Party for the adoption of socialist policies. And that's what the District Labour Party (DLP) did, it adopted socialist policies.

And in those days when the party had determined the policy, the councillors had to carry it out. So the DLP concretised what was contained in Clause IV of the Labour Party constitution (its socialist commitment) in relation to housing, jobs and services - all of which the council then implemented.

**What were the biggest achievements of the council?**

We built 5,000 houses and flats - gardens back and front in many cases. We demolished some of the worst housing in Western Europe. We then cancelled all monetary cuts and redundancies planned by the outgoing council. We built six new nursery schools. We expanded council services.

We had apprenticeships for council jobs. At one stage we had something like 16,000 workers engaged in council projects. So in effect we translated socialism into

the language of jobs, the language of houses, the language of nursery schools.

**How did the councillors link up with trade unions and working class people in the city?**

The DLP was a fine, democratic organisation. It was made up of trade unions, women's committees, the Young Socialists, party branches and constituency parties, the Co-ops - all had delegates to the DLP. And that was the spring board we used to reach out to wider sections of the working class.

On that basis we were able to mobilise tens of thousands at the demonstrations. And on three occasions 30,000 council workers took strike action to defend the policies of the council.

So this notion peddled by the right wing in the Labour Party, like former Labour leader Neil Kinnock and supported by the capitalist press, that it was some kind of tiny group which had captured control of the council, was nonsense. We couldn't have achieved what we did without mass support from the labour movement and wider working class communities.

**How did the right wing respond to your success?**

They generated a campaign of hysteria in the capitalist press.

Thatcher's minister Norman Tebbit used his position in Parliament to demand of Kinnock - 'what was Labour going to do about the Liverpool extremists?' Bowing to this pressure Kinnock launched a savage attack on Liverpool at the 1985 Labour Party conference.

Shortly after, Labour's right wing suspended the DLP, this was preceded by the unelected District Auditor's decision to fine and remove the 47 fighting Labour councillors from office.

Kinnock then proceeded to conduct the most horrendous witch-hunt against not only Militant supporters but also any lefts who supported building houses and creating jobs.

Nonetheless the socialist legacy of that movement continues in Liverpool to this day.

# SCRAP TRIDENT - INVEST IN JOBS, HOMES AND PUBLIC SERVICES



Anti-Trident protest

**Matt Dobson**  
Socialist Party Scotland, Glasgow

The Conservative Westminster government is likely to bring a vote on renewing the Trident nuclear missile system to Parliament in 2016.

The government has put the bill at between £15bn and £20bn, but campaign group Greenpeace claims it will run to at least £34bn. Jeremy Corbyn and CND quote a figure of £100bn.

The massive expense of Trident renewal will be another facet of the building anger at the massive inequality in society and endless austerity.

A new generation of young people became anti-nuclear weapons and rallied against Trident in the movement for independence.

The SNP, who call for the removal of Trident from Scotland, use Trident as an issue to prove their “anti-aus-

terity” credentials and to continue to raise the profile of independence. However, the SNP are committed to remaining part of NATO, even under independence.

Being a member of NATO means committing to use military force and weapons of mass destruction to protect the interests of other members.

Trident was also a key issue in the mobilisation behind Jeremy Corbyn's election as Labour leader.

The general secretary of Unite, Len McCluskey, has come out in opposition to scrapping Trident “because it will cost jobs”, despite current Unite policy being opposed to the renewal program.

## economic alternatives

Workers and communities in the area around Faslane on the Clyde where Trident is based, and in the defence industry generally, have

genuine concerns about mass redundancies. This is an issue that the trade unions, socialists and the anti-Trident movement need to address.

The Clyde has become a producer of warships and a base for the maintenance of Britain's nuclear weapons.

It is a far cry from when it produced 90% of the world's commercial ships. Workers' fears come from the ruthless way in which British governments and big business have destroyed the shipping and other heavy industries.

Socialists argue that the skilled workforce could be used for other work. Workers now employed in nuclear weapons systems, together with scientists and engineers, should be redeployed on projects that bring real benefit to society.

The economy requires raw materials and food to be brought in on ships, which could sustain merchant

shipbuilders on the Clyde. The level of technology involved in nuclear weapons is amongst the most advanced in the world. The skills used to produce and maintain them could be used to make socially useful equipment for use in the NHS, transport and to enhance the lives of human beings.

The large scale resources squandered by investing in nuclear weapons could be used to develop tidal power technology.

At a time when brutal austerity is being implemented. There is no end to the ways in which the planned investment in Trident renewal could be better spent.

Trade union leaders and Jeremy Corbyn should use their authority to popularise arguments against the retention of nuclear weapons and, alongside workers in these industries, develop an anti-austerity socialist strategy of alternative work for those currently employed at Faslane and other sites.

## socialism

Socialists are against all nuclear weapons and unsafe use of nuclear power. We cannot rely on capitalist institutions such as NATO or the UN that oversee the domination of the world by imperialism to stop the spread of weapons of mass destruction and constant conflicts.

There are serious capitalist and big business interests at stake; profits from arms production and sales, geopolitical power and prestige. Under capitalism the major powers will always rather stockpile arms than co-operate for nuclear disarmament.

For this reason the eradication of

nuclear weapons needs a fundamental change in the social system. A new and democratic society based on public ownership of industry and workers' control and management would form the basis of a socialist planned economy.

One of its first tasks would be to end the wasteful expenditure on arms proliferation. The building of a socialist society would also have to be on an international basis.

## Socialist Party Scotland says:

● **No to the renewal of Trident. Scrap the existing Trident system.**

● **Radioactive material from warheads should be permanently disposed of as safely as possible, under trade union supervision.**

● **Workers employed in production of weapons of mass destruction, together with scientists and engineers, should be redeployed on projects for real benefit to society.**

● **The investment planned for the new nuclear weapons should be spent on socially useful mass investment into public services and infrastructure projects such as a mass building program of council housing, and giving a future to young people.**

● **No to imperialist wars, bombing interventions and occupations. No to NATO and the high tech arms race!**

● **For a socialist world and unity of workers and young people in a struggle against austerity, the profit system and war.**

# SNP LEADERS ROLL OVER FOR THE EU AND THE PRIVATEERS

**Leah Ganley and Sean Robertson**  
Socialist Party Scotland, Dundee

In what the SNP's infrastructure secretary Keith Brown said was a cost saving measure, the SNP has privatised a part of a vital public asset.

The contract to supply water to council buildings, the Scottish parliament, hospitals, prisons and other public facilities, worth £360 million, has been taken away from Business Stream - a wholly owned subsidiary of publicly owned Scottish Water - and given to Anglian Water.

Anglian Water are a private company mainly owned by capital investors in Australia and Canada who paid no corporation tax in the last tax year, despite paying dividends of £180 million to shareholders.

The SNP has said in the past that it is opposed to private ownership of Scottish Water.

No civilised country would surely put the supply of water, an essential service as much as the NHS, into the hands of investment capitalists whose only motive is profit.

It is a move in the wrong direction, potentially towards total privatisation or metering of water use, which is the current situation in England.

The SNP's anti-austerity, pro-public services façade has slipped even further with the potential privatisation of vital ferry services in the Clyde and Hebrides as well as a lack of action to return Scotrail services to public hands.

CalMac - a publicly owned company - are in competition with notorious private company Serco for the

“If the SNP were serious about protecting the interests of “the Scottish people” they would be challenging the pro-business agenda”

Hebrides and west coast island ferry contract, due for renewal in 2016.

## Scotrail

Whilst the Scotrail franchise came up for renewal last year, and instead of taking the opportunity to bring the service into public control and ownership, the SNP-led Scottish Government awarded the franchise to Abellio, a Dutch state-owned company.

In both these cases, as with the Scottish Water sell-off, the SNP has said they have had no other option than to follow these “tendering” processes because they are under strict regulation by EU laws.

This is despite the SNP taking an opposing view on EU tendering when in opposition to the Labour/Lib Dem coalition.

Ten years ago, when the tables were turned, the SNP was arguing that there were ways around the compulsory tendering, for example



RMT members campaigning in Oban to keep CalMac services public

if the services are deemed to be life-line.

A poll by the RMT found that almost two thirds of Scottish voters think Caledonian MacBrayne ferry services should remain the public sector, while only one in ten support privatising the service.

The poll also found that six out of ten Scots supported the right of CalMac workers to take industrial action to defend staffing levels, jobs and pensions from the threat of privatisation.

The RMT took strike action in June demanding no compulsory redundancies and the same pension rights and terms and conditions as staff have now, regardless of who wins the new contract.

Mick Cash RMT General Secretary said: “Any privatisation of CalMac would be a betrayal to Scottish people and would also fly in the face of claims by the SNP that they stand

shoulder-to-shoulder with working people against the greed and exploitation of big, money-grabbing corporations.

## Defy the EU

If the SNP were serious about protecting the interests of “the Scottish people” they would be challenging the pro-business agenda being forced by competition regulations, to ensure our public services such as transport and water remain public services, even if it means defying the EU rules.

Why are the SNP so keen to be in the bosses' EU with its in-built bias against public ownership?

We say reject the bosses' EU and fight for democratic public ownership in an independent socialist Scotland as part of a wider, voluntary, socialist union of Europe.

## WHO DO THEY REPRESENT?

Almost one-third of the SNP's recently elected Westminster MPs have additional incomes from renting out property, on top of their £74,000 salary.

Media attention has focused on SNP MP Michelle Thomson who has been forced to resign the SNP whip. Thomson, a property dealer whose company has been accused of buying homes from people in financial distress and then selling it on for a huge profit, was described by the SNP as having a “commitment to how business can be used to support social justice”.

There are 16 SNP MPs who receive income from renting property. These include the SNP MP for East Kilbride, Lisa Cameron, who rents out a house and five flats. Tasmina Ahmed-Sheikh, a former Tory party member, rents out three flats in Glasgow and a house in the Highlands.

The former treasurer of the SNP, Ian Blackford, owns two cottages on Skye, which he rents for his holiday property company.

A recent survey of SNP MPs, MSPs and MEPs found that 90% of them were drawn from the top 3 occupational groupings. These facts underline the chasm that separates the majority of the SNP's public representatives from the majority of the working class in Scotland.

It's time to build a new workers' party that will stand candidates committed to representing the working class, not least by living on a skilled workers' wage.

# 2016 ELECTION: FOR A UNITED STAND AGAINST ALL CUTS



## Scottish TUSC

Letter to all left organisations planning to stand in the 2016 election

The Scottish parliament elections in 2016 will be taking place at a time of unprecedented austerity. The scale of the Tory cuts due to be inflicted in Scotland over the next two to three years will have a devastating impact on millions.

The SNP, despite their anti-austerity mandate, have passed on every penny of Tory cuts in Scotland since 2010. Labour have done the same.

It is therefore vital that a genuine socialist and anti-austerity alternative is offered for the 2016 elections.

Scottish TUSC is preparing to stand in the elections and we intend to make the issue of defiance of the cuts by the Scottish government a central demand of our manifesto. In addition to a wider programme of socialist and anti-austerity policies.

We believe that the parliament should become a fortress of mass opposition to any further austerity and that a no cuts budget should be set by utilising the powers of the parliament – which will now include borrowing powers. This strategy of defiance should be linked to a mass mobilisation in the trade unions,

communities and all those affected by austerity to demand a return of the billions stolen from public spending since 2010.

We are writing, as we have done previously, to all those on the socialist left who have declared their intention to stand in 2016. We would like to suggest a meeting with representatives of Scottish TUSC and yourselves to explore whether there is common agreement on a platform on a no cuts policy for the elections, as well as wider socialist policies.

If there was agreement then progress to working towards an electoral agreement to maximise the genuine anti-austerity alternative for 2016.

As you know Scottish TUSC already has the support of the RMT transport union as well as many leading trade unionists. You'll also be aware that the Glasgow local authority trade unions have recently agreed a no cuts policy and are demanding the Labour council refuse to make any more cuts.

We are confident that support for this position will grow enormously over the next months. We are therefore keen to know your views on our proposal for a meeting to discuss the 2016 election campaign.

## STANDING 100% AGAINST AUSTERITY IN 2016

**Scottish TUSC conference**  
**Saturday 23 January 1pm**

Renfield - St Stephens Centre, Bath Street, Glasgow

Speakers from RMT, Cheryl Gedling (PCS vice president pc)  
Brian Smith (Glasgow City Unison pc), Socialist Party Scotland  
www.tusc.org.uk

## REMEMBERING THE 1915 GLASGOW RENT STRIKE VICTORY

“The women of the housing schemes were to the forefront of this movement. Whenever landlords' agents and sheriff officers came to carry out evictions, word quickly spread.”

Sinead Daly

Including extracts from the Scottish Militant Labour pamphlet *Red Flag Over the Clyde*, by Jim Cameron



100 years ago in Glasgow and in cities and towns across Scotland, rent rises and appalling housing conditions led to the eruption of 1915 rent strikes. It was a mass movement that took place alongside an unprecedented working class mobilisation that became known as “Red Clydeside”.

Living conditions in Glasgow were appalling with mass overcrowding of families in small flats. Thousands slept rough every night. Cholera, typhoid, smallpox and TB were rife. In 1871 almost one in five did not survive infancy. Mass industrialisation in Glasgow and Clydeside in the 19th and 20th century resulted in huge population growth. Glasgow alone grew from 112,000 in 1801 to over a million people in 1871.

### Outbreak of war

The outbreak of war in 1914 saw tens of thousands of working class men joining the army leaving the women to struggle on lower wages, to feed and clothe their children and pay the bills and rent.

Thousands of other families were drawn into the city to provide the workforce for the munitions industry that was expanding rapidly due to the British army's demands. With housing demand outstripping supply landlords, hungry for more profits, set about increasing rents.

Families, unable to meet these rent rises, were threatened with evictions. By 1915 the stage was set for a social explosion against the rent increases and threatened evictions. The rent strikes began in Govan, in the heart of Glasgow's shipbuilding industry and quickly spread.

Key organisers of this campaign included John MacLean, Willie Gallacher, Andrew McBride of the Independent Labour Party (ILP - a workers' political formation which came out of 'new unionism' in the late 1880s) and John Wheatley who later became an ILP MP in Glasgow.

However, it was Mary Barbour of the Women's Housing Association, whose name became synonymous with the rent strikes and working class resistance. In May 1915 a joint meeting of Glasgow Labour Housing Committee and the Women's Housing

Association called the first rent strike. The aim was not to withhold the entire rent, but only the increased rent.

Meetings were held in the backcourts, in the streets and wherever people could be brought together. Apart from the local meetings, city-wide demonstrations were organised including one in George Square in October 1915 where an estimated 25,000 people gathered to support the rent strikers' cause.

The women of the housing schemes were to the forefront of this movement. Whenever landlords' agents and sheriff officers came to carry out evictions, word quickly spread. Pots and pans were banged together, flour bombs, bricks and anything else that came to hand were used and the invaders were driven out.

No quarter or compromise was given by the women and the agents had to very quickly conclude that their days of evicting non-payers were over.

Rent strikes were not unique to Glasgow. By November 1915 as many as 20,000 tenants were on rent

strike and rent strike activity was spreading beyond Glasgow to other parts of the country. Significant movements took place in other major Scottish cities including Edinburgh, Dundee and Aberdeen. John MacLean then put out the call for a complete rent strike in Glasgow and posters went up on windows and lamp-posts declaring: “We are not paying increased rent!”

Faced with this new tactic landlords were forced to pursue those in work through the courts, not for eviction warrants, but for arrestment of wages. They thought this would break the strike - how wrong they were!

### Debt court

18 working men were due to appear in the small debt court on 18 November 1915 to have a wage arrestment order made against them. Mrs Barbour and other leaders within the Women's Housing Association mobilised the women from all the working class areas to march to the sheriff court.

One man summoned was an engineer, James Reid, from the Dalmuir shipyard. This spurred workers from Dalmuir, Fairfield, Stephens and other shipyards and factories in the city to down tools and march with the women.

The streets around the court house were jammed and all traffic stopped as upwards of 10,000 people protested. The mood was electric. John MacLean demanded that the prime minister, HH Asquith, introduce legislation preventing any increase in rents for the duration of the war. MacLean warned that a failure to do so would result in a general strike on Monday 22 November.

Against the backdrop of these movements, home secretary David Lloyd George was forced to agree to immediately introduce a “Rent Restrictions Act”. This victory boosted the confidence of Scotland's working class for future struggles.

## FACEBOOK TAX DODGE



Mark Zuckerberg is worth £24bn

Laurel Fogarty  
Socialist Party

A couple on average wages would have paid more UK tax than corporate giant Facebook in 2014.

The social media multinational paid just £4,327 in UK corporation tax. This is compared to the total £4,800 income tax paid by a couple each earning the median wage of £22,000.

Facebook declared itself to be working at a loss in Britain, despite making £105 million from UK operations last year.

The firm hid profit by moving takings from the UK to Ireland and the Caymen Islands, and paying out huge bonuses to its 362 UK employees. This allowed it to slash its UK tax bill and pay a meagre few thousand - from massive global profits of £1.9 billion.

This money could be used to fund our ailing NHS, build much-needed quality social housing.

Ordinary people continue to pay for the banking crisis with vicious cuts to welfare and working tax credits. But corporation tax has steadily dropped - from 28% to 21% since George Osborne took over the treasury in 2010.

The Socialist Party says: nationalise the parasitic corporations that dominate our economy under the democratic control of workers and the public.

Then we could plan production and service to cater to the needs of ordinary people, not the profits of the wealthiest 1%.

# ONE YEAR AFTER THE EL UPRISING AGAINST AUS



George Square, Glasgow

**Philip Stott**  
Socialist Party Scotland

The Scottish independence referendum delivered what Socialist Party Scotland described as an “electoral uprising against austerity and the political establishment.” 1.6 million, overwhelmingly working-class, people voted Yes on September 18 2014 in the teeth of a colossal campaign of fear and intimidation.

An unprecedented turnout of 85% – the largest participation in any plebiscite or election since the introduction of universal suffrage – saw hundreds of thousands take part who had never previously voted, or had not voted since the days on Thatcher’s poll tax. It was a heroic attempt to find an escape route from unemployment and low pay, brutal poverty and cuts. No less was it a damning verdict on the political elite rightly held responsible for these crimes.

While the No side won by 55% to 45%, it was in many ways a pyrrhic, empty victory that has not “settled the question for generations” as David Cameron, Gordon Brown and co had hoped. Instead, as we explained at the time, the “winners become the losers and the losers the winners.”

In the wake of the indyref the base of support for the “pro-union” capital-

ist parties has been dramatically weakened. Scottish Labour, who spearheaded the Better Together campaign, suffered an electoral annihilation just 8 months after their “victory” in the referendum.

The leadership of arch-Blairite Jim Murphy in Scotland, who promised a revival, lasted barely 5 months. He lost his Westminster seat in May, along with 39 of the 40 other Scottish Labour MPs. The former “Peoples Party” was reduced to its worst election result since 1918. In contrast, a landslide of support towards the SNP saw it secure 56 of the 59 available seats. Today they currently stand at 55% support in the polls for the Scottish elections in May 2016.

The standing joke after the 2010 general election was that there were more giant pandas in Edinburgh zoo than Tory MPs. Now this political humiliation applies not only to the Tories in Scotland, but Labour and the Lib Dems as well.

Moreover, a new referendum – the Quebec scenario, where two independence referendums were held within fifteen years – is also very likely. Another five planned years of savage Tory austerity will inevitably create the conditions for further demands for more devolved powers and independence.

“A key factor in the defeat of the referendum was the SNP’s pro-capitalist economic model for an independent Scotland.”

### anti-austerity mood

The 2014 referendum was an expression of the same mass anti austerity, anti-establishment mood that has particularly undermined the former social democratic parties in creating the conditions for the rise of parties like Syriza and Podemos. Bernie Sanders’ insurgent campaign in the US and the huge support for Jeremy Corbyn are also a reflection of the widespread desire for new mass anti-austerity and working class parties.

Labour leader Harold Wilson coined the phrase “a week is a long time in politics”, pointing to the possibility of rapid political change over a short pe-

riod of time. The events in the days following September 18 2014 were an acute example of this.

Rather than being cowed and defeated, tens of thousands of primarily young people poured onto the streets and squares looking for a way to continue the struggle. There was an explosion in the membership of pro-independence political parties with many searching for left and socialist ideas.

Project Fear; the combined might of the political establishment, the majority of the media and big business had unleashed an unprecedented campaign of intimidation and misinformation in the run-up to September 18. The effect of this was to drive the working class to the left. This mood, particularly from February 2014, was given an organised expression by the launch of an explicitly socialist pro-independence campaign by Tommy Sheridan – at the suggestion and with the support of Socialist Party Scotland.

The “Hope Over Fear” tour was a series of mass meetings of an energised and radicalised working class and caught the mood, which was in favour of independence but also radical socialist solutions to capitalist inspired austerity. Socialist Party Scotland helped organise huge meetings titled “the socialist case for independence”

as part of this tour. The support for public ownership, taxing the rich, a living wage and an end to cuts was overwhelming and reflected the political vacuum to the left of the pro-business SNP.

### New party

In the hours following the indyref we called for the launching of a new socialist party to offer a political home to young people and the working class. Tommy Sheridan and also the leadership of groups like the Radical Independence Campaign rejected such an approach. Tommy Sheridan went further and drew the conclusion that the left should call on people to vote for the SNP.

The failure to take these necessary steps, alongside the widespread outlook that the SNP leaders had been prepared to stand up against Project Fear, led to a mass influx into the party of over 80,000 people. However, as we predicted, this has not led to a significant shift to the left by the SNP under its new leader Nicola Sturgeon. Despite an unprecedented electoral mandate and securing 50% of the popular vote in May on an “anti-austerity” platform, the SNP are continuing to implement Tory cuts at council and Scottish Government level.

### Indyref 2?

Today the issue is not so much whether there will be another referendum but rather its timing and the circumstances that could trigger it. Nicola Sturgeon and the SNP leadership are attempting to reconcile the demands of a large section of their new membership who want a commitment to a relatively quick referendum with her own “gradualist” approach. Sturgeon has made it clear that there won’t be another vote unless “we were confident that we could win it by a large majority.”

The SNP leaders are in the process of drawing up the wording for their 2016 manifesto. In it they are likely to refer to a number of scenarios that could trigger an indyref 2. These include the possibility of Britain voting to leave the EU while Scotland vote to stay in. A failure to deliver the promised enhanced powers agreed by the Smith Commission, far less the “near federalism” promised in “the vow”, and a continuation of Tory austerity will also be included as “material changes of circumstance” that would trigger a possible second referendum.

In all likelihood there won’t be a date or even a firm commitment in the SNP 2016 manifesto for another referen-

# LECTORAL STERITY

“The referendum on September 18, 2014 was an expression of a mass anti-austerity mood in society and the hatred of the pro-big business political elite.”

dum. However, there will be the option to call one if the conditions of an upsurge in support for independence existed. A possible referendum in 2020 or 2021 cannot be ruled out.

Westminster still has the powers over whether a “legal” referendum can take place in Scotland – not the Scottish parliament. It’s not ruled out that a Tory government could refuse another indyref, particularly if support for independence had risen markedly in the meantime. Under this scenario an “illegal” referendum could be organised by the Scottish government, creating a new flashpoint that would ratchet up the national question still further.

What the SNP leadership certainly will do is continue to use the issue of a second referendum to push for more concessions from the Tories on the one hand, and to try and placate the tens of thousands of new members of the party on the other.

In addition, they will also increasingly use the national question to try to divert attention away from their own role in the implementation of Tory austerity in Scotland. The scale of the cuts will be ratcheted up significantly over the next two or three years. Primarily it will be SNP MSPs and councillors, alongside Labour, who will be carrying through these cuts, leading to an increasing exposing of the pro-business SNP leadership.

## Achilles heel

A key factor in the defeat of the referendum was the SNP’s pro-capitalist economic model for an independent Scotland. The SNP’s white paper – the so-called blueprint for independence – outlined support for tax cuts for the major corporations, a pledge to keep the monarchy and proposed a currency union with the Bank of England as the central bank – a single currency arrangement that the pro-union parties in Better Together ruled out.

Alex Salmond and co held out the promise, more like the chimera, of a thriving capitalist economy under independence in which “all boats would float”. Today, with a new recession only a matter of timing and the north sea oil price fallen by over half since last September, the idea of an independent capitalist Scotland offering an es-

cape route from austerity is increasingly the Achilles heel of the SNP leadership.

By refusing to go beyond the limits of what capitalism could afford they were unable to combat the onslaught from big business and the bosses’ media. To answer the fears of a layer of the working class on pensions, public services, savings etc would have required a developed socialist programme, including support for massive wealth redistribution underpinned by the nationalisation under democratic control of the banks and big business in an independent socialist Scotland.

## The Corbyn factor

An added potential complication for the SNP today has been the insurgent campaign of Jeremy Corbyn who has just won the UK Labour leadership contest. Corbyn stands significantly to the left of the SNP on public ownership, tax rises on the rich, his unflinching support for trade union struggles and workers rights etc.

While the carnage inflicted on Scottish Labour as a result of their collaboration with the Tories in Project Fear has been seismic, a new left, anti-austerity party could seriously undermine SNP support in Scotland. Whether this arises through an influx of new radicalised trade unionists and young people into Scottish Labour to try and transform it, and there are major obstacles to this, or whether a new party is ultimately created, remains to be seen.

As with the rest of the UK party, the balance of forces in Scottish Labour is stacked against Corbyn and his policies. Scottish Labour leader Kezia Dugdale openly opposed him during the election. There are no left figures in Labour’s leadership team in Scotland.

At council level, for example, only two Glasgow Labour councillors out of 43 supported Corbyn. The right-wing majority in the Labour Party will oppose tooth-and-nail any attempts to drive the party to the left and democratise its structures. A determined campaign will be needed to change this balance of forces.

Our appeal to Jeremy Corbyn and his supporters in Scotland, as it is



Jeremy Corbyn was elected Labour leader on an anti-austerity platform

across Britain, is to organise an open conference and invite all his supporters, the trade unions who have backed him and socialist organisations to participate. Out of such a conference could develop a major anti-austerity and socialist campaigning organisation to provide a base of support for these ideas. It’s vital that an anti-austerity movement around Corbyn is built outside of the formal structures of Scottish Labour if this opportunity is not to be wasted.

In addition we would appeal to Jeremy Corbyn and his supporters in Scotland to reassess their position on the national question. No to independence, the position currently held by Jeremy, will be a barrier to reaching some of the most radicalised sections of the working class in Scotland. The numbers applying to join Labour in Scotland to support Corbyn have not been on the same scale as in England, partly this is a reflection of the still toxic brand that Labour is seen as in Scotland.

It is possible to stand for the unity of the working class across Britain at the same time as defending the democratic rights of the Scottish people. Socialist Party Scotland did precisely this during the referendum. We supported a Yes vote but also stood for an independent socialist Scotland as part of a voluntary socialist confederation with England, Wales and Ireland.

As a starting point Jeremy should call on all Labour candidates, MSPs and councillors to refuse to vote for a single penny in cuts. This means a pledge

to refuse to vote through Tory cuts in Scotland by using the powers of the councils and the Scottish parliament, including use of under spends and borrowing powers etc to set no cuts budget. Backed up by the mass involvement of the trade unions, community and anti-austerity campaigns, a mass movement could be built to demand a return of the billions stolen by the Tories from public services.

## No cuts

The Socialist Party and the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC) has pioneered this approach and will continue to advocate such a stand. We’ll be writing to Labour and SNP candidates calling on them to support a no cuts policy.

Where they do we will seek to make common cause with them. However, it is very likely that they will be tiny in number. Therefore Scottish TUSC is preparing to stand widely in the Scottish parliament elections next year to offer that alternative.

The referendum on September 18, 2014 was an expression of a mass anti-austerity mood in society and the hatred of the pro-big business political elite. The spectacular electoral success of the SNP, as well its spiralling membership following the indyref, was also a distorted reflection of the same mood. The SNP leadership by their actions so far have betrayed those who looked to them seeking a fighting opposition to cuts

“The scale of the cuts will be ratcheted up significantly over the next two or three years. Primarily it will be SNP MSPs and councillors, alongside Labour, who will be carrying through these cuts”

and austerity.

It is therefore vital that a clear socialist and campaigning anti-cuts political force is created. It is possible, and we hope it is the case, that Jeremy Corbyn’s victory will open the door to such a development. Basing itself on defiant opposition to austerity and mass trade union and community struggles against the accelerating cuts, the anti-trade union bill etc, such a political alternative could become a mass party within weeks and months,

It would represent a big step forward in the necessary task of arming the working class with a clear socialist programme to lead the struggle against capitalism.

# SYRIA: UK MILITARY ACTION WILL INFLICT MORE HORROR



The destruction of Syria as a result of the war has driven millions into becoming refugees

**Hannah Sell**  
*Socialist Party England and Wales*

After four and a half long, bloody years of civil war in Syria - with over a quarter of a million dead and eleven million displaced - there is still no end in sight. On the contrary the entire region faces being drawn into a sectarian civil war.

As we go to press it now seems to be on the cards that Cameron will put a new vote to parliament, for Britain to join in the airstrikes on Syria as well as continuing them in neighbouring Iraq.

This would do nothing to end the nightmare facing the peoples of Syria and Iraq but will only add to the endless horror that they face. Nor would it do anything to protect people in Britain and elsewhere from terrorist attacks; on the contrary it will make them more likely to occur.

The threat of British airstrikes is already being accompanied by a new wave of warmongering propaganda from the right-wing press.

The Sun even cynically launched a campaign demanding British airstrikes in the name of Aylan, the Syrian refugee toddler who drowned trying to cross the Mediterranean. As if more bombs landing on Syria, with the inevitable resulting civilian casualties, would do anything to decrease the number of Syrians fleeing for their lives.

## Anti-war mood

Left Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn has made clear his opposition to bombing Syria. If he, as he should, stands firm and opposes the bombing, he will inevitably face yet more vilification from the Tories, the capitalist press, but also from within his own party.

Cameron hopes that any vote will pass because of the support of a large section of Labour MPs: the Observer (11 October) reports that more than 50 have said they will back him.

However, if Jeremy Corbyn puts a clear case against the bombing he will get widespread support from working and middle class people.

While there is a desire to see something done to bring peace to Syria and to defeat the reactionary thugs of Isis, there is also a deep-rooted scepticism over what further military intervention by Britain or other imperialist powers will achieve.

No wonder after the disastrous invasion of Iraq, which laid the basis for the current quagmire, and then the 2012 onslaught on Libya which has led directly to the anarchy which now exists there.

It was the strong anti-war mood in Britain that forced Miliband to oppose bombing Syria in 2013; thereby making Cameron hold back.

The fact that Cameron appears to now be confident to push bombing Syria to a vote is down to a number of factors including the escalating refugee crisis.

One important reason, however, is the role of the warmongers in the Parliamentary Labour Party, giving the Tories an opportunity to split Labour and, Cameron hopes, undermine Corbyn.

That this is a factor in Cameron's decision making is an indication of the extreme short-sightedness of today's Tory Party.

In the past, acting on behalf of British capitalism, the Tory leadership thought of foreign policy in terms of decades or even longer. Today they act on an extremely short-term empirical basis.

In reality, of course, whether or not Britain begins to participate in

“After just over a year of airstrikes in Iraq and Syria, at a cost of more than \$2.7 billion and the killing of many civilians, Isis still controls at least half of Syria and a third of Iraq.”

the bombing of Syria will make only a symbolic difference to what happens in the Middle East. Britain's bombers would merely be a small part of the 'coalition of the willing' led by the US. Britain's participation would do nothing to rescue the wreckage of US imperialism's strategy for Syria and Iraq.

As Patrick Cockburn put it in the Independent (3 October): "The US-led air campaign against Isis has not worked. The Islamic militants have not collapsed under the weight of airstrikes, but, across the Syrian and Iraqi Kurdish regions, either hold the same ground or are expanding.

There is something ludicrous about the debate in Britain about whether or not to join in an air campaign in Syria without mentioning that it has so far demonstrably failed in its objectives."

After just over a year of airstrikes in Iraq and Syria, at a cost of more than \$2.7 billion and the killing of many civilians, Isis still controls at least half of Syria and a third of Iraq. In May of this year, for example, the Iraqi city of Ramadi fell to Isis. The

US air force carried out 165 strikes against Isis positions in the month before it fell, but they did not alter the outcome. At the time of writing, five months on, Isis still holds Ramadi despite a prolonged attempt by the Iraqi government to retake it.

In desperation to retake the city the predominantly Shia Iraqi government has deployed the Shia militias.

Given that Ramadi is capital of Anbar province, both predominantly Sunni, this will do nothing to undermine support for Isis among the Sunni population who fear mass reprisals against all Sunnis if Ramadi falls.

These fears are not without foundation; earlier in the year the Shia militia were central to the campaign to retake Tikrit from Isis. After the city's recapture mass executions of Sunnis - wrongly all written off as Isis supporters - forced thousands to flee.

Ramadi is an example of imperialism's utter failure not just because of the events of the last year, but everything that has happened since the 2003 US-led invasion and occupation.

One of the most brutal battles fought by the US army over a decade ago was to capture Ramadi from Sunni insurgents. Yet now it is in the hands of Isis - a more reactionary and barbaric group than the worst of those previously fought by US troops.

It is the role of imperialism in the Middle East which is central to the nightmare that has now developed in the region.

Its legacy, with decades of military intervention, divide-and-rule policies, support for brutal dictatorships and flirtations with jihadist forces has left Iraq and Syria in ruins, reflected in a rapid descent into sectarian fragmentation.

The events in Syria confirm the analysis the Socialist made at the start of the conflict. At the time there were widespread predictions, including from the Cameron government in Britain, that President Assad would rapidly be defeated.

## Confirmation

We argued that, unlike in Libya, this would not be the case. Assad had greater reserves of support from ethnic and religious minorities within the country; with the increasingly sectarian character of the rebels driving them towards the regime.

At the start the uprising was part of the Arab Spring - and was a genuine popular revolt against the Assad dictatorship.

But this changed with the outside intervention of reactionary forces opposed to revolution in the region - in particular the brutal dictatorial regimes of Saudi Arabia and Qatar - backed up by imperialist forces.

The result has been the unleashing of a dangerous battle between the Sunnis and the Shias on a regional scale. Isis is the horrendous consequence of this process.

“The working class and poor farmers of Iraq and Syria and the Kurdish people can only rely on their own self-organisation to put an end to this nightmare.”





Anti-military intervention in Syria demo, London

The Socialist is calling for:

- **No to imperialist intervention! The withdrawal of all foreign forces from Syria and from other occupied countries.**
- **Let the Syrian people themselves decide their fate in open, fair and free elections, supervised by elected, democratic workers' committees.**
- **For the building of united, non-sectarian defence committees to defend workers, the poor and others against sectarian attacks from all sides.**
- **Prepare a movement to fight for a government of representatives of workers and the poor.**
- **For a revolutionary constituent assembly in Syria.**
- **The implementation of the national and democratic rights of the masses, beginning with the recognition of the right of the Kurdish people to self-determination including, if they so wish, full autonomous democratic rights within the state they live in or the establishment of a common state of the Kurds themselves.**
- **Independent trade unions and the building of mass workers' parties with a programme of land to the masses and the factories to the workers, implemented through a programme for a socialist democratic planned economy.**
- **A democratic socialist confederation of the Middle East and North Africa.**

US imperialism initially at least turned a blind eye to the growth of Isis while attempting to create and fund a pro-Western Free Syrian Army (FSA) to fight Assad.

US Senator John McCain was even photographed posing supposedly with the FSA, but in reality with Isis commanders! US weaponry sent into Syria ended up in the hands of Isis.

However, Isis's aggressive and accelerating role in tearing apart Iraq and Syria and its contempt towards the world powers has forced the US to act against it.

Nonetheless, according to Patrick Cockburn (Independent 30 September): "The US is not bombing Isis in Syria in areas the jihadist group is fighting the Syrian army."

### Imperialism

In reality US imperialism has no forces it can rely on in Syria. The capitalist press in the US and Britain has expressed outrage at Putin's regime launching airstrikes in Syria.

Cameron hypocritically declared that if Russian action was: "against the Free Syrian Army in support of Assad the dictator, then obviously that is a retrograde step". Yet the FSA no longer exists!

As Robert Fisk explained (Independent 4 October): "Washington admitted their disappearance, bemoaned their fate, concluded that new "moderates" were required, persuaded the CIA to arm and train 70 fighters, and this summer packed them off across the Turkish border to fight - whereupon all but ten were

captured by Nusrah and at least two of them were executed by their captors."

In reality there are 20 or more opposition groups fighting Assad, funded by Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Turkey and the UAE all with a sectarian, Sunni Islamist character.

US imperialism remains the most powerful imperialist country on the planet, but it is a declining world power. Its complete inability to 'police the world' as it did in the past is graphically demonstrated in Syria.

Putin feeling confident to launch airstrikes in support of Assad is only one indication of this.

It is also shown in how US imperialism has been left as 'piggy in the middle' between the Sunni regimes funding the fighters against Assad and Shia Iran which has sent 15,000 troops to back the Assad regime.

British imperialism adding its puny weight as a 'piglet in the middle' would make no difference to the unfolding nightmare.

That is not to suggest Isis cannot be defeated. On the contrary its underlying weakness has been shown by the military successes won by the predominantly Kurdish YPG and YPJ who have established a territorial base in Northern Syria.

Within limits it has shown that when anti-Isis fighters link their military struggles to appeals for national liberations and social change it is possible to win victories.

However, these successes rely on the heroic action of guerrilla units rather than on the democratic, mass, multi-ethnic mobilisation of the people themselves.

There is a danger this can lead to

the driving out of non-Kurds in some cases, as has been reported to have taken place by Amnesty International and Patrick Cockburn, although this has been denied by the YPG.

Even if these incidents are rare and not widely endorsed they are a potentially very dangerous development. In addition the political leadership of the YPG/YPJ still express hopes that Western imperialism will act in their interests.

Western imperialism has shown again and again that it has no interest in the genuine aspirations for self-determination for any national or ethnic grouping.

However, it has repeatedly leant on one group to try and defeat another, creating the sectarian nightmare that now exists.

The working class and poor farmers of Iraq and Syria and the Kurdish people can only rely on their own self-organisation to put an end to this nightmare.

United non-sectarian self-defence of threatened communities and minorities is vital, and can be an important lever through which a grass roots movement fighting for socialist change can be rebuilt.

By standing uncompromisingly against all imperialist forces, local reactionary regimes and sectarian death squads, and supporting the rights of self-determination for all communities, such a movement could find mass support among the regional and international working class. In turn, workers' organisations internationally need to spearhead movements against imperialist intervention in the Middle East.

## BERNIE SANDERS' CAMPAIGN MAKES THE ESTABLISHMENT SWEAT



US presidential candidate and declared socialist, Bernie Sanders

Jess Spear

*Socialist Alternative (US co-thinkers of Socialist Party Scotland)*

Bernie Sanders' insurgent campaign for the Democratic Party nomination is beginning to make the establishment of the Democratic Party really sweat. Sanders' call for a political revolution against the billionaire class combined with his refusal to take money from corporations or rely on Super PAC money is tapping into the massive vein of discontent and disgust with the corporate political establishment.

This, in addition to positions like calling for \$15 minimum wage, single payer health care and opposing the Trans-Pacific Partnership has led to Sanders early endorsement by the National Nurses United, and a surge of rank and file support in a number of other unions.

Sanders has also substantially strengthened his program on racial justice, police brutality, and mass incarceration and is regularly addressing these issues after being silent in the early stages of the campaign, which, as we said, was a mistake. He is also being more proactive in spelling out his differences with Hillary Clinton for example on breaking up the big Wall Street banks and re-enacting the Glass-Steagall Act.

Sanders also points to the important vote to attack Iraq in 2003 as a clear difference between himself and Hillary Clinton. His refusal to give in to the massive pressure from a near constant drumbeat for war is noteworthy. However, we disagree with his earlier votes for war against Afghanistan and the former Yugoslavia. His largely uncritical support for the Israeli state, despite its systematic oppression of the Palestinian people, is particularly egregious.

### Activated

Nonetheless, these positions do not change the fact that hundreds of thousands of ordinary people are being radicalized by his campaign. To these hundreds of thousands, including large numbers of young people, Bernie Sanders represents an opportunity to stand up to the billionaire class and fight for fundamental change. As we have repeatedly insisted, socialists and left wing activists should be a part of this movement, not stand aside from it.

In particular, we need to address the question facing this movement: how to achieve the key pro-worker aspects of Sanders program that have attracted so many.

Sanders says, and we agree, that "the only way we succeed is when millions of people stand up and de-

cide to engage." We say this requires a mass movement in the streets and building a new political force independent of the Democratic Party.

### Gloves Will Come Off

The fundamental contradiction underlying the Sanders campaign – standing for nomination for the billionaire backed Democrats – means that as Sanders become a more serious threat, the question is not if, but when, the gloves will come off.

A preview was given by a Hillary-linked Super PAC statement attacking Sanders' support for socialist Jeremy Corbyn in Britain and for negotiating with the Venezuelan government under Hugo Chavez to buy cheap heating oil for working people in Vermont. Should Bernie Sanders actually start winning primaries, the Democratic Party machine will not stand aside.

The lack of debates is already an indication the leadership is looking to control the primary process to ensure the triumph of a candidate that does not inspire millions to fight against Wall Street.

The Democratic Party will never carry out a political revolution against the billionaire class. The primaries are dominated by corporate cash and the machine of the Democrats is closely tied to Wall Street. Not a single Democratic Senator supports Sanders and the so-called super delegates – party officials and elected representatives – are already being lined up against him.

Sanders should not stay within the straightjacket of the Democratic Party, which will, at the first opportunity, cut off his political revolution.

Should he lose the primaries, it would be an enormous mistake for Sanders to direct his supporters to support Hillary Clinton or any other Democratic nominee under the control of Wall Street. In such a scenario, the best option to build toward Sanders' program of \$15, single-payer health care etc is to support the strongest independent left challenger: most likely Jill Stein of the Greens.

If he somehow won the nomination he would face the unremitting hostility of the Democratic Party apparatus.

It is urgently necessary to use Sanders' campaign to begin taking steps toward what we really need: a new political force independent of the Democratic Party, connected to mass movements in the streets like the fight for 15 and Black Lives Matter.

This is how we really start a political revolution with the potential to not only win Sanders' progressive platform, but to break the corporate grip on our political system.

# NO TO THE BOSSES' EU - FOR A SOCIALIST EUROPE

Ronnie Stevenson

Socialist Party Scotland, Glasgow

The European Union (EU) referendum is expected to take place in the lifetime of the current Westminster Parliament, probably in 2017.

It would appear that Cameron and the Tories will organise it as a straight forward in or out vote. This will cause the differences in the Tory Party to surface with a vengeance.

In approaching this issue the question for socialists is what is in the best interests of the working class as a whole?

The SNP seem intent on campaigning to stay in, with their only condition being they won't be in the same campaign as the Tories. Labour has not yet presented a united position but a large section of the Labour and trade union leadership will campaign to stay in.

## capitalist agreement

In order to make decisions we have to understand what the EU is. It is, in essence, an agreement between the different national capitalist classes of Europe, with the aim of creating a large arena for big business across Europe to conduct their hunt for profits with as few barriers as possible.

The history of the EU has been a succession of treaties each further enshrining anti-working class laws.

The most recent, in 2007, was signed by then Prime Minister Gordon Brown without the referendum that Labour had previously promised. It enshrined in EU law privatisation and deregulation, attacks on workers' rights and public services.

Even small measures towards nationalisation would be declared illegal under EU law. The right wing of the Labour Party are using that argument to pressure Jeremy Corbyn to water down his more forthright statements made during the leadership campaign about nationalisation of the railways etc.

Of course all laws are only as strong as the forces behind them and a left government carrying out nationalisation would galvanise the support of the vast majority of work-



RMT members, including Bob Crow, marching in Brussels against EU austerity.

Picture Paul

ing-class people in Britain and across Europe. This would make the EU laws impossible to implement. Nevertheless, the bosses' EU is a bulwark against socialist measures and therefore there should be no truck with a vote to stay in as the SNP and the right-wing of the labour movement are arguing.

In the last three decades, the majority of the leadership of Britain's trade unions have argued for EU membership, claiming that workers could extract benefits from Britain's membership.

Even some on the left support staying in seemingly because of a few of the crumbs some ordinary people have gained from the use of the European laws.

That argument has been increasingly undermined as the EU becomes more and more a neoliberal tool against workers' organisations and rights. Look at the brutal treatment that the EU has meted out against workers in Greece, Spain, Portugal, Italy and Ireland.

They have also argued that we

“The EU is an agreement between the different national capitalist classes of Europe, with the aim of creating a large arena for big business across Europe to conduct their hunt for profits with as few barriers as possible.”

should stay in and try to 'reform it from within'. This is utopian. The EU has almost no mechanism of democratic accountability with central decision-making in the hands of the European Council, the heads of government of the 28 different capitalist nations of the EU.

Some, particularly young people - repelled by the nationalism of United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP) and the Tory right - see the EU as a progressive force. Yet 'Fortress Europe' with its appalling treatment of refugees fleeing for their lives from Syria and elsewhere shows that this is not the case.

In contrast the EU has allowed free movement of workers within its borders, not for humanitarian reasons but in order to maximise profits via a 'race to the bottom'. EU measures such as the 'posted workers' directive' are designed specifically in order to drive down wages.

The result is an increase of fear and resentment that workers already resident in a country will see their wages and public services threatened by increased migration, particularly from the low-wage economies of Eastern Europe.

Socialists are internationalists; we want the maximum possible unity

across Europe, but this is possible only on the basis of democratic socialism, eradicating poisonous divisions through real working class internationalism, leading to a voluntary democratic socialist confederation of the continent.

## united movement

We must build a united movement to fight for the rights of all workers, for a £10 an hour minimum wage, the rate for the job for all, and for an end to austerity.

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

Socialist Party Scotland will therefore campaign against EU membership linked to a class and internationalist programme - emphasising the common interests of the European working class and rejecting capitalist nationalism.

## PORTUGAL: LEFT GROWS AS RIGHT-WING COALITION FAIL TO WIN MAJORITY

Socialismo Revolucionario  
CWI in Portugal

The Portuguese general elections on 4 October, showed a turn to the Left and announced a new political period in Portugal, with great dangers for the ruling class.

The new parliament has 36 left MPs. The Left Bloc (BE), against all odds, more than doubled its number of MPs, from 8 to 19. The CDU (Coalition of the Communist Party (PCP) and Greens) had a slight growth and elected one more MP, reaching 17.

A broad united front of the left, based on a common programme, headed by the Left Bloc and PCP, but with the involvement of the CGTP and other trade unions and social movements, is a striking necessity to defeat the right.

If the leaderships' refuse to build such an alliance, then the rank-and-file must build it, first of all in the daily struggles in workplaces,

schools and on the streets. The pro-capitalist media declared the PSD (Partido Social Democrata)/CDS (Centro Democrático e Social) coalition (the previous government) as the big winner. The truth is that 63.2% voted against the government and this coalition has lost 11.8% of the vote since the last general elections.

The PDS (Partido Social Democrata - the main coalition party) won 86 MPs, ahead of the PS by only one MP. Both parties are well short of an overall majority.

The PSD and CDS will try to carry out draconian measures in next year's state budget, cutting social spending by more than 700 million euros to 'meet agreements' with the Troika.

The likeliest scenario is a push for a "grand coalition" government, including the PS, to create more stability and to allow for the rewriting of the Constitution.

If such a government comes into

being, all the capitalist parties will see a fall in support, opening new opportunities for the Left. If the PCP and Left Bloc unite their efforts, the two-party system in Portugal is doomed.

## no support for austerity

The PCP and Left Bloc, in order to expose the PS, must be intransigent on their conditions on forming or supporting a new government. No austerity can be tolerated; no attack on the working class can be acceptable! Demand what the PS leaders will not give: a Left government.

Attacking the two-party system is only possible by building a 'left front' capable of concentrating and coordinating the numerous workers' struggles around clear demands and breaking with capitalism.

Such a united front could fight for a real alternative left government, unleashing a new wave of mass protests to further radicalise work-



ers, students and precarious workers; organizing the working class in democratic bodies which will act as tools for control and management of the workplace, schools and neighbourhoods.

If the leaderships of the PCP and Left Bloc allow themselves be seduced by the possibility of forming a government and make any kind of programmatic concessions in trying

to approach the PS, they risk participating in an austerity coalition. If they accept it, they will have betrayed the workers and saved the two party system, as well as preparing their own ruin.

Socialismo Revolucionário (CWI Portugal) is firmly committed to the struggle against austerity and for socialism and will work with any forces struggling for the same ends.

# FIGHT TO SAVE STEEL JOBS NATIONALISATION NOW!



**Matt Dobson**

1,200 steel jobs are threatened across the UK, including 300 in Scotland with the closure of the two remaining steelworks at Motherwell (Dalzell - see picture above) and Cambuslang (Clydebridge). These body blows came after the closure of the SSI steelworks in Redcar and the loss of 2,200 jobs.

It is critical that the trade unions mobilise a fight back of the workforce and for the nationalisation of the plants. Action is needed before Tata bosses are given grace to walk away leaving workers on the scrapheap, as SSI did in Redcar.

Working class action can have an impact. Recently the workforce at Tata returned a huge mandate for strike action in May over pensions. This forced Tata bosses to the table

with a serious offer.

It's likely the Scottish Government, unless forced by mass pressure, will only ask for a Westminster subsidy or use Scottish Government funds to try and get the task force to agree a short-time working arrangement to keep the plants open.

## nationalisation

Labour and Jeremy Corbyn should make a clear call for the nationalisation of the threatened Tata steelworks. This would give confidence to trade unionists, the workforce and communities threatened with devastation by these closures.

It's not ruled out a temporary subsidy or short-time working arrangement to stop the complete collapse of the steel industry in the UK or

Scotland could be agreed. While this would come as relief to workers and communities if the immediate prospect of mass redundancies were avoided, it is not certain what strings would come with subsidies.

About half of the 1.6 billion tonnes of steel made worldwide each year comes from China. Devaluation of its currency has resulted in China being able to competitively export 100 million tonnes a year. This means a race to the bottom with workers' livelihoods paying the price, as super-rich steel magnates like Tata think nothing of shifting production from the UK.

● **Open the books of Tata, SSI and others to inspection by democratically elected representatives of the workforce and the trade unions.**

● **For the SNP Scottish government to intervene to bring the Motherwell and Cambuslang steelworks into democratic public ownership under workers control and management. Compensation to small shareholders on the basis of proven need.**

● **If short-time working agreement is agreed, trade unions should demand full compensation and no loss of pay for the workforce.**

● **For the workforce trade unions, Community and Unite, to organise a mass campaign across the UK for the nationalisation of the steel industry involving the whole trade union movement and the wider community.**

## ELECT ROGER BANNISTER FOR UNISON GENERAL SECRETARY

**Roger Bannister**

UNISON cannot carry on as it is, punching below its weight, whilst members live daily with the threat of redundancy and cuts to pay and conditions of service.

In the face of this vicious Tory government, UNISON members need a General Secretary with a proven record of fighting for them, prepared to put their interests first.

As a lifelong socialist and anti-austerity activist I have every confidence in our member's ability to turn back the attacks coming from this Tory government.

I believe a General Secretary in touch with the members should live the same life as the members. For that reason, if elected, I would only take the average wage of a Unison member and donate the rest of the General Secretary salary to causes that build our movement.

The election of Jeremy Corbyn as leader of the Labour Party, on an anti-austerity programme, is a significant political development for public sector workers, but it is the beginning and not yet the end of a process that could easily be derailed by Corbyn's many opponents in the Labour Party.

In reality many thousands of UNISON members are employed by Labour councils who have merely passed on Tory cuts. This must stop.

That is why I call for greater flexibility in our political fund rules so that none of our funds go either directly or indirectly to politicians that attack unison or its members.

In the 1980's I was deeply involved in the struggle of the Liverpool City Council and Labour movement against Thatcher's cuts.

Thanks to that defiant stance thousands of local government jobs and services were saved. As General Secretary I would campaign for a similar approach to be taken by Labour councils.

For a number of years our union has called strike action in pursuit of various claims including pay. During the balloting process the leadership has made it clear it would take more than one day of strike action to shift the employers.

When the time comes for action this is never backed up with sustained industrial action. Instead our members have been subjected to a morale sapping cycle of one day actions followed by a settlement when the government offers a few crumbs. We must break with this cycle.

Our NHS is under attack like never before. We have all been inspired by the brave and militant stand taken by Junior Doctors. Unison is the largest health union in the country. It should be leading the battle to defend our NHS

The trade union movement as a whole is now under attack from the Tories with their Trade Union Bill. Unison should be playing the lead role in bringing other unions together with a strategy of industrial action for the widest possible resistance to this attack.

This union urgently needs change. I have fought for a single anti-Prentis candidate at the election; even offering to withdraw if that could be achieved. Unfortunately no agreement was reached.

On the basis of my past votes in General Secretary elections, my profile and program I believe that I am in the best position to deliver the change our members need.

## JUNIOR DOCTORS IN REVOLT OVER TORY ATTACKS



**Steve German**

Tory government plans in England to increase junior doctors' hours and cut pay - as part of its '24/7' NHS service - have incensed staff who already work long hours, including weekends. So much so that huge protests have been taking place, including solidarity events in Scotland,

and strike action is being contemplated, with the BMA doctors' union balloting its members.

Junior doctors insist that this is not simply about their pay - for some it could mean a 40% cut. By redefining 'unsocial hours', the government's new contracts could lead to unsafe conditions for NHS patients as a result of being treated by exhausted staff.

The government's attempt to impose a new contract on junior doctors is part of a wider attack on

public services aiming to push through an agenda of privatisation.

Doctors in frontline services like emergency medicine and general practice will be hardest hit financially by the new contract making these already understaffed areas stretched to breaking point.

The contract also removes vital monitoring to ensure the number of hours worked are safe for patients and doctors.

The BMA in England is currently balloting its members for strike ac-

tion and thousands marched on 17 October demanding an end to a contract that's unfair for staff and patients.

The junior doctors' fightback must be linked to the fight for fair pay for all NHS staff and an end to the creeping privatisation of NHS services.

Coordinated action of the health-care unions is needed to challenge this government's austerity agenda and fight for a democratically controlled NHS to meet the needs of our

## ANGRY EIS MEMBERS TO BALLOT FOR STRIKE ACTION OVER CUTS

**By an EIS member**

In May of this year, just before the summer break, West Dunbartonshire Council tried to sneak through more cuts to the education budget without proper consultation with the unions.

These cuts would see departments with little relevance to each other join together.

Home Economics would be joined with P.E., Art would be joined with Music and Business Administration and Computing would be joined with Technical.

Principle teachers would be removed and replaced with Faculty Leaders who, more often than not, would have no specialist knowledge of the subjects they would oversee.

This would mean that most of the workload, planning and teaching in these departments would fall on the

shoulders of the ordinary classroom teacher who, once again, would be expected to carry this out in their own unpaid time.

It would also see a cut in Pastoral Care teachers in an area of serious deprivation.

Of course this has nothing to do with improving educational provision but has everything to do with saving money.

Principle Teachers will lose their posts and potentially face a 20% decrease in salary.

This is a council with an underspend of over £1 million which recently tried to reduce weekly education time for Primary children.

This proposed restructure in secondary schools flies in the face of research by the EIS which shows that this contributes to a significant increase in teacher workload.

Indeed the EIS annual conference

in June unanimously called for industrial action in the face of this workload.

It is clear that the hard work and good will of teachers up and down the country has held the education system together despite the cuts.

Teachers in West Dunbartonshire, reflecting the declining morale and disenchantment of their colleagues have decided "enough is enough".

### support for action

A series of meetings by the EIS, to test feeling, found that around 300 secondary teachers called for an indicative ballot for industrial action.

This strength of feeling was mirrored in the fact that only 7 abstained and 2 teachers voted against. Indeed, two teachers on a school trip to Valencia texted their support for action.

This is the latest attack on the people of West Dunbartonshire by a Labour controlled council supported in their cuts by SNP councillors and the Scottish Government.

The indicative ballot will undoubtedly show overwhelming support for industrial action as will the official ballot which follows.

Teachers around the country will be watching their colleagues in West Dunbartonshire as a precursor for national action against all councils who continue to administer the Tories cuts

**The Socialist** is dedicated to reporting the struggles of workers. If you have a report for us please email it to [info@socialistpartyscotland.org.uk](mailto:info@socialistpartyscotland.org.uk) Phone 07889135533

### NATIONAL GALLERIES VICTORY

National Gallery strikers unanimously voted to back a deal that will see a protection of terms and conditions for PCS members at the National Gallery and agency staff brought in by Securitas.

The agreement includes the reinstatement of victimised union rep Candy Udwin and also retains recognition for the right of the union to negotiate on all terms and conditions.

The members took 109 days of strike action altogether.

This is a great victory for PCS as National Gallery bosses conceded almost all terms and conditions. Though the strike did not stop the privatisation, it has secured a number of vital concessions that protect workers' conditions and their union rights.

The inspiring victory demonstrates that strike action is effective and that strikes can win.

# KILL the anti-union BILL

**Brian Smith**  
*Glasgow City Unison secretary*

The proposed new Tory anti-union laws are a declaration of war against workers' and democratic rights. They would outlaw strikes if less than 50% of members voted in a ballot, with an even stricter rules for workers in 'essential' services.

This "40% rule" means that in huge parts of the public sector, transport services, etc that if half of the workers voted in a ballot then 80% would have to vote for strike action for the action to be lawful.

Under the new proposed law all who did not vote would be counted as voting against strike action.

We would have very few elected politicians if these rules were applied to them! Unions would also

have to give 14 days' notice of any strike action, double the current period.

The balloting requirements will make it difficult to take lawful strike action in large employers with many work sites as these are where ballot turnouts tends to be lower.

The UK Government also plans to make it legal to use agency staff to do the jobs of striking workers. This change would assist employers in their efforts to contain the impact of lawful strike action.

## 19th century

So even if a union meets all the pre-action requirements the employers would still have the option of hiring non-union labour to break

a strike. The Tories are attempting to roll back the right to strike by adopting methods from the 19th century.

Trade union representatives in the public sector also face cuts in facility time required to represent members and participate in collective bargaining arrangements.

The Tories also propose to cease the "check-off" scheme in the public sector which allows members to pay their union subscriptions directly from their wages.

This is a vindictive proposal designed to force the unions to redirect time and effort into getting members to sign-up to individual direct debits via their personal bank account.

The facility time and check-off attacks can be resisted by local councils and the Scottish Government

due to devolution arrangements in much of the public sector.

Both SNP and Labour politicians must come good on their commitments to defy these aspects of the bill if it becomes law.

Public sector employers under the control of local councils or the Scottish Government should also be challenged to publicly state that they will not hire agency workers to break strikes or use additional legal powers to challenge individual strike ballots.

## mass action

All workers in Scotland should be opposing these attacks by participating in local and national protests called by the unions. The unions

must also prepare for mass coordinated strike action, including a 24-hour general strike, especially if any union is threatened with legal action because of the new laws.

If these laws come in unchallenged, it will be a green light for employers to ride roughshod over workplace agreements and victimise union reps.

We need to step-up union organisation at workplace level and build solid networks across the unions for the battle ahead. It is no accident these plans were announced six weeks before Osborne's July budget.

The Tories - elected by just 24% of the electorate - fully understand that the UK unions, with over six million members, can defeat another wave of vicious cuts, if they take decisive mass action.

## what we stand for

### work and income

- For the unions to take immediate action 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.
- Reject Welfare to Work; for the right to decent benefits, training or a job without compulsion.
- A maximum 35-hour week without loss of pay.
- All workers, including part-timers, temps, casual and migrant workers to have trade union rates of pay, employment protection, sickness and holiday rights from the first day of

employment. End zero-hour contracts.

- Scrap the anti-union laws. Build fighting trade unions, democratically controlled by their members. Full-time officials should be regularly elected and receive no more than a worker's wage.
- An immediate 50% increase in the state retirement pension, as a step towards a living pension. Reinstate the link with average earnings now.

### environment

- Major research and investment into replacing fossil fuels with renewable energy. End the problems of early obsolescence and unrecycled waste.
- Public ownership of the energy generating industry. No to nuclear power. No to Trident
- A democratically planned, low fare, publicly owned transport system, to help end environmental pollution.

### public services

- Fight all cuts. No to privatisation. Renationalise all privatised utilities and services.
- Free, high quality education for all from nursery to university; with a living grant. No to the return of tuition fees in Scotland. Cancel the student debt and end the cuts in education funding.
- A socialist NHS to provide for everyone's health - free at the point of use and under democratic control. Kick out the private contractors from all parts of the NHS.
- Keep council housing public. For a massive programme of publicly owned housing to provide good quality homes at low rents.
- Fully fund all services and run them under accountable, democratic committees that include representatives of workers and service users.

### rights

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

### A mass working class party

- For a mass workers party that draws together workers, young people and activists from other movements to build a political alternative to the big business parties.
- Trade unions should disaffiliate from the Labour Party now and play a central role in helping to build a new workers' party.

### socialism and internationalism

- No to imperialist wars and occupations.
- Tax the super rich. For a socialist government that takes the major companies in Scotland into public ownership and the top 150 companies and banks that dominate the British economy. Run them under democratic working class control and management. Compensation should be paid only on the basis of proven need.
- For an independent socialist Scotland and a free and voluntary socialist federation of Scotland with England Wales and Ireland.
- A democratic socialist, environmentally secure plan of production based on the interests of the overwhelming majority of people.
- No to the bosses European Union. For a socialist Europe and a socialist world free from poverty.