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# the Socialist

Formerly **Militant**

## Solidarity with refugees

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- Fight for jobs, homes and services for all
- Campaigning for scholarships for refugees (& free education for all)



## France: full-scale struggle erupting

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Panama papers, steel crisis,  
junior doctors' contract, austerity...

# TORIES

# OUT!

## LET'S ALL STRIKE TOGETHER

Join  
the  
socialists  
today!

**N**ot only can we not trust the Tories to tell the truth about their tax arrangements, we can't trust them to run the country in the interests of anyone other than the super-rich 1%. We need to get them out.

The events around the Panama Papers prove, as if proof were necessary, that Cameron and Co and their families have vast wealth. And they, like the bosses, bankers and the rest of the 1%, see it as their right to maximise and increase their riches - at our expense.

In Edinburgh the physical collapse of schools built through Private Finance Initiative (PFI) provides a graphic example of what putting profit first means.

Following Cameron's eventual admission that he did actually benefit from his father's tax haven hoard the demand for him to go rang out. Of the first 5,000 people who voted in a Mirror online poll, 95% wanted Cameron to resign.

Watching the movement in Iceland that brought down the prime minister and has set its sights on a change in government has whetted our appetite to get the Tories out.

### Mass movement

Let's build a mass movement that could be capable of just that. The Socialist Party calls on the anti-austerity forces around Jeremy Corbyn and the trade union leadership to organise a powerful national campaign to drive the Tories Out!

The first step should be coordinating strike action of all those workers with ongoing disputes as preparation for a 24-hour general strike.

This is a weak government - voted for by just 24% of the electorate - and a divided government as revealed by the resignation of Iain Duncan Smith. They are split down the middle by the EU referendum. That's one reason to vote to leave the bosses' EU. Cameron could be forced to resign and call a general election.

The type of society we live in, capitalism, is so unequal that the richest 1% of the world's population own more wealth than all the rest of us combined. Unsurprisingly, increasing numbers of people are searching for an alternative.

A democratic socialist society would be able, through planning the use of the world's enormous wealth and resources - not squirreling it away in tax havens - to provide decent jobs, homes and services for everyone.

■ More on pages 2 and 3



# Panama Papers reveal corrupt system of the 1% FIGHT FOR A SOCIALIST ALTERNATIVE



## What we think

In publishing their tax returns, Cameron and Osborne have shown that they are not 'in it' with the rest of us. Every year tens of thousands of pounds of unearned cash enters their accounts in the form of rent and dividends, not to mention the odd six-figure familial 'gift'.

In rent payments alone, Cameron receives three and a half times the median income. Osborne receives around £20,000 more than the average income in dividends from his family's wall paper company. Both qualify for the top rate of tax - which they cut, further enriching themselves and other millionaires.

The more that this story runs, the more the Tories are exposed as a government of the very rich exclusively for the very rich. The Sunday Times points out that Samantha Cameron's father owns property and land estimated at more than £20 million.

This scandal contains within it a surfeit of scandals. Not least is the appointment of Edward Troup, executive chair of HM Revenue and Custom to oversee the inquiry into any Panama-related wrong doing. This former corporate lawyer, who has spent years advising offshore tax havens, wrote in the Financial Times in 1999 that "taxation is legalised extortion". Tax avoidance and evasion through loopholes is legalised theft from public services.

### Cabinet of millionaires

The leak has re-emphasised that we have a cabinet of millionaires including health minister Jeremy Hunt. In the interests of private health profiteers he is waging war on the NHS and pushing for a contract that would mean a 30% pay cut for the junior doctors. Let's put it more clearly - 70 MPs (Cameron and Hunt included) have links to private healthcare firms.

There is a revolving door between big business and pro-rich government - which was also the case under New Labour. Last year the Telegraph estimated that Tony Blair 'earned' between £50million and £100million

“The more that this story runs, the more the Tories are exposed as a government of the very rich exclusively for the very rich”

## Austerity not needed

The Panama Papers reveal a financial parallel world in which the 'masters of the universe' keep their ill-gotten gains. The scale of this wealth hoarding is astonishing.

According to researcher Ben Judah, one-third of the estimated \$21 trillion in tax havens worldwide falls within British sovereign territory. There is more money in British sovereign tax havens than there is in the UK's GDP (total output of goods and services) this year!

So when George Osborne imposes austerity on Britain's low-

est income earners to plug the government's budget deficit, he's clearly ignoring the piles of cash sitting in the British Virgin Islands, et al.

And it's not only the working and middle classes of this country being needlessly screwed by the Tory chancellor. It's estimated that if money siphoned off to tax havens from ex-colonial countries was instead spend on health and other vital public services, 3.6 million lives could be saved every year.

Dave Carr

### Donate today!

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

- pay by card via 020 8988 8777
- cheques payable to 'Socialist Party', PO Box 24697, London E11 1YD



photo Paul Mattsson

“What is needed is a party that is 100% committed to fighting for the interests of the working class and all those suffering austerity”

since quitting as prime minister, largely in consultancy fees from despotic regimes.

This is at a time when Universal Credit, the bedroom tax and the wide range of other austerity measures have reduced the incomes of hundreds of thousands of people - a million have sought support from foodbanks as a result. In January, Ipsos-Mori found that just 21% of Britons trust politicians to tell the truth. And the Tories are not popular - they took power with the support of less than a quarter of the electorate.

Unusually for the Guardian its editorial actually summed up what most people feel: "the suspicion here is not corruption, but the veiled pursuit of the interests of one class against another."

That is what capitalism is - a system based on exploitation of the many, the working class by the bosses, the capitalists. This class, the dominant class in capitalist society, has enormous power to run society in its own interests.

Tory Alan Duncan defended this status quo when he said that demanding MPs publish their tax returns: "risk[s] seeing a House of Commons which is stuffed full of low-achievers who hate enterprise, hate people who look after their own family and know absolutely nothing about the outside world." But a parliament dominated by millionaires is completely unrepresentative of the major-

ity, the working class, which is barely heard.

Duncan has since apologised for his comments but they only expanded on what Tory environment minister Amber Rudd said on the Marr show: "we don't want to put people off who might have substantial assets".

These events will see the appetite for greater democracy and accountability grow. Socialists support all democratic rights, including voting for parliament, which were fought for by the working class. But we want far more than this truncated version of democracy.

### Worker's wage

Instead of hoarding wealth, socialist and Marxist MPs in the Socialist Party's predecessor Militant - Dave Nellist, Terry Fields and Pat Wall - only took the average wage of a worker, instead of the current bloated MPs' salaries. Their accounts were available for inspection and circulated to all constituents.

The Socialist Party calls for the abolition of the House of Lords and the end of fixed term parliaments - which a mass movement or even a defeat of the government in the EU referendum could render null and void.

We have also raised the need to have two-year parliaments and the right of recall of MPs to expand democratic participation. We support votes at 16 and an end to

the social cleansing of the electoral register. More would be needed to achieve genuine democracy - a democratic socialist state.

But these would be important steps in challenging the current set-up with power resting in the hands of the elite. But what is crucial is the building of an independent political voice for the working class.

## Reactionary EU campaigners implicated in Panama Papers

One aspect of the Panama Papers revelations not widely commented on is the links with the reactionary Vote Leave and Grassroots Out EU referendum campaigns of some of the 'off-shore investors' named.

This is significant. The Electoral Commission is currently deciding which of these two organisations, or a third - the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC) - will be appointed as the official Leave campaign in June's referendum.

The group chosen will be given access to TV broadcasts and substantial public resources - a

£13 million free mailshot for starters.

It would be a scandal if taxpayers' money went to organisations whose backers do everything to avoid paying tax.

At the very least the Electoral Commission should do a proper audit of the business backers of Grassroots Out and Vote Leave before they make their designation decision.

Alternatively, they can designate TUSC as the lead campaign for Leave. You won't find our supporters on the Panama lists.

Clive Heemskerk  
TUSC national election agent

## Another Fifa corruption scandal

The last Fifa corruption revelations were hardly out of the headlines when a new scandal has struck the damaged organisation - this time from the Panama Papers.

Last summer, swamped in scandal, it looked impossible for the international football governing body to find a way to clean up its obliterated reputation. Up stepped Michel Platini (president of European football organisation Uefa).

Yet immediately his credentials started to crumble. It was discovered that Sepp Blatter, former Fifa president who was at the centre of the original corruption scandal, had paid Platini two million Swiss francs, allegedly for work carried out nine years previous.

The global public backlash this provoked forced a seemingly blind Fifa ethics committee into action. His resultant ban from football for six years left a hole again.

Next in line to fill the void was Uefa general secretary Gianni Infantino - a Swiss lawyer and career sports administrator whose dirt was harder to dig up. His honeymoon hasn't lasted long either.

The leak of the colossal Panama Papers has caught the global elite with their trousers down. The scale of their dodgy dealings, money laun-

dering, tax evasion and more has been exposed in dramatic fashion.

And, unsurprisingly, the papers showed Infantino to have been involved in dodgy offshore World Cup deals alongside now indicted Fifa members during his time as director of legal services at Uefa.

### Reflection

As we've said previously in this paper, football doesn't exist in a bubble. The processes and bodies in the footballing world reflect the machinations of wider society.

As football has become a global profitable marketplace, the Fifa crooks have absorbed the attitude, greed and methods of the corrupt rich leaders in world economics and politics.

Fifa reform is impossible under its own auspices. They have proved incapable of mapping out a genuine grassroots-based agenda for change. And that is because it's not in their interest.

Like capitalism and the barbaric austerity-driven regimes across the globe it creates, Fifa needs tearing down and transforming from the bottom up to truly be a body worthy of representing and championing the people's game.

Suzanne Beishon



In Iceland, where Panama leaks led to the Prime Minister's resignation, the movement has now set its sights on bringing down the government. The Pirate Party, which currently has four MPs, is set to be the winner. This shows the potential for a party to quickly gain support in a situation where the masses are attempting to challenge the status quo.

### Independent voice

What is needed is a party that is 100% committed to fighting for the interests of the working class and all those suffering austerity.

A third of those backing Bernie Sanders - who stands for free health care, free education, a \$15 an hour minimum wage and taxing the rich to pay for it - have said they will not vote for Hillary Clinton if Sanders is not elected as the Democratic candidate for US president. This represents the growing understanding that 'lesser evilism' is not enough - that an independent voice of the working class must be built.

Here in Britain, the election of Jeremy Corbyn was a good start but the party still contains a majority of MPs and councillors who do not see the need for fundamental change in society in the interests of the 99%. If Labour is to play a role in ending the domination by the 1%, it means a fight within Labour to kick out the Red Tories.

Building a party of the working class requires a socialist programme that can begin to fight for a society in the interests of the millions not the millionaires - starting with democratic and permanent nationalisation of the banking system, railways, steel and the commanding heights of the economy under workers' democratic control and management.

■ The Socialist Party is standing candidates as part of the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition against cuts-making councillors in May's local elections. See [www.tusc.org.uk](http://www.tusc.org.uk)

## Houses for offshore investment while we're stuck at home

The Panama Papers proved what many people already know, that the rich will do whatever they can to hide their vast sums of money and avoid paying tax.

The leak also revealed how the UK property market (particular in London) had been inflated by the super rich using offshore companies to buy properties as investments rather than as homes that people can actually live in.

Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan, the United Arab Emirates president, is just one example. He owns £1.2 billion worth of property in London through offshore companies.

This is pretty galling for a worker like myself since ever rising rents in the UK mean that I, along with over three million people in their 20s and 30s, still live at home with my parents. The alternative is paying nearly half of my salary to live in private rented accommodation that is often badly maintained - damp and mould are common problems! - by landlords whose main aim is to make profits.

David Cameron might have talked tough in the past and claimed the Tory government is going to tackle tax dodging but not only has he benefited from selling shares in his father's offshore investment fund but he has also profited from London's inflated property market. Cameron has made £500,000 from renting his Notting Hill home since he was elected in 2010 and moved into Downing Street.

Just think of all the council homes that could be built with the money the 1% stash away offshore!

Juliette Fogelman  
Waltham Forest



photo Spudgun67/  
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# Save BIS Sheffield: We won't be a Northern Poorhouse!

photo Alistair Tice



Alistair Tice

Labour shadow chancellor John McDonnell described Sheffield as the City of Resistance. It certainly felt like it on 9 April as 700 people marched around the city centre before listening to speeches at a city hall rally.

The demonstration was called by the PCS civil servants union which is fighting to save the Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) office in Sheffield from closure and the loss of 250 jobs.

BIS is the very government department charged with responsibility for economic growth and the Northern Powerhouse agenda. Tory Business Secretary, Sajid Javid, wants to close the Sheffield office and move it to London. You couldn't make it up!

But the march became a rallying point of opposition for all those suffering attacks from this Tory government: civil servants, steelworkers, junior doctors, teachers facing academisation and, noticeably, groups of young people attracted by the anti-austerity movement.

The crowd applauded speeches from PCS general secretary Mark Serwotka and John McDonnell - how refreshing to hear a Labour Party leader say he was proud to stand on picket lines with junior doctors and

others fighting Tory attacks.

It was also great that several Labour councillors stood on the city hall steps in support of the BIS campaign - but all the more disappointing that they are passing on Tory cuts with 400 redundancies announced in this year's council budget.

Marion Lloyd, who herself faces redundancy at the Sheffield office, is the president of the PCS BIS group and a Socialist Party member. In her speech, Marion said: "How can anyone trust Sajid Javid to help the steelworkers when he wants to sack another 4,000 civil servants in his own department?"

### "Fight together"

She said: "There are two ways of doing things. The Cameron, Osborne, Javid way of looking after number one - that's the Tory, big business capitalist way. And there's our way - we unite together, fight together, win together."

Marion welcomed the election of Jeremy Corbyn as Labour leader but said: "We cannot wait until a general election in 2020. We must build solidarity now towards a general strike."

To the biggest applause of the day Marion ended her speech by saying: "Yes we want Cameron to resign, but not just Cameron. We want the downfall of the whole bloody lot. Let's show these Tories, these capitalists, what a Northern Powerhouse really looks like - let's bring them down!"

## DOCTORS FIGHT ON AGAINST IMPOSED CONTRACTS

Junior doctors in the BMA (British Medical Association) struck again on 6 and 7 April in their magnificent battle against imposed, worsened contracts.

At the King George hospital picket line in east London, Matthew Kelham, one of the striking junior doctors, explained to Socialist Party member Merilin Vahter: "The government says the BMA is just striking over Saturday pay, which is a lie." He then went on to talk about the contract openly discriminating against women, implementing unsafe working conditions and the importance of patient safety which is now under threat.

Socialist Party member Ian Pattison joined at least a dozen junior doctors who stood strong in the rain at Whipps Cross hospital in north east London. They "stood 10 foot taller" when 50 of them and their supporters marched to the centre of Walthamstow. Over the course of the two day strike, 25 junior doctors and their supporters bought copies of the Socialist. 21 people came to the Socialist Party meeting on 6 April to hear a Whipps junior doctor speak. Junior doctors stood firm at King's



King's College Hospital, south London photo James Ivens

College Hospital in south London. Supporters of the Carnegie Library occupation in Lambeth joined the picket line. Several doctors asked James Ivens to explain the Socialist Party's ideas to them. A surgeon bought a copy of the Socialist and the Socialist Party leaflet was being avidly read.

Josh Asker reports that junior doctors in Southampton remain determined to defeat the imposition of unfair and unsafe contracts. They welcomed support from other trade unions, including the NUT, and understand that coordinated action with other health unions could play

a vital role in winning the dispute. On the picket line at St James's Hospital in Leeds not a single doctor disagreed with the Socialist Party's call for other NHS unions to coordinate strike action with them.

Many doctors were encouraged by the disarray of the government after IDS resigning and now Cameron's involvement in the Panama tax avoidance scandal. As one doctor commented to Iain Dalton: "They look as incompetent on those issues as we know they are in relation to us."

Ajay Sudan, a junior doctor at Gateshead's Queen Elizabeth Hospital said to the Socialist: "You'll often

hear of doctors and nurses flocking to Australia and New Zealand, and that they'll have better conditions when they're over there. They have those better conditions because they are willing to fight for them."

Junior doctors, supported by medical students and other trade unionists, battled the hailstones on their determined picket line outside Manchester Royal Infirmary. Later, Socialist Party member Becci Heagney joined over 200 who marched into Manchester city centre while chanting "save our NHS" and "hey, ho, Jeremy Hunt has got to go".

Teachers and doctors march together in support of strike! Assemble 5pm on Tuesday 26 April at St Thomas' Hospital and march to the Department of Health Called by the NUT London Region and BMA North & South Thames Junior Doctors

On a cold blustery evening on 6 April in Nottingham around 100

medical staff, trade unionists and others gathered in support of the NHS in the market square. Following BMA and NUT speakers Nathan Sharpe reports that council worker, Unison rep and Socialist Party member Jean Thorpe, talked of the "massive reductions in council funding and the redundancies over the last six years", and said that it is "vital to coordinate strike action between all unions."

The striking doctors have received much solidarity from other trade unionists and from the public. Some online polls put public support at over 90%.

A well-prepared national demonstration and an ongoing and escalating programme of industrial action - with coordinated action across the NHS and elsewhere across the trade union movement - would reveal the mass opposition to the attacks on the doctors and other public services and force the Tories into reverse gear.

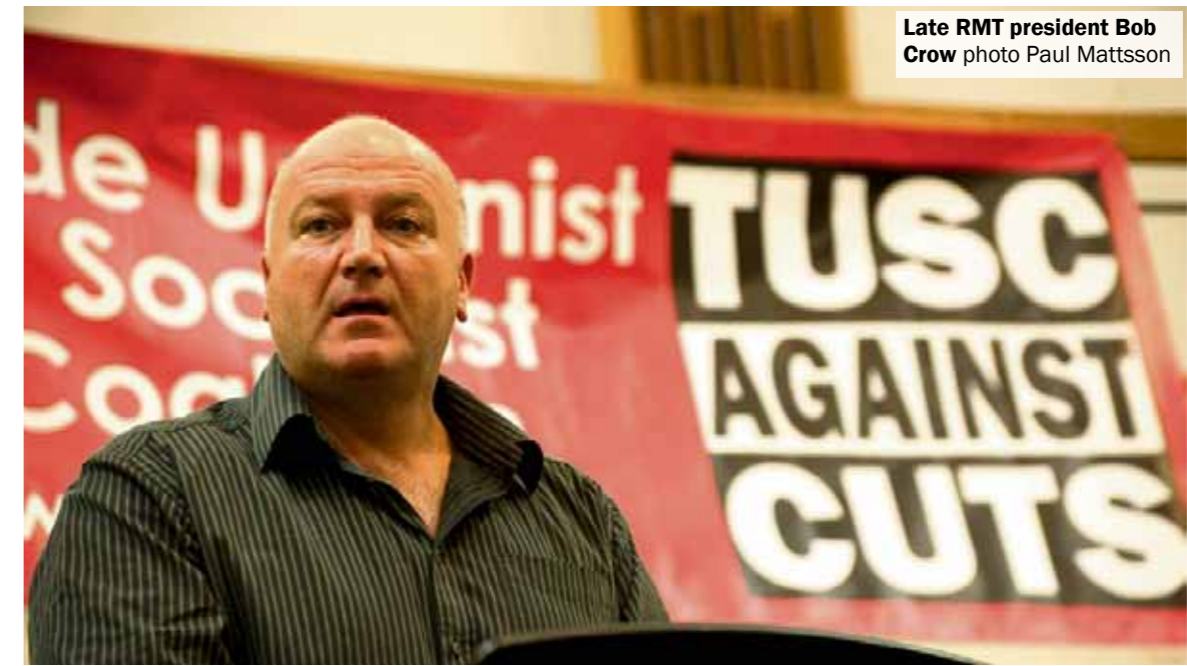
## RMT BRANCH CALLS FOR TUSC BACKING TO CONTINUE

Members of the transport workers' union, the RMT, and particularly its late general secretary Bob Crow, have played a crucial role in the building of the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC) since its birth in 2010. TUSC was founded to take forward the fight to re-build independent working class political representation.

This included providing a banner under which socialists, trade unionists and community campaigners could fight elections on a clear anti-austerity programme. The RMT's Annual General Meeting (AGM) has endorsed TUSC since 2012.

Following the election of Jeremy Corbyn, the union has begun a debate in the run up to this year's AGM on whether to continue with its existing political strategy. Neasden RMT branch has written to all RMT branches urging them to continue to support TUSC. Extracts from their letter are reprinted below:

"Brothers/Sisters, RMT branches are being consulted on whether our union should end our participation in the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC). Neasden branch has submitted a resolution to this year's AGM in support of continuing with our current political strategy including our participation in TUSC. Neasden branch would respectfully ask you to consider the following points in making any branch response to the consultation underway. ■ If RMT continues to sit on the steering committee of TUSC we have a veto on the policies and actions of the coalition. TUSC cannot



Late RMT president Bob Crow photo Paul Mattsson

stand in any election without the agreement of all participants.

■ Participating in TUSC does not undermine support for those Labour candidates who support our aims or for the socialist leadership of Labour. Indeed, in the last general election RMT gave £63K to Labour candidates and just £10K to TUSC. Furthermore, RMT was the second highest trade union financial contributor to Jeremy Corbyn's leadership campaign. This has been done while maintaining our participation in TUSC.

■ The election of Jeremy Corbyn as leader of the Labour Party was a huge victory for socialism but Labour is not yet a party committed

to anti-austerity. Unfortunately the majority of Labour councillors have voted for cuts, privatisation and redundancies over a period of years. We cannot now advise workers who have backed TUSC in the past to embrace the same councillors they have stood up to oppose. The fight against cuts cannot wait until the next general election. Candidates standing against all cuts are needed now.

■ RMT should not support any candidate who has voted for austerity cuts or to privatise services at local or national level. Any candidate who has voted in this way should not be considered to support the key aims and policies of RMT.

■ RMT has nothing to gain by withdrawing from TUSC at this time. Our union has taken a lead among trade unions in supporting political candidates who do not accept the Tory/Blairite consensus of cuts and privatisation. We must continue to support candidates who fight for trade union policies and socialism. This should mean supporting Corbyn as leader of the Labour Party and supporting any labour candidate who shares these ideas. It should also include continued participation in TUSC. Fraternally Cat Cray Political Officer Neasden Branch London Transport Region"

## Construction workers down tools to protest attacks on jobs and pay

Keith Gibson (GMB) and Janet Gibson

From 6am on 7 April, 150 engineering construction workers, members of Ucat, GMB and Unite unions, gathered for the second time to protest outside Templeborough power station in Rotherham. Company bosses are using the EU Posted Workers Directive legislation to pay migrant workers less than the UK national industry (NAECI) pay agreement.

This pool of cheap labour is used to effectively deny equal opportunities for UK construction workers to get jobs at Templeborough, Dunbar in Scotland and Margam in Wales, three sites where coordinated protests took place.

The protest stopped work for the day with nobody trying to get into the plant. So, to 'keep our feet warm' we took a leaf out of the book of US trade unionists by holding a rolling picket on the main road, blocking traffic for several hours.

At Templeborough the lessons of the Lindsey Oil Refinery dispute in 2009 were to the fore amid consistent calls for strike action throughout the construction industry.

Despite union official claims to a planned meeting with Danish unions, a planned lobby of MEPs in Brussels and a parliamentary lobby prior to the EU referendum, the resounding feeling from construction workers was nothing short of 'we need national strike action, another Lindsey', to defend NAECI pay and to protect equal job opportunities for both migrant and UK workers.

There is a trade union activists' meeting planned for 18 April at Sheffield Unite's offices. Socialist Party leaflets were taken and read, and several copies of the Socialist newspaper were bought. Speakers, including Socialist Party member and former Lindsey worker Keith Gibson, raised the need to unite with striking junior doctors, ballot-pickets and other workers in dispute.

photo Alistair Tice



### Socialism Today

The Socialist Party's magazine

- April issue includes: ■ Labour's unresolved civil war ■ Ireland: New left rises ■ When Khrushchev denounced Stalin

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### [News in brief]

#### ■ Low pay: no way!

In response to the new so-called 'living wage' the bosses are looking for ways to claw back the pennies it will cost them. Corporation tax-avoiding Caffè Nero has blamed the National Living Wage for its decision to scrap free staff lunches. Despite making millions of pounds in the last year the company, which has not paid corporation tax since 2007, told staff they would be forced to cough up 35% of the cost of their lunchtime panini. One staff member, who didn't want to be named, told BuzzFeed News the move was "ridiculous". She said: "We work for them, we make the money for them, and we're always understaffed. On top of everything, they don't give you food anymore." Meanwhile, two Topshop cleaners who campaigned against their poverty wages have been suspended from their jobs at the chain's flagship Oxford Circus store in London. One of the cleaners, Maria Susana Benavidez Guaman, used a Change.org petition to campaign against "poverty wages" calling for "a living wage so I can provide a decent life for me and my family". She was asking for a pay rise from £7.50 an hour to £9.40 an hour. There will be a protest against their victimisation, organised by United Voices of the World trade union, at 4.30pm on 9 April at Topshop on Oxford Street. The Fast Food Rights campaign for £10 an hour and union rights also continues on 14 April with an international day of action with protests planned in Wakefield and other UK towns and cities, for more information see fastfoodrights.wordpress.com and youthfightforjobs.com

#### ■ RMT London strikes

Transport union the RMT will strike again at Kings Cross on 14 April in their fight with ISS on the Virgin East Coast contract. The RMT accused global facilities giant ISS of failing to take staff concerns seriously and have confirmed that a further 24-hour strike will kick off on the Virgin East Coast contract at Kings Cross. RMT has also demanded that Virgin, which holds the East Coast franchise, intervene with its contractors to end what the union describes as a "pay and conditions scandal at one of Europe's busiest railway stations." Also, the next 24-hour strikes on London Underground's Piccadilly Line against "bullying, harassment and intimidation" take place on 19-20 April and 21-22 April.



Isai Priya  
 Waltham Forest Socialist Party

The latest stage of the refugee crisis has seen the European Union (EU) strike a dangerous deal with the Turkish state to try to reduce the number of refugees reaching Europe. All refugees arriving in Greece will be returned to Turkey.

The EU will then supposedly accept one Syrian asylum seeker from camps in Turkey for every one returned in this way. But already there has been chaos in implementing and processing this, with nowhere near enough resources made available.

### Deportations

The first set of migrants were deported from Greece to Turkey on 4 April. This was met with protesters jumping in the sea and blocking roads to stop the deportations.

It caused administrative chaos and civil unrest that led to a four-day suspension of the deal. Some are so desperate they have said they will commit suicide if deported.

The future for those removed remains uncertain. A number of the claims about the life awaiting them have been disproven.

For example it's argued that Turkish labour laws mean Syrians will be able to work. But for this they need a work permit and figures suggest that less than 0.1% will be granted one.

And sending those fleeing war and repression to a country that is itself conducting a war against parts of its own population cannot guarantee their protection and is not a solution.

Despite the lack of protection for them in Turkey, the EU is forging ahead. However, if thousands continue to make the dangerous journey to Europe, the deal will fall apart. In all of this it is innocent victims that continue to suffer and pay the price for a crisis they never caused.

### Dangerous

25 refugees, including several children, died on 6 March as a result of the latest boat capsized off the coast of Turkey.

In 2015 alone, more than a million people crossed the Mediterranean Sea in dangerous routes, risking their lives to flee war and persecution. For nearly 4,000 of them, the journey for survival came to a tragic end in the deep ocean. More than 400 migrants have already died since the beginning of this year.

Despite the perilous journey, hundreds of thousands of refugees are continuing to put



All photos here taken in Calais by Paul Mattsson

# SOLIDARITY WITH REFUGEES

## Fight for jobs, homes and services for all

their lives at risk to escape and reach safety. European countries are making extreme attempts to discourage refugees entering Europe - building higher fences, cutting benefits, tightening immigration laws and seizing possessions.

However, a recent report by the Overseas Development Institute stated the obvious - that these attempts "will not stop" refugees coming to Europe. War, repression and poverty are some of the main reasons for the increase in migration.

The five year Syria conflict has left 13.5 million

people in need of urgent humanitarian assistance. Ten million Syrians have been internally displaced by violence and 4.6 million people are estimated to have fled the country - on top of hundreds of thousands who have been killed before they could escape.

### War

Along with the Syrian civil war, the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan are among the conflicts that have resulted in the increase in the number of refugees. These victims are now paying the price of wars they never wanted or caused. The vast majority of those entering Europe are affected by these conflicts.

On top of Britain's direct role in these wars, the government

sells arms to states in the Middle East, contributing to the continuation of the conflicts and the flow of refugees.

Refugee camps that previously held 80 migrants now hold up to 2,500 - one in ten of them being children. The Calais 'jungle' has made it to the news - where we have seen human lives left to rot in desperate conditions, huddling together to keep themselves warm.

### Disappeared

More than 100,000 children have disappeared, raising fears that they could be exploited and trafficked. According to the European Union's law enforcement agency Europol, there is no protection given to the refugees in camps.

Those who make it through the journey alive to Europe and away from camps may breathe a sigh of relief. They escaped the violence they face at home. That's before facing the reality of their new situation.



The rhetoric about migrants stealing jobs and homes is far from the truth. In Britain, each asylum seeker only gets £36.95 a week and are not allowed to work

were attacked. This despite the fact that only three out of the 58 men convicted were recently from Syria and Iraq.

The rhetoric about migrants stealing jobs and homes is far from the truth. In Britain, each asylum seeker only gets £36.95 a week to live on and they are not allowed to work. The few services that exist to support people once they are granted asylum - like language classes for example - are being cut just like other public services.

But inevitably there is a genuine concern from some working class people about the strain on services that have already been cut to the bone. But there are resources available - Britain is the fifth richest country in the world.

Despite mass opposition to the bombing of Syria, parliament voted in favour. In a short period of time they can find billions of pounds for war but claim there is not enough money to invest in vital services like the NHS. Austerity is an economic choice.

### Profit system

Instead of bombing and causing more people to be displaced, Britain could use the resources to take more people in and invest in jobs, social housing, education and healthcare for all.

David Cameron's government has agreed to take 20,000 Syrian refugees over five years - 4,000 a year, 12 a day. This is pitiful. And even this they're not implementing - in the last quarter of 2015 only 339 were granted asylum!

The Socialist Party fights for European governments to offer real help to refugees, alongside campaigning for investment in jobs, homes and services to support the whole population.

We also fight for a world where those who want to stay at home are able to instead of being forced to flee - a socialist world free from war, terror and poverty.

Plan the world's resources to ensure everyone, everywhere in the world, has access to affordable homes, secure jobs, decent schooling and a future.

End the poverty gap and stop imperialist and sectarian conflicts. Fight for a society that puts people before profit and capitalist prestige.

The refugee crisis is a product of the capitalist system and to get rid of it you have to get rid of that system. Join the Socialist Party in that fight.



### Portsmouth

## Campaigning for scholarships for refugees – and free education for all

Vladimir Bortun  
 Portsmouth Socialist Students

One of the issues getting students most angry and active recently has been the refugee crisis.

Portsmouth Socialist Students, together with activists from other student societies, have launched a petition asking the University of Portsmouth to offer 20 scholarships to refugees. 26 British universities have already done this.

We already have over 1,000 signatures and our petition has been endorsed by the student union. We are preparing an open letter to the

governing body of the university to support the petition.

However, not all of our fellow students have lived up to this display of solidarity.

Some have launched an online counter-petition asking the university not to grant any scholarships to refugees. Their argument (which they refused to defend in an open debate) is that refugees should not get scholarships as long as domestic students have to pay for their education.

We replied to them - both in the local press and on the student union website - that we support free education for all and are also ac-

tively campaigning against fees, cuts and privatisation of education. Education should be a fundamental right rather than a privilege reserved to fewer and fewer people.

Our support for refugees goes hand in hand with opposing cuts in public services and putting forward a real alternative to austerity. All these issues are connected to one another as they ultimately have the same root cause - capitalism.

So it is us - socialists - who support refugees while also genuinely fighting for people's needs in this country on a daily basis and not only when it fits a petty, xenophobic agenda.





■ Review: 'Militant' by Michael Crick

# LESSONS OF *Militant* VITAL FOR ANTI-AUSTERITY STRUGGLES TODAY

**Peter Taaffe**  
 Socialist Party general secretary

Michael Crick's book 'Militant' was first published in 1984. Why has it now been re-issued 32 years later? For the very same reason that it was published in the first place: to provide ammunition for attacking the emerging left, specifically the Socialist Party (formerly Militant), and all workers and youth who wish to see the labour movement return to its socialist roots.

This aspiration was symbolised by the Corbyn insurgency and his unprecedented victory during the Labour Party leadership contest.

Tom Watson, current 'centre-right' deputy leader of the Labour Party who recently described the present left as a 'rabble', gives the game away on the cover of Crick's book.

He recommends it as "a must read for Labour activists". He clearly sees it as a handbook for similar action to be taken if necessary against the Corbyn left through a right-wing purge, as in the 1980s. The publisher, 'Biteback', in its publicity blurb, also admits: "Some in the centre of the party [are] urging its supporters to treat the long unavailable book as a 'war manual'."

The same purpose is served by clearly biased photographs, also on the cover, of Derek Hatton - deputy Labour leader of Liverpool City Council and supporter of Militant at the time - and Tony Mulhearn against the background of banners from the short-lived, rabid and soon-to-be-forgotten so-called 'Liverpool against Militant'.

One reads: "Hitler only destroyed half our city. Hatton tried for the lot".

Why not the far more accurate images of enthusiastic demonstrations and mass meetings of Liverpool workers and their families in fervent support of the immortal Liverpool City Council, which forced the fountainhead of reaction in the 1980s, Thatcher, to retreat and give back the millions stolen from the city?

## Great gains

Why not the pictures of the great gains arising from Liverpool workers' Militant victory? The expanded local services, the 5,000 newly-built council houses with gardens back and front, that were praised by none other than Lord Reg Underhill himself, former national agent of the Labour Party. He nevertheless still wanted to expel Militant! Why not feature the thousands of new jobs created, the new parks and sports centres that were built?

No, that is not the purpose of this book, which is to seek to slander and demonise Militant and the successful fighting policies pursued in Liverpool and elsewhere.

Watson - in the so-called 'centre' of Labour - in an alliance with the Blairite right, hopes to dissuade the pre-



Mass demo in support of Liverpool council photo Militant



The Militant editorial board, expelled from the Labour Party in 1983 photo Militant



Protesting against the poll tax photo D Sinclair

**“”**  
**The purpose of this book is to seek to slander and demonise Militant and the fighting policies pursued**

sent generation of Labour 'activists' from going down the 'Militant road'. That is, socialist policies used then and applicable now, such as, among other things, 'no-cuts' budgets. This is the real answer to Osborne's further £10 billion butchering of council and national services and jobs.

Why not also comment on Militant's decisive role during the poll tax struggle? It is an incontestable fact that others deserted the field of battle. It was not the disastrous Neil Kinnock and the right-wing Labour leadership that led to victory in this epic struggle.

Nor unfortunately did the trade union leaders and Labour left, let alone left groups like the Socialist Workers Party. The leader of the SWP at the time, Tony Cliff, decreed that not paying the poll tax was like not paying your bus fare! Militant had 34 comrades jailed during this battle, along with many others who fought and sacrificed equally. It was our party that gave the necessary leadership.

It was Militant and the All-Brit-

ain Anti Poll Tax Federation which achieved the remarkable feat of organising the 18 million-strong non-payment campaign that smashed the tax and consigned the 'iron lady', Thatcher, to history!

Reviewing Crick's latest book, the SWP now unbelievably write: "The lesson of the 1980s should be that focusing on internal battles eventually means giving way to the right."

## Re-selection

This is completely false. The internal Labour struggles of the 1980s were not just "internal". The Liverpool struggle resonated widely among trade unionists and workers generally, as did the 're-selection' battle - attempts to replace pro-capitalist MPs with real socialist, working-class fighters.

"Re-selection" of pro-capitalist Blairite MPs remains just as important today as a means of decisively changing the Labour Party and cementing Corbyn's leadership.

The SWP made a major blunder,

concluding in 1984 that the Liverpool council outcome meant that workers were "sold down the Mersey"! In Liverpool, workers celebrating their victory treated this claim with bewilderment and disdain.

None of Militant's achievements are either recognised or explained in Crick's book because as he, Watson and the weakened Blairites well understand, this would completely vindicate fighting socialist policies for today.

Crick fails to grasp the political reasons why Militant was successful in Liverpool and elsewhere. It is Marxists who are usually falsely accused of a 'conspiratorial' view of history. Yet Crick's book crudely exemplifies this approach.

Militant allegedly rose through conspiratorial, secretive methods. Marxism could only find support by disguising our "real revolutionary policies."

How childish! As if a movement which manages to connect to first of

all hundreds, then thousands and, on a mass level, hundreds of thousands and millions, can do so through 'secretive' methods designed to hide its real programme.

There is no economic or real political context to Crick's analysis of our rise or, for that matter, our supposed subsequent 'isolation'. There is just a passing reference to why we had such success in Liverpool. Crick writes: "If Militant had never existed in Liverpool, a struggle would have been likely between the Liverpool Council and the Thatcher administration... Liverpool suffered particular badly from the successive measures introduced by the government to curb local spending."

It was Militant, together with thousands of politically aware workers, however, which supplied the vital ingredient of programme and leadership which defeated Thatcher.

But it was not just Liverpool but Britain as a whole that was suffering from the crisis of capitalism in general

and the special crisis of British capitalism evident throughout the 1970s. This was symbolised in the complete collapse of manufacturing in Liverpool, leading to poverty and unemployment.

This naturally generated working-class opposition to the system and its direct representatives, the Tories and Liberals. It was the major factor in swinging the great majority of the labour movement towards the left and, with it, a dramatic increase in support for Militant.

At one stage, the 1,200 supporters of Militant in Liverpool produced a weekly supplement of our national weekly paper. We argued for the programme and the policies which ensured the Liverpool victory and the later poll tax triumph.

None of this is explained by Crick, who falls back on the hackneyed right-wing 'organisational' explanation for our growth. Our success throughout the 1970s and 80s was primarily political, of course married to effective organisation.

It was our correct explanation of how events were likely to develop and our programme for victory of the working people against capitalism and its pro-capitalist agents in the labour movement which enthused workers and young people, drawing them to our banner.

## Growth

The same factors are at work today as capitalism once more heads for the rocks, wrecking the lives of millions in the process. Moreover, we never vanished from the political arena, as our opponents hoped and predicted. Instead we have been able to survive and grow, despite the ideological backlash against 'socialism' arising from the collapse of Stalinism and, with it, the planned economy.

This allowed us to maintain our party and to exercise a major influence in the changed situation following Corbyn's Labour leadership victory.

We and the labour movement initially succeeded in Liverpool and were only defeated because of the desertion, by the likes of David Blunkett and Ken Livingstone, from the common struggle of 22 councils taking a 'no-cuts' stance against the Tory government.

Only Liverpool and Lambeth held out against Thatcher.

It was this, combined with the defeat of the miners and the coalescing with the first beginnings of neoliberalism, which provided the material base for the beginnings of the triumph of the right, first through Kinnock, followed by John Smith and succeeded by the outright neoliberal political counterrevolution within the Labour Party of Tony Blair.

But that cycle has exhausted itself as a new and perhaps even more devastating world economic crisis looms which will severely impact on Britain, which is now much more economically exposed than in the 1970s or 80s.

It is unquestionable that mass resistance will flow from this. The problem is will the leadership be there - as it was in Liverpool - that can lead the forces of the working class and the labour movement to victory?

The fact that the working masses are striving to create such a leadership was shown by the anti-austerity revolt symbolised in Corbyn's emergence as Labour leader and Bernie Sanders in the US.

All of this is a closed book to Crick. Kinnock possessed the necessary previous 'left credentials', which he unscrupulously used to lead the charge towards the right at the top in the latter part of the 1980s. He justified his Stalinist-style purge of Labour, while some alleged 'lefts' unbelievably accommodated themselves to this, as the "necessary price for a Labour victory"! Yet Baron Kinnock, as he subsequently became for his priceless service to capitalism, was the architect of devastating election defeats in 1987 and 1992.

What a contrast to Liverpool under the political sway of the much maligned Militant!

The highest Labour vote ever in local elections in the city was achieved in 1987 when the Liverpool Labour group and movement were still under the political influence of Militant!

Electoral decline set in with Kinnock's disastrous reign as Labour leader while the purge of Militant and the left was carried through. In fact, the process of dismantling Labour as a working class party at bottom began with our expulsion, as we predicted at the time.

Thatcher recognised - according to her partner in crime, Norman Tebbit - that her greatest achievement was the establishment of New Labour through Tony Blair! To his credit, Jeremy Corbyn, as Crick records, opposed the witch-hunt against Militant and has defended his decision since becoming Labour leader.

Crick and all those capitalist forces who feared the growing influence of

the left and Militant in particular ascribe our success to 'sinister' and 'underhand' methods. Horror upon horror, our success was due to the fact we were 'organised', something that we have never denied in writing, on radio or in TV debates watched by millions.

We were organised just as the right was at the time through the right-wing organisation 'Solidarity' and the left in the movement behind Tony Benn and the Tribune newspaper.

As to being a 'party within a party' - so is the Co-op Party. Paul Mason has also recognised, in effect, that the Labour Party will have to be organised on federal lines. This could draw in genuine socialist forces, particularly

the new generation who are repelled by the top-down intolerant methods and structures of even some of the current Labour left groupings.

**Organised**  
 Our real crime was to be better organised than our opponents. Moreover, our political programme was capable of reaching hundreds of thousands and even millions of workers.

This was shown in Liverpool, the poll tax battle, the miners' strike - when we assembled 500 miners in our ranks - and in innumerable struggles that unfolded in the 1970s and 80s.

Militant was the most successful Marxist/Trotskyist organisation in Britain and, to some extent, in Western Europe.

Like no other left, Marxist force at the time or since, we were able to connect to mass working class audiences with our programme, which linked their day-to-day problems with the idea of transforming society in a socialist direction. We describe this in great detail in 'The Rise of Militant' and also in a forthcoming history of our role since the mid-1990s.

This, and many other lessons from that period, can be better learned in preparation for today's battles through our books than the one-sided biased work of Michael Crick.



Council housing built by Militant-led Liverpool council photo D Sinclair

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# LIBRARY OCCUPATION ENDS WITH MARCH ON CUTTING COUNCIL

**James Ivens**  
Lambeth Socialist Party

The community occupation of Carnegie Library in Lambeth, south London, ended proudly and defiantly on 9 April. Over a thousand local residents and workers marched in protest - including a rebel Labour councillor. But the fight to save this and three other libraries is not over.

The Blairite borough council won the right to evict occupiers effective 5.30pm on the day of the demonstration. Police were not allowing entry or re-entry, and public sector union Unison has not followed up on earlier strikes. Parents and children inside the Carnegie faced extra pressure, with school holidays due to end.

## Advance

In this context, occupiers decided to walk out together and march on the town hall. Trade union and political banners bristled from the crowd. An enormous brass fanfare trumpet sounded the advance.

Joining school children at the head of the protest was Councillor Rachel Heywood. Pressure from the libraries campaign has forced her to break ranks and criticise

Lambeth's leadership.

Speaking at the closing rally outside Brixton Library, Heywood said: "I would not be representing you, or any of the people around Brixton, if I were to say let us close the libraries down and turn them into private gyms."



**"Now don't boo, but I'm a member of the Labour Party." The crowd booed, loudly**

Lambeth Socialist Party welcomes this u-turn from a councillor who had previously backed the borough's sociopathic austerity programme. But Heywood herself recognises her party is unlikely to wear it. "I don't know if I will still have a job tomorrow," she said.

The last Lambeth councillor to waver over cuts was Kingsley Abrams, who abstained in one vote. The Labour group quickly suspended him. He later stood as part of the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition 100% anti-austerity electoral challenge last May.



Over 1,000 marched to save the library photo James Ivens

Pro-Corbyn Labour group Momentum has been out canvassing for the very Blairites that library campaigners have targeted. A Lambeth Momentum activist at the closing rally opened with: "Now don't boo, but I'm a member of the Labour

Party." The crowd booed, loudly.

Marchers then cheered a mention of Jeremy Corbyn. But he has not answered calls to intervene in support of the libraries campaign.

Socialist Party members were excluded from the rally platform, so

we could not highlight these contradictions and propose our alternative. But the contradictions are clear. Unison must take advantage and call escalating strikes, coordinated with other workers, to push the Blairites back.

## Demonstration to defend the NHS in Leicester

**Andrew Walton**  
Leicester Socialist Party

Our NHS is under attack like never before, and we must act now to save it. As an NHS worker and Unison member, I chaired a protest organised by Leicestershire Against The Cuts on 9 April.

## Junior doctors

It brought together campaigners from groups such as the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition, the Socialist Party, Momentum, and Keep Our NHS Public, alongside other trade unionists and junior doctors. We had a lively rally and march through Leicester city centre, with many students and young people raising their voices - we need our public health service to still be there for future generations.

People were angry that cuts are being made to local NHS services - the nearby Hinckley and Bosworth Community Hospital is earmarked for closure and 400 beds are under threat at

the Leicester Royal Infirmary. A doctor on a picket line at Leicester General Hospital said that junior doctors are seen as an easy target, as their contract is up for renewal.

Jeremy Hunt is seeking to impose a new contract, without any meaningful negotiation. Doctors do not want to go on strike, but when patient care and the future of the NHS is at stake, they have no other choice.

Jon Dale, a Unite member, put forward the Socialist Party's alternative. We stand for investment into our healthcare service. We would scrap extortionate PFI deals, where health trusts owe private companies billions of pounds. We would kick out the fat cats from our health service by abolishing the Health and Social Care Act, which has opened NHS services up to tender to "any willing provider".

We demand a publicly-owned, properly funded National Health Service. The Tories want to get rid of the NHS. If you want to protect our health service, join the socialists!

■ See reports of the latest junior doctors' strike on page 6

## Worcestershire

# Hands of our health service!

**Sean McCauley**  
Worcestershire Socialist Party

Worcestershire has been hit time and time again with cuts to its NHS. It's been 16 years since New Labour closed Kidderminster's A&E, last year the Tories and Lib Dems closed the Cookley rehab ward and now the Tories plan to close the GP centre in the Kidderminster hospital.

## 30 years

Health bosses in Worcestershire have also tried, for over ten years, to close maternity services in Redditch.

They closed it 'temporarily' in November 2015 and now plan to make it permanent after a consultation process in June.

Overall, the Tories are forcing £50 million cuts on the NHS in Worcestershire while at the same time Private Finance Initiatives (PFIs) are bleeding Worcestershire NHS dry.

Over 30 years we will pay £852

million for the Worcester Royal hospital!

The mark up in terms of the cost of PFI schemes is normally four times the original cost of the building of the hospital; for us it is nearly ten times.

We demand that the Alex Maternity Unit is reopened, all cuts are opposed and the PFI scheme at Worcestershire Royal cancelled.

## Public Meeting: Defend the Health Service

Called by Worcester Trades Union Council  
20 April at 7.15pm in St Andrews Church, Pump St, Worcester city centre, WR1 2QT

## Socialist Party Fighting Fund

	£ target	£ received	April 2016 to June 2016	Deadline 30 June 2016
Eastern	1,200	762	63%	
Wales	2,300	426	19%	
South West	1,400	258	18%	
Yorkshire	2,900	440	15%	
East Midlands	1,600	196	12%	
North West	1,800	154	9%	
South East	750	64	8%	
West Midlands	2,100	141	7%	
Southern	1,200	63	5%	
London	6,150	151	2%	
Northern	600	12	2%	
England and Wales	3,050	25	1%	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>25,000</b>	<b>2,691</b>	<b>11%</b>	



# Sales of the Socialist on the rise, read all about it!

**Ian Pattison**

The Socialist campaign organiser

We had a very successful sales campaign of the Socialist in the first three months of 2015 - selling 2,000 more than in the previous quarter. That's on top of thousands that landed on door mats via subscription.

## Panama

The main capitalist papers have jumped to expose tax avoidance in the Panama Papers. Now they're trying to calm working class anger and shore up David Cameron. But fewer and fewer people trust the establishment and their mouthpieces in the media.

An extra 700 copies were

snapped up in Yorkshire. Sellers of the Socialist sold 400 copies in one month campaigning against steel closures in Scunthorpe.

On 9 April, 200 people bought the Socialist across five Welsh towns while demanding nationalisation of the steel industry. Sales have almost tripled in Wales.

The Socialist has been boosted by our working class writers. A front page on £10 an hour was written by a young, low-paid fast food worker. Our 'solidarity with the junior doctors' article was written by a medical student. Workers' action for nationalisation was put forward in an interview with a redundant Rotherham steelworker. And this week we feature the Panama Papers scandal. Not in the words of Cameron and other tax-dodgers, but working class people who have been ripped off and are ready to fight back.

## Subscribe

The Southern region more than doubled sales by going hell for leather on sales weeks of action twice this year. In the West Midlands, a Corbynista Labour Party member took out a subscription when she re-joined Labour six months ago. When Labour cuts councillors came knocking for nominations, she refused, instead nominating the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC) after reading what we said.

Why not take out a direct debit subscription? (see advert bottom left) And take a few extra papers to try and sell to friends, family & workmates?



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## May Day greetings

The Socialist is 100% anti-austerity, unashamedly supporting the struggles of working class people against inequality. On May Day, International Workers' Day, trade unions and other campaigning groups put solidarity messages in our paper.

Can you move a motion in your branch? If it's too short notice, why not take the sign-up sheet around

workmates to guarantee at least an unofficial greeting in the paper that fights the cuts?

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](mailto:jamesivens@socialistparty.org.uk)

■ Pay greeting online [www.socialistparty.org.uk/mayday](http://www.socialistparty.org.uk/mayday)



photo Helen Pattison

## “Not the church, not the state - women must decide their fate!”

Socialist Party members joined hundreds protesting at the Polish embassy in London on 9 April in solidarity with thousands demonstrating in Warsaw and at other embassies around the world against attacks on abortion rights.

The Polish government has announced plans to introduce a total ban on abortion. Protesters left coat hangers at the embassy, highlighting the tens of thousands of Polish

women every year forced to have dangerous backstreet abortions by the already stringent laws.

A group of Irish women joined the protest after demonstrating against the prosecution of two women in Northern Ireland for procuring pills from the internet to carry out their own abortions.

The Socialist Party fights for access to free, legal and safe abortions for all.

## Workers and youth unite to defend vital services

**Helen Pattison**

London Youth Fight Austerity

Youth workers and teenage service users lobbied Camden council on 6 April in defence of youth services which the Labour council plans to slash. One protester, from a single parent family in an inner London borough, said youth services allowed him to branch out and build his confidence - the main reasons he is now at university.

## Generation

Bluebell, a secondary school student, said that no child in Camden hasn't used or been positively impacted by the youth services in some way. She didn't think cutting the services would save money as

without them people would not be able to reach their full potential and it would leave a generation without the support they need.

Before the council agreed the cuts to youth services, Hannah Morris, Camden Youth MP, thanked the council for listening to the consultation, protesters and trade unions and for preventing some cuts to services but asked that they reconsider and stop all the cuts. Hannah stressed that these services were life savers and without them the only people to lose out would be young people and their families.

The cuts were passed but after the meeting the local organiser of the council workers' union Unison stressed the campaign would continue.



# Bosses back EU to boost NHS sell-offs

Tom Barker

The future of the NHS has emerged as a key battleground in the debate surrounding Britain's referendum on membership of the European Union (EU).

Labour MPs like Alan Johnson have said leaving the EU would risk "frightening consequences for staffing, waiting times and levels of service care".

At the same time, right-wing campaigners for Brexit argue that leaving could secure the health service by reducing immigration from Europe.

Both camps rely on fearmongering rather than a sober assessment of the facts. They attempt to hide the class interests of the establishment politicians involved.

Ukip leader Nigel Farage has said continued membership in the EU would "allow giant American corporations to bid for contracts within the National Health Service... There are many people that fear that this could be the privatisation of the National Health Service through the back door."

But the former commodities broker's real interests are quite different. On his 2012 'Common Sense' tour, Farage announced:

"I think we're going to have to think about healthcare very, very differently. I think we are going to have to move to an insurance-based system of healthcare."

Douglas Carswell, the lone Ukip MP, has campaigned continuously for an "open market" in healthcare contracts. Right wingers also put about the lie that immigration is responsible for strain on the NHS - rather than their cuts to funding and staffing.

## Gove

Establishment Brexit campaign group Vote Leave is backed by Justice Secretary Michael Gove and London Mayor Boris Johnson. One spokesperson said: "If we vote Leave we can stop handing over £350 million a week to the EU and can instead spend our money on our priorities like the NHS."

Yet in 2005, Gove co-authored a book entitled 'Direct democracy: an agenda for a new model party'. This states unequivocally:

"Our ambition should be to break down the barriers between private and public provision, in effect denationalising the provision of healthcare in Britain."

Gove, with current health secretary and bane of junior doctors Jeremy Hunt, backed the pro-privatisation Health and Social Care Act 2012.

Many people are rightly repulsed by anti-immigrant, right-wing Euroscepticism. But we need to ask ourselves why the majority of establishment politicians, business leaders and big corporations have lined up to back the EU.

The piecemeal sale of the NHS is nothing new. The so-called Private Finance Initiative (PFI) introduced under Tory John Major accelerated



EU-assisted healthcare privatisation worsens staff shortages as bosses cut corners to boost profits  
Ward photo by Yuya Tamai, scissors photo by Saltanat ebli, both Creative Commons

sell-offs of the public sector. Tony Blair's New Labour expanded PFI into the NHS.

Blair is also unambiguous on the EU referendum, stating it is Britain's "destiny to lead in Europe". With characteristic charm, Blair has even said the public cannot be trusted to make the "sensible choice" - to stay inside the bosses' EU.

And the Blairite ex-health ministers calling for a vote to remain are in the main beneficiaries of large salaries from the private health sector.

Sir Richard Branson is the bil-



**We need to ask ourselves why the majority of establishment politicians, business leaders and big corporations have lined up to back the EU**

lionaire owner of private health firm Virgin Care. He too has spoken out against Brexit, warning that "it would be a very, very, very, very sad day if British people voted to leave".

Since entering the health market in 2010, Virgin has gathered over £1 billion worth of contracts within the NHS. Most recently, Virgin won a £126 million contract to take over four hospitals in Kent. Unsurprisingly, this deal was pushed through by - drum roll - Jeremy Hunt.

The Confederation of British Industry, which represents Britain's

top bosses, backs EU membership and supported the Health and Social Care Act.

If Branson wants to stay in the EU, it is certainly not for the love of a publicly owned health service.

The reason for privatisers' support for the EU is simple. It is because of the EU's unwavering commitment to privatisation, written into every one of its undemocratic treaties and institutions, which the European Parliament has no power to overrule.

One of the bosses' latest tools in the process of privatisation is the proposed Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP).

## TTIP

TTIP is a multibillion-dollar agreement between the United States and the EU which allows corporations to overturn government decisions when their profits have been affected by state intervention or public ownership. This is just the latest manifestation of the EU's founding purpose: assisting the capitalist class in maximising profits and resisting public ownership.

Voting to leave would set TTIP back and cause disarray in the pro-privatisation EU and British capitalist establishment.

Whether or not we stay in the EU, British workers will be faced with austerity. The same is true for the rest of Europe.

The only thing that can reliably defend against NHS privatisation is mass trade union and political action against the capitalists. Positive reforms for the living conditions of the working class, such as the NHS, have been won, without exception, by such action.

## £1 billion

NHS contracts privatiser Richard Branson has won since 2010 - Branson backs EU membership

What few and insufficient protections the EU does provide are also the result of such action. Voting to back the EU will only bolster the capitalist forces seeking to remove even these protections, both in Brussels and Westminster.

For many, the vote will provide a stick with which to beat the establishment parties. Brexit would almost certainly lead to the downfall of David Cameron and, possibly, to a snap general election.

The Socialist Party is calling for a vote to leave the EU. But in or out, the future of the NHS depends on whether, as Nye Bevan once said, "there are folk left with the faith to fight for it."

■ Read more socialist arguments for voting Leave at [socialistcase4exit.eu](http://socialistcase4exit.eu)

# Huddersfield A&E fightback grows



photo Bob Severn

Mike Forster  
Huddersfield Socialist Party

The campaign to save accident and emergency services in Huddersfield, Yorkshire, is mobilising all its forces for a public 'consultation' on 18 April.

Previous sham consultation meetings have been really well attended. Not a single voice has been raised in favour of the closure.

So far, we have distributed 12,000 leaflets calling on local people to attend. The clinical commissioning group, responsible for the proposed cut, has only booked a room for around 450. We can expect a huge overflow of angry residents outside the venue - yet more evidence of a flawed consultation.

The newly formed 'Youth for HRI' group has also produced 3,000 flyers calling on young people to come, and will be marching from the town centre to the venue.

As well as the active youth group, there are 14 local groups which have been set up to organise and mobilise local communities. These groups are now meeting every month with a programme of major events.

Huddersfield has never seen anything like this depth of local support or energy since the days of the campaign against Thatcher's hated poll tax. Militant, the Socialist Party's forerunner, similarly played a leading role in that movement.

■ Facebook 'Lets save Huddersfield A&E', Twitter #HandsOffHRI, [handsoffhri.com](http://handsoffhri.com)



Teachers and school students marching against academies in London last month photo Sarah Wrack

# No A-level courses in Knowsley thanks to 'academies' system

Roger Bannister  
Secretary, public sector union Unison, Knowsley branch (personal capacity)

Within a few weeks there will be no A-level provision in the borough of Knowsley, Merseyside.

This is a chilling portent of what will happen to education in working class areas if the Tories and Blairites are allowed to get away with turning council-run schools into 'academies' run by unaccountable private profiteers.

Halewood Academy has decided to end all A-level teaching, and send existing sixth formers to schools in neighbouring authorities. It was the last school in the borough offering A-levels.

Knowsley was the second most deprived borough in the country in the Department for Communities and Local Government's 2015 'Indices of Multiple Deprivation'.

Almost 22% of the population is dependent on out-of-work benefits, according to the Department for Work and Pensions in August 2015. Actual youth unemployment is just below 30%. Knowsley is governed by a right-wing Labour group which controls every seat in the council chamber.

Of the six secondary schools in the borough, three are already academies, and another one is on the way.

Halewood was originally a 'converter academy', meaning it was not part of a chain. However, its results were so disastrous that it was in the process of becoming part of a 'multi-academy trust' (MAT).

During this time, Halewood's outgoing governors decided to abandon A-level teaching. The MAT's governors then slowed down the takeover so they didn't have to take the flack.

The Times Educational Supple-

ment could only find two other education authorities that have no A-level provision.

One is the City of London - a tiny, medieval relic in the centre of the capital, bordering the prosperous City of Westminster. The other is the Scilly Isles, whose population is less than 2,500, and has an arrangement with Cornwall for post-16 education.

Neither of these can be compared to an area like Knowsley with a predominantly working class population.

The Tories praise academies for 'freeing' schools from 'bureaucratic' local authority control. This is inaccurate propaganda.

In reality, council oversight has been significantly weakened since the Education Reform Act 1988. This introduced 'local management of schools' which scattered financial control among individual schools' heads and governors.

## Planning

As can be seen from the Knowsley disaster, wholly autonomous schools mean a total lack of borough-wide planning. Academy bosses take decisions on the basis of individual profitability, with no regard for the educational needs of the community as a whole. Local authorities are powerless to insist on any school offering a particular subject, or even maintaining sixth-form education.

The end result of this process will be that good, prestigious schools will flourish only in wealthy districts with well-heeled populations. Poor schools, offering inadequate provision, will be the norm in working class areas.

The fight against academisation is crucial, vital to defend educational opportunities for working class children.

## 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)

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**■ Women and work**

Women have borne the brunt of the cuts inflicted by the Con-Dems and the current government.

Over the past decade, women's pay, work opportunities and protection have been eroded.

Women have fought the idea of benefit payments going to one person in a household - a throwback to the old days when the 'head of the household' dealt with everything - as part of Tory 'Universal Credit' plans. This and other measures could force women back into dependency.

Of the people living in poverty in this country, 40% are women and 23% are children. Last year the Trade Union Congress revealed that half a million more women than men were looking for work.

The poor, the victims of the system, often find themselves blamed for their situation. Unemployment, under-employment and low pay obviously affect more than just living standards. They have a profound effect on self-esteem, and physical and mental health.

**Sally Peterson Gloucester**

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.

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

[socialistparty.org.uk/join](http://socialistparty.org.uk/join) 020 8988 8777

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# Panama Papers protests



**Iceland: "Capitalism doesn't work"**  
 Natalia Medina of Rättvisepartiet Socialisterna (CWI Sweden) participated in the demonstrations outside the parliament building in Reykjavik that forced the resignation of Iceland's prime minister, Sigmundur David Gunnlaugsson, following revelations about his finances in the Panama Papers.  
 Demonstrators Ólöf Einarisdóttir and Begga Pontár told Natalie: "People lost so much during the financial crisis (of 2007-08); many we know were affected. We need a completely new government".  
 "This is the parliament, not a house for criminals!" Páll Heiðar Aadnægard exclaimed. Páll has been working as a volunteer since 2007, helping people who risk getting evicted from their homes. "We managed to postpone some evictions and even stop a few, but some we couldn't stop. I've seen some terrible things. This is not enough [protesting], but it's a step in the right direction."  
 Gunnar J Karlsson said: "My husband works in construction and after the financial crash every building site was at a standstill in Iceland. Now he has to work in Norway, away from the family. If you're born in a rich family with power, then you can't possibly understand what we feel, what we're going through."  
 "It's a problem that people with power are abusing the system and are hiding money overseas. We need new people in the government - ordinary people. It doesn't work this way - capitalism doesn't work and people are beginning to realise that."



**China: Chinese ruling elite used tax havens**  
 On 12 April, two dozen protesters organised by Socialist Action (CWI Hong Kong - pictured above) protested against tax havens for the super rich outside the Hong Kong office of Mossack Fonseca, the firm at the centre of the Panama Papers scandal.  
 Among the 140 global political leaders named in the Panama Papers are eight current or former members of the Chinese Politburo Standing Committee, the pinnacle of power within China's dictatorship. President Xi Jinping's brother-in-law Deng Jiagu and sister Qi Qiaoqiao are named as having links with two companies in the British Virgin Islands tax haven.  
 A Bloomberg investigation in 2012 showed the president's family owned financial assets worth \$376 million at that time.  
 The latest revelations come at a time of deepening crisis and divisions within China's ruling elite, as the economy derails.  
 The Chinese regime is going to unprecedented lengths to suppress news of the Panama papers inside the country.  
 Beijing's notoriously nationalistic Global Times, while admitting that the Panama Papers may be genuine, makes the absurd claim that their publication is a US-inspired plot!  
 More comment see chinaworker.info

# BANGLADESH STOP THE RAMPAL POWER PROJECT



The threatened Sundarbans forest photo Wikimedia Commons

**Pete Mason**  
Barking and Dagenham Socialist Party

The world's largest mangrove forest lies on the deltas of three rivers: the Ganges, Brahmaputra and Meghna rivers on the Bay of Bengal. In this area of outstanding natural beauty called the Sundarbans, the Bangladesh government plans to site a coal-fired power plant.  
 A 400-kilometre "Long March" from the capital, Dhaka, to the Sundarbans in the district of Bagherhat took place, organised by the Committee to Protect Oil, Gas and Mineral Resources in Bangladesh. Meetings were held in the towns and villages on the way.  
 The Rampal project could de-

stroy the forest. Every year the power plant would pollute the atmosphere with 52,000 tons of toxic sulphur dioxide, 30,000 tons of nitrogen dioxide and a million tons of ash, just a few kilometres from the mangrove forest. It will change the salinity and temperature of the water in the area.

**Threatened lives**  
 The Rampal project threatens the lives and livelihoods of the rural poor in the region. The mangroves act to stop storm surges from cyclones bringing catastrophic flooding to this low-lying region. The Sundarbans is also home to the endangered Bengal Tiger.  
 The Committee threatens Dhaka with "sit-in, besiege, strike, blockade and other programmes" if the gov-

ernment does not stop the project.  
 The UK branch of the Committee to Protect Oil, Gas and Mineral Resources in Bangladesh called a solidarity meeting in Tower Hamlets, London while the Long March was in progress.  
 Secretary of the committee and Socialist Party member Akhter Khan said: "Sheikh Hasina, the prime minister of Bangladesh, has won the 2015 United Nations environmental award for 'Champion of the Earth'.  
 "But she is destroying Bangladesh's environment and ecology by promoting this dirty coal-based energy plant jointly with the Indian government."  
 A protest outside the London Bangladeshi embassy is planned, along with a cultural event.

# Brazil Solidarity with attacked civil servants

LSR (CWI in Brazil) reporters

On 4 April, a group of civil servants in Praia Grande, Brazil, who are in struggle for a wage increase of 12.5%, occupied their trade union (linked to Força Sindical) offices in protest at the treacherous actions of the union leadership which threatened to sell out their dispute.  
 After five hours waiting for the union president, they were surprised by 20 henchmen and beaten in a cowardly manner. Please, send urgently messages of your solidarity with these workers against such abuse.  
 They mainly fight for a real increase in their wage and against the president of the union. This is their

first struggle in eight years. For many of these workers, it is the first struggle of their lives.  
**Please send solidarity messages to: mauricio.de.oliveira.filho@gmail.com**  
 ■ A congressional committee voted to recommend impeaching Brazil's President Dilma Rousseff over corruption claims. The decision will intensify political struggle between parties in the governing coalition and on the streets, where mass pro and anti-Rousseff demos have taken place. More in a future issue of the Socialist



# Workers and youth on the streets in France Full-scale struggle with government is erupting



photo Paul Mattsson

Clare Doyle

A new period of class struggle has opened up in France. Until recently, the smouldering discontent among workers was finding expression in isolated but numerous workplace battles - over threatened closures, redundancies and the growing repression against workers' representatives.  
 Secondary school students had been holding walkouts, especially on the issue of racism.  
 Now, everything is coming together but bold organisation is vitally needed to mobilise and put forward a strategy to win.  
 Workers have been taking strike action and joining demonstrations together across the country against changes in the labour law.  
 The 'Socialist' government of President Francois Hollande is trying to introduce legislation which does away with limitations on working hours and makes sacking and tightening the screw on workers easier.

In Paris, many workers and students decided to join those who have been staying overnight in the Place de la Republique. The idea of 'Nuits Debout' (nights standing up) - voicing discontents, discussing ideas and what to do - has caught on and spread to other cities (including across the border to Brussels).



**The trade union federations have named 28 April for a new day of strike action and the battle is being joined by almost every layer in society**

Although there have been quite serious attacks by the police on occasions and attempts to close down the occupations, there have been regular general assemblies and 'open mics' for any of the 'enraged' to have their say.  
 The movement, while not as large, has been compared to the 'indignados' in Spain and the 'Occupy' movements in the US, with a clear rejection of society run by the rich and contemptuous elite.  
 While revolution cannot simply be 'detonated', France has in its history the experience of May 1968 which showed the students sparking a movement of workers that threatened the very survival of capi-

talism. In France today there is even more anger and feeling of betrayal that pro-big business policies are being driven through by a so-called Socialist government.  
 Hollande's popularity ratings are "already the lowest of any serving president in modern French history" (Reuters).

## Concessions

The government's tiny concessions on the labour law reform and an offer of money to students are unlikely to assuage the protesters. On the contrary, they can even act as a spur for taking more and bigger action. The situation is rapidly developing in which many workers feel that indefinite general strike action is needed.  
 The trade union federations have named 28 April for a new day of strike action and the battle is being joined by almost every layer in society. But the major force for change is the still powerful French working class.  
 Linked to real socialist ideas - not the neoliberalism of Hollande and Valls - it can force a political struggle which can have huge repercussions throughout Europe.  
 Members, and supporters of Gauche Révolutionnaire - the sister organisation of the Socialist Party - have participated in many of the actions around the country with, as yet, no harassment from the police.  
 Reports and analysis from them are carried at socialistworld.net  
 ■ France 1968: Month of Revolution by Clare Doyle available from Left Books (see page 9 for more details)



## 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.

#### WORK AND INCOME

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

#### 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 state retirement pension, as a step towards a living pension.
- 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

@socialist\_party text 07761 818 206 /CWiSocialistParty





# NATIONALISE TO SAVE ALL STEEL JOBS



Alec Thraves

**T**ata Steel's UK assets are officially up for sale. Investment bankers and vulture capitalists are eyeing up any profitable pickings while at the same time willing to throw thousands of workers and their communities onto the scrapheap.

That is why the Socialist Party's demand for nationalisation of Tata Steel has received such an overwhelming amount of support in our steel communities.

Over the past couple of weeks thousands of leaflets demanding nationalisation have been eagerly snapped up and hundreds of copies of the Socialist sold to workers who have no faith in the private sector to save their jobs and livelihoods.

In the steel communities across South

Wales on 9 April, our members, armed with our front page demanding 'Nationalise Steel', sold 70 copies of the Socialist in Port Talbot, 50 in Swansea, 40 in Newport, and 32 in Llanelli.

While there is understandably a certain feeling of relief by the sale of Tata's Scunthorpe plant to the 'investment firm' Greybull Capital, this breakup of Tata comes with a 3% pay cut, attacks on the workers' pension scheme and an uncertain future in the hands of a ruthless company.

That sale will be of no comfort to the workers in Port Talbot where the only interest shown from the private sector has been Sanjeev Gupta and his Liberty House company, a minnow businessman who admitted that his business plan was written on the back of an envelope! His precondition for even considering a bid is the closure of the blast furnaces in order to change the

steelworks into a plant that recycles scrap metal - the biggest scrap dealer in Europe!

That is why nationalisation is the only guarantee to secure the steel industry in Britain and the tens of thousands of jobs that rely on it.

#### NSSN Nationalise Tata - Keep the Furnaces Firing public meetings

- Port Talbot: 7.30pm 13 April, Grand Hotel (opposite train station)
- Llanelli (joint with Llanelli Trades Council): 7.00pm 20 April, Queen Victoria Club, Queen Victoria Road, SA15 2TL. Speakers include a Trostre steelworker

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