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# the Socialist

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## Queen's Speech - more cuts and sell-offs

# TORIES ATTACK:

# FIGHT BACK



Dave Carr

**The Tory government has announced a raft of new bills to extend the privatisation and commercialisation of our public services.**

None of the big social problems - such as the housing crisis, the faltering National Health Service, and the prohibitive cost of higher education - will be remedied.

On the contrary, the Cameron government is pressing ahead with the sell-off of more social housing through 'right to buy' and increasing council rents through its 'pay to stay' measures.

University tuition fees, which were trebled to £9,000 under the previous Tory-led coalition, will be allowed to rise even higher. On top of the scrapping of maintenance grants, fees rises will be a further barrier to students from low-income backgrounds.

And tax-dodging, profit-maximising hi-tech companies like Google and Facebook will be allowed to establish competing universities.

Despite a retreat on forcing all local authority schools to become academies the government is still pressing ahead with its undemocratic, unaccountable, and socially divisive scheme. Academies will certainly boost headteacher salaries, but without a shred of evidence that they improve education standards.

The prisons crisis - record high levels of inmate suicides, overcrowding, increasing violence against staff and prisoners, and a drugs epidemic - will escalate under new legislation to devolve government-squeezed funding to prison governors.

Our democratic rights will also be attacked under plans to scrap the Human Rights Act and curtail free speech, disguised as anti-terrorism measures.

All these attacks are against the background of continuing vicious austerity cuts to our living standards, in order to bail out the super-rich and their failed capitalist system.

But the ability of this weak and divided Tory government to carry out these privatisations and cuts is limited. Since being elected, the Tories have retreated on many issues - including cuts to tax credits and disability payments, Sunday trading and even aspects of its anti-trade union bill. And this has happened despite the lack of a generalised fightback from the trade unions.

The current struggle of the junior doctors to defend the NHS against millionaire minister Jeremy Hunt imposing rotten new contracts - and also the NUT teachers' union ballot for strike action over academies, workloads and pay - show the groundswell of anger and opposition.

We need more protests, demonstrations and co-ordinated strike action by workers, students and communities building towards a trade union-led 24-hour general strike, to kick out the hated Tories.



**Letter**

■ Socialist gran

"Capitalism is in crisis. Your generation cannot live under the conditions it perpetuates. You are being stripped of any chance of a decent standard of living. "It's time you all stood up together and demanded a better way of life. I can't march with you

but I'll back you. I'll back you every step of the way." My gran, Christina McAllister, 2016. She may have just made me cry a little.  
**Jac Green, Lincoln**  
 > More letters on pages 10-11

■ University of Facebook

The Tories plan to lift the cap on tuition fees and allow tech firms to establish private universities. A new white paper proposes elite institutions being allowed to hike fees with inflation, pushing them still further from working class students' stretch. And Facebook, Google and others could earn the right to launch their own private higher education institutions. The Socialist says education is a right, not a privilege. Kick profit out of schools and universities. Scrap tuition fees - for a living grant for all students.



photo Paul Mattsson



■ The BBC is going to stop publishing recipes. The Tory-driven change is to stop it 'competing' with the free market. If the free market is so very marvellous, why hasn't it already won the competition for best online recipe service? It's not like Rupert Murdoch can't afford to tell the world about his trademark macaroni cheese. The truth is that private firms don't exist to provide services, they exist to make money. They are incapable of satisfying even the most human basic needs without this. And they are abject plagiarists, incapable of inventing new ideas, resting on state-funded innovation.

■ Blair bombshell

War fan Tony Blair could face charges over his role in sending British soldiers to Iraq. A cross-party group of MPs wants him prosecuted if the Chilcot report shows he lied to get support. One route is to have him 'impeached' - following trial by the House of Lords. The Lords hasn't actually had a go at this in 210 years though, so the International Criminal Court is likelier.

Likelier still, of course, is for nothing to come of this. The capitalist establishment, in Britain and internationally, backs Blair's belligerence. All the bosses' wars kill workers and benefit only the rich. Saying otherwise is the lie at the core of all imperialist conflict. The Socialist hopes Blair does face justice. But we say send all the establishment warmongers - and the capitalist system which requires war - down alongside him.

**BRISTOL GREEN BACKS CUTS**

The "anti-austerity" Green Party has once again lined up with Blairite cutters in Bristol. May's elections ousted the incumbent 'independent' mayor George Ferguson - who Green councillors were happy to work with to make cuts - in favour of Labour's Marvin Rees. The Greens' own candidate, Tony Dyer, then defended Rees's cuts programme in the 10 May Bristol Post.

In the article, Dyer warns of a shortfall of £80 million facing the city council. He offers the option of privatising housing services as one way of making out the cuts, and calls on people to support Rees as he carries it out. Tom Baldwin stood as mayoral candidate for the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC) against all cuts and privatisation. Tom said:

"It's funny that these warnings have been made after the election - and not during it, when the Greens were seeking people's votes and posing as opponents of austerity.

TUSC was the only party to consistently warn of the scale of budget cuts Bristol must face up to in the coming years. That's because we were the only party with a plan to fight those cuts, and stick up for jobs and services in this city.

We called for a budget based on what Bristol needs - and building a mass campaign to push back the Tory government, and reverse the swingeing cuts it's made.

Claims that this would be illegal are wrong. The council could use reserves to balance the budget in the first instance, protecting services while an anti-cuts campaign is built.

The election results showed a huge desire for change. This needs to be a genuine change of direction, not just a new leader following the same old policies. Unfortunately, during the campaign, Labour's Marvin Rees talked of the need to "pick our battles" rather than challenge the cuts.

The Greens' Tony Dyer has now echoed this approach, saying: "What I think Marvin needs is people to support him and not expect too much."

TUSC does not say one thing in elections then act differently after. We will continue to oppose austerity and stick up for ordinary people, and the jobs and services we need, no matter what.

It's still possible for the new mayor to change direction, reverse the cuts made by George Ferguson, and refuse to make more. We call on Marvin Rees to do this and we will support any genuine efforts to stop the cuts. ■

**NHS staffing black hole**



photo 38 Degrees/Creative Commons

**Matt Whale**  
 Student nurse

The NHS is short about 50,000 clinical staff, according to estimates by parliament's Public Accounts Committee.

For those of us working in it, these results come as little surprise. Huge cuts coupled with the Tories' dishonest push for a 'seven-day' NHS have left hospitals stretched to breaking point. Socialists and those working in

the NHS aren't necessarily opposed to a seven-day NHS. We give emergency care 24/7 anyway.

But expecting quality non-emergency care seven days a week - on budgets that are struggling to cope with a 'five-day' NHS - is a recipe for disaster. Bassetlaw Hospital in Nottinghamshire had to suspend all emergency surgery from 30 April as a result of staffing shortages.

The report also points out the mixed messages sent to trusts. On the one hand, the Tories demand cuts to spending. But on the other,

they expect an increase in staff numbers, especially after the damning comments on staffing levels in the Francis Report into the Mid Staffs scandal.

This, of course, is no accident. The establishment is setting the NHS up to fail. By underfunding our health service, the Tories, Blairites, and their pals in private health can attempt to justify private takeover of services trusts can't afford.

The junior doctors' dispute is another effect. It's about more than

contract changes, and is now a fight for the NHS itself.

The health unions and Trade Union Congress should call a national demo in support of the NHS and the junior doctors now, with plans for coordinated strike action from the other health unions and beyond.

The NHS wasn't given to us. Former generations of trade unionists fought for it. Now is the time for the trade union movement to back the junior doctors and fight for the NHS today.

**Stamp out sexist dress codes**



Amelia Bartrip

Nicola Thorp, a receptionist at accounting and consultancy giant PwC, has bravely spoken out after management sent her home without pay for refusing to wear high heels.

It is debilitating to work on your feet in high heels. It is also sexist, requiring women to conform to a restrictive and stereotyped ideal of feminine appearance. Portico - the employment agency which provides PwC's receptionists - sets these guidelines for women only, not men.

Like many women, I have also experienced discriminatory guidelines regarding my appearance at work.

When I was a temporary worker at Harrods - like Nicola, recruited through an agency - men and women were told to maintain a high standard of personal grooming. But it was only women who the agency told to turn up on their first day with "immaculate makeup".

Harrods also provided new staff with a "style guide". Women were told to set aside time for grooming, keep trousers long "for a slimmer bodyline", manicure nails, avoid fake tan, keep eye makeup light to avoid looking "vampish", and encouraged to wear red lip-stick.

**Female**

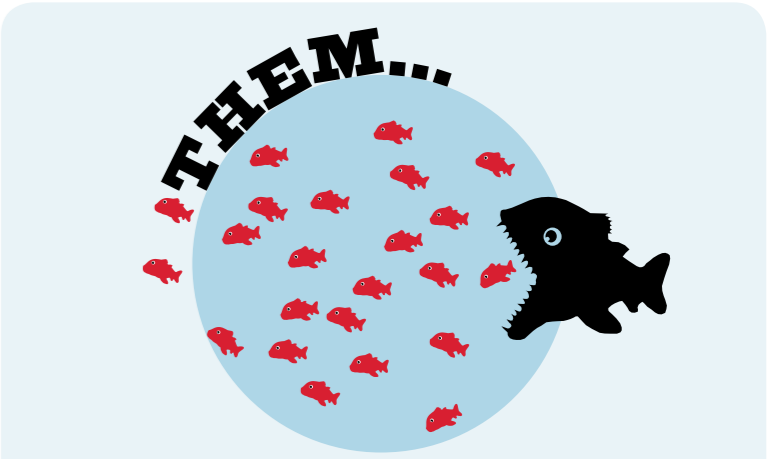
Apparently bad breath is an exclusively female condition, as only women were advised to "brush your teeth or use mouthwash".

I was on a low-hour contract, only guaranteed ten hours a week. But I had to use several hours' of hard-earned money to keep up with Harrods' unrealistic standards.

I knew I could do my job just as well without makeup, but thought if I did not conform then other workers would be prioritised for shifts over me. In the current climate, lots of women are in precarious employment, which makes it difficult for us to challenge discriminatory practices.

It is essential that women participate in combative trade unions. Dress codes should only exist where they are essential to be able to carry out the job properly and safely. But bosses use dress codes against both women and men workers as just another way to assert control.

By organising together through trade unions workers can take back control, including pushing back these sexist, outdated practices.



■ Democracy hypocrisy

The Conservative Party could face criminal charges over possible electoral fraud at last year's polls.

A Channel 4 investigation has suggested the Tories did not properly account for £38,000 of spending on their 'battle bus'. Rather than allocating the cost to the local candidates the bus supported, Conservative HQ filed it as national expenditure.

In 24 of the 29 constituencies, local allocation would have breached spending limits. The Tories won 22 of them.

The police and Electoral Commission are investigating. Courts could sentence fraudulent election agents to a year in the bin. But the Socialist does doubt that judges, chief constables and top bureaucrats will want to watch their mates doing bird.

While the Tories see democracy as an optional extra, socialists face censorship. Liverpool Council struck the names of other parties from material for Roger Bannister, Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC) mayoral candidate.

How was TUSC meant to take up Liverpool Labour's record of enthusiasm for austerity without naming it? It's one law for them, and another for us.

■ Thanks to **John Smithee** for the bus business

**£925,000**  
 Amount paid to 125 MPs' assistants made 'redundant' then immediately reemployed

Parliamentary apparatchiks took home almost a million in 'redundancy' payments before the general election - to be reemployed weeks later!

125 MPs' assistants received a total of £925,000 - tax free. Their establishment party masters then duly shooed them back into the same offices for new MPs. Ten weeks later. That's not redundancy, that's a bonus and a holiday.

Meanwhile, potential Tata Steel buyers are threatening jobs and refusing to take on the firm's pensions commitments. And Thames Water, the privatised utility monopoly, had a pensions black hole of £249 million last year. Privatisers want to extract the maximum possible cash from their operations. They have no interest in providing a useful service, or maintaining loyal ex-workers in old age. The Socialist says: nationalise Tata, utilities, finance and the top 150 corporations under democratic working class management and control.

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

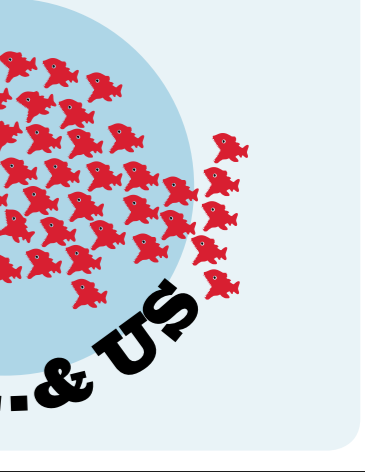
**£38,000**  
 Amount the Tories could have fraudulently overspent on 2015's election battle bus

■ Bogus bonus

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# Teachers: vote Yes to strike - defend pay and conditions



NUT members striking against academies in Lewisham in 2015

**James Kerr**  
National Union of Teachers rep (personal capacity)

I am today reaffirming our determination to see all schools become academies. However, having listened to the feedback from parliamentary colleagues and the education sector we will now change the path to reaching that goal." Nicky Morgan couldn't have made it clearer - the wholesale privatisation of our schools is still the Tories' aim.

For teachers that means the end of nationally negotiated pay and conditions and a potential free-for-all as academies attempt to drive down wages and conditions.

That's why from 23 May until 22 June, NUT members will be balloted for discontinuous national strike action to ensure pay and conditions are protected for all teachers, including those in academies.

NUT members will take heart though that Nicky has felt the need to change path. Again. This zig-zag comes off the back of u-turns on baseline testing and spelling, punctuation and grammar tests. This is a government in disarray over a host of issues and trying to weather the storms of the EU referendum.

Teachers need to hold their nerve and consign these plans to the dustbin as well.

The signs are good, there have been big teachers meetings recently in Newham, east London, Oldham and Norwich (to name a few) with a determined mood. In Oldham the entire NUT membership of one primary school turned up, showing the strength of feeling. These meetings will be coupled with phone banking, school group meetings and more when the ballot gets underway.

### Build for yes

Teachers should get on to their local division to see what they can do to build the yes vote.

The NUT's political campaign is also in full swing with rallies alongside parents and students in Manchester and Sheffield chiding the barbaric testing regime and the pressure on our schools to become 'exam factories'.

Parents, trade unionists and Socialist Party members should find out if there are events in their area to build the biggest possible movement against this government's plans.

We are not alone though. We have marched with the junior doctors and up and down the country workers are taking action against the effects of austerity on their jobs.

# JUNIOR DOCTORS VOTE TO WORK WITH AND DEVELOP LINKS WITH OTHER UNIONS

**Scott Jones**

Junior doctors at their conference on 14 May voted to "work to foster and develop links with other unions and to lobby the wider BMA to do likewise".

Described by Yannis Gourtsoyannis, a member of the BMA junior doctors' committee, as huge, this is a real rejection of the TUC general council's refusal to call a day of action in support of junior doctors.



The TUC has, at every turn, left the junior doctors' struggle isolated

This demand was put forward by the civil servants' union PCS and firefighters' union FBU but was scandalously rejected by the TUC on 27 April.

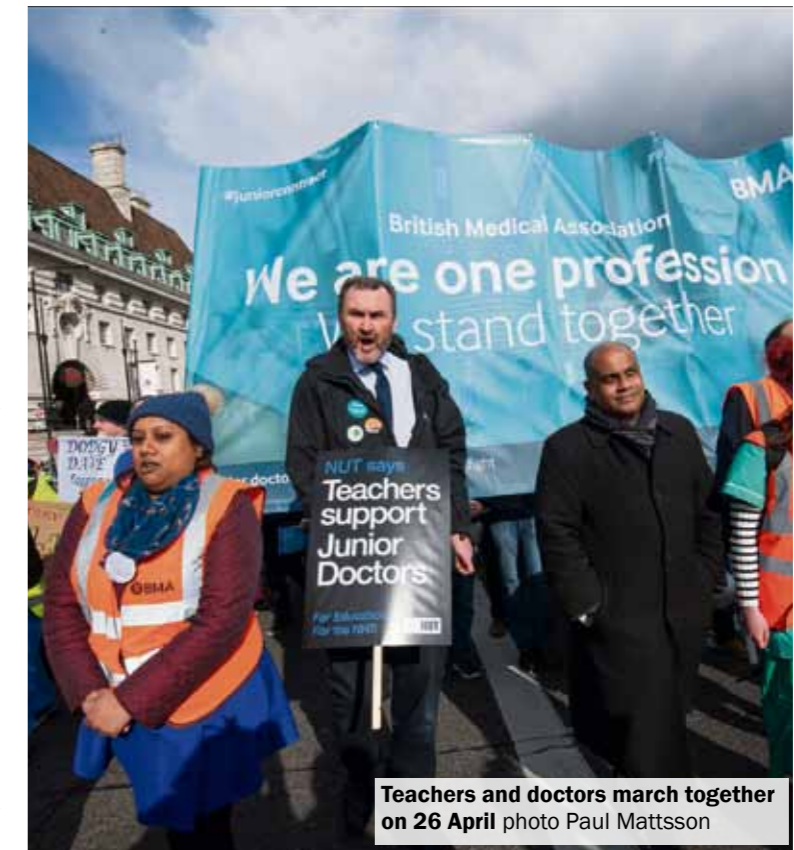
The BMA and junior doctors have been forced along the path of trade

unionism and have adopted its methods. However, the TUC has, at every turn, left the junior doctors' struggle isolated.

Talks between the government and junior doctors over the new contract have been extended after the government stepped back from imposing it. But during the talks details of a plan emerged to train nurses to stand in for doctors as a way to tackle the hospital staffing crisis. Junior doctors have said the idea is dangerous and it's no coincidence it's been devised at a time of strike action.

It further reiterates the reality of the junior doctors dispute, which isn't just over contracts but the future of the NHS. The battle for that future must involve coordinated action by trade unions.

Yannis Gourtsoyannis will be speaking at the National Shop Stewards Network (NSSN) conference on 2 July (see page 6 for details), putting into action the call made at the junior doctors' conference. Like the junior doctors, the NSSN, along with thousands of union activists, is fighting for mass action to defeat the Tories. This will be a major theme of the NSSN conference.



Teachers and doctors march together on 26 April photo Paul Mattsson

# HIGHER EDUCATION ACTION OVER PAY AND CASUALISATION

**Sam Morecroft**  
Sheffield UCU anti-casualisation officer (personal capacity)

The University and College Union (UCU) has announced a 48-hour national strike across the higher education sector on 25 and 26 May, as well as a work-to-contract action.

The two-day strike represents the beginning of what needs to be a determined, sustained and escalating industrial campaign for better pay.

Despite the fact that between 2009 and 2016 our pay has fallen by 14.5% in real terms, the employers have offered only a miserly 1.1% pay increase for 2016/17.

### Cash rich

That's despite the fact that universities are cash rich - with a surplus of £1.8 billion across the sector! But these strikes are not just about pay - they are also a reflection of the anger at the employers' refusal to negotiate over the ever-increasing gender pay gap, or casualised contracts which are rife within the sector.

Members know that to force the employers to improve their offer will require serious and sustained

action. Already the UCU leadership is considering further strikes, including on 18 August, the day A-level results are released. But more is needed.

It is a mistake that at this stage the leadership has not announced an assessment boycott, which would create the maximum possible disruption throughout June and July.

Already the UCU leadership is considering further strikes, including on 18 August when A-level results are released

Pressure needs to be put upon the leadership to announce further strike days as well, to coincide with the junior doctors' strike and other unions taking industrial action. The UCU leadership has a poor record of flinching at crucial moments in industrial disputes in recent years

members must not allow them to sabotage our industrial action with any retreat this time around.

Unite, Britain's largest trade union, is due to ballot its members in higher education as well, and Unison is recommending to members that they reject the pay offer and ballot for industrial action.

That's great - by taking united action together, we can have far more impact. But it's crucial that socialists and serious trade unionists in both unions make sure that those ballots are carried through, and produce strong votes in favour of joining UCU members in struggle.

### Attacks

In recent years university workers, just like junior doctors, have experienced attacks on terms and conditions which have driven up the rate of exploitation in what used to be thought of as middle class jobs. Serious and determined struggle is needed to reverse this trend.

UCU members call on our students and other trade unions to support us, show solidarity and join us in taking action. Together we can stop austerity - and bring down this hated Tory government!



photo Paul Mattsson

# Unite housing workers walk out against intransigent bosses



Previous HCA strike photo Helen Pattison

Unite members at the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA), have voted 57% in favour of taking strike action to start on 19 May.

The dispute has arisen because the agency ignored the union pay claim submitted in June 2015 and refused to negotiate for eight months, choosing instead to design its own pay settlement which it is threatening to impose.

The pay settlement breaches the provisions in some staff contracts and the union recognition agreements, as does the refusal to negotiate or to seek conciliation through Acas.

Unite Housing Workers branch has said: "Our members are fighting against an intransigent management who want to freeze out the unions and disregard the provisions of our contracts and recognition agreement - but we will fight on until they agree to change their

approach. A show of strength from other Unite members and other trade unions would be a huge boost to our members. Please also join us on our picket lines.

These will be held between 8am and 11am in London at the Home Office building, 2 Marsham Street, London, SW1P 4DF and in Manchester at the City Tower, Piccadilly Plaza, Manchester M1 4BT."

At least two more days of action are proposed on 15 and 16 June so Unite housing workers are also appealing for donations to their strike fund:

- By cheque made out to "Unite Housing Workers Branch LE1111", sent to PO Box 66701, London E11 9FB
- By BACS to account name Unite Housing Workers LE/1111 Branch, account number 20040626, Sort Code 608301

# Low paid Pennine Foods workers strike over cuts to premiums

Low paid members of BFAWU, the bakers' union, will be taking 48 hours strike action from 6am on 19 May after their employer Pennine Foods (Two Sisters) announced attacks on terms and conditions in a new contract.

The company aims to remove double time and time and a half on weekends and cut pay for breaks. This is coming at the same time as they are set to rebuild the entire plant at a cost of £38 million.

The company has, over the last 14 months, been in discussions with BFAWU over the contracts, albeit the original discussions were meant to be for a pay award.

Over the last few years the company has been recruiting workers to the new contacts which are clearly less favourable in

terms of pay. During the talks the company put a new contract on the table which has been balloted on. On all three occasions members have rejected the proposals.

BFAWU was left with no option but to ballot members for industrial action and over 85% voted in favour.

Please send messages of support to john.higgins@bfawu.org and haroon.rashid@bfawu.org

For donations make cheques out to Pennine Strike Fund and send to BFAWU, Stanborough House, Great North Road, Welwyn Garden City, Herts AL8 7TA

See more at the strikers' Facebook page: <http://tinyurl.com/supportthepenninestrike>



## [News in brief]

### Jannies strike

Glasgow school janitors have walked off the job for five days in an escalation of their dispute with Cordia, an arm's length company of Glasgow City Council. The jannies' trade union, Unison, says that Cordia, and their political masters at Glasgow City Council, are still refusing to talk. The janitors began a five-day strike on 16 May. Sam Macartney, Unison branch officer, said: "Our jannies deserve justice. Glasgow City Council is treating them with contempt. We will be asking Glasgow's newly elected MSPs to support the Justice4Jannies campaign". Unison estimates that Cordia is spending £3,000 per day in an attempt to cover the janitors duties and break the industrial action. For more see: [socialistpartyscotland.org.uk](http://socialistpartyscotland.org.uk)

### Topshop protest



Protesters in central London shut down Oxford Circus on 14 May in a demonstration against Topshop and Sir Phillip Green, boss of the Arcadia group that owns the store. Starting outside the company's flagship store in Oxford Circus, around 150 protesters including the National Shop Stewards Network blocked the road chanting, "Topshop, shame on you". The demonstration was part of a national day of action organised by the United Voices of the World trade union as part of a living wage campaign for cleaners and in support of two victimised cleaners. Teresa Grey, of United Voices of the World, said: "Two Topshop cleaners joined our union. For that, one was sacked, the other suspended." Green is also at the centre of the collapse of BHS. Green has taken what the Financial Times calls "substantial dividends" over a number of years. He avoided tax on these by paying them to his wife, who lives in Monaco. Additionally, he used BHS assets to back loans for other businesses within his group. Green recently bought a third super yacht.

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# PCS LEADS THE WAY IN FIGHTBACK AGAINST TORIES

**John McInally**  
 PCS vice-president

What a difference a year makes! Last year's PCS (civil servants' union) conference took place in the immediate aftermath of the Tory election victory. All the pessimists in leading positions in the labour and trade union movement shied away from a fight against what they saw as an all-powerful government.

But the anger against the Tories found an outlet in the unexpected election of Jeremy Corbyn as Labour leader.

All socialists welcome this but we recognise the need for the new Labour leadership to really transform Labour into an anti-austerity force with other lefts inside and outside the party. This requires a fight against the pro-austerity Blairites in parliament, the councillors and party machine who will never be reconciled to his leadership.

The events of the last 12 months have shown that far from dominant, Cameron's government is in crisis. Divided over Europe and after a raft of u-turns, it's dawning on the Tories, but more importantly on increasing numbers of workers, that they are in a much weaker position with a paper-thin majority.

Yet the majority of the trade union leaders have baulked at the fight - celebrating marginal concessions on the trade union bill and the TUC general council refusing to act on the call of PCS and Fire Brigades Union to organise a national day of action in support of the heroic junior doctors and in defence of the NHS.

Correctly, PCS has consistently called for sustained joint co-ordinated public sector campaigns and strikes. We believe that this action, particularly on the scale of a 24-hour general strike across the wider union movement, can defeat the Tory anti-union laws and their vicious cuts.

As with the pensions strike in November 2011, PCS will again take the lead in working with other fighting unions in these struggles. It is no accident that the BMA's junior doctors' conference on 14 May passed a motion calling for them to work closely with other unions.

PCS has been singled out by the Tories because of our militant record. The attack on check-off was taken out of the trade union bill a year after it was removed

from us. An incredible campaign by our members and staff has gone a long way to shore up the membership and finances.

In the face of these attacks, PCS has fought and won major gains and concessions. After the National Gallery and Scottish museums disputes, members are on all-out strike in the National Museum Wales, workers in BIS are striking over office closures and redundancies and members in land registry are again fighting the threat of privatisation after defeating the first attempt.

Cameron and co can be defeated and PCS conference can underline the leading role that PCS will continue to play in both defending our members and building mass defiance of the Tories.

**■ Socialist Party fringe meeting: After the elections: how do we kick out the Tories?**

Lunchtime, Wednesday 25 May in the Grand Hotel, Brighton

Speakers: Peter Taaffe, Socialist Party general secretary, and Fran Heathcote, PCS DWP President/ NEC Chair; Marion Lloyd, PCS BIS President/NEC



John McInally  
 photo Senan



photo Senan



**Come to the 10th annual NSSN conference**  
 Saturday 2 July 11am-4.30pm  
 Conway Hall 25 Red Lion Square, Holborn, London WC1R 4RL

Speakers include: **Ronnie Draper**, BFAWU general secretary; **Matt Wrack**, FBU general secretary; **Janice Godrich**, PCS president; **Chris Baugh**, PCS deputy general secretary; **Sean Hoyle**, RMT president; **Steve Gillan**, POA general secretary; **Yannis Gourtssayannis**, BMA junior doctors' committee national executive

## “Where’s Carwyn?” - museum workers demand action by the Welsh government

**Dave Reid**

National Museum Wales workers from all over the country, currently on indefinite strike against the management's imposition of a cut in pay, rallied at the Senedd in Cardiff on 11 May to demand the Welsh government step in and resolve the dispute.

While the politicians milled around the Senedd trying to cobble together a deal to form a Welsh government, museum workers held an enthusiastic lobby and rally addressed by PCS general secretary, Mark Serwotka and other trade unionists to demand the Welsh government step into their dispute.

For two years National Museum

Wales management has been trying to impose a cut in weekend payments to museum workers. In March they announced that they would sack all the workers and impose the pay cuts unless workers surrendered. But the museum workers refused to be bullied into accepting the wage cut and responded by calling an indefinite strike.

The Big Pit mining museum is closed as ex-miners running the museum have gone on strike and are organising collections for the hardship fund all over South Wales. Other museums are being kept open by management but with a greatly reduced service.

The National Museum of Wales is financed by the Welsh government and run as an arms-length compa-

ny. A week before the election on 5 May, Labour First Minister Carwyn Jones, promised that as soon as the election was over he would step in and resolve the dispute. So workers asked: “Where is Carwyn?”

A number of Labour and Plaid Cymru assembly members came out of the Senedd to address the strikers and offer support. But this dispute could be resolved easily if the Welsh government were to instruct the assembly to drop its attacks.

**■ The museum workers hardship fund has collected thousands of pounds including an excellent £1,000 from Unite but much more is needed. Raise a donation at your union branch and pay it into:**  
**Bank: Unity Trust Bank**  
**Account name: PCS Amgueddfa Cymru 107006 Branch Hardship Fund**  
**Account number: 20364700**  
**Sort code: 60-83-01**  
**Or via PayPal: http://bit.ly/26eNhhvq**

## Government defeated by check-off court challenge

13 May was a day marked by many in Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) PCS group. Following a legal challenge launched by the group and supported by the national union, the High Court upheld PCS' case that payment of union subs through salary 'check-off' is a contractual right in DWP.

This opens the door for the union to claim compensation and vindicates PCS' argument that its withdrawal was a politically motivated attempt at union busting.

A campaign led by lay reps signed up almost 90% of the existing membership by August 2015.

This was not the first time a Tory government had attempted to bust unions by withdrawing check-off, but the numbers signed over to direct debit was unprecedented and reflects the reputation of PCS in the workplace and the commitment of their reps.

# BIS MEMBERS STRIKE TO SAVE JOBS AND KEEP OFFICES OPEN

**Marion Lloyd**  
 PCS union group president in Department for Business, Innovation and Skills

PCS members at Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) sites will be striking on the 19 May to stop their jobs being moved to London and keep their offices open. A fantastic ballot where 96% of members voted for strike action, after a turnout of 53%, smashed through the new Tory rules.

The decision to axe jobs in the regions, close the Sheffield site and move everything to London must be stopped. This is part of an agenda which aims to cut staff numbers by 40% and reduce the BIS estate from 82 office locations to just six. These cuts are huge and are the tip of the iceberg. Workers in BIS and partners can, according to press reports, look forward to another 10,000 job losses.

The decision makes a mockery of the 'northern powerhouse' agenda, the 'midlands engine' agenda and all government policy on growth and supporting local communities.

It means experienced, skilled staff will be lost and money spent on redundancies. Our own figures show that more than 75% of jobs lost in the regions will need to be replaced in London - at huge expense to the tax payer - and we suspect this is a conservative estimate.

### Efficiency?

Already BIS is looking to use consultants, is taking people on secondment and even re-employing staff recently exiting - all at huge cost. So much for efficiency! Communications to staff already state that no relocation costs will be paid and compulsory redundancies may not be avoided.

PCS is completely opposed to this. We

are demanding meaningful consultation on any changes, no compulsory redundancies and no office closures.

We need all members to join our campaign, support the strike, donate to the hardship fund and get involved with campaigning activities.

■ Sign the petition: [bit.ly/bisSheffPet](http://bit.ly/bisSheffPet)  
 ■ Donate to the strike: cheques made payable to the PCS BIS Hardship Fund can be sent to the BIS group treasurer at 9 Medina Way, Upper Stratton, Swindon, SN2 7NW or money can be transferred to Unity Trust Bank Account 20240992 sort code 60-83-01



Cuts-making business secretary, Sajid Javid

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**SOCIALIST ALTERNATIVE**  
**PETER TAAFFE**  
 SOCIALIST PARTY  
 GENERAL SECRETARY

# THE EU AND THE ECONOMY - PROJECT FEAR STEPS UP

## REMAIN OR LEAVE, WORKERS MUST FIGHT FOR SOCIALIST CHANGE

Judy Beishon  
Socialist Party executive committee

Every household will lose £4,300 a year, proclaim Cameron and Osborne to spread fear and increase the chance of a Remain vote in the EU referendum.

As most of big business in Britain and globally wants Britain to stay in the EU, the government's warnings have been vocally backed up by many institutions of capitalism, including the OECD and IMF, along with prominent individuals from Obama in the US to the prime minister of Japan.

The UK is threatened, they argue, with investors fleeing, the pound plummeting, prices rising, trade volumes falling and all manner of other calamities - which would all impact badly on living standards.

The spectre of renewed recession has also been raised by Osborne and Bank of England governor Mark Carney. But the economy is on the brink of another recession anyway!

The Bank of England and the CBI bosses' organisation have cut their growth forecasts, with CBI director Carolyn Fairbairn commenting: "A cloud of uncertainty is looming over global growth, particularly around weakening emerging markets."

She also factored in the uncertainty of the EU referendum result, but while the present fall in investment by British corporations is inevitably partially linked to the referendum, the entrenched weakness of the economy underlies it.

Already British industry has nosedived into its third recession in eight years; the trade deficit is increasing - including with Europe - and productivity growth continues to be low.

In addition, growth in the services sector is falling. This growth is heavily dependent on consumer spending, which in turn is unsustainable at current levels - households have a bigger debt-to-income ratio than in



photo Ed Gregory/Creative Commons



**'Trickle down' theory - that all layers of society benefit from wealth creation at the top - has been shown to be a sham**

the run-up to the 2007-2008 crisis.

With interest rates at the record low of 0.5% for over seven years now and the Bank of England having already pumped £375 billion of electronically created money into the economy, the ruling class and government are perilously short of options for stimulating growth further.

So it isn't surprising that with the referendum opinion polls still almost neck and neck, they're panicking at the prospect of added economic instability and hits on corporate profits in the event of Brexit.

### Repercussions for the 99%

In response to the 'project fear' on living standards, many people will say 'what's new?' Brutal austerity measures have been inflicted for a decade, whether the economy has been growing or not, including the rigid holding down of public sector pay.

Many working class and middle class people are struggling to get by and a layer will vote for Brexit to express anger towards the parliamentary parties and EU institutions that have been supporting cuts in services and other attacks on living standards. Whether Britain ends up in or out of the EU the struggle against austerity will go on.

However, another layer of young people and workers are leaning towards voting Remain because they fear being forced to pay the price of a worsening economy following a Brexit. This concern is



photo Wikimedia/Creative Commons



photo DFID/Creative Commons

understandable, especially after witnessing the bailout of the bankers after the 2007-08 crisis at the expense of the majority in society.

But the living standards of workers in Britain won't depend on the level of profit being made by the major industries and services in the months and years after the referendum. Rather, they will depend on how far working class people manage to go in mobilising through the trade unions against both the austerity policies of the government and private sector bosses' attempts to drive down pay and conditions.

'Trickle down' theory - that all layers of society benefit from wealth creation at the top - has been shown to be a sham by the rapidly growing wealth gap in recent decades, which has led to an obscene level of enrichment within the top 1%. Oxfam calculated that the five richest families in Britain now have more wealth than the poorest 20% - over 12 million people!

In addition, studies from the OECD have shown that "income inequality has a sizeable and statistically negative impact on growth," as does the unrelenting austerity drive of Osborne and co. How will a Remain victory, a vote of confidence in Cameron and Osborne, reverse these?

### Class interests

Just as it is against the interests of working class people to vote in a general election for the Tories on the grounds that they are the first-choice team for the capitalist markets, likewise it is against workers' interests to vote for the capitalist club that is the EU.



photo Axelle B/Creative Commons



The Greek people heroically voted against the EU's austerity memorandum but Prime Minister Tsipras retreated and has implemented austerity photo Ggja/Creative Commons



Sharp end of EU austerity photo Ggja/Creative Commons

Events in Greece have clearly shown which class the EU is serving. The European Commission has insisted on mass impoverishment of Greece's working class and middle class. Fighting this, the Greek people have engaged in many rounds of industrial action and magnificently voted 'no' to the EU's austerity imposition in a referendum last July.

Tragically, the Syriza government spurned that vote and proceeded to do the EU's bidding.

With mass support behind it to oppose the EU diktats, that government could have moved to take fundamental measures in workers' interests - including taking the banks and other key companies into public ownership under workers' control and management and introducing democratic, socialist planning of the economy.

Today in Britain, whatever the extent of losses suffered by big business as a result of a Brexit or a new recession, they don't have to be passed onto ordinary people.

The six million strong trade union movement has the power to mobilise effective mass resistance if enough pressure is put on its leaders to do so. This must include demanding the nationalisation of any large company threatening job losses, and

assistance for small companies facing difficulties.

Also, Jeremy Corbyn must be held to his welcome anti-austerity stance, through building on the surge of support that elected him as Labour leader and turning it into an organised form - providing political representation for ordinary people.

Unfortunately Jeremy Corbyn and John McDonnell have departed - under pressure from Labour's right wing - from the Labour left's historic position of opposition to the capitalists' European institutions. They are now echoing the Tory government's propaganda by sending out Labour leaflets and social media messages saying that Brexit would threaten jobs and wages.



European trade unions march against EU austerity in Brussels in 2010 photo Paul Mattsson

them, if deemed necessary, to raise interest rates.

Trading would go on amidst the predicted disruptions, with a two-year period for the negotiation of new agreements, during which the government could come under pressure to organise a second referendum to try to overturn the decision of the first.

### Right-wing Brexiters

Clearly not every capitalist in Britain thinks Brexit would be a bad thing for the economy and some think they would benefit from it, along with many small businesses.

They decry the declining weight of British industry in Europe and globally and believe that 'free trade' outside the 'protectionist trade agreement' of the EU could flourish. Brexit-advocating economist Ruth Lea argues that the government would be able to negotiate a 'free trade' deal with the EU for tariff-free goods, along with 'passporting rights' for financial services, because the UK already complies with EU finance and other regulations.

But while staying in the EU won't lead to a new era of prosperity, neither will leaving it. Either way, British capitalism is a sick entity in an anaemic European and world economy. The 'outers' are much divided on the economy and tie themselves in knots when seeking a model for exit - Michael Gove was ridiculed for citing Albania as an example.

So they turn heavily to the issue of immigration, but also are leaning on anti-establishment feeling. For example, David Davis said that the single market benefits "big companies to the detriment of small businesses"; David Owen hypocritically remarked: "the EU works in the interests of the elite" and IDS attacked the EU as "a friend of the haves rather than the have nots".

Their real attitude to the working class is typified by billionaire donor to Leave EU, Peter Hargreaves, whose recent comments include that workers' rights have gone too far, such as flexitime, extended maternity leave and protections against redundancy. He and the likes of Boris Johnson, Gove and Nigel Farage want bosses to be free to pursue a 'race to the bottom' in their workforces' pay and conditions.

The economic arguments of socialists are the polar opposite of those being used by right-wingers whether in the Remain or Leave campaigns. None have any solution to the economic impasse of capitalism in Britain, Europe and globally.

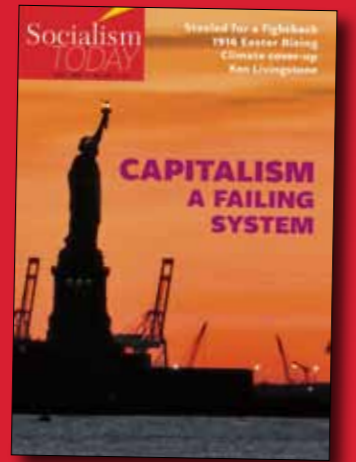
It is crucial that the anti-capitalist and socialist 'vote Leave' message of the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC) and the Socialist Party is heard as widely as possible in the coming weeks, as the only position that can be taken in working class interests.

TUSC is organising a 20-city tour putting forward the socialist case for exit - see page 13

### Socialism Today

The Socialist Party's magazine

- May issue includes:
- Capitalism: Failing system
- UK Steel: Steeled for a fightback
- 'Red' Ken: Retreats & missed opportunities
- Easter Rising: Contentious centenary
- Italy: Five Star Movement's ten years



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TV review  
**OCCUPIED**

\*Spoiler alert \* Spoiler alert\*

Clive Walder

'Occupied' is a ten-part Norwegian TV political thriller. A Green government suspends extraction of fossil fuels, prompting a Russian invasion of Norway.

It's based on an idea by bestselling Norwegian author Jo Nesbo, and is now available on DVD. While the plotline may seem farfetched, it does illustrate the way US imperialism treats its smaller 'allies'.

Political instability in the Middle East undermines oil production creating an energy crisis in Europe. This, and a devastating hurricane that hits Norway, propel the Green Party to power on the back of an anti-fossil fuel mood.

The occupation spawns a right-wing nationalist paramilitary group, Free Norway. The group embarks on a campaign of individual terrorism, including abducting both Prime Minister Jesper Berg and the Russian ambassador.

Meanwhile, the occupation proves to be a lifeline for a restaurant in financial difficulties. The occupiers make it their restaurant of choice. This causes friction with the restaurateur's son, who accuses her of collaborating with the occupation - and who eventually joins Free Norway.

There is a striking resemblance to the period of Vidkun Quisling's Nazi-collaborator Norwegian government during World War Two.



**The US isn't interested in a battle it might lose**

Berg tries without success to get the European Union to pressurise the Russians to withdraw. He is released from his abduction and goes into hiding, running the country from the US embassy.

He mistakenly believes that the US would readily help its old ally and take military action to remove the Russians from Norwegian soil. But they aren't interested in engaging in a battle they might lose. By this time, the US is self-sufficient in oil, and has no vested interest in defending European oil supplies.

Occupied examines the potential for armed conflict over scarce natural resources. It also shows the big powers defending the interests of their ruling class first, come what may.

The writers clearly wanted to send a message that US and EU foreign policy is exploitative and self-serving. Smaller countries like Norway are no more than pawns on a chess board, to be helped when it suits US interests and ignored when it doesn't. A point Occupied conveys admirably, and in a very watchable way.



**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

**EU gray train**

In or out of the EU? That, as they say, is the question. Here are some reasons for exit.

MEPs are of course elected, but are basically toothless. All major decisions, which affect 500 million people, are taken by an unelected 'Council of Ministers' - heads of the 28 states.

We are being clobbered by neoliberal austerity. Look at the gray train - all those parasites board it for their inflated salaries, while we take cuts and job losses.

If Obama, Cameron and big business say stay, that's another reason to exit. The EU is just a bosses' club in competition with the USA, Japan and China - or to batter workers with.

They say thousands of jobs will be lost. A red herring. Capitalism will trade whatever it can to make a quick buck. What did we do before we joined the EU 40 years ago?

It's all scaremongering. Socialists say exit, not on a petty nationalist basis, but by offering people an alternative to austerity.

A society based on a democratically planned economy, as opposed to blind market forces. Where the billions who create the wealth run society, instead of the billionaires who leech off the rest of us.

**Bill Buchanan Nottingham**

**EU train gravy**

Readers of the Socialist may know that the train drivers' union, Aslef, has called for a vote to leave the EU in the referendum.

This is due to opposition to the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP), and the EU 'Fourth Railway

Package' which seeks to extend rail privatisation, franchising and the associated waste and lack of coordination from the UK to the whole of Europe.

The Aslef website also contains reports of the annual assembly of delegates taking place. There could be no better time to find out where and when Aslef branches meet, get in contact and go along.

**Pete McNally Chair, Aslef Worcester branch (personal capacity)**

**Scouse sell-offs**

Last May, a BBC reporter was about to interview me on Liverpool's Exchange Flags landmark when a security guard approached saying "You can't do that there 'ere, this is private property," or words to that effect.

The reporter accepted this directive, while assuaging my indignation at being moved from an area that has been publicly owned for centuries.

A recent report confirms the trend appears to be seeping insidiously into large areas of the city. Take the L1 postcode: the entire estate is built on private land, owned by a corporation called Grosvenor.

Having sold off the land to the private developer - or rather, technically speaking, having granted it a 250-year leasehold of the site - Liverpool City Council has essentially relinquished all control. The bins, street lighting, round-the-clock security - all are under corporate control. The city centre has effectively been privatised.

Liverpool's citizens need to be vigilant lest we wake up one morning to find our public spaces owned and controlled by an unholy alliance of Peel Holdings and Grosvenor.

**Tony Mulhearn Liverpool**



The EU's contribution to the Greek economy photo linntheu/Creative Commons

**Hospital hoo-hah**

Can Huddersfield move to Huntingdon? Regarding the once-privately managed Hinchingbrooke Hospital at Huntingdon, Cambridgeshire, suddenly reports of downgrading facilities and a part-merger with Peterborough City Hospital around 20 miles away are appearing in the local press.

But no firm proposals have been made public. It seems the local Tory MP may be privy to some details, as he is apparently supporting the march. This situation is a result of the massive PFI debt at Peterborough - and other debt at Addenbrooke's in Cambridge - rather than problems with the clinical staff at Hinchingbrooke.

We say the county is not "over-hospitalised" - to quote a Blairite ex-minister. It's just the debt the Blairites and Tories have hung round the neck of the NHS. Keep all facilities at Hinchingbrooke - cancel the debt!  
**Steve Cawley Peterborough**

**City suffers**

Monday morning, 11 April; join the crowds from west London rushing for the Central line tube; grab a copy of the freesheet 'City AM' from the guy paid to hand them out.

What a cheerful start to the week for workers, particularly those at the bottom of City firms. The headline in this right-wing paper is "CITY FACING STARK GROWTH WARNING".

It starts: "Workers in the Square Mile should brace for deep cuts to both bonuses and jobs with economists warning that faltering deals, stalled IPOs and market difficulties will take an extreme toll on the City over the coming months."

They pour off the Tube at Holborn, Chancery Lane, Bank and Liverpool Street, to extravagant prestige office buildings, to routine, mostly boring jobs: organising the multimillions of the 1% of money-grubbers, including how they can avoid taxes.

The same paper warns, however, "chief execs are feeling the heat". BP oil boss Bob Dudley had proposed he get a £13.9 million pay packet. Reckitt Benckiser chief Rakesh Kapoor wanted a £23 million package. And Sir Martin Sorrell of advertising giant WPP wanted £62.8 million.

Even the big City shareholder organisations are extremely embarrassed by these amounts, and there will be revolts at the annual general meetings. While Cameron, Osborne and all governments could act on these obscenities, they will continue to argue that, as with their own finances, this is 'within the law'.

The fact they also make the law is not to be mentioned. It can be clearly seen who they are really "all in this together with" - and it's not City workers, or any other workers.

**Keith Dickinson Acton, west London**

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.

Featured letter: environment

**STOP THE BADGER CULL**



The badger cull is inhumane, poor value for money and counterproductive photo Karen White/Creative Commons

**Indira Prasad Leicester**

Despite the success of vaccine trials, the Tories are to extend the badger cull again in 2016. There will be new cull zones in Herefordshire, Dorset, Cornwall and Gloucestershire.

Today, in a climate of economic uncertainty and crippling austerity, the government has so far spent £25 million on slaughtering over 4,000 badgers and denting the ecosystem. In September 2015, a Freedom of Information request revealed the cost per badger stood at £6,775.

The link between bovine tuberculosis and the badger population - and the controversy surrounding the issue - can be traced back to the early 1970s, when a dead badger was identified on a farm in Gloucestershire. Bovine tuberculosis can in rare cases transmit to humans, but pasteurisation makes that risk very small.

2013 saw Gloucestershire and Somerset pilot the first badger cull, which was repeated in 2014. In 2015 it was announced the cull would extend to Dorset, with a target of up to 835 badgers.

Given the public resources invested in the cull, it may come as a surprise that peer-reviewed scientific studies find the cull is not only ineffective, but could be actively counterproductive.

The cull, run by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra), also fails to meet its own humaneness criteria. Autopsies have apparently shown that around 25% of badgers took up to five minutes to die.

Bovine tuberculosis exists within the overwhelming majority of mammals in British wildlife, so singling out the badger population is ineffective in managing the disease in cattle.

Defra's own data suggests that while 15% of badgers may test positive for BTB, just 1.6% are capable of passing on the disease, meaning 98.4% of badgers pose no risk to cattle at all.

The culling of badgers can actually increase infection levels in cattle due to the 'perturbation effect', whereby the removal of a proportion of the badger population in a particular area causes the rest to behave in different, unusual ways.

There are a number of cheaper, more humane and far more effective methods of controlling bovine tuberculosis, such as cattle vaccination, badger vaccination and improved containment. In Wales, the less costly option of vaccination has led to a 48% decrease in cattle slaughter.

**Waste**

The millions of pounds of taxpayers' money spent is an outright waste, as independent expert panels have pointed to over and over again. The Tories spent just under £16.8 million on culling in 2015 alone.

I believe that socialists should take a stance against the cull. It is an unscientific, inhumane and ineffective policy, damaging to the environment, and a financial disaster.

Can we justify millions in taxpayers' money needlessly spent on another year systematically eliminating wildlife? Much better to spend the money on a mass vaccination programme, which could create jobs as well as more effectively managing the disease.

Leicester Animal Rights, along with members of the Socialist Party, have organised the 'Leicester March Against the Badger Cull' on 21 May. The march will begin at 12.30pm, Victoria Park, Leicester LE1 7RU and culminate in a rally in Leicester city centre.

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# On an upward trajectory

## My experience as a new Socialist Party member



Anti-austerity march June 2015 photo Paul Mattsson

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### Socialist Party Fighting Fund

	£ received	£ target	April to June 2016	Deadline 30 June 2016
Northern	761	600		127%
North West	1,896	1,800		105%
East Midlands	1,388	1,600		87%
Wales	1,820	2,300		79%
Eastern	895	1,200		75%
South West	879	1,400		63%
Yorkshire	1,754	2,900		60%
West Midlands	1,198	2,100		57%
London	3,180	6,100		52%
Southern	411	1,200		34%
South East	191	750		25%
Other	414	3,050		14%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>14,791</b>	<b>25,000</b>		<b>59%</b>

Nick Slater

Being a dad with four small kids to look after, it can sometimes seem difficult to fit in being an active member of the Socialist Party.

However, the harder life is, the less space you have to breathe, the more you need socialism and to get active!

The change for me started to come when a few of us established a regular Socialist Party presence in Torquay with meetings and a Saturday stall.

For a long time, local politics have been dominated by the establishment parties and latterly Ukip. Hopefully, now, a deeper shade of red can sink into people's hearts and minds as a growing backlash against our Tory Mayor and MP develops.

There is no doubt that the Socialist Party is the only real alternative to Tory austerity in a very run down, dispirited and mostly politically switched-off area.

I feel that through our new stall and activities we will and are slowly changing that. Positive action, for me, has developed a deeper realisation and appreciation that this is what it's all about.

Being a friendly and public face of much needed 'outsider politics' is perhaps just what a town like Torquay needs. A stall manned by two or three members who clearly care about other people, equality, and fairness in local and national life is a very appealing to lots of people who don't see this happening anywhere else, least of all in the local government buildings, newsrooms and town hall.

### Answers

Any worries about time and other life commitments seem to lessen in magnitude. It all feels right and fits together, becoming enjoyable and fulfilling rather than another bloody chore or job to tick off the list!

People of all ages see us as people they can let off steam at as we listen and calmly offer a largely unheard of alternative. And while 'socialist speak' can seem dated to older (often wealthier) residents, it sounds very fresh and optimistic to local young people - who know nothing except for difficult living conditions, lost ambitions, growing debt and how much harder life has got under this government!

The stall sells the Socialist and has other socialist material for those who need answers to their political problems and we have campaigning petitions to sign. We also did door to door canvassing in the Torbay area promoting a real anti-cuts council candidate which upset the local Blairite Labour candidate!

To a new member, our Socialist Party activity makes me feel more energised rather than burdened by it all.

It's all an upward trajectory for socialism in Torbay that I am very proud to be a part of.

Read more online at [socialistparty.org.uk](http://socialistparty.org.uk)



50,000 say 'Tories out' April 2016 photo Paul Mattsson

## Newcastle: Countering the fascist menace

Norman Hall  
Gateshead Socialist Party

On 14 May far-right groups organised a rabble of 50, from as far afield as Scotland, for a demo and rally in Byker, the east end of Newcastle. Although they profess the importance of nationality, some seemed confused about their own, when they launched into a chant of "we're English!"

They were met by 150 to 200, overwhelmingly Tynesiders, gathered to oppose their vile racist ideology. This counter-demo and rally was initiated by the National Shop Stewards Network (Northern), Youth Against Racism in Europe (YRE) and the Socialist Party at relatively short notice.

The rally was addressed by officials and shop stewards from BFAWU, Unite, and RMT unions as well as the YRE, Northumbria University NUS and others.

The counter-demo was loud and enthusiastic and determined that the racist message of disunity and blaming refugees, immigrants and



photo Nick Fray

minorities for the crimes of capitalism, did not go unopposed.

The Socialist Party calls for a united movement against racism and for jobs, homes and services for all.

Alan Milne, a BFAWU regional organiser, Mark Robinson, a Unite shop steward and Stan Herschel, RMT regional organiser (retired) all commented on the poisonous role of fascists in the workplace and the need to drive them out of the unions.

Mark related how previously a BNP member, who held the role of shop steward before him, drove union membership down to 20%. Mark reported membership was currently 95%, including Polish workers, two of who are themselves now shop stewards.

The family of one of the Polish stewards had 36 relatives killed by the Nazis and his grandfather had come to Britain and joined the RAF to oppose fascism.

Proceedings were wound up with a determination to oppose the fascists wherever and whenever they raise their heads.

### Socialist Party meetings

- Bristol North**  
Marxist economics - how the bosses rip off workers  
Tuesday 24 May, 7.30pm  
Meeting room, Cheltenham Road library, Cheltenham Road, BS6 5QX
- Bristol South**  
EU referendum - what position should socialists take?  
Thursday 19 May, 7.45pm  
Bedminster Library, Bedminster Parade, Bedminster, BS3 4AQ
- Cardiff East**  
The lessons of the Cuban revolution  
Thursday 19 May, 7.30pm  
Andrew Buchan, Albany Road, Roath
- Cardiff West**  
What will a socialist society look like?  
Wednesday 25 May, 7.30pm  
The Old Market Tavern (upstairs room/back of ground floor), 20 Trinity Street
- Chesterfield**  
The story of the blacklist  
Monday 23 May, 7.30pm  
Upstairs at the Chesterfield Alehouse, 37 West Bars, S40 1AG
- Grimsby**  
Monday 23 May, 6.30pm  
Walters Bar, 5 Old Market Place, DN31 1DT  
Monday 6 June, 7pm  
Centre4, 17a Wootton Road, DN33 1HE (TUSC)  
Tuesday 7 June, 7pm  
Grange Community Centre, Carnforth Crescent, DN34 5EF (TUSC)
- Leeds**  
Birth of the Independent Labour Party  
Sunday 22 May, 3pm  
West Riding Pub, 38 Wellington Street, LS1 2DE
- Leicester**  
Lessons of the 1926 general strike  
Thursday 2 June, 7.30pm  
Richard III pub, 70 Highcross Street, LE1 4NN
- London - East**  
EU referendum - what position should socialists take?  
Thursday 26 May, 7.30pm  
Bryant Street Methodist Church, Bryant Street, Stratford, E15 4RU
- London - Greenwich**  
The socialist case against the EU  
Thursday 16 June, 7.30pm  
Glyndon Community Centre, 75 Raglan Road, Plumstead, SE18 7LB
- London - West**  
EU referendum - what position should socialists take?  
Wednesday 15 June, 7.30pm  
West London Trades Union Club, High Street Acton, W3 6ND
- London - Waltham Forest**  
EU referendum - what position should socialists take?  
Thursday 16 June, 7.30pm  
William Morris Community Centre, Greenleaf Road, E17 6QQ
- Salford**  
The miners' strike 1984-85 - A civil war without guns  
Wednesday 25 May, 7pm  
Royal Oak, 34 Barton Lane, Eccles, M30 0EN
- St Austell, Cornwall**  
The Environment  
Monday 23 May, 7pm  
Bystro At The Bank, Higher Cross Street
- Torbay South Devon**  
The socialist case for Brexit  
Thursday 26 May  
Contact Alex for details 07456 280802
- York**  
The role of the Socialism Today magazine  
Thursday 19 May, 7.15pm  
The New York Club, Blossom Street
- Don't worry if you can't see a meeting near you, go to [www.socialistparty.org.uk/whatson](http://www.socialistparty.org.uk/whatson) or call 020 8988 8777 for meetings in your area**

### London housing meeting

"We won't move" campaign

Monday 23rd May, 7:30pm  
Indian YMCA, 41 Fitzroy Square, W1T 6AQ

## EXIT EU WITH SOCIALIST POLICIES - JOIN THE SOCIALISTS

Continued from back page

The Socialist Party is fighting for a Leave vote in the EU referendum but our campaign has nothing in common with right-wingers like Ukip's Farage and Boris Johnson's Tories. We seek to build an independent socialist campaign for withdrawal, based on solidarity with working class people across Europe.

In fact our starting point is always to develop a strategy that defends working class people and fights to end the capitalist profit system, which creates poverty, inequality and exploitation.

That's why we always seek to unite the working class around a socialist programme and in action. Working class struggle is the only motor of improvements for the majority - not the EU.

In or out of the EU, as long as capitalism exists, we fight on - and we fight for socialism. A socialist society is needed, through planning the use of the world's enormous wealth and resources, to provide decent jobs, homes and services for everyone which neither the EU nor the Tories can or will.

For example, in Europe there are an estimated eleven million empty homes - enough for all the homeless and the refugees seeking shelter. But capitalism, blindly driven by profit and the 'free market', is incapable of providing homes or the basics of a decent and dignified life for the majority.

If you agree with the ideas that you read in this paper, please join us in the fight for socialism.

socialistparty.org.uk/join

### TUSC AGAINST CUTS

### 20 city tour - Socialist case against the EU

- Bristol**  
Tuesday 31 May 7.30pm  
YHA Youth Hostel, 14 Narrow Quay, BS1 4QA
- Cardiff**  
Thursday 9 June 7.30pm  
Angel Hotel, Castle Street, CF10 1SZ
- Derby**  
Wednesday 18 May 7.30pm  
Derby Quad, Market Place, Cathedral Quarter, DE1 3AS
- Gateshead**  
Wednesday 25 May 7.30pm  
Gateshead Railway Club, 15 Wellington Street, NE8 2AJ
- Leeds**  
Tuesday 7 June 7pm  
Dennison Hall WMC, Pinfold Lane, Armley, LS12 3LL
- Leicester**  
Thursday 19 May 7pm  
Secular Hall, 75 Humberstone Gate, City Centre, LE1 1WB
- Liverpool**  
Tuesday 14 June 7.30pm  
Casa, 29 Hope Street, L1 9BQ
- London**  
Thursday 2 June 7.30pm  
Indian YMCA, 41 Fitzroy Square, W1T 6AQ
- Salford**  
Tuesday 7 June 7pm  
Royal Oak, Barton Lane, Eccles, M30 0EN
- Sheffield**  
Tuesday 21 June 7.30pm  
Central United Reform Church, Chapel Walk, Norfolk Street, S1 2JB
- Warrington**  
Wednesday 15 June 7pm  
Kings Head, 40 Winwick Street, WA2 7TU
- York**  
Monday 20 June 7.30pm  
New York Club, 22-26 Blossom Street, YO24 1AJ

Details tbc for Birmingham (1 June), Coventry (2 June), Southampton (7 June), Stoke (16 June) and other cities see [www.tusc.org.uk/events](http://www.tusc.org.uk/events)

# France: New stage in battle over labour law

## HOLLANDE PROVOKES FRESH STRUGGLES



April's general strike photo Naomi Byron

**Clare Doyle**  
Committee for a Workers' International (CWI)

France's 'socialist' president, Hollande, has taken the fight over the country's 'El Khomri' labour law (named after the employment minister) to a new level.

The draft law makes it much easier for the bosses to lay off workers and reduce redundancy payments. It will also make it easier to increase the working week by reducing overtime payments (France's statutory working week is 35 hours).

### Trial of strength

Months of protests and demonstrations have mobilised hundreds of thousands of workers angered by this attack on their hard-won gains. They have been joined by students and young people fearful for their futures.

The bill was heading for defeat in the National Assembly. Nearly 5,000 amendments had been submitted and at least 40 parliamentarians were going to vote against it, including 20 from the governing Socialist Party.

Hollande, goaded on by the fanatically business-friendly prime minister, Manuel Valls, has decided to invoke a clause in the country's constitution to overrule parliament and make the bill legally enforceable.

Spontaneous protests broke out across the country and workers and young people responded to a call by the main trade union leaders for demonstrations on 12 May. Strikes and demonstrations are going ahead nationally on 17 and 19 May.

The government has faced votes of no confidence in the parliament and has stirred up deep hostility in an already hostile electorate. 70% of the population is against the labour law changes and in polls, Hollande's rating has gone to little over 12% - the worst score of any president in history.

A major trial of strength in France between the government and a big sector of workers and young people has reached a critical stage.

The right-wing parties have been urging the closing down of the Nuit Debout (open public assemblies), but they are popular with people starved of a forum for the discussion of everyday politics.

The heavy use of state forces to confront protesters is radicalising a new generation on the streets, but

is also undermining the authority of the state within these institutions. Significantly, on 18 May, the police's own organisation is holding a demonstration in protest at the way they have been treated.

The situation has become extremely tense and volatile. In the space of two months - March and April - the leaders of the trade union federations called four days of strikes and demonstrations, but stopped short of all-out action.

The mood is building for a 'fight to the end'

The mood on the traditional May Day demonstrations was for a fight.

The march in Paris was bigger than most years and 10,000 up on the 60,000 turnout for the trade union demo of 28 April. (Both were attacked by the CRS riot police in attempts to discredit the movement for 'encouraging' violence.)

A mass political force is needed with elected leaders who understand what is happening and what

is to be done. The enthusiasm of the Nuit Debout participants for a different society is laudable, but the logic of their movement is to avoid the vital issue of organisation and political programme.

At the beginning of May, it looked as if Hollande, with next year's presidential elections in mind, was preparing the way for a truce. He announced that France would pull out of the Trans Atlantic Free Trade Agreement - feinting in the direction of protecting French workers.

He also announced a measure improving the status (and income) of a section of teachers. "He has put on his Father Christmas clothes and started handing out the goodies," commented Virginie Pregny at a public meeting in Paris of Gauche Revolutionnaire (CWI in France).

However, Hollande has decided to continue on the road of protecting the big bourgeois in France and further provoking the wrath of the French working class.

The movement needs to find a political voice to challenge the government. Not only general strike action is needed but a clear idea of how to get an alternative - a government of the '99%'. Those who agree with this idea and want to make it a reality need

to come together in assemblies and conferences with the idea of creating a political force that really represents those in struggle.

### General strike

The coming weeks are likely to see an intensification of the struggle. The main unions and youth organisations have 'invited' their branches to organise assemblies to discuss prolonging this week's planned strike action. They could also call for a national demonstration in Paris.

The mood is building for a 'fight to the end!' Assemblies and strike committees are needed to link up on a local, regional and national level - to organise the strike but also to prepare a representative body that can challenge for political power.

The question of who runs society is always posed by general strike action and raises the urgent need for a mass political force of the working class and youth, armed with genuinely socialist ideas and a clear programme.

This is what the CWI in France and internationally is continually fighting for. The struggle continues.

Read full version of this article on [socialistworld.net](http://socialistworld.net)



May 2016 anti-austerity protests photo CWI Belgium

## Belgium: unions call national demos and general strikes

# Bring down the government!

LSP/PSL (CWI, Belgium) reporters

Belgian trade unions have called new protests - including national demonstrations and a 24-hour general strike - after the right-wing government announced abolition of the 38-hour working week and attacks on public sector pensions, among other austerity measures.

A campaign of union protests will culminate in a general strike on 7 October, the second anniversary of the Thatcherite government.

### Irresponsible

The propaganda of the government and its parrots in the corporate media accuse trade unions of being 'irresponsible' and 'representing nobody'. Yet opinion polls indicate that 75% among the Dutch speaking and 81% among the French speaking populations think that the trade unions are important to defend social reforms.

In the past decade the trade unions have won 200,000 new members bringing total membership to 3.5 million. This growth and bigger involvement is partly a result of the plan of action at the end of 2014 (when a national demo was followed by three regional strikes building up to a general strike on 15 December 2014). The active rank and file of unions has also grown.

At the same time the government has been weakened. It was unable to present itself as a government of 'national unity' following the terrorist attacks of 22 March.

The government not only attacks our living standards but also each other! The widespread discontent played a role in the resignation of two ministers - Jacqueline Galant from the federal government and Annemie Turtelboom from the Flemish government.

Christian-democrat minister Kris Peeters tried to present himself as the 'social face' in the right-wing government, but totally blew this cover when he said 'we all live above our means'. He is seen as the architect of abolishing the 38-hour working week. On a recent demonstration against this law by the ACV/CSC Christian trade union federation, Peeters was a central theme.



Union protests will culminate in a general strike on 7 October, the second anniversary of the Thatcherite government

He says that there can be no negotiations if there are strikes. But there are no real negotiations, it is a one direction offensive by the bosses.

Bosses' like Karel Van Eetvelt from Unizo have compared the



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.
- Keep 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!

[www.socialistparty.org.uk](http://www.socialistparty.org.uk) 02089888777

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# Vote to leave the 'Employers' Union'



photo Senan

## AND FIGHT THE BOSSES' GOVERNMENT

Sarah Sachs-Eldridge

Cameron can't rely on Tory voters alone to win the EU referendum. Only 24% of the electorate backed his party in the general election and most of them aren't in favour of staying in the EU. So he wrote an article in the Mirror newspaper in a bid to link his Remain campaign to the issues that concern working class people.

"We're fighting for jobs," he writes. But his governments have brought the austerity axe down on one million public sector workers! As one

letter to the Mirror the following day asked, "is he a liar or a fool, or does he think we are all fools?" We say: No cuts!

Posh boy Cameron has consistently proved that he is in power to represent the bosses and the bankers.

It was only when the Tata steel workers, taking up the slogan of the Socialist Party, demanded nationalisation to save the steel industry that the Tories even began to contemplate partial nationalisation. We call for 100% nationalisation of the steel industry under democratic working class control.

Cameron writes that it's the "poorest and the most vulnerable" who are hit hardest by economic recession. But a third of the population were thrust into poverty between 2011 and 2014 under his watch. Among the one million people forced to seek support from food banks it's cuts to benefits that have been the major factor in this Cameron-made epidemic of desperation. We say: Tories out!

However, the Brexiteers are competing with Cameron in the 'Hypocrisy Olympics'. Iain Duncan Smith, former work and pensions minister, has described the EU as a force for 'social injustice'. It is - but so is he.



**The Brexiteers are competing with Cameron in the 'Hypocrisy Olympics'**

Or has he forgotten introducing the 'bedroom tax'? His tenure was one of unrelenting attacks on the poorest and most vulnerable.

The Socialist Party campaigns for an exit from the Employers' Union.

In or out of the EU, working class people have to fight to defend our jobs, homes and services. But as another Mirror letter says: "A Brexit victory gets rid of Cameron and Osborne in one fell swoop. That really would see Britain stronger, safer and better off." **Continued on page 13**

**The bosses' EU and economy - see feature on pages 8&9**

**TUSC tour details page 13**

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