

£1/£2 solidarity price

Issue 895

31 March - 6 April 2016



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# the Socialist

Formerly **Militant**

## EU referendum

- Why socialists should vote to leave the EU... > Pages 8-9
- ...But no unity with Tories & Ukip > Pages 12-13



## The fight against government's academies plan > Pages 2, 3, 4 and 11



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## We demand a REAL living wage

# £10/HR

# NOW



## No age exemption

**Jaime Davies**  
Bakers' union member

**S**ome workers will be excited for a pay rise in April as the National 'Living' Wage comes into force. But is it really a great deal for workers? Or is it fool's gold?

The minimum wage is rising from £6.70 an hour to £7.20. But here's the catch - it will only affect over-25s!

Even for them, a 50p increase is not enough to make up for years of rising costs of living. The chancellor, George Osborne, has said that the aim is for the living wage to be over £9 an hour by 2020. By then inflation will mean there is no real pay rise at all!

And the bosses will try to take advantage of this and divide workers. For example, where there are zero-hour contracts they could give fewer hours to the more 'expensive' over-25s compared to the 'cheaper' younger workers.

The Treasury tries to justify the age exemption by saying "the priority is to secure work and gain experience." The millionaires' cabinet seem to be ignoring the reality that prices and bills are the same whatever your age! How are young people supposed to be able to live independently, start a family or just enjoy life?

### Fast food rights

We have no option but to keep fighting for a £10 an hour minimum wage now for workers of all ages and an end to zero-hour contracts. We must also demand the right to organise in trade unions in workplaces that don't recognise them - including the multi-million pound fast food companies.

The Tories are only raising the minimum wage at all because they have felt pressure from trade unions and campaigns like Fast Food Rights, which was launched by the bakers' union BFAWU, Youth Fight for Jobs and others.

We must be united and organised to continue fighting for a real pay rise that puts workers' needs before the bosses' greed. We can win a real living wage and oust this hated and divided government.

The Trade Union Congress must show a lead in coordinating action by other workers with the junior doctors, as a step towards a 24-hour general strike.

Join the protest in your local area on 1 April for a proper living wage, decent contracts and trade union rights. If nothing is planned near you yet, consider organising a protest or meeting.

- See details of local events - [www.youthfightforjobs.com](http://www.youthfightforjobs.com)
- Let Youth Fight for Jobs know about your plans - [youthfightforjobs@gmail.com](mailto:youthfightforjobs@gmail.com)
- Send reports to Youth Fight for Jobs and [editors@socialistparty.org.uk](mailto:editors@socialistparty.org.uk)



# ACADEMY CHAIN AXED IN HEAD'S PAY SCANDAL

**Ted Woodley**  
 Birmingham Central Socialist Party

The poster boy for the 'academy' system has fallen from grace, in a scandal which exposes the dangers of Tory backdoor privatisation plans.

Birmingham's most famous 'super-head', Liam Nolan, is rarely out of the news. But this latest scandal has rocked his firm, 'Perry Beeches the Academy Trust', which runs several schools in the city.

Perry Beeches had been due to open two more schools by 2017. Now, the Department for Education is going to strip the firm of five of its schools. But, having learned nothing, it will hand them over to yet another academy chain - this time run by a senior Coventry Labour councillor, Blairite David Kershaw.

Teachers and the Socialist Party have warned from the off that academies and 'free schools' hand our children's education over to unaccountable profit-seekers.

There is no credible evidence that standards are higher than in council-run schools. Academies also place senior managers, often anti-union bullies, on a pedestal, and pay them bloated salaries.

One of Nolan's free schools was placed in 'special measures' by schools inspector Ofsted - only 20 months after opening. Despite this, the Tories and wider political establishment continued to laud him as an educational crusader, single-handedly driving up standards.

Prime Minister David Cameron has praised him, and Birmingham Labour MP Jack Dromey described him on Twitter as "one of Britain's finest heads".

However, following an investigation, the government's Education Funding Agency has revealed the lengths to which Nolan has gone to line his own pockets.

For his role as 'executive head-

teacher', Nolan gets £120,000 a year. But he is also the chief executive officer of the multi-academy trust. Instead of drawing a salary for this role, during the last two years the trust made payments totalling £160,000 to a company called 'Nexus' to supply a CEO.

Nexus then subcontracted this 'work' to another company called Liam Nolan Ltd - whose sole director is... you guessed it!

It gets worse. The report goes on to reveal that the trust handed over £1.3 million to Nexus over two years "without a written contract or a formal procurement exercise to demonstrate value for money."

How can all this be explained? You need to ask the trust's accounting officer. However, this post is also held by the same Liam Nolan. How does he find the time to teach anything?

## Stink

The stink continues as even the trust's chair of governors had "joint business interests" with a director of Nexus. This was not disclosed in the register of interests.

Nolan defended himself by telling the BBC last week: "I'm a teacher not a businessman." You'd be forgiven for thinking otherwise.

He has even stated in the past that he considers himself underpaid. "Compared to other industries whose bosses run similar budgets I would say the salary is low in comparison," he told the Birmingham Mail in 2014.

In a separate case, the trust has been ordered to repay over £118,000 after wrongly claiming money for free school meals.

The Tories intend to scrap democratically elected governors and council oversight of schools entirely by 2022. The Socialist Party opposes this. We fight for schools to be publicly owned and run, under the democratic control and management of teachers, parents, students and the local community.

business advisor, tech boss Anthony Watson, suggests a minimum wage of £35,000.

As the threat of political action against them grows, more and more capitalists argue for restraint. Better to toss us some scraps than risk a movement against the system itself.

The Socialist would welcome the above measures. But we fight for public ownership and democratic workers' control - or what the bosses grant today, they'll take tomorrow.



photo Sarah Wrack

# TEACHERS AND SCHOOL STUDENTS MARCH AGAINST FORCED ACADEMIES



Socialist Students leading chants on the London march photo Sarah Wrack

**Paul Callanan**  
 Socialist Party London

Thousands of teachers marched through London on 23 March against Tory plans to force all schools to become academies. Thousands more marched in other cities across the country.

The youthful demonstration's anger was directed mainly at Education Secretary Nicky Morgan. Teachers who spoke to the Socialist Party on the protest were furious at what they rightly see as the latest attempt to destroy state education.

A contingent of school students organised by Youth Fight for Jobs and Socialist Students backed their teachers, leading chants of "Say hey! Say ho! Nicky Morgan's got to go!" and "Teachers and doctors: unite and fight!"

The march finished with a massive rally at the Emmanuel Centre, just yards from the Department for Education. The 1,000-capacity hall was packed to the gills.

The most warmly received speaker was a junior doctor. She spoke

about the need for teachers and junior doctors to coordinate action.

Teachers met this with a standing ovation and chants of "the teachers and doctors will never be defeated!" Kevin Courtney, deputy general secretary of the National Union of Teachers (NUT), was also cheered when he announced the union was prepared to take industrial action against Tory plans. NUT conference has now approved this stance: see our update on page 4.

The young, vibrant protest showed there is an appetite for action among teachers. The Socialist Party agrees the NUT should immediately begin discussions with doctors' union BMA on coordinated strikes.

This should be a step towards united action across the whole public sector, which is under all-out attack from the Tories and the Blairites. Such action could start to draw in private sector unions, and workers not currently in unions, and could finish off this weak and divided government.

## > Teachers march in Coventry and Nottingham: reports on page 11

The Socialist Party is the leading force campaigning for coordinated strikes to end attacks on workers. If you want to see this achieved, you should join. Visit [socialistparty.org.uk/join](http://socialistparty.org.uk/join) today!

# DISABLED ACTIVISTS SHAME TORY CUTTERS

**Amalia**  
 Disabled worker

Disabled people protested against Tory attacks on our benefits in parliament on 23 March.

I joined around 40 people to protest during Prime Minister's Questions. Campaign group Disabled People Against Cuts (Dpac) called the action. "Cut Osborne", "No more deaths from benefit cuts" and "Is this how to treat disabled people?" were some of the slogans on banners.

This took place in the aftermath of Work and Pensions Secretary Iain "IDS" Duncan Smith's resignation. He hypocritically claimed he resigned because of cuts to disability benefits. Replacement Stephen Crabb is no better. And IDS voted through the cuts budget no problem.

## ESA

He also backed the £30 a week cut to 'Employment and Support Allowance' for disabled people. The Tories forced this through the Lords, against strong opposition, on 7 March.

Chancellor George Osborne has subsequently backed down on one attack - cuts to 'Personal Independence Payments'. See [socialistparty.org.uk](http://socialistparty.org.uk), 'Tories cut disabled dignity for tax breaks', for the Socialist's coverage ahead of the climbdown.

This is a victory for all activists. It was supported by public outcry and a tremendous naming and shaming campaign in the mass media.

This led to a number of Tory MPs publicly opposing the cuts. Three were asked to resign their positions as patrons of disability charities, including Tory London mayoral candidate Zac Goldsmith.

Despite the victory, there was lots of well-justified anger in the crowd. Shadow Chancellor John



John McDonnell greets Dpac protesters photo Amalia

McDonnell greeted the protesters, saying all Jeremy Corbyn's questions to David Cameron were on cuts in benefits and the disability allowance.

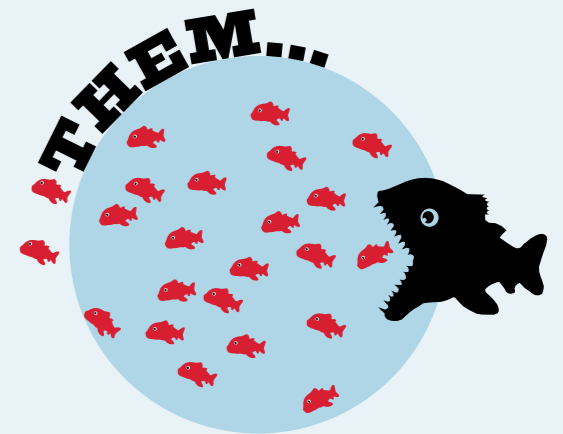
This is good. So was John's warm embrace of a Dpac activist. However, Labour and the unions have the power to do more than just ask difficult questions. Disability allowance cuts stirred the Tory pot, and IDS popped out.

This shows that - just like when they retreated over cutting tax credits - a section of the Tories is worried about anger over continuing austerity and growing inequality.

Jeremy Corbyn and the Trade Union Congress should organise mass demonstrations and coordinated strikes against this weak and divided government. Then the rest of the Tories would have to follow IDS.

The Socialist Party says that disabled people have the right to play a full part in society.

- Reverse all cuts to benefits and services for disabled people
- Benefits to reflect the extra costs of overcoming the barriers disabled people face
- For well-paid jobs and liveable benefits for all, without compulsion



## ■ Housing hypocrisy

Housing association bosses who oversaw a drop in affordable home building have received fat raises, according to the Times.

The top 50 associations built 6.3% fewer homes in the past 12 months. Many chiefs have had inflation-busting pay rises of 10%, and earn an average of £200,000 a year. Top bosses can earn up to £350,000.

Yvonne Arrowsmith, head of East Thames Group, presided over just 153 new builds - a 45% fall from the previous year. She 'earned' £155,000 for her efforts.

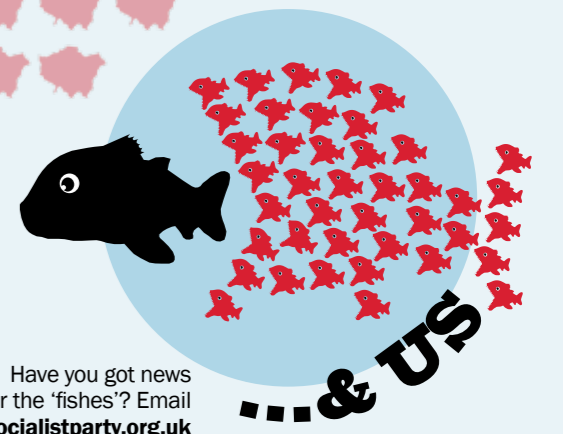
While chief execs rake it in, the housing crisis only worsens. The 'market failure' is most acute in London. Nearly a third of boroughs - nine out of 32 - have zero properties for sale at less than the UK average of £191,812.

Only in Bexley, an outer south-east London borough, is there a property available for under £100,000. The average London price is £530,409. That's nearly 40 years' full-time salary after tax on the Tories' new National 'Living' Wage for over-25s.

The Socialist campaigns for a mass programme of publicly owned home construction, immediate rent controls, and a £10 an hour minimum wage now with no exceptions.

**1** Number of London boroughs where you can buy a home for less £100,000

> Fighting the great tax robbery - a socialist programme: pages 14 and 15



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

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

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# NUT TO BALLOT FOR ACTION OVER ACADEMIES

Delegates at the National Union of Teachers (NUT) national conference this Easter decisively voted to ballot for strike action against the government's 'white paper' plan to force every school to become an academy by 2020.

The agreed motion called for a ballot for discontinuous action to begin with a one-day strike before the end of the summer term and to seek to coordinate action with other unions.

The strike ballot decision follows widespread demonstrations and public protests by teachers' unions, students and parents (see page 2), and also a speech by Jeremy Corbyn at NUT conference condemning forced academisation.

## Heckled

Meanwhile, Tory education secretary Nicky Morgan was heckled by delegates when she spoke at the Nasuwt union conference. To much laughter she admitted "the government did not always get things right!"

The Monday of NUT conference was dominated by a debate on the government's Prevent strategy. This places an obligation on teachers to refer students suspected of 'extremism' to the police.

Speakers in the debate were unequivocal in their commitment to protect their pupils. They pointed out that the best way to do this is by encouraging an environment where students feel free to discuss with teachers. The Prevent strategy instead has a chilling effect on free



Thousands march in London against academies photo Martin Powell-Davies

discussion. Speakers also pointed out the strategy disproportionately targets Muslim students.

A Socialist Party conference leaflet spelt out how the NUT should prepare members for strike action and in defence of state education following the ballot. Extracts are printed below.

"Teachers have been waiting for a long time to mount a serious fight-back and, coming out of conference with a ballot for discontinuous strike action to build for, we have the

chance to do just that.

"NUT members need to know that strike action in the summer term is not just 'letting off steam' but the beginning of a serious struggle against the government.

"It is a ballot for discontinuous action. We must explain the fact that the amended motion talks about action in the autumn term and doesn't end in July, despite the media reporting it as just one day.

"Reps also need to point out the call for coordination with the

junior doctors, not just leaving this to national leaders but building local links between teachers and doctors in preparation for industrial action. The government, beset by crisis, will be fighting on two fronts - health and education - and that will weaken them.

"The Conservative government is on the ropes. We must show to members that the civil war in the party over the EU, Iain Duncan Smith's resignation and the pressure of pushing through their agenda

enables the trade union movement to strike a decisive blow.

"The public mood is changing and our strike comes in a very different political context to our last disputes. We must have confidence that parents, students and the rest of the community will back us.

"In the same way that the junior doctors' fight for a fair contract is linked to defending the NHS, our strike is about defending state education - a social movement with industrial action at its core."

## Red card for Greenwich Labour councillors!

### Libraries' cutbacks

Nearly 8,000 jobs have been axed in libraries in six years and 343 have been closed due to spending cuts, with another 111 scheduled to shut this year according to the BBC. The East Midlands has lost 36% of its jobs in libraries, the biggest percentage drop in the UK. In Wales, there was a fall of 21%.



Greenwich libraries

Library campaigners in Greenwich 'red carded' Labour councillors who refused to sign a pledge committing to do all they can to keep libraries open.

The lobby was organised following the end of a 'consultation exercise' into proposals to scrap the mobile library. To their shame, only one Labour councillor was willing to say that they will fight for the library service.

On the same night, the council was awarding the freedom of the Borough to ex-Greenwich Council leader Chris Roberts. His legacy is the Tall Ships Festival which now takes place in Greenwich each year (at a cost of over £2 million).

So while libraries are closed, the people of Greenwich can console themselves by watching tall ships sail past once a year!

The campaign to save the mobile library will now escalate to make sure that this precious and much valued service is protected.

### South London fights back!

NSSN public meeting, 13 April at 7.30pm, Karibu Centre, 7 Gresham Road, SW9 7PH

## Lambeth: Librarians walk out over cuts and privatisation

James Ivens

Librarians in Lambeth, south London, struck on 22 and 23 March against attacks on four of the borough's ten libraries.

Members of public sector union Unison shut down every site in protest against the Labour-run council's cuts and privatisation plans. A consultative ballot for walkouts across the entire council workforce is underway.

### Greenwich and Bromley

The Socialist Party urges Lambeth Unison members to vote for borough-wide strikes. This could save the libraries, and start to force the council back on other attacks on workers. Coordinating action with threatened library workers in nearby Greenwich and Bromley would further advance all these struggles. Lambeth Council, a stronghold

of the Blair-Mandelson 'Progress' organisation, wants to sell facilities and staff to private gym company GLL.

Previous actions have already forced the Blairites to scale back attacks from five libraries to four. The Tate South Lambeth Library, which serves several working class housing estates around Oval, is safe - for now.

An unofficial strike on 18 November last year countered instructions to start removing books from shelves. Several lobbies of councillors' surgeries, cabinet meetings and full council meetings have made Labour cutters very uncomfortable. Community groups are planning more direct action to defend the libraries if necessary.

The National Shop Stewards Network (NSSN) is holding a south London public meeting in April to help bring struggling workers together.



On the picket line at Arnos Grove photo Martin Reynolds

## Museum workers strike to defend pay

Dave Reid

PCS members at all seven sites of the National Museum of Wales have taken strike action over management attempts to cut the pay of its frontline workers by as much as 15%.

On Good Friday workers at the Big Pit Mining Museum came out. On Saturday National Wool Museum workers at Drefach were out, along with the National Waterfront Museum in Swansea where workers marched from their picket line to join the protest against the National Front White Pride event (see page 11).

On Sunday it was the turn of the National Slate Museum at Llanberis and the National History Museum (Museum of Welsh Life) at St Fagans. On Bank Holiday Monday workers

at the National Museum Cardiff were out as were PCS members at the Big Pit Mining Museum again.

Museum management are attempting to remove the unsocial hours payments received by front house, mainly lower paid workers. Of course, top managers are not cutting their own wages. Workers also believe that the management have plans to casualise conditions further.

### Costly mistake

The museum's budget has been hit but the workers are asking: why is it that the lowest paid workers are taking the cuts? Especially as a series of management foul ups have cost the museums hundreds of thousands of pounds. The high-handed and aggressive management style has not bothered to consult the workers on the ground which has led to costly mistakes.

A report on management bullying in the museum commissioned by the museum trust has so far been kept under wraps and shelved.

However it will be harder for management to force through the cuts because several rounds of successive strike action have built the strongest union organisation around the PCS the museums have ever had.

Museums in Wales are run by a board of trustees, the majority of whom are appointed by the Welsh government.

A number of Welsh Assembly members have expressed their support for the museum workers. But

## Tube workers' strike shuts Piccadilly Line

Tube workers operating the busy Piccadilly Line shut it down for 24 hours on 23/24 March in their strike against "bullying, harassment and intimidation". The RMT transport union has condemned management for refusing to address serious issues at the heart of the dispute.

RMT and Socialist Party member Paul received this text message

from his union rep: "Congratulations for your support of our strike today. This gives your reps a very strong hand to now press for further meaningful talks with management knowing that the members are 100% behind the issues... The other two strikes in April are still on and will remain so unless management negotiate seriously. Our unity is our strength. Stay united!"

## May Day greetings with the Socialist

Formerly **Militant**

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

Help the Socialist continue that work with a May Day greeting this year from readers of the Socialist in your union or campaign.

Deadline is Wednesday 22 April but you will get a 25% discount and

only have to pay the prices in **bold** if you send your greeting before Wednesday 15 April.

Spread £800 **£600** - full page £500 **£375** - half page £300 **£225** - quarter page £170 **£127.50** - 1/8 page £90 **£67.50** - 1/16 page (text only) £50 **£37.50** - 1/32 page (text only) £30 **£22.50** - 'Small box' (name only) £20 **£15**

Phone 020 8988 8781  
 Email jamesivens@socialistparty.org.uk  
 Pay greeting online www.socialistparty.org.uk/mayday

the government should make it clear that the anti-union attacks on workers' living standards are not acceptable. It should say that if it does not change either the museum trustees will be replaced or better still the charter will be changed so that there is an elected board with representatives of the workers on the board.

But a wider question is posed by

this dispute. The history of Wales is presented in our museums and our modern history is dominated by the struggles of working people with anti-union employers against low pay and oppressive working conditions.

Can we leave the telling of that story to a management that believes that it is fair to drive down the wages and working conditions of its own workers?

## [News in brief]

### Tata announcement

As we go to press, steelworkers - particularly in the UK's biggest plant Port Talbot - are waiting to see the outcome of meetings of owner Tata on the future of steelmaking in this country. Thousands of jobs have been lost in the steel industry over the last 12 months, including 750 at Port Talbot - nearly a fifth of the plant's workforce. Socialist Party Wales members have been campaigning in the town against threats to the works and further job cuts, arguing that the Labour-led Welsh Assembly government should be nationalising Port Talbot. In addition, Jeremy Corbyn and John McDonnell should be calling on all Tata's UK operations to be taken into public ownership to save jobs and defend communities.

### Save BIS Sheffield

Thousands of people are expected to join a PCS march through Sheffield on 9 April to protest against the loss of hundreds of jobs in the city. At the end of January the Department for Business Innovation and Skills (BIS) announced plans to close its Sheffield site by January 2018, losing 250 jobs. Taken together with other closures, including HMRC (Revenue and Customs) Sheffield, the overall loss of jobs to the city is 500.

### Dalston Rio strike

Bectu members at Dalston's Rio cinema are preparing to vote in a ballot for industrial action after talks at Acas failed to resolve their long-running pay dispute. Management and Bectu representatives met at Acas on 7 March but the talks ended without any movement on management's part. 83% of members voted in a consultative ballot, 94% of them wanted the chance to decide whether to strike.

### Losing £3,500

Electricians and plumbers working at two NHS trusts in the north west are working to rule and banning overtime in long-running disputes which have resulted in them losing about £3,500 a year.

### Read more online at



socialistparty.org.uk





### Easter 1916 Dublin uprising commemorated

The Irish state put on a show commemorating the Easter 1916 Dublin uprising against British rule. However, this official pageant represented a sanitised version of that watershed moment in Ireland's history. Glossed over was the pivotal role of revolutionary socialist James Connolly and the workers' Irish Citizens Army militia.

A comprehensive article on the uprising - A revolt against imperial power and war - by Cillian Gillespie of the Socialist Party (CWI Ireland) can be read on [www.socialistworld.net](http://www.socialistworld.net)

The Socialist will be carrying an extensive feature on the uprising in the issue covering the actual date of the 100th anniversary (24-29 April).



### Kshama Sawant addresses Sanders rally

'Democratic socialist' Bernie Sanders secured landslide victories in Alaska, Hawaii and Washington state primaries in his bid to secure the Democratic Party presidential nomination over Wall Street, corporate establishment rival, Hillary Clinton.

Sanders addressed a 20,000-strong rally in Seattle at which Kshama Sawant also spoke and called for a "new party of the 99%". Kshama is the city's Socialist Alternative (co-thinkers of the Socialist Party) councillor who spearheaded the introduction of a \$15 an hour minimum wage. A video and transcript of her rally speech is available on [www.socialistalternative.org](http://www.socialistalternative.org)

Kshama was quoted in the Guardian following her protest earlier at a Clinton rally where she held aloft a sign which read: "I'm not with her".

# BELGIUM: FAR RIGHT ATTACK VIGIL FOR BRUSSELS VICTIMS



The far right were allowed to intimidate people at the Place de la Bourse

**Eyewitness report from members of Linkse Socialistische Partij/ Parti Socialiste de Lutte**  
Socialist Party's sister organisation in Belgium

What a disgrace. That was the dominant feeling in Belgium and worldwide when confronted with the images of far right-led hooligans on Sunday 27 March in Brussels. A quiet and dignified vigil, with family members of victims of the 22 March Isis terrorist attacks present, was disrupted by a group of extreme right-wing troublemakers who were escorted by police to the vigil.

At the vigil, they were greeted with boos and a lot of disbelief. How could the police escort a group of close to 500 hooligans to the vigil? They had gathered in the morning in Vilvoorde, 20 kilometres away from Brussels, and both the local authority and police were aware of their plans in advance.

When they arrived in Brussels they immediately attacked a night shop and gave fascist salutes. Still,

the police decided to let them go to the vigil. Once again the police tops blunder and the political leaders deny responsibility.

On the Saturday a call was made by the national government to Belgians not to participate in the planned gathering that would have brought probably many thousands of people to the centre of Brussels.

Unfortunately the organisers responded by cancelling the event. This meant that only several hundred people were present in the Place de la Bourse when the far right-led march arrived.

#### Vigil

The people present at the vigil were representative of the international and multicultural character of the city. Immigrant kids were sharing homemade biscuits. Everything was peaceful.

But this was until a group of hooligans arrived under police escort. Those present were bewildered and reacted by chanting anti-fascist slogans. A young woman began to hyperventilate and had to be transported away by ambulance. Mothers with children tried to flee as



**It cannot be left to the establishment politicians and their media to express the anger over terrorist attacks - they have no real answers**

quickly as possible. Relatives of the victims were hit despite being there to grieve the dead and injured from the terrorist attack.

The hooligans were clearly organised by the far right. We saw a member of the Vlaams Belang's local leadership in Ghent among the hooligans. They chanted racist slogans. Immigrants were told to leave.

Some thugs trampled over flowers and candles of the vigil in order to take over the steps outside the Stock Exchange and chase away the mourners present. Only then did the police start to act.



Anti-fascists give far-right hooligans the thumbs down

The call by the government not to hold the original planned march was itself remarkable.

Last year, while the terrorist threat was at level 4, permission was given at the end of November for the Christmas market to go ahead.

But now a march of collective grief and outrage after the Brussels terrorist attacks was declared not possible, even though the threat level has been lowered from four to three.

What happened on Sunday was a disgrace and also a warning. Members of LSP/PSL and other left activists were present at the vigil, discussing and distributing a message

of solidarity, against terror and hate. That was the slogan on our posters that were widely taken by the people present to express their feelings.

#### Left alternative

But the labour movement also needs to respond. We cannot leave it to the establishment politicians and their media to express the anger and outrage as a result of the terrorist attacks - they have no real answers. If the labour movement does not respond, the far right will attempt to fill that political vacuum.

We are pushing to organise an active response from workplaces and the rest of society. The organised

labour movement must address the concerns about questions of security by discussions in the workplaces, but also needs to act in the streets.

We cannot allow the far-right hooligans to gain confidence. They will use racism and Islamophobia to first divide and then attack the working class.

They will inject hatred in society at a moment that we need the maximum amount of unity against terrorism, hate and oppression.

We need to build a movement that argues for a socialist alternative to this capitalist system that creates the conditions which breeds these evils.



Police escorted Nazi-saluting far right thugs to the peace vigil

## Kazakhstan: Treatment of political prisoners condemned



Nazarbayev with former highly paid consultant Tony Blair

#### CWI reporters

On 10 March, MEPs in Strasbourg agreed a condemnation of the Kazakhstan's President Nazarbayev regime's treatment of political prisoners. Although the European Parliament has few powers (key decisions are made by council of ministers of member states) it puts more political pressure on the Kazakhstan regime.

Nazarbayev had brought forward the general election due later in the year to 20 March. As usual it was totally rigged (all six parties participating support Nazarbayev) but his aim is to try and claim a renewed 'legitimacy' and avoid mass protests when he steps up his programme of new privatisations and steep price rises.

Once again this dictator will want the workers and poor people of Kazakhstan to pay for the difficulties brought about by the fall in world oil prices.

#### Oppression

Over the years, many who oppose the dictatorship have been jailed. Administrative detention for two or three weeks is liberally doled out to those who organise or participate in protests - on the streets or on-line! Those who organise strikes or opposition parties can be sent down for years.

Vladimir Kozlov, mentioned in the European parliamentary debate, was the leader of an opposition capitalist party, Alga. While the CWI has fundamental political disagreements with Alga, we stand for the defence of democratic rights.

He was sentenced to seven and a half years in prison soon after the December 2011 massacre of striking oil workers in Zhanaozen.

His 'crimes' were "inciting social discord", making "calls for the overthrow of the constitutional order" and "the establishment of a criminal organisation".

Vadim Kuramshin was a lawyer who exposed the barbaric treatment of inmates in Kazakhstan's prisons. In his trial on false charges of extortion, a jury actually found him innocent. He was released, only to be re-arrested and imprisoned for 12 years in a 'strict regime' colony.

Aron Atabek, a writer and poet, was involved with hundreds of protesters in the struggle to save a shanty town called Shanyrak from destruction by bulldozers in 2006. He was arrested and accused of killing a policeman and sent down for no less than 18 years. 'Witnesses' in his trial later confessed to being blackmailed to give false evidence against Aron, but no retrial has been granted.

The resolution discussed in Strasbourg alludes to the deteriorating situation for journalists and activists in Kazakhstan. It points to the regime being particularly sensitive in the run-up to 'Expo 2017' - the International Fair in Astana, the country's capital.

A model resolution to send to the Kazakhstan authorities, supporting the demands of the Euro-parliamentarians in relation to the three named political prisoners, and going further to demand their release, can be found on the website of Campaign Kazakhstan ([www.campaignkazakhstan.org](http://www.campaignkazakhstan.org)).

The imprisoned activists and their legal representatives would like to see copies of these resolutions and they would be particularly encouraged by a flood of personal letters to them at the addresses also given there.







# WHY SOCIALISTS SHOULD VOTE TO LEAVE THE EU

Hannah Sell, Socialist Party deputy general secretary, answers some common questions about the socialist case for exit.

photo Creative Commons/Wikimedia

## 1) Isn't it only right-wing Tories and Ukip who want to leave the EU?

No. In the media the referendum campaign has been completely dominated by right-wing, pro-big business politicians. The voice of working class people has not been heard. In fact, however, a number of trade unions - including the militant transport workers' union the RMT - are campaigning for exit. So is the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC) of which the Socialist Party is a part.

“Our campaign has nothing in common with the right-wing nationalist politicians who speak for exit in the media. In fact TUSC is running a campaign to demand that none of the official 'leave' campaigns receive state funding to peddle their right-wing nationalist reasons for exit.”

Our campaign has nothing in common with the right-wing nationalist politicians who speak for exit in the media. In fact TUSC is running a campaign to demand that none of the official 'leave' campaigns receive state funding to peddle their right-wing nationalist reasons for exit.

In the last European referendum campaign, back in 1975, socialists like Tony Benn were prominent campaigners for voting for exit. They understood that the EU (then called the Common Market) was exactly that - an agreement between the different capitalist classes of Europe in order to create the largest possible market and maximise their profits. Since then a succession of EU treaties have further enshrined privatisation and attacks on workers' rights into the fabric of the EU.

It is only necessary to look at the way the institutions of the EU have treated the people of Greece - forcing endless austerity on them which has lowered incomes by an average of one third and led to mass unemployment - to see that the EU acts in the interests of the 1% not the 99%.

■ See 'Exit left is not exit right' on page 13



Paul Murphy, member of the Socialist Party Ireland and former MEP photo Senan

## 2) You say that the EU enshrines privatisation and attacks on workers' rights but isn't it better to stay in and try to reform it?

Some politicians who agree with many of the criticisms of the EU listed above (Green MP Caroline Lucas, for example) say that it is better to stay in the EU and try to reform it. The question they can't answer, however, is how the EU could be reformed.

Voters across Europe get to vote for MEPs who sit in the European Parliament; but that is an almost completely powerless body. Of course, when socialists are elected to the European Parliament they have been able to use it as a platform to campaign in defence of workers' rights. But it is not the European Parliament but the

European Council that takes the vast majority of EU decisions.

The European Council is made up of the heads of government of the 28 nation states of the EU - the EU really is a capitalists' club. The governments of Europe have no interest in handing some of their power to the European Parliament.

It can't be totally excluded that a powerful European-wide mass movement could force them to do so - but a movement that powerful could also achieve far more than the reforming the EU, it could put a socialist federation of Europe on the agenda.

“Voters across Europe get to vote for MEPs who sit in the European Parliament; but that is an almost completely powerless body”

## 3) But isn't it more internationalist to be in the EU together with other nations?

The EU is not internationalist. On the contrary, it is 'Fortress Europe', doing everything it can - including allowing refugees to drown in the Mediterranean - in order to prevent those fleeing for their lives from Syria and elsewhere being able to enter the EU.

Nor does not it foster European solidarity within the EU; rather it increases tensions between different nations. It is a capitalist project attempting to impose unity between nations from above, in the interests of the capitalist classes of Europe, particularly those from the most powerful nations.

Over the last eight years the institutions of the EU - the hated 'troika' - have imposed terrible austerity and privatisation on the economically weaker countries of the EU - above all Greece, but also Portugal, Ireland, Cyprus, Latvia, Romania and others. The governments of these and other EU countries have used EU rules as the excuse for the misery they have imposed on their populations. The inevitable result is an increase of national feelings as people rebel against endless EU austerity.

Real internationalism is workers' solidarity across Europe. Working class people have huge common interests. We are facing the same fight against low pay, casualisation, cuts and privatisation in every country of Europe. Successful movements in one country would have huge support, and be emulated, across the continent. That is why the institutions of the EU were desperate

to force the left-led Syriza government in Greece to its knees in order to demonstrate to workers in other EU countries that there was no alternative to endless austerity.

Under huge pressure from world capitalism the Syriza government capitulated - and is now implementing further savage austerity - to which the Greek working class have responded with general strike action.

But it didn't have to be that way. If the Syriza government had stood firm and implemented socialist policies it would have been kicked out of the Eurozone, and even the EU. But, by showing a real alternative to austerity, it would have inspired millions of workers across Europe to fight for socialist policies in their own countries.

Socialists are internationalists; we want the maximum possible unity across Europe. But this is only possible on the basis of democratic socialism, eradicating poisonous divisions through real working class internationalism, leading to a voluntary socialist federation across the continent.



Greek Prime Minister Tsipras photo Youtube

## 4) Doesn't the EU Social Chapter give workers more rights?

For decades now the majority of trade union leaders in Britain have argued that the European Social Chapter provides important protection for workers in Britain.

In reality the Social Chapter, while it potentially gave some extra legal protection on certain issues, was never much more than a fig leaf to disguise the reality of the European Union as an employers' union.

What protects workers in Britain - and in other countries - is not the European Social Chapter but our collective strength. If, over the last decades, the

**21%** Fall in collective bargaining rights across the ten EU countries hardest hit by crisis

trade union leaders had led a determined struggle against austerity and privatisation, we could have won far more than the few crumbs provided by the Social Chapter.

Let's remember Major's Tory government was allowed to simply 'opt out' of the Social Chapter when it was first introduced. When Labour was elected in 1997 they opted into the Social Chapter. However, Britain's anti-trade union laws, both the already draconian existing laws and the even more brutal ones currently going through parliament, are not deemed to have contravened the

Social Chapter.

And after many years of neo-liberal EU treaties and endless austerity, even the fig leaf of the Social Chapter is now in tatters. EU member states that have been 'bailed out' by the troika have suffered the biggest fall in collective bargaining rights in the world. According to the International Labour Organisation (the ILO) collective bargaining rights have fallen by an average of 21% across the ten EU countries hardest hit by the economic crisis, and have fallen by a massive 63% in Romania and 45% in Greece.

## 5) What would exit mean for workers in Britain who are citizens of other EU countries?



photo Creative Commons/Ed Yourdon

The Socialist Party is campaigning for the right of all those working in Britain to be able to continue to do so with full legal rights. We understand, however, that many workers from other EU countries are worried that a vote to leave might put their rights in danger.

In fact, in the short term their rights would not change. For two years, or until UK has negotiated a leaving deal with the EU, the existing situation would remain.

It is not likely a deal would be negotiated quickly. Losing the referendum would be a disaster for Cameron and would almost certainly mean he would be forced to resign. The Tories could split. It is even possible that they could be forced from power.

There would therefore be plenty of time for the workers' movement to organise against any threat to EU citizens in Britain. It is possible that - if the government was to fall - a Jeremy Corbyn-led Labour Party could come to power.

It is important therefore that Jeremy Corbyn makes clear that his government would defend the rights of all EU citizens. And of course EU workers who are members of trade unions will have far greater protection in the workplace than they get from EU law.

Even if the Tories remain in power, it is not at all certain that a post-exit government would want to threaten the rights to work in Britain of EU citizens. There are two million British

nationals settled in other EU countries who could then be threatened with expulsion from their country of residence.

In addition British capitalism has used super-exploited EU workers as a means to try and lower wages of all workers in Britain. The capitalist class would like this to continue.

However, inside or outside of the EU, the Tory government is attempting to increase the exploitation of EU workers by cutting their rights to claim state benefits. In doing this they are attempting to divide and rule - falsely laying the blame for austerity at the door of migrants.

The workers' movement needs to counter this by explaining that it is only big business that gains when we are divided. When workers from Eastern Europe are paid less than the rate for the job it is the bosses that gain. The only solution to this is a united struggle for all workers to get the rate for the job - with a £10 hour minimum wage.

This fight also has to defend the right of EU workers to claim benefits when they need to. In fact workers from Eastern Europe are less likely to claim benefits than those who were born here (6.6% compared to 16%) but if those workers don't have the right to claim when they need to it will make it easier for big business to force them to work for lower wages, strengthening the 'race to the bottom' for us all.

## 6) So if socialists should support leaving the EU why is Jeremy Corbyn voting to remain in?

In the last referendum on Europe, in 1975, Jeremy Corbyn voted for exit. During his leadership campaign last summer he refused to promise to call for a Remain vote, instead suggesting a conference of the workers' movement to discuss a position.

Once he was elected leader of the Labour Party, however, he came under enormous pressure from the right wing of the Labour Party - and from the capitalist class - to call for a vote for Remain. Shadow Foreign Minister Hilary Benn, before he tried to blackmail Corbyn over Syria, threatened to resign unless Corbyn buckled on the issue of the EU. Unfortunately, he did buckle.

If Jeremy Corbyn was heading up a left exit campaign, it would have transformed the debate. The possibility of Leave winning and the Tories being evicted from power would have been far greater.

Instead, unfortunately, Labour is largely trailing behind the Tories. Alan Johnson MP, who is heading the 'Labour in for Britain' campaign, even said that he wanted to prevent Cameron having to resign!

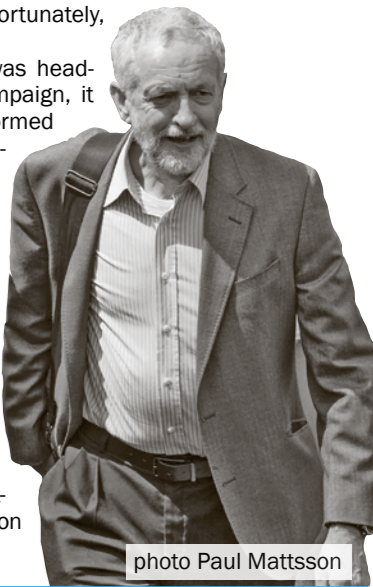


photo Paul Mattsson

## 7) Are you saying that - unless we leave the EU - it will never be possible to implement socialist policies in Britain?

No, of course not. The Socialist Party opposes the EU because of its laws and institutions but they could not stop a determined workers' government supported by a mass movement from carrying out socialist policies. However, they are another hurdle to overcome, with real consequences for the day-to-day struggles to defend working class interests.

Join the fightback! Join the Socialists!

socialistparty.org.uk/join 020 8988 8777

@socialist\_party text 07761 818 206 /CWISocialistParty





Featured letter:

# 'Universal Jobmatch' con 'RABBIT TRAIL' OF RECURRING, NON- EXISTENT JOB ADS

## One of Iain Duncan Smith's statistics

'U'niversal Jobmatch' is a website jobseekers are encouraged to use to find work. Unemployment benefit claimants can face an obligation to spend 35 hours a week job searching. We are compelled to use the site, granting access to our Jobcentre Plus adviser, who can monitor our efforts. We all know the consequences of failing to meet Department for Work and Pensions

(DWP) expectations - reasonable or otherwise.

The site was designed by Monster, a private online recruitment agency. Monster won out after a controversial tender process that saw the government pay almost a million pounds in compensation to other bidders.

The site has been and still is riddled with problems. I believe some of these problems, pernicious in nature, are there to trip up claimants.

At best, it makes ad revenue but doesn't provide anything new, just re-posting vacancies from other sources. Jobseekers end up going

down a rabbit trail, trying to find who they are actually applying to. Whether the advertised job exists is another matter entirely.

## Nothing back

Attempts to contact the site owner have no guarantee at all of a response. I have yet to hear back from any advertiser, even when requesting basic information about the job in question. Details are rarely provided in the advert.

However, the larger problem is that a search can yield an almost infinite list of results the claimant must wade through. If the claimant is on the DWP 'work programme' - working for their dole - it is likely the workfare employer will be overseeing this effort. This will lead to a tired job searcher rewarded with frustration.

The list will also repeat adverts, sometimes under a different heading. This is usually the case with telesales jobs which seem ubiquitous; adverts with no real content, appealing to the applicant's "drive" and "passion".

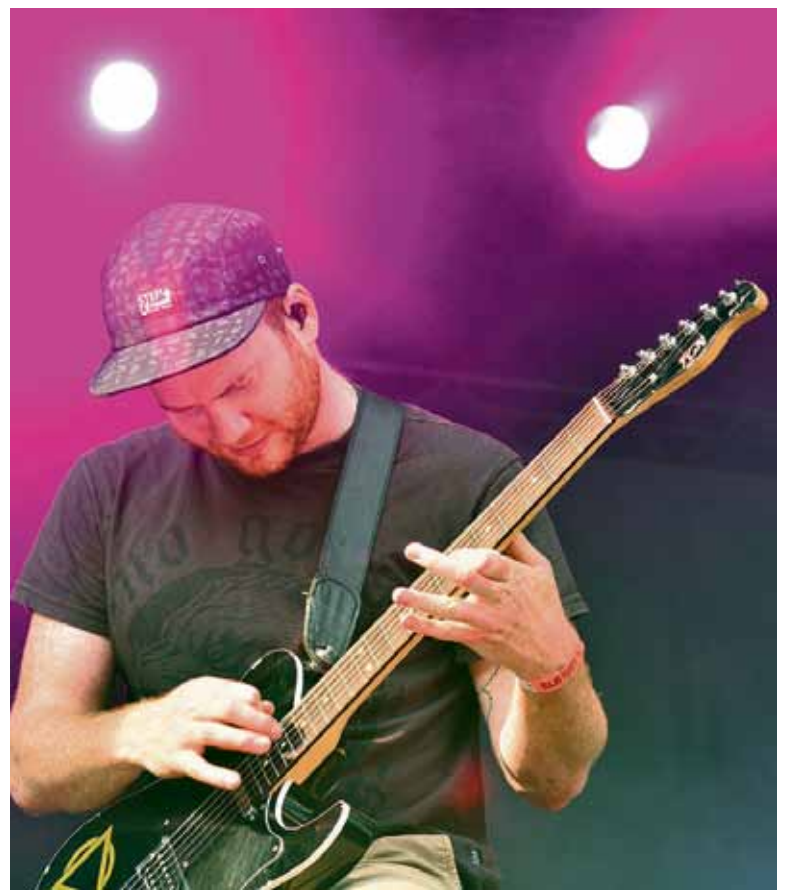
This problem is amplified by the dysfunctional nature of the site itself. Clicking to look at the next page will completely reshuffle results. This makes it impossible to maintain an effective search.

Finally the site 'encourages' claimants to explain, by means of a drop-down form, why they are 'refusing' to apply for a particular vacancy. Anyone with any experience of the DWP will tell you that this is the fast track to a sanction.

## The Socialist says:

- Invest in well-paid, secure jobs for all, not endless schemes to repackage the insufficient number of vacancies
- No to the slave labour 'work programme': pay the rate for the job, don't undermine paid work with press-ganged dole workers
- Stop punitive sanctions: decent jobs and liveable benefits for all without compulsion

## Music review: Enter Shikari A kaleidoscope of colour and a barrage of sound



## Ronnie Job

Seeing alternative rock four-piece Enter Shikari in Cardiff turned out to be less a show and more an all-out assault on practically all our senses. And it was awesome!

You don't just hear the music, but feel it vibrating through your bones - even those of us sitting at a safe distance from the human pyramids, mosh pit and crowd surfing.

Your eyes are constantly drawn, by the inventive laser display, to a screen which mixes a fantastic light show with images of issues close to the band's heart.

Because Enter Shikari is a band with a message. Particularly about ending the destruction of the planet by capitalism's lust for profit, detailed in the song 'Myopia'.

They also address issues like privatisation of healthcare. In 'The Anaesthetist', they declare: "illness is not an indulgence we should pay for... You will not profit off my health." The clever 'Torn Apart' appeals for unity against racist division.

And that's just from their 2015 LP 'The Mindsweep'. Their entire catalogue is full of songs of grassroots resistance.

Impressive support act The King Blues appealed for people to return to Cardiff Motorpoint on 16 March to protest against a planned arms fair.

The reason these messages get heard by a mass audience is that the band are, above all, great fun to see and hear. The best part of two hours flew past in a kaleidoscope of colour and a barrage of sound.

Lead singer Rou Reynolds refused to be confined by the dimensions of a stage - appearing at the back of the auditorium at one point playing a piano, which appeared to be resting on mixing desks. He then climbed on top to sing, play guitar and blow a trumpet.

## Live

If you've not heard Enter Shikari and you're looking for me to categorise their music, I'm afraid I can't. You'll hear the thrashing guitar, drums and screaming of post-hardcore; dance and electronic influences; and harmonising over beautiful melodies.

They're not to everyone's taste. But they bring the same energy and enthusiasm to all these diverse sounds. They lose nothing in musicianship when heard live, but increase the power and energy to the maximum - it seems to be their natural medium.

Thank you, Enter Shikari, for rekindling my enthusiasm for live music.

- Listen to Enter Shikari at [myspace.com/entershikari](http://myspace.com/entershikari); for world tour dates, visit [entershikari.com/shows](http://entershikari.com/shows)



## The Socialist Inbox

### Do you have something to say?

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

## Inadequate academies

The recent Ofsted report for Leicester schools stated three were "inadequate": two run by the local authority, the third an academy.

The two council schools are to become academies, a move unopposed by the Labour city council. The local Labour MP is Jon Ashworth, a member of Jeremy Corbyn's shadow cabinet.

Seven Leicestershire schools were deemed inadequate: six are academies.

The Tory county council spokesperson pointedly did not mention academisation. Instead, he stated: "If a local authority school receives an Ofsted rating of 'inadequate' we work very closely with it to look at ... ways it can be supported to improve". This may upset the

county's MPs, who are all Tories, including Secretary of State for Education Nicky Morgan!

The Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC), which includes transport union RMT and the Socialist Party, opposes academy status. Without TUSC's intervention, the upcoming council elections would resemble the Oxford (dark blues) versus Cambridge (light blues) boat race.

**John Merrell  
Leicester**

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



# No to forced academies! Tories out!

Many protests were held last week against the government's white paper plan to force every local authority school to become an academy and to remove parent governors from school boards. Below are reports from two such protests (more on pages 2-3. Also, NUT conference report - page 4).

## Coventry

A lively protest took place in Coventry outside the Department for Education building organised by the National Union of Teachers (NUT). It was supported by teachers, parents, school and university students. It also drew support from union members of Unison, Unite, GMB, CWU and Coventry TUC.

Jane Nellist, recently re-elected to the national executive of the NUT, chaired the protest and explained why her union is completely opposed to the Tory privatisation plans.

Eileen Hunter, an NUT activist from Warwickshire spoke passionately about how these plans needs to be fought.

Sam, a student from Coventry University, spoke about the need to forge links, and brought solidarity greetings from Coventry students.

Parents also spoke about the effects that academisation has had on the education of their children.

Paul Hunt, assistant branch secretary of Coventry City Unison, explained how the Tory proposal will be an attack on Unison members in schools. He called for a coordinated fightback between the public sector unions, pointing out that the government is weak - as shown by the resignation of Iain Duncan Smith and the Tory party splits over Europe. The junior doctors have shown a lead, now is the time for a 24-hour general strike in this country!

All speakers showed that the fight must now be taken to the government.

Jane Nellist closed the protest and expected NUT conference to come out with clear plans for industrial action and that Coventry NUT would be continuing a campaign after Easter to defend education.

## Nottingham

A large and lively crowd gathered in Nottingham to protest against the Tories' education wrecking plans. Parents, students, staff and teachers came to the NUT and ATL organised rally.

Many of the speakers at the rally drew the connection between this imposition and privatising the education service, and calls for concrete action against it were met with applause.

As one NUT branch secretary put it: "It's not just schools... it's the junior doctors and the whole welfare state... we need to take action, including strike action, to stop this."

**Geraint Thomas**



photo Coventry SP



photo Geraint Thomas

## Swansea: Fascist thugs made to look pathetic

### Socialist Party reporters

One particularly wet and bedraggled looking fascist, his face hidden by hood and scarf, held a banner that said "white pride worldwide". It was a ridiculous claim for a supposed international event with such a pathetic turnout. The handful of racists who turned up could probably have fitted into the stretch limo that drove past at one point.

The fascists' tiny turnout made the determination of the police to ensure that they be allowed to hold a rally only the width of a road away from the Swansea Unites celebration of diversity even more bizarre. The festival of diversity had been called to deny the racists the use of Castle Square.

The police committed serious resources - police horses and riot vans - to making it possible for the 'master race' to occupy a small patch of wet grass within sight of the Swansea Unites stage.

However, the police couldn't save the fascists' embarrassment as their tiny turnout was derided by the hundreds of anti-racists and trade unionists, including Socialist Party members, that turned out to oppose them.

A half dozen fascists who weren't at the white pride rally attempted to disrupt the celebration of diversity.



Fists were thrown and the police made arrests. This is a warning to pay serious attention to stewarding future events and take nothing for granted.

The main message to take from the day however is that a determined movement of trade unionists and working class communities in defence of jobs, homes and services can easily cut across the racist division these fascist scum attempt to spread.

## All you need is love - and a stall!

### Iain Dalton

West/North Yorkshire Socialist Party organiser

"I love the Socialist Party!" exclaimed one young woman who saw our stall in Harrogate on 23 March campaigning in support of the junior doctors.

In the normally quiet spa town (with a Tory MP and not even one Labour councillor), our campaign in defence of the NHS was a breath of fresh air.

Many NHS staff, including some junior doctors, stopped by the stall, glad to see that someone was building support for them. One or two even recognised us from the junior doctors' picket line at the local hospital.

With bold posters on each side of the stall, and plenty of literature about our strategy to build support for the junior doctors, many people were happy to give donations to help with our campaigning efforts. We also achieved a record breaking sale of 29 copies of the Socialist, with two people leaving their contact details for our next meeting.

All of this is vital for the Socialist Party to be able to



photo Iain Dalton

build our membership and support for our ideas to defend the NHS. Every new member and penny we collect helps us move further towards that goal. If we can build support in sleepy Harrogate, we can build it anywhere!



If you agree with what you read in the Socialist, consider making a donation to the Socialist Party's fighting fund:

■ pay by card on 020 8988 8777 or [socialistparty.org.uk/donate](http://socialistparty.org.uk/donate)

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



## Socialist Party Fighting Fund

	£ target	£ received	January-March 2016	Deadline 1 April 2016	
North West	1,800	6,187			344%
Northern	600	1,071			178%
Yorkshire	2,900	5,135			177%
South West	1,400	2,332			167%
East Midlands	1,600	2,421			151%
West Midlands	2,300	2,956			141%
Wales	1,200	3,040			132%
London	6,100	7,049			116%
Southern	1,200	1,376			115%
South East	750	700			
Eastern	1,200	575			
England & Wales	3,050	220			
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>25,000</b>	<b>33,061</b>			<b>132%</b>



# VOTE AGAINST THE EU – BUT NO UNITY WITH TORIES OR UKIP

The Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC) has written a formal letter to the Electoral Commission asking them not to give millions of pounds of public resources to Tory and Ukip EU campaigners in June's referendum. The Socialist Party, a key component of TUSC, will campaign to leave the EU but we will not sign up to a common political platform with reactionary leave supporters, explains Socialist Party executive committee member Clive Heemskerk.

The Socialist Party opposes the European Union because at bottom it is an 'employers' union' of 28 capitalist governments, acting as a continent-wide agency of anti-worker and pro-austerity policies.

The EU's laws and institutions impact on the day-to-day struggle to defend working class interests. Public ownership and other forms of state intervention are restricted by EU treaties. Even local councils, for example, have to sign off everything they do against EU state aid regulations.

While the EU treaties ultimately could not stop a determined workers' government supported by a mass movement from carrying out socialist policies, they are another legal obstacle to overcome. Why should workers give a vote of confidence to a set of agreements between different capitalist politicians that would be used to try and block socialist policies?

Socialists oppose the EU in order to defend working class interests and take forward the fight for socialism, in Britain and Europe.

In contrast, that minority of capitalist politicians who oppose the EU - Boris Johnson, Iain Duncan Smith, Nigel Farage et al, organised in the Vote Leave and Grassroots Out campaigns - do so the better to try and divide the working class. There can be no unity with them by socialists campaigning for a Leave vote in June's referendum.

### Referendum dangers

A referendum by its very nature, however, creates pressures to blur the conflict of interests between workers and capitalists. It reduces a range of issues to one binary question, with the capitalist rulers of the day setting the wording and, they hope, the terms of the debate.

This pressure is amplified by the legislation governing referendums, passed under Tony Blair's New Labour government in 2000, which

builds in the expectation that cross-class campaigns will be created to conduct the debate.

Under the legislation all organisations that want to campaign are required to register as a 'permitted participant' with the Electoral Commission, including political parties and trade unions.

**“ Socialists oppose the EU in order to defend working class interests and take forward the fight for socialism**

The Commission, an unelected quango, then has the power to decide which of the permitted participants become the official Leave and Remain campaigns, bestowing them with political authority and millions of pounds of public resources.

When the legislation was being drafted the government White Paper explicitly stated that "the benefits available to a designated organisation will constitute a powerful inducement" to create a common campaign.

The Electoral Commission's application form for lead campaign status requires them to show "the breadth of campaigners' interests" they involve, "for example, parties, trade unions, registered companies" - class collaboration institutionalised!

That is why the TUSC campaign against the EU, including its call for the Electoral Commission not to make a lead designation for Leave, is so important. To show that what is involved in the referendum are class interests and that the working class is not 'all in it together' with big business politicians, whether they oppose the EU or not.

### Pushing for a fake 'unity'

The TUSC letter to the Electoral Commission lists some of the irreconcilable divisions that exist between socialists opposing the EU and the reactionary Leave campaigns on various policy issues that arise in the EU debate (see box).



photo Creative Commons/Steve Cadman

- TUSC has a petition to the Electoral Commission calling on them not to give taxpayers' money and other public resources to the reactionary-led exit groups. Founding signatories include two trade union national presidents and 16 union national executive committee members.
- Sign the petition online at [www.tusc.org.uk/17170/04-02-2016/dont-give-taxpayers-money-to-ukip-and-tory-eu-campaigners](http://www.tusc.org.uk/17170/04-02-2016/dont-give-taxpayers-money-to-ukip-and-tory-eu-campaigners)
- To read the full letter to the Electoral Commission check out the TUSC website at [www.tusc.org.uk](http://www.tusc.org.uk)

But it also makes the more fundamental point that what is really being "asked of Leave campaigners in demanding that they produce a common position, is that they effectively agree an alternative governmental programme".

The letter gives as an illustration of this the Electoral Commission's "apparently straightforward request that organisations applying for lead status provide a page 'which should include their opinion on what will happen in the event of either referendum result'".

TUSC, the letter explains, "believes that a victory for the Leave

outcome would be a devastating defeat for the Conservative government, and could presage a split in the party similar in character to the schisms over the Corn Laws and Tariff Reform, opening up the possibility of a general election and a Jeremy Corbyn-led Labour government before the end of the year".

**“ How is it possible in any meaningful sense to speak of a common Leave position?**

But, it goes on, "we assume that is not necessarily a motivation for many of the politicians and big business representatives in the reactionary Leave campaigns" and so would not feature in their 'what will happen' assessment.

The letter asks if what the Electoral Commission actually requires is "a discussion of article 50 of the Lisbon treaty on the mechanics of

withdrawal? Or 'what will happen' to the world economy? Or the impact on governments, and opposition movements, across Europe?"

But "whatever the intention, it is clear that it would be politically impossible to get an agreed position even on this basic request".

"So how is it possible in any meaningful sense to speak of a common Leave position?" it asks. "And on what basis would the Electoral Commission make what would be a purely political decision to decide between the different political positions?"

### A political choice

The deadline for lead designation applications is 31 March, with the Electoral Commission making its decision by 15 April. The most likely outcome is that the Commissioners, sensitive to the requirements of the capitalist establishment, will appoint an official Leave campaign, probably the Vote Leave organisation.

Vote Leave involves all the Tory cabinet ministers backing exit, the

Ukip MP Douglas Carswell and, for 'Labour' decoration, is co-chaired by the Blairite MP Gisela Stuart who notoriously supported the idea of a 'grand coalition' with the Tories before last year's general election.

As the TUSC letter says "designating one of the reactionary campaigns as the official voice of Leave would be a political decision favouring the Remain campaign", fitting in with the narrative "being created by the government what would be to try and portray those who oppose the EU as one reactionary lump".

The pro-EU Guardian commentator Martin Kettle summed up the tactic last year when he argued that a Remain victory is more likely "if

voters come to see the Brexit option as a step towards a Nigel Farage universe."

On the other hand, a refusal by the Electoral Commission to appoint an official Leave campaign in response to trade union and socialist led protests would smash that lie. Building that protest is the task for the next two weeks.



Ukip leader Nigel Farage photo Creative Commons/Gage Skidmore

**“ The EU treaties are another obstacle for a workers' government to overcome**

## Exit left is not exit right

The TUSC letter lists some examples of policy issues that arise in the EU debate which show the irreconcilable differences between a working class, socialist opposition to the EU and the reactionary Leave campaigns.

### ■ EU treaties on public spending



TUSC, and the wider anti-austerity constituency, oppose the EU treaties that have embedded what can only be described as a neo-liberal economic framework into the EU. But the reactionary Leave campaigns do not oppose an austerity agenda.

While 750,000 people from our constituency demonstrated against austerity in March 2011, six weeks later individuals who have become prominent figures in the reactionary Leave campaigns organised a 'rally for cuts' (pictured above), in May 2011. They included Nigel Farage, Bill Cash, Priti Patel, Toby Young, and the Taxpayers' Alliance, whose founder, Matthew Elliot, is now the chief executive of Vote Leave. If we march in opposite directions how can the reactionary Leave campaigns be said to "adequately represent" us?

### ■ The EU and privatisation

A similar dichotomy exists in attitudes to the EU treaties and service directives driving the liberalisation of markets in energy, transport, postal services and other public services, and the EU's state aid rules.

TUSC's core policies include bringing privatised public services, industries and utilities back into public ownership, including transport, Royal Mail, the NHS, and the justice system, and democratic public ownership of the banks and major companies. None of these policies are compatible with the EU treaties - but they are policies which the reactionary Leave campaigners would also stridently oppose.



### ■ The EU and workers' rights

TUSC includes as one of its constituent organisations the Rail, Maritime and Transport (RMT) workers' union, which

comes up against EU directives and European Court of Justice rulings as it defends its members.

The reactionary Leave campaigns, on the other hand, are dominated by the same politicians and big business interests that are behind the new Trade Union Bill, showing they have no real differences with the restrictions on rights to collective bargaining and other workers' rights that flow from the EU treaties.

### ■ The EU and international trade treaties

Another TUSC core policy is to oppose the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) "and all secret austerity treaties". Some reactionary Leave campaigners have referred to TTIP but they have no principled opposition to the institutionalisation of privatisation that the treaty negotiations are aimed at or the investor-state court mechanism to enforce this.

### ■ The EU and migration



TUSC has a clear core policy of defending the right to asylum and opposing racist immigration controls. Our criticisms of the recent EU agreement with Turkey to trample over the right to asylum, for example, have nothing in common with the reactionary Leave campaigners.

Our prescriptions for dealing with housing shortages - rent caps, nationalising the building monopolies and handing over their land banks to local councils to build homes etc - and the other pressures on public services that are often raised in this policy area would contradict EU state aid rules and directives but they would absolutely not be supported by reactionary Leave campaigners.

### ■ The EU and defence



Some reactionary Leave campaigners have opposed the EU's Common Security and Defence Policy - but only to counterpose to it their support for NATO. TUSC is opposed to "moves towards a militarist United States of Europe" but also opposes all "imperialist wars and occupations" as well as the renewal of Trident and the increased defence spending agreed by the government to meet its commitments to NATO.

All photos in this column by Paul Mattsson



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# FIGHTING THE GREAT TAX ROBBERY

## Taxes and regulation or socialist nationalisation?

Tax avoidance has been in the headlines lately, provoking renewed calls to tax the rich and big business. The Socialist campaigns for closing loopholes, and increasing wealth and corporation taxes. But, writes **Paul Hunt**, you can't control what you don't own: only socialist nationalisation can end the great tax robbery.

It is a time of seemingly never-ending austerity. Workers across the UK and the world are being forced to pick up the tab for a crisis caused by the capitalist system.

So the news that massive corporations are engaged in massive tax avoidance is a source of understandable bitterness and anger.

As previously reported in the Socialist, huge multinationals such as drugs firm AstraZeneca and telecom company Vodafone pay zero corporation tax in the UK. After a 'sweetheart' deal with the Tory cabinet, internet giant Google agreed to pay £130 million - just 2.8% of its profit.

Little wonder people are up in arms when the government says there is no money for libraries, play centres, vital public services or pay rises.

### HMRC

With government credibility already shot to pieces regarding its 'all in it together' slogan, the Tories have continued to make swingeing cuts to HM Revenue and Customs. The ability to collect tax has been weakened further.

In an illustration of how the balance has shifted towards giving big business an easy ride, the rate of corporation tax in the UK in 1981 was over 50%. It is 20% in 2016!

It is no surprise that demands for the rich to pay their share are gaining ground. People see the increase in the gap between rich and poor in their everyday experience. This has been a large part of the rise of the likes of Jeremy Corbyn in the UK and Bernie Sanders in the United States. People are looking for answers to the crisis that they see around them.

For example, the website of the Sanders campaign states that, if elected, he would start by "demanding that the wealthy and large corporations pay their fair share in taxes. As president, Senator Sanders will stop corporations from shifting their profits and jobs overseas to avoid paying

US income taxes.

"He will create a progressive estate tax on the top 0.3% of Americans who inherit more than \$3.5 million. He will also enact a tax on Wall Street speculators who caused millions of Americans to lose their jobs, homes, and life savings."

Here in the UK, the fact that we have a Labour leader prepared even to talk about rising inequality, and say ordinary people shouldn't foot the bill for the crisis, is an important step forward. Arch-Blairite Peter Mandelson, architect of New Labour, famously declared his party was "intensely relaxed about people getting filthy rich."

In his campaign for the Labour leadership last year, Jeremy Corbyn set out his economic vision in the document 'The Economy in 2020'. He sets out some laudable aims. These include collecting £120 billion of avoided and evaded tax, creating a system where the rich pay more (the rate is not specified), and creating a "level playing field" between small and big businesses.

Demands for the rich to pay their taxes, and proposals like a 'Robin Hood' tax on big finance institutions' transactions, are not new. In fact, for most of Labour's history - not including the Blair-Brown New Labour years - they were common currency. These ideas have recently made a partial comeback through the publicity work of groups like 38 Degrees and the Tax Justice Network, as well as being raised by Jeremy Corbyn.

The Socialist Party supports many of the measures he proposes, but are they enough to solve the crisis for working class people?

Recent events in France show once again that, whatever the

intentions, taxing the super-rich is not a straightforward question.

François Hollande of the Parti Socialiste (equivalent of the Labour Party) promised higher taxes on the super-rich during his 2012 election campaign. He pledged to tax incomes over €1 million at 75%.

Under pressure from the capitalist class, in practice he reduced this to 50%, before dropping the policy altogether. High earners were threatening to leave the country - and take their wealth with them.

According to reports from the French finance ministry, Hollande's increase only brought in the relatively small sums of €260 million in 2013 and €160 million in 2014. This was in relation to a budget deficit at that time of €84.7 billion!

### Enforcing

No doubt a firmer stand on the rate, closing loopholes and enforcing collection could have improved these figures. Certainly they in no way mean we oppose higher income taxes on the super-rich.

A genuine socialist government would combine such measures with taking democratic control of all imports and exports. This means enforcing a state monopoly of foreign trade and exchange, including movements of capital, with democratic control of all imports and exports. That would prevent the tiny super-rich elite from trying to flee the country with their plunder.

What about the corporations? In Britain, around 150 big companies control the majority of economic activity. Surely, you might say, we can tax them further?

Yes, is the answer. Substantially increasing both income tax for the rich and corporation tax for big business could, if actually implemented, provide enough money to reverse all cuts to public services, increase public sector workers' pay, and a lot more. However, as long as we live in a capitalist society, where wealth and power are concentrated in the hands of the 1%, they will use all means at their disposal to avoid handing

over even a penny of what they've got.

The experience of Syriza in Greece shows that half-measures - or more accurately, quarter-measures - can lead to a situation where a left party ends up implementing brutal capitalist austerity.

Even if such governments succeed in redistributing some of the wealth controlled by big business, that is not the end of the story. Britain's 1945 Labour government created the welfare state and operated far greater taxation and regulation than today's establishment parties. But over the following decades, the capitalists took every opportunity to claw those gains back.

In Chile and Venezuela in the 20th century, left governments even faced mass sabotage by capitalists. 'Why supply goods and services,' they reasoned, 'for countries that won't even let us keep most of the profits?'



**Even if left-wing governments succeed in redistributing some of the wealth controlled by big business, that is not the end of the story**

The clear answer to companies that threaten closures, job losses or sabotage is to take them into public ownership.

As Karl Marx, scientific socialism's founding thinker, put it in his 'Critique of the Gotha Programme': "The capitalist mode of production, for example, rests on the fact that the material conditions of production are in the hands of non-workers in the form of property in capital and land... If the elements of production are so distributed, then the present-day distribution of the means of consumption results automatically."

"If the material conditions of production are the co-operative property of the workers themselves, then there likewise results a distribution of the means of consumption different from the present one."

Marx's words, despite being

Tax avoiders like Google should be nationalised under the democratic control of workers and service users  
photo Robbie Shade/Creative Commons



**The clear answer to companies that threaten closures, job losses or sabotage is to take them into public ownership**

### Further reading from leftbooks.co.uk

■ **Socialism in the 21st Century** (£5)

The way forward for anti-capitalism, by Hannah Sell

■ **Value, Price and Profit** (£2)

Essential introduction to Marxist economics

■ **Critique of the Gotha Programme** (£4.95)

Marx argues that socialists must not limit themselves only to winning concessions within capitalism, but must also fight to change the system itself

**Fight for bold socialist policies: take the wealth off the 1%!**

■ Reverse all cuts to HM Revenue and Customs - collect the uncollected tax, and increase taxes on the super-rich and big business

■ **Nationalise the banks, top 150 corporations and tax avoiders under the democratic control and management of workers and service users. Compensation only to be paid on the basis of proven need**

■ For a socialist, democratically planned economy to meet the needs of all, not make obscene profits for a few

written in 1875, are totally relevant today. You can't plan what you don't control, and you can't control what you don't own.

The mass inequality we see is a logical consequence of the capitalist system, whereby wealth production is owned and controlled by a tiny minority in its own interests. Year on year the wealth gap is widening further as the capitalists react to economic stagnation and crises by making the working class pay.

### Neoliberal

Neoliberal economic commentators suggest that taxes should be cut to entice more wealth into the country and encourage businesses activity. But the so-called 'trickle down' approach has only ever achieved the opposite, as is clearly the case today.

What is needed is a genuine, full, socialist programme. This means breaking the power of the capitalists - by nationalising not only the banks, financial institutions, plus companies threatening job losses and so on - but all the big corporations which control the majority of economic activity.

A publicly owned economy, under the democratic control and management of workers, could actually start to plan production in the interests of the 99%.



**What we stand for**

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

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

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

Our demands include:

### PUBLIC SERVICES

■ No to ALL cuts in jobs, public services and benefits. Defend our pensions.

■ No to privatisation and the Private Finance Initiative (PFI). Renationalise all privatised utilities and services, with compensation paid only on the basis of proven need.

■ Fully fund all services and run them under accountable, democratic committees that include representatives of service workers and users.

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

■ A socialist NHS to provide for everyone's health needs - free at the point of use and under democratic control. Kick out private contractors!

■ Keep council housing publicly owned. For a massive building programme of publicly owned housing, on an environmentally sustainable basis, to provide good quality homes with low rents.

### ENVIRONMENT

■ Major research and investment into replacing fossil fuels with renewable energy and into ending the problems of early obsolescence and un-recycled waste.

■ Public ownership of the energy generating industries. No to nuclear power. No to Trident.

■ A democratically planned, low-fare, publicly owned transport system, as part of an overall plan against environmental pollution.

### RIGHTS

■ Oppose discrimination on the grounds of race, gender, disability, sexuality, age, and all other forms of prejudice.

■ Repeal all laws that trample over civil liberties. For the right to protest! End police harassment.

■ Defend abortion rights. For a woman's right to choose when and whether to have children.

■ For the right to asylum. No to racist immigration laws.

### NEW MASS WORKERS' PARTY

■ For a new mass workers' party drawing together workers, young people and activists from workplace, community, environmental and anti-war campaigns, to provide a fighting, political alternative to the pro-big business parties. Support the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition as an important step towards this.

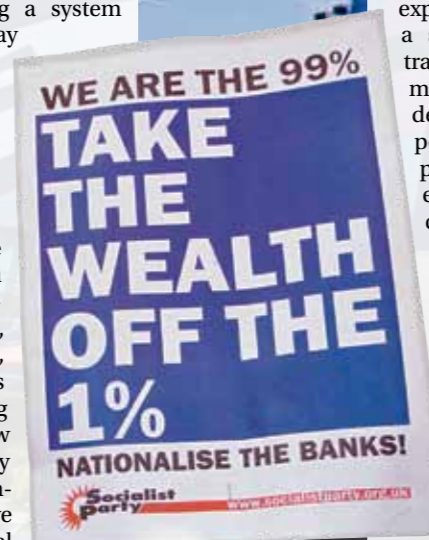
### SOCIALISM AND INTERNATIONALISM

■ No to imperialist wars and occupations.

■ Tax the super-rich! For a socialist government to take into public ownership the top 150 companies and the banking system that dominate the British economy, and run them under democratic working class control and management. Compensation to be paid only on the basis of proven need.

■ A democratic socialist plan of production based on the interests of the overwhelming majority of people, and in a way that safeguards the environment.

■ No to the bosses' neoliberal European Union! For a socialist Europe and a socialist world!



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

socialistparty.org.uk/join 020 8988 8777

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## Stop Tory cuts and privatisation

# SOLIDARITY WITH JUNIOR DOCTORS

**Zoe Brunswick**  
Medical student

**T**he BMA (British Medical Association) is to escalate strike action in its continued fightback against an unsafe and unfair contract. The union will now stage a full walkout of all junior doctors from 8am-5pm on 26 and 27 April, following another 48 hours of emergency care only on 6 and 7 April.

This has come about after the government's blatant refusal to negotiate on a contract that will have doctors working more unsocial hours for less pay.

We now call for other trade unions to ballot for coordinated strike action in solidarity with the junior doctors.

The grassroots of the BMA have already presented a letter of solidarity signed by over 2,000 doctors to the National Union of Teachers (NUT) in support of their dispute against the government's plan to force all schools to become academies. We now urge the NUT to use their strike ballot to take industrial

action in coordination with the BMA.

Other healthcare professionals are also facing pay cuts and should use this to ballot for industrial action alongside the doctors.

### Fightback

This dispute is not merely about pay and working conditions for junior doctors, but is a fightback against the wider Tory agenda of austerity and privatisation.

The push for doctors to carry out more routine work over the weekend is not in the interests of patients, but in the interests of private companies who are looking to buy simpler and easy to manage services.

We must embrace the anger and determination of the junior doctors and work with them to build a wider fightback against the Tories' plans.

The Socialist Party calls for a mass demonstration against the crippling cuts to the NHS and for all unions to take coordinated strike action to continue the momentum of the junior doctors and fight cuts and privatisation.

