

# YES to independence

# YES to a socialist Scotland

by Philip Stott

“Austerity is just another word for an unremitting class war carried out by the elite and the bankers against the 99% in our society. Today, five people in the UK have more wealth than the poorest thirteen million. Wages are falling and the numbers using food banks are rocketing. That’s the backdrop against which the Scottish independence referendum on September 18 is taking place.”

Speaking at a huge public meeting in Dundee in April (see picture opposite), Socialist Party member John McNally – who is also a leader of the PCS trade union – summed up the reasons why hundreds of thousands of working class people are planning to vote Yes in the referendum.

Support for independence has been increasing recently as many of the “victims of austerity” seek an escape route from the unending cuts being carried out by the Con-Dem coalition.

With Labour leaders like Ed Miliband promising to carry on where the Tories left off, it’s no wonder that support for a Yes vote is rising.

“Project Fear” – the Labour/Tory/Lib Dem lash-up is conducting an unprecedented campaign of blackmail underpinned by a future of capitalist savagery.

But the majority of the over one million people who currently say they will vote Yes in September are

doing so to find an end to low pay, zero-hour contracts, falling incomes and savage welfare cuts.

Alex Salmond and the SNP won’t deliver that. They want to change the flag, but not the economic system of profiteering capitalism that is seeking to drive working class people into the dust. Only fighting socialist policies can turn the tide against austerity.

Socialist Party Scotland is campaigning for a Yes vote in September. But we’re also fighting to build a mass movement to end the cuts, for public ownership of the banks, the oil and gas industry, the energy companies and the major sectors of the economy.

The powers of independence should be used to deliver a living wage for all, an end to zero hour contracts and a decent welfare state. To do this we need the trade unions to help set-up a new mass workers party that can fight to become a majority in the Scottish parliament.

Building a mass movement against the cuts and for an independent socialist Scotland is the only escape route from savage austerity, which will continue after September whatever the result of the referendum. Vote Yes on September 18 – But join the struggle for socialism today.



- End austerity - Make the bosses pay for their crisis
- Build a new party for the working class majority

## Editorial: Economy

# Capitalism is in a crisis, not a recovery



There is no recovery for the millions facing attacks on their benefits, wages and living standards while £120 billion goes avoided and evaded by big business and the billionaire elite.

Desperate times call for desperate measures. That must have been the line of Con-Dem Chancellor George Osborne's thinking when he went about claiming new jobs and wages figures proved that his austerity measures were yielding a recovery.

Far from bringing relief to 'hard-working families', the Coalition's cuts and pro-capitalist policies are rapidly turning the clock back on living standards at a terrifying rate. Real growth can however be seen in workers' anger.

Osborne's claim, faithfully reproduced across the big business-owned media, was that wages are now rising faster than inflation.

Statistical contortionists manufactured this figure by including fat-cat bonuses in the measure of wages and excluding sky-rocketing house prices by using the CPI not the RPI measure of inflation. In reality real wages are still 6% below the pre-crisis peak of 2008.

The London Evening Standard (ES) produced a devastating graph. It showed that energy bills have gone up by 57%, food prices by 40%, and petrol has risen by 49%.

Housing is in a league of its own with prices and rents increasing at a speed Usain Bolt would envy. London house prices have risen by 22% in the past year, with other areas also seeing significant rises.

We were also invited to celebrate the latest employment figures. Unemployment is down by 320,000 to 2.2 million.

But again the devil is in the truth. Almost half the jobless are young people. Scandalously almost a million workers are in the

grip of zero-hour contracts, living precarious, stressed-out lives.

Unsurprisingly ONS figures show that two million or one in five part-time and temporary workers say they would like full-time work.

### Lack of investment

Other figures reveal that Britain is being propelled back to the 19th century. As job cuts in the public sector hit hard and big business refuses to invest its hundreds of hoarded billions in new jobs "worried workers price themselves into the jobs market", as an ES writer put it.

In particular, frustrated and demoralised workers, seeking to avoid the humiliating benefit regimes and workfare on the one side and low-paid insecure work on the other, have opted out to enter into self-employment.

Increases among Britain's 4.5 million-strong self-employed workforce account for more than 40% of the 'jobs' growth over the last year, and for almost two-thirds in the last quarter.

This, accompanied by aggressive privatisation drives, represents an attempt by big business and their servants in government to undo all the gains of the working class over the last century.

Self-employed people are often forced into financial and personal uncertainty. While the capitalist press is awash with tales of wealthy whizz kids, for the majority of self-employed workers this is hard graft with poor returns.

Tax expert Richard Taylor

worked out that "the average, inflation adjusted, earnings of those who are self-employed fell from just under £15,000 a year at the turn of the century to £10,400 in 2011, a real decline of just over 31%."

As the Socialist Party has explained many times, capitalism is in a blind alley, unable to further develop the productive forces (factories, offices, science and technique), or to use the surplus created by workers to invest in much needed industrial development.

So the basics- clean water, homes, jobs, healthcare, environmental protection- are denied to billions of people.

Instead the capitalist classes appear to be retiring from their historic role. In Britain the number of employing businesses has fallen in most years since 2008.

The number of private-sector businesses with 250 or more employees dropped 8.2% to 6,600 between 2000 and 2013.

It is also predicted that there could be more self-employed by 2018 than the number of employees in the public sector.

The TUC reports that rapid expansion of this sector, normally a feature of recession, is growing fastest among impoverished pensioners, part-time workers and odd-jobbers.

### Bubbling anger

But, as the Socialist Party has predicted, things will not continue like this forever. The working class will not continue trying to make ends meet while watching the rich

get so obscenely richer.

The anger that is bubbling below the surface will explode at a certain stage and pay and jobs will be a major factor in that explosion.

A foretaste of the action we can expect has been provided by the construction workers who successfully demanded to be taken on by the profiteering building companies on direct contracts.

The frustration is also fuelling the votes for strike action on pay by workers in the NHS, among teachers, on the railways and more.

It is what makes the Bakers' Union and Youth Fight for Jobs' 'Fast Food Rights' campaign against junk jobs so appealing to the super-exploited workers in that industry.

### For a real living wage

The Socialist Party fights for the immediate implementation of the Living Wage (currently set at £7.65 or £8.80 in London) as a step towards a minimum wage of £10 an hour, with regular increases to cover price rises.

We oppose the pay cuts and pay freezes, parts of the Coalition strategy to make the working class pay for the bosses' crisis.

We say that, for example, the estimated £120 billion lost to tax evasion mainly by the super-rich 1%, would go a long way to rolling out a mass programme of socially useful job creation.

That would mean more homes built, more staff in our threadbare public services, and fewer people forced onto the dole or pushed into instability.

Protections against precariousness and poverty are also needed for workers who wish to remain self-employed.

Making affordable credit available from banks would help. National Insurance payments should guarantee benefits when workers are unable to work.

But a programme needs a strategy to achieve it. Socialist Party members at trade union conferences have been winning big support when they argue for decisive action to defend workers' rights.

This includes making the case for a 24-hour general strike as well as arguing the case for action on the issues affecting workers in the different sectors.

Fundamentally, though, we explain that capitalism is utterly incapable of satisfying even the modest aspirations of the 99% for a secure job, for a home that is not prey to the whims of greedy landlords or banks, for public services that meet their needs.

So linked to the struggles for jobs and decent pay, must be a struggle to achieve all these basic needs, as part of a struggle to change society along socialist lines.

This would mean, as a start, nationalising the banking system and the big companies that dominate the economy and placing them under democratic workers' control and management.

Socialism would mean democratic planning to end the chaos of the market and environmental destruction. And it would mean the end to the misery of millions in Britain and across the world. Join us in the fight for a future, a socialist future.

## Join the Socialist Party Scotland

**VISIT** [www.socialistpartyscotland.org.uk](http://www.socialistpartyscotland.org.uk) click on

**JOIN or MORE INFO**

**EMAIL** [info@socialistpartyscotland.org.uk](mailto:info@socialistpartyscotland.org.uk)

**TEXT** your name and postcode 07761 818 206

**FACEBOOK** [facebook.com/socialistpartyscotland](https://www.facebook.com/socialistpartyscotland)

**TWITTER** @cwiscot

## Have you got some news for us?



The paper of Socialist Party Scotland

E-mail: [info@socialistpartyscotland.org.uk](mailto:info@socialistpartyscotland.org.uk)

Website:

[www.socialistpartyscotland.org.uk](http://www.socialistpartyscotland.org.uk)

Editor: Philip Stott

## New website

Socialist Party Scotland launched a new website in March 2014.

As well as the usual news and analysis from Scotland and internationally, there is also a special sections of the website dedicated to the independence referendum.

Regular videos will be posted and you'll also be able to read the latest issue of the Socialist newspaper on the website, if you haven't already

bought it of course.

You can join the party as well via the website, as well subscribing to receive a regular newsletter and asking for more information on the policies, meetings and activities of Socialist Party Scotland.

We hope you enjoy it and find it informative, as well as useful. And don't forget to contact us if you want to contribute to the website.



[www.socialistpartyscotland.org.uk](http://www.socialistpartyscotland.org.uk)

# Food bank scandal grows by 500%

**Nancy Taaffe**

*Socialist Party, London*

One million people are now being fed by food banks in the UK. The Trussell Trust who operate 40 food banks in Scotland – up from 1 in 2009 - handed out food to 71,428 people in Scotland last year, an increase of 500% on the year before.

A third of the people seeking help from food banks did so because of delays in their benefits. Low incomes and benefit sanctions were also common reasons to seek emergency food.

And the operation run by the Trussell Trust is only the tip of the iceberg. It's estimated that this particular charity distributed only one quarter of all food parcels given out in the last 12 months, with churches and other organisations also operating similar schemes.

In an effort to cut across the horror and sympathy this figure generated, government sources have denounced the author, Trussell Trust charity, as "misleading and emotionally manipulative".

The Mail on Sunday went further, sending an undercover reporter to a Nottingham food bank to prove that he could get three days free food without having his story checked

out. In reality he reported that he was 'asked a series of questions'.

And as @KennyDownSouth tweeted: "No, no Daily Mail. The scandal isn't that food bank volunteers didn't check your cretin's ID. The scandal is that food banks exist at all."

In response to this poor excuse for genuine investigative journalism, £38,000 was donated in a matter of hours - heart-warming evidence of human solidarity.

## capitalist failure

It's not surprising that the Con-Dems and the big business-owned press attack food banks. They are a physical manifestation of the failure and inability of capitalism to solve the most basic human needs.

In the sixth largest economy on the planet people are going hungry because of soaring rent and bills, austerity measures, wage cuts and unemployment.

The economy is supposedly in recovery, sales of luxury goods are booming. Whole streets in Chelsea are bought up by oligarchs and sit in darkness as empty investment holdings.

There are more than enough resources to enable all the people of

this island and the planet to have warmth, shelter and food - but we don't all have these things.

The logic of capitalism is that, as Oxfam revealed, Britain's five richest families are worth more than the poorest 20%. This is Con-Dem 'all in it together' Britain.

Labour and the SNP are also implementing the cuts agenda, contributing to the extension of the food bank queues. The Scottish government and Labour and SNP-led councils are slashing jobs and services just as much as their Tory and Lib Dems counterparts.

The Labour leadership has gone as far as to commit to Tory spending cuts if it forms the next government.

We need an alternative. Councilors have a choice not to make cuts - but all the establishment parties are making us pay for the bankers' crisis.

## new party needed

We need a new mass workers' party, urgently, to build that alternative. The challenge being made by the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition is an important step towards the building of a new workers' party. Get more info at [www.tusc.org.uk](http://www.tusc.org.uk)



Welfare hatchet man, IDS and Ed Miliband promising more of the same



# Deaths of Bob Crow and Tony Benn

**Peter Taaffe**

*Socialist Party England and Wales*

With the deaths in quick succession of Bob Crow and Tony Benn, the trade union and labour movement has lost two principled socialists and militant fighters. Their presence at meetings and demos will be sorely missed. While we mourn their loss, however, the best way to mark their passing is to renew the struggle against austerity, poverty and war – and to fight for the socialist transformation of society.

A spectre is haunting capitalist commentators, right-wing new Labour and their hangers-on, following the deaths of Bob Crow and Tony Benn. It is Militant (now the Socialist Party) – seemingly dead and buried decades ago, according to these very same sources – which now seems to haunt them.

## Militant

First came Polly Toynbee, who attacked Tony Benn for giving succour to Militant, who she described as a "virus" and an "evil" influence on the Labour Party. Her authority on this issue? She was "a member of Brixton and Lambeth Labour Party", and witnessed our alleged "evil" approach.

Yet no leading member in the Labour Party in that area at the time seems to remember her 'contribution', other than joining the 'exit tendency', the ex-Labour traitors who left in 1981 to form the Social Democratic Party (SDP). The SDP split the Labour vote in the 1983 general election and opened the door to Margaret Thatcher.

If anybody is guilty of facilitating the coming to power of Thatcher, it is those like Toynbee who preferred Thatcher's victory to the triumph of left and socialist ideas within the Labour Party and society at large. It was a peculiar caricature of Lenin's alleged idea of 'revolutionary de-



Bob Crow supporting workers at Visteon fighting for their rights

featism' – in her case, counter-revolutionary defeatism – preferring the victory of the enemy, rather than your own side.

Then came the House of Lords denizen, Liberal Democrat Shirley Williams. She was also an SDP deserter from the Labour Party. In a spat with Labour MP Diane Abbott on Newsnight, Williams attacked Tony Benn with the same charge sheet of association with Militant. Then, to cap it all, Andrew Rawnsley complained in the Observer: "[Benn] never disowned, and stood in the way of dealing with, the Militant Tendency and other far-left entryists who were poisoning Labour from within. He does not bear sole responsibility for the split that led to the formation of the SDP, but he was one of the most crucial triggers for it".

## supported nationalisation

The Observer, when estimating Tony Benn's contribution, is Hydra-headed. It's editorial, in marked contrast to the spiteful and shallow 'analysis' of Rawnsley, was more measured. It said: "[Benn] was in favour of nationalisation of the

major utilities and against fat cats growing fatter". It pointed out that, unlike others (including New Labour MPs, invisible to voters), in a poll in 1984 in Chesterfield, Tony Benn was known by an incredible 90% of the electorate!

In the above comments, and the equally nauseating, unctuous, hypocritical articles praising Bob Crow and Tony Benn, is a theme: that hopefully these two big figures were one-offs, 'the likes of which we are unlikely to see again'.

Some have even suggested that the trade unions, already half the size in membership – though not in potential power compared to the heyday of 1980 – will completely disappear in a few decades.

## militancy will return

As if the class struggle can be conjured away by a few bourgeois scribblers! The reaction of working people to the relentless offensive prosecuted by the capitalists and their governments will see the emergence of a militant and political trade union movement that can exceed even the past considerable efforts of Tony Benn and Bob Crow.

One of Bob Crow's lasting contributions, which he will be remem-

# Benn backed Militant



Tony Benn supported Militant (now known as the Socialist Party) when the right wing attacked and expelled us because he recognised, as the Labour Party rank and file

did, that we were being hounded because we fought successfully against capitalism. Under our influence, the working class scored big victories: in Liverpool (1983-87), and in the anti-poll tax battle, which eliminated the tax and, in the process, overthrew Thatcher, as she recognised in her memoirs. Tony Benn also attacked the Observer and refused to buy it when, in complete contrast to its opposition to the Suez invasion in 1956, it supported the war criminal Tony Blair's invasion of Iraq.

● This article is an extract from a longer feature by Peter Taaffe which can be read in the April 2014 edition of Socialist Today [www.socialismtoday.org](http://www.socialismtoday.org)

bered for, is his participation in the formation of the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC), a forerunner of a mass working-class party. No amount of slander – against leaders and individuals prominent in the workers' movement – is capable of preventing the ultimate march of history.

At most, together with other unfavourable factors for the struggle, it can only slow down the process. Bob Crow was described by those who are now praising him as "the most dangerous man in Britain". Tony Benn was described as "clinically insane", and compared to Hitler by the Sun.

Militant, in Liverpool and elsewhere, was vilified in a 'great slander' campaign, including by the Liberals who threatened that the pope would "excommunicate" its supporters. This did not prevent Liverpool Labour Party (when it was under the influence of Militant), scoring its highest ever vote, when it was a real workers' party at bottom.

Nor did it prevent the recent victory of Socialist Alternative candidate, Kshama Sawant, in Seattle. In this case, the strategists of US capitalism were unprepared and did not

believe that Kshama would storm to victory – initiating a surge in interest in socialism in the citadel of world capitalism as well as a mass campaign for a \$15 an hour minimum wage.

They will now attempt a counter-campaign, in vain. Nor was Owen Jones, the left-wing celebrity, who maintains a deafening silence over the reasons for Kshama's victory while he rubbishes any idea that something similar is possible in Britain.

## sceptics confounded

The sceptics will be confounded as the British labour movement rouses itself to confront a diseased and rotten system, and all those parties which are associated with it.

It will create not only a mass movement of struggle but also replenish from its ranks new fighters and leaders to replace those who have gone before.

We salute the memory of these two powerful labour movement figures, Bob Crow and Tony Benn, and honour their memory in the struggle for a socialist future.

# Fracking, big oil and the environment

Sean Robertson

Socialist Party Scotland - Inverness

In Middle America a woman turns on her kitchen tap. Flames shoot out of the faucet, singeing her eyebrows. The ground shakes and a massive hole opens up in the street.

No it's not a natural disaster or the coming of the apocalypse. But an incident of a type which are likely to become more and more common as oil companies attempt to keep dwindling supplies of fuel flowing using the modified techniques of Hydraulic Fracturing or 'fracking' to exploit previously extractable deposits of hydrocarbons, mainly natural gas or methane.

The process involves blasting a mixture of sand, water and chemicals into shale deposits deep underground to release trapped gas.

In the US, water sources have been polluted by both methane released from the ground and by chemicals used in the fracking process, mainly due to inadequate barriers between the drilling well and aquifers.

These pollution events and environmental incidents, which include ground tremors, have led to worldwide mass protests against the practice with demands for safety and environmental protection. Protestors' demands have gone completely unheeded, with corporations and their political mouth pieces claiming the process is both safe and neces-

sary to secure energy supplies, despite a massive and growing body of evidence to the contrary.

In the coming year, the areas in which companies will be allowed to explore on shore oil reserves will increase dramatically, taking in the vast majority of England and a vast swathe of Scotland, running from the central belt to Aberdeen.

When Cameron's government was 'elected', they claimed that they would be the 'greenest government ever'. The government's environment spokesman, Owen Patterson, actually claims that climate concerns are down to people being 'emotional about the environment' and that we should just accept that the climate has been changing for centuries.

## big oil

By this wilful ignorance they are clearing the road for their mates in Big Oil to quench their thirst for oil (and profit) at the expense of possibly millions of the poorest people in the world who will lose land and die of starvation or disease as a result of climate change. The IPCC claims that there is a 95% certainty that this is caused by man-made greenhouse gases.

Respected scientific publication, the Climate Change Journal, has reported that just 90 of the world's companies are responsible for 60% of global carbon dioxide emissions

released since 1751. This roll of shame contains all the usual suspects - Shell, BP, Gazprom and Exxon as well as nationalised companies such as Norway's Statoil.

Expanding fracking in the UK by any amount is a move in the wrong direction. This is because climate change is so critical an issue to our and future generations. We have to strive to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to the lowest level possible.

To do this, the main thrust of our energy investment should be in alternative energy sources harnessing the natural powers of wind waves, tidal, solar and geothermal sources. Scotland has an estimated 25% of EU's renewable energy potential. These are resources that will never run out and could provide real, sustained economic security.

Unfortunately a familiar story has dogged their development up until now - profiteering and market forces have led to a piecemeal and inefficient situation which is exasperated by the disregard by developers for local communities. Energy prices rise while the real problem of climate change is left unchallenged.

## public ownership

A democratically run, publicly owned energy company could manage Scotland's oil so that it is used responsibly while at the same time unlocking the country's green heart,



There have been widespread protests against fracking in the US and the UK

creating sustainable economic security long into the future.

While not completely stopping oil production a national energy company would willingly and responsibly face up to the fact that our dependence on oil cannot continue.

A different vision for the environment will be required in an independent socialist Scotland if we are to build a socially just, sustainable society.

Immediate action should be taken to stop the fracking expansion plans currently being tabled. Calling for an immediate moratorium on all new onshore drilling operations, a mass campaign is needed, linking up with similar campaigns in the rUK and uniting socialists, environmentalists

and energy campaigners. We should also argue for the formation of a national energy corporation run in the way outlined above with a focus on reducing energy use and dependency on oil, removing all nuclear power and promoting renewables as well as economic sustainability.

In its short 300 year history, capitalism has presided over environmental destruction on a massive scale, from extinctions to deforestation and ozone depletion to climate change. It has shown that mankind has the ability to irreversibly alter the ecology of the planet.

A socialist society would ensure that we could make these positive changes for the good of all the Earth's inhabitants.

## Edinburgh tragedy shows cuts can cost lives



Savage cuts to public services can have a tragic human cost

Jimmy Haddow

Socialist Party Scotland

The death of an Edinburgh school student at Liberton High School at the beginning of April when a "wobbly modesty wall" fell onto her was a tragedy. It also indicates the dangerous cost of years of cuts that have been instituted by successive council administrations. Council officials in Edinburgh have begun urgent safety checks in the city's schools and have claimed that a full survey of all schools, including Liberton High School, was carried out in 2012-13, and no concerns with this wall were identified. However, reports in newspapers and social media have said that school students did raise concerns about this particular wall within the school to the relevant school authorities.

7000 of Edinburgh's school students are being taught in crumbling buildings that need urgent repair to make them safe and fit for use. 19 schools and nurseries have, or are

close to showing, major defects. And two of the worst-affected primary schools have been waiting at least five years for comprehensive repairs and upgrades to their dilapidated campuses.

Education Officials on Edinburgh Council have said that they are pressing ahead with a £30 million emergency investment plan to bring all of Edinburgh schools up to a satisfactory standard by 2019.

However, parents of students who are at the Edinburgh schools are unhappy about the delay to repairs to many of the schools and are demanding that the money is spent immediately.

There are many complaints about the huge sums being spent by the council on the debacle of the trams in Edinburgh, but the education of the city's children and the accommodation they are taught in are left to deteriorate.

A representative of the Scottish Secondary Teachers Association is also calling for the SNP Scottish government to give direct funding to clear the repair backlog. How-

ever, the Green Party in Edinburgh are proposing that officials approach the Scottish Government and make the case for a special school repair and improvement levy, charging the Edinburgh council tax payer pay an extra £1 per week on their bill.

Astonishingly, the SNP Government's Justice Secretary Kenny MacAskill said the City Council had done a good job in maintaining schools in the face of budget cuts. Yet Edinburgh anti-cuts activists have highlighted the fact that the Labour/SNP Edinburgh Council are going to introduce £36 million of cuts over the next year as part of a £327 million accumulative reduction in the council's budget over the next 4 years.

This will have a devastating effect on education, as well as the other council services in the City of Edinburgh.

## No Cuts

The local authority trade unions in Edinburgh should be campaigning to oppose all the cuts that the Labour/SNP Council are preparing to carry-out.

We demand that Edinburgh Council set a No Cuts budget and launch a fight for the money that they has been lost in recent years from the city.

Edinburgh Council should be campaigning with other Scottish Councils to force the Scottish Government to fight for the finance they have lost from the austerity programme of the ConDem government. It's clear that very few, if any, councillors are prepared to make such a stand, which means the need for a political working class alternative to the mainstream austerity political parties is vital.

## It's time for a fighting campaign to defeat cuts

Since 2009 there has been a 25% real terms cut in Scottish local government spending.

Nearly 40,000 council jobs in Scotland have been lost since the start of the ConDem vicious austerity programme and at least £2billion stolen from councils across Scotland.

UNISON members who work for community and voluntary organisations have also faced a massive assault on their jobs, conditions and the services they provide. The impact has been even greater when the increased demands due to the social fallout of the capitalist economic crisis are factored in.

There have been a series of strikes by Glasgow City Unison members against attacks to their terms and conditions recently.

These include among education workers and staff in the social work department. We should congratulate those UNISON members and local branches which have used industrial action to resist cuts in pay and attacks on terms and conditions.

The good work of many UNISON branches in developing and assisting local community campaigning against cuts in services, care centre closures, school closures, library closures, increases in changing for council services, etc should also be acknowledged.

However, we need to step - up our resistance as we enter the council budget setting process for 2015/16 and beyond.

Left branches and activists in local government in Scotland should consider supporting the following points of action:

- That the UNISON Scottish Local Government Committee (SLGC) immediately ensure that UNISON Scotland's current policy of calling on local councils to set defiance, needs budgets whilst leading a campaign for more money from the Scottish and UK Government's is our primary political demand.

- We should at least call on all councils to set a 2015/16 budget which is no less than that for 2014/15 under the slogan "No Cuts". We should also make the demand that no further charges are levied for council services.

- That the UNISON SLGC now begin a campaign for Scottish wide industrial action in early 2015 if councils move to implement further cuts to jobs, workers conditions and council services as part of their 2015/16 budget. Any action should be co-ordinated where possible with other trade unions.

- That UNISON SLGC initiate/support the calling of a Scotland-wide conference involving local government trade union organisations and including campaigns like Defend Glasgow Services in early 2015 to assist in building a coordinated fightback against cuts to services, conditions and jobs.

- That UNISON SLGC asks the Unison Scottish Committee to call on the STUC to organise a national demonstration on the theme of "No Cuts" as early as is practicable as part of this campaign.

# Building a political voice for workers



The SNP won't deliver for workers in an independent Scotland

**Matt Dobson**

*Glasgow Socialist Party Scotland*

Policies outlined in the SNP's White Paper for Independence such as the lowering of corporation tax for big business and the "Team Scotland" partnership model, which based on the experience of Ireland would tie trade unions into agreements unfavourable to workers, show that Alex Salmond (pictured) the SNP are not putting forward the interests of the working class.

Workers and young people reading the SNP's vision of a "Fairer Scotland" will wonder why there is no commitment to scrap zero-hour contracts, protect workers rights through ending all anti union laws and using the wealth and resources in society for the benefit of the majority through public ownership.

As well as organising mass campaigns and industrial action against austerity and inequality, workers, the poor and young people need a new party that fights for their interests in councils, parliament and in communities.

This idea is gaining support rapidly and is becoming a key issue in the referendum debate.

Some in the Yes campaign have

put forward the idea that Scottish Labour would move to the left and even "return to its socialist roots" in an independent Scotland.

While this may reflect a genuine hope amongst some, this argument is not based on reality and dangerously could lead to illusions that a new workers' party does not need to be built.

The rhetoric of the Scottish Labour leadership who rail against the "something for nothing culture" says everything about their real agenda. Labour's have a record of implementing brutal cuts combined with an anti-trade union agenda in councils such as Glasgow. The voting record of Scottish Labour MPs, a number of whom voted for the recent welfare benefits cap confirms.

## Falkirk and the Collins review

The experience of the Falkirk scandal and the acceptance of the Collins Review has confirmed the lengths the Labour leadership will go to attack the trade unions having an influence in the Labour party. It also underlines why it is crucial that the trade unions break the link with Labour and take steps to form a new

workers party. Socialist Party Scotland activists have gained a real echo at pro independence meetings and events raising the idea of building a new party for the working class majority to put fighting socialist activists into a post independence Scottish Parliament.

Independence meetings, especially those with Tommy Sheridan speaking putting the case for an Independent Socialist Scotland, have had large turnouts of working class people who are open to discussing a socialist alternative.

This shows the massive potential support for a party based on organising struggle against cuts and austerity in the workplaces and the communities. A party with representatives that articulate and fight for the concerns of workers, benefit claimants and young people rather than big business.

Regardless of the outcome of the referendum all the main parties will continue with a cuts agenda. There will be an increasing mood to fight for real political representation amongst the working class in Scotland.

## TUSC

The Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC) is playing a pivotal role in pushing forward the idea of a new workers party. TUSC is a coalition involving the RMT trade union, the Socialist Party, trade unionists and community campaigners. TUSC in England is standing over 550 candidates in the coming elections (see article opposite)

There will also be a pro-working class alternative in the European elections in May with the No2EU Yes to Workers Rights coalition (see below)

The Scottish TUSC will be discussing initiating a conference after the independence referendum, whatever the result, to discuss the crucial task of building political representation for the working class in Scotland.

## Biggest left challenge in 60 years



The Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition's no-cuts challenge in May's local elections in England on May 22nd has reached an outstanding 561 candidates as nominations closed.

TUSC candidates will also be standing for three of the five directly-elected mayor contests taking place on the same day. It has been a massive achievement to build the biggest left of Labour election challenge in 60 years.

And it is a real coalition that has been assembled to make sure the establishment parties don't have it all their own way - of trade unionists, community campaigners, and members of different socialist organisations.

The number of RMT members standing is 49. This is a fitting legacy to the late Bob Crow who helped pioneer TUSC and fought consistently for working class political representation.

And, while the Unite union general secretary Len McCluskey tells the Guardian that Labour will face "a defining moment" at its policy forum in July, in May 137 Unite members will be standing under the TUSC umbrella, including the Southampton 'rebel' councillor and Unite member, Keith Morrell,

expelled from the Labour Party for voting against the cuts.

There are a broad range of working class community fighters in anti-bedroom tax organisations, local save our services groups, disabled people against cuts campaigns, etc who want to link their struggle with others by standing for election under the TUSC name.

One of the Salford TUSC candidates is an anti-fracking activist at the Barton Moss protest.

And there is a political spread. Candidates from the TUSC constituent socialist organisations, the Socialist Party, the SWP, and the non-affiliated individuals organised in the Independent Socialist Network.

And candidates who are members of organisations not currently part of the TUSC coalition - a couple of Labour Party members (not for much longer!), and some who are members of Left Unity or Respect, who have taken up TUSC's offer to participate in the campaign with the same rights as other candidates to promote their organisations.

The full list of the candidates and the results after May 22nd can be found at [www.tusc.org.uk](http://www.tusc.org.uk).

## No2EU - Yes to Workers' Rights



No2EU - Yes to Workers' Rights is standing in the European elections to offer a fighting alternative to savage austerity.

No2EU - Yes to Workers' Rights was set-up by Bob Crow and the RMT trade union.

The European elections on May 22nd are taking place at a time of unprecedented austerity. Governments like the Con-Dem coalition in the UK and their counterparts across Europe are taking the axe to jobs, public services and working

peoples' living standards.

The European Union is the frontline in driving through savage cuts on the people of Europe. It's an undemocratic and anti working class arrangement that is there to protect the big corporations and promote their interests.

No2EU - Yes to Workers' Rights is standing in the Euro elections in Scotland, England and Wales in May. We're a trade union-backed campaign with candidates who are leading struggles against cuts. We

stand for a workers Europe, rather than the bosses Europe promoted by the mainstream political parties.

We want to see a Europe based on democracy, that ends privatisation of public services based on socialist policies. A Europe that does not put the interests of big business above that of ordinary people. The current structures of the EU make this impossible. We say:

- Yes to workers' rights
- Exit the EU on the basis of socialist policies
- No to austerity
- No to privatisation
- End the anti-union laws
- Blame the bosses and bankers for the crisis, not immigrants
- Yes to international solidarity of working people

No2EU candidates in Scotland are John Foster - Communist Party Britain  
 Brian Smith - Socialist Party Scotland and Glasgow Unison  
 Andrew Elliott - RMT trade union  
 Murdo McLean - Communist Party Britain  
 Gail Morrow - Anti bedroom tax campaign  
 Richie Veitch - RMT trade union

## Let's keep it brief...

### Salmond on Putin and Farage

● Alex Salmond says he is opposed to some of the actions of the Putin regime in Russia. Well that's a start, given Putin's repressive government and attacks on LGBT campaigners and his anti-working class policies. But Salmond goes on to say: "He's restored a substantial part of Russian pride and that must be a good thing."

The so-called restoring of "Russian pride" has been the conscious whipping up of Russian nationalism to advance the interests both domestically and internationally of Putin and the oligarchs that support him.

And it that wasn't bad enough on the German Tory leader Angela Merkel Salmond said: "I think the German Chancellor is pretty effective. Some chancellors have been unwilling to use German authority. She is not in that mould."

Perhaps worst of all Salmond commented on Ukip leader Nigel Farage, he has a "certain bonhomie"... "He is having influence beyond his significance so you have to admire that. There is a constituency for saloon-bar poli-

tics and he has played it out. I have a sneaking regard for anyone who takes on powerful establishments." If admiring "aspects" of the brutal Putin regime, Merkel in Germany, or the millionaire and pro big business Farage represents taking on powerful establishments then it's clear that working class people have a fight on our hands in any independent Scotland under Salmond's leadership.

### CBI: a bad day at the office

● The bosses organisation, the CBI, has lost its "impartial" reputation, a number of members and its Scottish director over the stance on independence. The CBI registered to allow it to spend up to £150,000 in campaigning for a "No" vote. Within days they had to reverse that decision as most of Scotland's universities, several quangos, the Law Society of Scotland and businesses left the organisation as a result. They regret "inadvertently giving the impression that the CBI is a political entity." Hmmm. Big business, intervening in politics. That's what the Tories and Labour are for.

# Capitalist “Project Fear” support for independence

Support for independence in Scotland has increased significantly in the first few months of 2014. The possibility of a majority Yes vote in September is creating a panic in the ranks of the Better Together campaign and among big business who are opposed to the break-up of the UK. “Project Fear” has been unleashed in an effort to blackmail and intimidate those looking towards independence as a possible escape route from savage austerity. In doing so the UK capitalist establishment is helping to drive tens of thousands of working class people to the left which has created a space for socialist ideas to grow as a result. In this feature **Philip Stott** analyses these processes and underlines the potential to build a socialist case for independence that puts an end to austerity and capitalism centre stage.



Scotland's Future under the SNP would be a continuation of cuts for the majority and a bonanza for big business

There is growing fear, horror would not be too strong a word, among the capitalist establishment in Britain at the possibility of a majority Yes vote on 18 September in the Scottish independence referendum.

The editorials and commentators of the 'august' journals of British capitalism are awash with concern at increasing support for independence in the last few months.

Typical of these was columnist Philip Stephens writing in the Financial Times on 10 April: "I am beginning to fear that he [Cameron] will be remembered instead as the prime minister who watched Britain amble into break-up."

Martin Kettle warned in the Guardian on 16 April: "One way or another the UK is shifting beneath our feet right now..."

"Scotland is significantly more likely to vote Yes to independence in five months time than it was five months ago."

This wave of concern comes in the wake of a series of opinions polls throughout January, February and March that have shown support for independence increase to 44% on average.

Worryingly for the pro-union side the rise in support for a Yes vote has come despite the unleashing of a barrage of threats about the economic consequences of independence.

The 'Dambusters Strategy', the name given to it by the Tory leadership, has thus far utterly failed.

## Project Fear is failing

The governor of the Bank of England Mark Carney kicked off a coordinated intervention by British capitalism in January by pointing to the inevitable difficulties of a currency union between Scotland and the rest of the UK, post independence.

He was quickly followed north to Edinburgh by George Osborne who delivered his 'Sermon on the Pound' two weeks later: "If Scotland walks away from the UK, it walks away from the UK pound."

Within hours Labour's Ed Balls had given the same message: "Alex Salmond [Scottish National Party leader] is saying to people that you can have independence and keep the pound and the Bank of England. That is not going to happen."

Lib Dem Treasury secretary Danny Alexander insisted it was "crystal clear a currency union would create unacceptable risks both for Scotland and the rest of the United Kingdom."

A deluge of announcements by big business quickly followed this choreographed assault. RBS claimed they would have to move parts of its business to England, as did Lloyds, Tesco

Bank and Scottish Widows. Oil giants Shell and BP insisted that a Yes vote would cause them major problems.

The vast majority of the capitalist media, who are staunchly opposed to the break-up of the UK, have regularly churned out scare stories to assist in this campaign - "Power bills will rise", "elderly care will be unsustainable", "supermarkets will increase food prices" and the "pensions system will collapse" are typical.

No doubt the calculation was that this propaganda would deliver a knockout blow to support for independence.

Instead it has had the opposite effect. But there has also been another unintended consequence of this intervention: a dramatically increased politicisation of the campaign which is driving sections of the working class and young people to the left.

## working class support for independence

This is not reflected by the policy of the SNP leadership who are desperate to prove themselves a safe pair of hands for big business interests.

Support for Yes was already highest among the hardest-hit victims of austerity who are increasingly looking towards independence as a possible escape route from unending cuts and falling living standards.

An opinion poll in December 2013 found that support for independence was 47% among the poorest fifth of households in Scotland. In contrast, among the wealthiest fifth backing for a Yes vote stood at 26%.

The sharpened politicisation which has emerged under the hammer blow of the attacks of the big business dominated 'Project Fear' has entrenched support for a Yes vote even further among significant sections of the working class.

These developments drove former Labour minister and ex-secretary general of Nato George Robertson to claim: "The loudest cheers for the break-up of Britain would be from our adversaries and enemies... the forces of darkness would simply love it."

All three main pro-union parties are now promising more powers for Scotland, to bolster support for a No vote in September.

The stick will still be wielded, but the failure of Project Fear means the carrot of enhanced devolution is now needed.

The strategists of big business and their political mouthpieces are now openly discussing the nightmare scenario for British capitalism - the break-up of the UK.

But they will fight tooth and nail to defend their class interests and to try and ensure a No majority in September.

As an editorial in the Financial Times put it: "what is not in doubt - and has been too little discussed - is that the rest of the UK would be weakened."

"The international status of the 'rump UK' would be diminished. Britain's prized reputation for political stability would slip; investor confidence would be lost."

Or, as Tory Prime Minister David Cameron put it recently: "independence would rip the rug from under our reputation."

## United in austerity

A major stumbling block for the political parties spearheading the No campaign is their diminished levels of social support in Scotland.

The Labour/Tory/Lib Dem pro-austerity lash-up has virtually no activist base on the ground.

Ed Miliband and Ed Balls' declaration that they will stick to Tory austerity if elected in 2015 has bolstered support for a Yes vote among Labour voters.

As has the incredible decision by Labour MPs to vote for the Tory cap on welfare at Westminster in March.

The Scottish Labour leadership is still tarnished after calling for an 'end to the something for nothing culture' under the SNP. A reference to free tuition and prescriptions and bus travel for the elderly.

In contrast to the Better Together campaign 'Yes Scotland', although dominated at the top by the SNP leadership, has hundreds of local cam-

paings and thousands of activists - many of them not members of the SNP.

The official Yes Scotland propaganda is largely based on the SNP's White Paper for independence. It proposes limited reforms, a pledge to increase the minimum wage by inflation, to double the number of hours parents are entitled to for childcare for three and four year olds and to scrap Trident nuclear weapons.

Yet, average wages in Scotland have fallen by 8% since 2009. Almost 500,000 workers in Scotland are earning less than the living wage of £7.45 an hour.

There has been a 400% increase in the number of people using food banks in Scotland in the last year.

A recent charities report entitled Scotland's Outlook declared a 'humanitarian crisis' as a 'poverty storm engulfs Scotland'.

It revealed that 870,000 people in Scotland were living in poverty, which the report articulated in language normally used to describe an international disaster zone.

A further £6 billion is due to be cut from benefits and welfare in Scotland over the next two years by the Con-Dem Coalition.

## SNP want to change the flag, not the system

Under these conditions the SNP's timid proposals will be like attempting to empty an ocean with a teaspoon.

The White Paper from the Scottish government confirmed that under independence the SNP intend to continue with austerity and tax cuts for big business.

They are opposed to even modest measures of public ownership, including of the profiteering gas and electricity companies.

Plans for a currency union with the rest of the UK underpin the SNP's proposals. It would be the "best option for business".

Under Salmond's plan, an independent Scotland would cede control over interest rates to the Bank of England and, in practice, give up a significant degree of control over Scottish budgets as well.

Such a euro-style straitjacket would bind an independent capitalist Scotland into long-term austerity.

This would leave a Scottish government unable to increase public spending and put an end to cuts under these rules - or risk expulsion from the currency zone.

A separate Scottish currency would not offer an automatic way out either. Only a wide-ranging programme of socialist measures, including a refusal to pay the debt stacked up by the bailout of the banks in 2008/09, linked

**"I am beginning to fear that he [Cameron] will be remembered as the prime minister who watched Britain amble into break-up"**

Philip Stephens, FT

# ar" failing as ence grows

**We say use the powers of independence to:**

- **Stop austerity and reverse the cuts**
- **Introduce a living wage of £10 an hour and end zero-hour contracts. Proper jobs and trade union rights for all workers**
- **End the attacks on welfare - for a living income for all**
- **Build a new mass working class party based on the trade unions, socialists and anti-cuts campaigners**
- **Bring into public ownership the banks, oil and the big corporations that dominate the economy under democratic working class control**
- **For an independent socialist Scotland as a step to a socialist confederation with England, Wales and Ireland and a socialist Europe**

to the full democratic nationalisation of the banking system and the major sectors of the economy can lay the basis for a way forward and a full reversal of the cuts.

## Socialist alternative needed

The desires of millions of working class people for an end to austerity will not be met under the SNP's plans.

Socialist Party Scotland supports a Yes vote but we are opposed to the SNP's pro-business blueprint. Instead, we are playing a key role in building a socialist campaign for the independence referendum alongside Tommy

Sheridan and others. The overwhelming majority of people who are attracted to independence are seeking a solution to savage austerity and a way out of the crisis.

This has created a unique vacuum for ideas that are far to the left of the official Yes Scotland campaign.

The space that has opened up for a socialist case for independence was reflected in late January when Tommy Sheridan was invited to address a meeting organised by independence supporters in Kirkcaldy. His speech was filmed and sent out via YouTube and has been watched 120,000 times.

Tommy raised many good points on the need for public ownership, an end to cuts and low pay and for an inde-

pendent socialist Scotland. Since then hundreds of working class people have been turning up to hear Tommy Sheridan speak at public meetings, looking for a socialist and left-wing case for independence that addresses their needs.

There is huge potential for socialist ideas to grow in the next few months with such a campaign.

Whatever the outcome of the referendum in September, the struggle against cuts and austerity will continue.

As will the need to build a new mass workers' party with a socialist programme to help end the nightmare of capitalism and build a socialist future.

## Queuing up to hear socialist ideas



350 people attended the 'socialist case for independence' meeting in Dundee on 15 April to hear Tommy Sheridan (above) and John McNally, vice-president of the PCS union, speaking as a Socialist Party member. One hundred people had to stand as all 240 seats were full 15 minutes before the meeting started.

Chairperson Sinead Daly introduced the meeting, explaining that it was organised to offer a vision that was absent from the official Yes campaign. "This meeting will discuss how the powers of independence could be used for the working class.

"It doesn't matter if you change the

flag over Scotland unless you go about preparing for the building of a new society, socialism, from the ground up to end cuts and austerity."

John McNally gave an excellent speech explaining the need to build unified and coordinated strike action by trade unions to defeat austerity.

John pointed out the need for public ownership and the building of a new mass working class party to represent the majority.

That hundreds of thousands were looking to independence to escape poverty and low pay, zero-hour contracts, etc. But to do that socialist policies are needed and a party to deliver them.

Tommy Sheridan made a very powerful speech railing against poverty, food banks and cuts. He lacerated the Labour Party and Project Fear and called for public ownership of gas, electricity, oil and the pharmaceutical industry, for a living wage and an end to zero-hour contracts and the removal of Trident.

During the question and answer session there was clear opposition to the SNP's currency union plan, to the

Queen remaining as head of state, to the bosses' club of the European Union, as well as real anger towards Labour. There was also strong support for public ownership and for a new working class party.

Copies of the Socialist Party Scotland 'Ten questions on socialism and the Indy referendum' leaflets were snapped up as people entered the hall.

We sold out of copies of the Socialist newspaper. 135 people put their names down for more information about the case for an independent socialist Scotland and £480 was collected at the end of the meeting.

Hope Over Fear - the Case for an Independent Socialist Scotland tour will run for the next few months and thousands are expected to attend to hear a socialist alternative.

John McNally's speech can be viewed on YouTube: search for 'John McNally Yes Dundee' Tommy Sheridan: Search for: 'Tommy Sheridan Yes Dundee' www.socialistpartyscotland.org.uk for analysis of the referendum

## The class divide



You can say that again

### THE EMPHASIS IS ON THE BUCKS....

Starbucks, notorious in the UK for tax dodging, surprisingly announced it was relocating its European headquarters from the Netherlands to Britain.

Had the multinational seen the light after only paying 0.3% of its £1.78 billion sales in tax between 1998 and 2012?

At the risk of sounding cynical - well, no! Thanks to Chancellor George Osborne, Starbucks can relocate knowing that all its royalties from Europe will be tax free.

Osborne has changed the levying of corporation tax from companies' worldwide profits to profits generated in the UK.

Tax analyst Richard Murphy commented: "One of the functions of its [Starbucks] European head office is to route the royalties earned on the use of Starbucks name from each operating country through to Starbucks in the USA".

Murphy also reckons that even taxes charged on Starbucks UK profits will probably be less than the overall tax paid to date in the Netherlands.

But what about the jobs created? Apparently, no more than ten employees will be relocated!

### TIME UP FOR MILLER



Culture Secretary Maria Miller's resignation after fiddling thousands of pounds in expenses has reminded the public of the 2009 MPs' expenses scandal.

The culprits included Prime Minister David Cameron claiming expenses to clear wisteria from his second property and 'Mr Austerity', Chancellor George Osborne, claiming expenses not only for his farmhouse but also for the neighbouring paddock! No wonder they tried to defend Miller's outrageous behaviour.

### MPs moonlighting

Life can be hard if you're on a basic salary of £66,000 plus expenses. That probably explains why Tory MPs have to moonlight to the tune of £4 million a year.

Recorded in the Register of Members' Financial Interests, 19 Tory MPs made more than their annual salary through second jobs with another 14 banking over

£100,000. Mind you, these outside earnings are marginally less than the £4.3 million in total earned by Tory MPs last year.

And before Labour starts gloating, its MPs' outside jobs and directorships amounted to £2.4 million last year.

### ONE RULE FOR THEM...



Alex Salmond, Scotland's First Minister, has promoted two ministers to the role of Cabinet Secretary. Salmond insisted the promotions, which carry a £16,745 pay bump to £102,775, were "based on merit and responsibilities". Both Angela Constance and Shona Robison will carry on with the same job as before but will receive a 20% pay hike. This has been done to boost the number of female members of the Scottish cabinet to 40%.

Hypocritical? When the Scottish government is imposing a 1% pay cap on Scotland's overwhelmingly female NHS staff and thousands of, again mainly women, PCS members working in the civil service? We certainly think so.

### RBS: AT IT AGAIN



Royal Bank of Scotland is reported to be planning to pay executives millions of pounds in allowances with no strings attached, which would help it get round EU curbs on bonus payments.

The taxpayer-owned giant intends to make awards that will allow top bankers to double their basic salaries. Recently RBS were forced to scrap plans pay staff bonuses worth double their fixed pay after the government said it would oppose the move.

The bank's annual report published in April showed it paid 75 people £1 million or more in 2013.

We say enough is enough. Sack the board and fully nationalise RBS under democratic working class control.

# 40 years of fighting for a soc



International solidarity is a vital aspect of the struggle for socialism. Socialist Party Scotland fights for a world free from poverty, war and inequality. But that requires more than just supporting workers in struggle in other countries, vital though that is. What is also needed is to build a powerful international, capable of helping the working class replace the capitalist system with democratic socialism. To assist in this task the Committee for a Workers' International (CWI) was founded on April 21st 1974 at a meeting of 46 Marxists from 12 countries. Today, the CWI organises in 48 countries and on every continent. In this feature **Robert Bechert** of the International Secretariat of the CWI explains why an international is needed to aid the struggle for socialism in the 21st century.



Top left: Kshama Sawant elected in 2013 in the US. Bottom left - Marching to make capitalism history at Gleneagles in 2005. Bottom right: Joe Higgins elected as an MEP for Dublin in 2009

Since the beginning of the 20th century every decade has witnessed revolutions as the working and poor masses attempt to end the oppression and exploitation they suffer under capitalism.

There have also been mass struggles, revolutions, counter-revolutions and mighty, world changing, developments. The old empires have disappeared, the world's balance of forces has repeatedly changed, the world's population has become urban and younger while environmental and climate threats have become major international issues.

The past 40 years have been no exception to the story of mass struggle. A mere four days after the CWI's formation, 48 years of military and dictatorial rule in Portugal were ended with the 25 April revolution. A few months later the Greek military junta collapsed. But history does not develop in a straight line. In both countries the ruling classes were able to survive mainly because the mass movements that threatened them did not have a concrete strategy of how to replace capitalism, and a leadership prepared to lead that battle.

## Arguing for socialism after Stalinism

The past 25 years have been complicated by the collapse of the Soviet Union and the other Stalinist states. Being ruled by a privileged totalitarian elite meant that these states could not be regarded as socialist. However, the fact that they rested on a planned, nationalised non-capitalist economy meant that their very existence proved that capitalism was not the only possible system.

The post-1989 collapse of these states into capitalism was utilised by the ruling classes in their counter-offensive after the radicalisation of the 1960s to 1980s to ideologically claim that there was no alternative to capitalism. This helped accelerate the rightward, pro-capitalist move in much of the labour movement.

But since the 2008 onset of the latest crisis in global capitalism we have entered a new world period. In many countries, especially the main imperialist ones, capitalism means living standards have fallen or are still falling. However, an important feature today is that a combination of globalisation and communication innovations has strengthened an international consciousness.

Growing numbers see the questions of the economy, war and peace, and the environment as international and also as tied to capitalism, or at least to the domination of the giant financial, manufacturing and trading corporations. At the same time more people are aware of the possibilities inherent in scientific and technological advances if they are utilised in the interests of the population and the environment rather than corporate profit. But most importantly, the experience of austerity and the struggle against it is forging an understanding of the need to change society fundamentally. Thus events like the 2011 overthrow of Egyptian dictator Mubarak had a worldwide impact.

These developments have provided an important potential base for an international socialist organisation, linking together movements around the globe. This century has already seen international movements and struggles, such as the opposition to the US and British led invasion of Iraq, the worldwide Occupy/Indignados protests, the anti-austerity protests in Europe, the

impact of the 2011 Tunisian and Egyptian revolutions and the recent international dock workers' struggle.

But if the workers' movement cannot provide a concrete answer to today's issues then there is the danger that reactionary nationalist 'answers' can gain support, laying the basis for future chauvinist or ethnic conflicts within and between states. One of the objectives that the CWI set itself 40 years ago is to help arm the workers' movement with a programme and strategy to both win our immediate battles and to remove capitalism's poisonous grip over the world, starting with explaining the central role of the working class.

## CWI's foundation in a revolutionary time

It was not accidental that the foundation of the CWI took place in a very turbulent and radical period. The long post-World War Two economic upswing was ending. But already, before the 1973 oil crisis that came to symbolise the changing economic situation, Europe and then Latin America had been gripped by revolutionary movements and crises, especially France 1968. In Vietnam US imperialism was facing its first ever military defeat. The Stalinist regimes had been shaken by the 1968 'Prague Spring' in the then Czechoslovakia and the 1970/71 wave of workers' strikes in Poland, movements which were not pro-capitalist but in essence looking towards establishing a workers' democracy.

At that time the trade unions in Britain, the CWI's first base, were at a high point, but not just in terms of numbers. The miners' victories and the 1974 defeat of the Tory govern-

ment in the "who runs the country" election showed their potential strength.

The onset of a generalised capitalist crisis deepened a political radicalisation in the workers' movement in many countries. The bitter experience of the bloody 1973 overthrow of the Allende government in Chile provoked a wide discussion on how socialism could be achieved and also how to prevent counter-revolution blocking the labour movement's path. It was truly a period of international struggle.

In 1974 the Spanish dictatorship of Franco, faced with a developing revolution, was crumbling. But the Spanish ruling class sought, and obtained, the help of the workers' leaders to contain the revolutionary movement within capitalism and establish a capitalist, not a socialist, democracy.

Against this background the Marxists who founded the CWI, then around the Militant newspaper, had begun to reach a much wider audience in Britain and soon in other countries. Internationally this was initially mainly in Europe but also in Sri Lanka, where the history of a Trotskyist movement with mass support meant that the ideas of the CWI found an early echo.

However despite the worldwide revolutionary upheavals of the late 1960s and 1970s the idea of a real workers' international, while attractive to many activists, had become less central to the mass of the workers' movement. Mainly this flowed from the failure of both the Socialist and Communist Internationals to remain and develop as organisations that strove to change the world. But in the 21st century, with the world's obvious and growing inter-dependence, the issue of international action and struggle is once more being sharply posed.

Alongside the need for global solutions the experience of the workers' movement has again and again shown that protests alone can win individual demands but not fundamentally change the situation, something which can only be achieved by overthrowing capitalism. But to securely achieve that a movement needs a concrete programme of action that provides national and international answers and a clear-sighted leadership, both of which require a party to formulate and help put into action.

## how to permanently win struggles?

Today the capitalists have little optimism. They lack confidence, as revealed in their current discussions on whether they can stop funnelling money into many economies via Quantitative Easing (QE) and, if they do, what will be the effects?

These conditions are preparing new periods of struggle and revolution. Generally in this period of crisis most struggles have been defensive, against the ruling classes' onslaught, but in countries which have seen economic growth, like Brazil and China, there have been offensive battles to win improvements.

In Greece the workers have conducted an incredible 36 general strikes since 2010, but have not been successful in stopping the ruling class's onslaught. But this does not rule out a new radicalisation, perhaps initially on the political plane. Simultaneously sections of the movement are drawing lessons from their experiences, a process which the CWI supporters in Xekinima are both part of and influencing.

The revolutions and mass struggles of recent years have again posed the age old question of how can



# socialist world

socialistworld.net

Committee for a Workers International



Comité por una Internacional de los Trabajadores



Top: CWI flag. Bottom: CWI members in Sri Lanka marching on May Day

## Workers of all nations unite

Practically from the dawn of the workers' movement there was an understanding that the struggle against oppression and capitalism was international. Already in 1848 Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels explained in the Communist Manifesto that "modern industry has established the world market... The bourgeoisie has through its exploitation of the world market given a cosmopolitan character to production and consumption in every country... In place of the old wants, satisfied by the production of the country, we find new wants, requiring for their satisfaction the products of distant lands and climes. In place of the old local and national seclusion and self-sufficiency, we have intercourse in every direction, universal inter-dependence of nations."

For socialists and working class activists the conclusion was expressed in the Communist Manifesto's ending that, in the face of an international capitalist system, the need was to adopt the call: "Workers of All Countries, Unite!"

From those early days socialists saw that an international bringing together of workers' organisations should not be limited to building solidarity between workers in different countries. Above all it was seen as first an instrument for helping to build workers' movements around the world and increasingly as a forum to discuss and decide upon their policies.

While there had been earlier international socialist organisations it was the First International, founded in 1864, which brought together the different forces in the then newly arising workers' movement, helped give them a firm political basis and strengthened the cadre of activists. While the First International collapsed in 1876 in the aftermath of the crushing of the Paris Commune less than 15 years later, in 1889, a new International was created. This body, later called the Second International, was formed by a number of growing parties. It soon came to symbolise a dramatic growth of workers' organisations and a popularisation of socialist ideas - with most of its member parties formally accepting Marxism as their political basis.

But political debate continued and repeatedly centred on the question of whether to attempt to reform capitalism or overthrow it. While some, especially rank-and-file, reformists may have genuinely believed that reform was an easier way to change society and achieve socialism, for the growing number of leaders this policy marked their own personal adaptation to capitalism.

They were increasingly reluctant to challenge capitalism, something which already before 1914 had led to some fierce debates as the left fought against opportunism and adaptation to capitalism.

### 1914 - A turning point

But it was only with the outbreak of World War One that the strength of the pro-capitalist elements at the top of the workers' movement was clearly revealed. The overwhelming majority of Second International leaders supported their 'own' ruling classes and empires. This was a fundamental break with the principles and previous decisions of the International to oppose a war between the competing imperialist powers. While in Russia and a few other countries genuine socialist parties

opposed the war, in most combatant countries only small minorities opposed the war when it broke out in 1914.

This decisive change, combined with the role of the Second International leaders in helping to suppress revolutionary movements in their own countries, transformed the workers' movement.

Against this background the socialists who refused to accommodate themselves with capitalism argued that it was necessary to fight to free the workers' movement from this poisonous pro-capitalist influence. The victory of the October revolution in Russia in 1917 transformed the situation. The German revolutionary Rosa Luxemburg summed up the feeling of many activists and workers around the world that the Bolsheviks, "Lenin and Trotsky and their friends" set "an example to the workers of the world".

The example was both political - programme, strategy and tactics - and organisational, in the sense of building workers' organisations, especially a political party, that were willing and able to fight to end capitalism. The subsequent struggle in the workers' movement was fierce, sometimes bloody as the pro-capitalist elements sought to drive out, and sometimes even murder, the left.

Internationally this split was seen in the 1919 formation, on the initiative of the victorious Bolsheviks in Russia, of the Communist International, an organisation then dedicated to overthrowing capitalism. It had a mass base in many countries as the events of 1917 in Russia sparked a mass revolutionary wave that travelled around the world. However the Communist International did not fulfil its early promise.

### Stalinism's rise

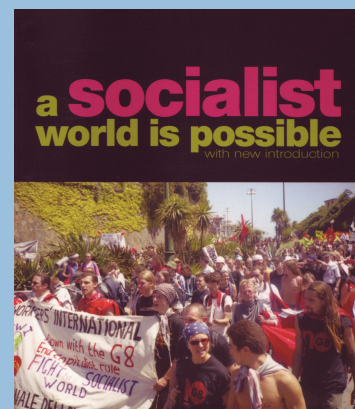
The defeat of post-World War One revolutions in Europe led to isolation of the Soviet Union. In post-war conditions of poverty, exhaustion and underdevelopment an increasingly privileged strata was, under the false banner of 'protecting the revolution', able to gradually consolidate its power and suppress democratic rights.

This was the basis for the rise of the Stalinist dictatorship which increasingly tried to avoid international upheavals or revolutions that could disrupt its rule. Thus, desperate to avoid war, it suddenly in 1939 signed a deal with Hitler, which included supplying raw materials and returning German anti-fascist refugees to Nazi Germany.

But this did not, as Leon Trotsky wrote at the time, prevent a Nazi attack on the Soviet Union in 1941. Later, allied with the US and Britain, Stalin decided in 1943 to dissolve the Communist International as a way of showing that his regime was not seeking to overthrow capitalism internationally but rather seeking an accommodation with the main capitalist powers.

Trotsky, the co-leader with Vladimir Lenin of the Russian Revolution, who in the 1920s led the opposition to the rise of the Stalinist system, had already drawn the conclusion in 1933 that the Communist International was no longer capable of leading the struggle against capitalism.

This was after the Nazis came to power in what was probably the worst defeat that the workers' movement has ever suffered and



A history of the CWI "A socialist world is possible" by Peter Taaffe - available from us (see page 2)

the one with the biggest repercussions.

### the impact of the Nazis' victory

However this defeat was not at all inevitable. Then the German workers' movement was the biggest in the capitalist world. The Communist Party in Germany was a significant force, winning nearly 17% in 1932. However, in practice, it was unable to build a united front of workers against fascism as it effectively equated the Social Democrats, whom it called "social-fascists", with the Nazis.

But after Hitler's victory there was no open discussion at all within the Communist International over what had happened to its biggest party outside the then Soviet Union. For Trotsky and his followers this meant that the Communist International had ceased to be a real living political organisation, instead it had become a bureaucratic machine where the leadership imposed its will without any questioning from below. Such an organisation cannot build a movement that can overthrow capitalism, something which can only be based on democratic debate and genuine workers' control and management. This is necessary both to build a living mass workers' party and to guard against the threat of its decay.

### A new, Fourth, International

Thus, once again, the question of building a genuine international was posed. However, while Trotsky raised the banner and programme of a Fourth International in the 1930s, initially it was only in Ceylon/Sri Lanka, Vietnam and Bolivia that it attracted large forces, although in the 1930s and 1940s especially its activists played important roles in struggles in other countries.

During the more difficult political period after the Second World War political, and organisational, disagreements led to divisions within the Trotskyist movement. It was out of these debates and experiences that the CWI was formed as an organisation aiming to build a workers' international based on the political traditions defended by Trotsky and the experience in the decades since his murder. Over the last 40 years the CWI has grown worldwide in the work to build an international socialist movement that can transform the globe.

In striving to achieve this aim we do not see past events as dead history. On the contrary we aim to learn, and apply, the real lessons of these events in the battles of today and tomorrow.

gains be consolidated and the old order really removed? Egypt is the latest example of where, in February 2011, the working masses potentially had power in their hands but did not fully understand that or see what needed to be done.

Mighty revolutions can almost completely sweep away the old order but, as in Portugal after 1975, it can come back if the working class does not secure power. Obviously every revolution and struggle has its own characteristics, but in revolutions the general lesson of how the working class and poor in Russia were able to come to, and stay in, power in 1917 is still essential.

Today's situation is similar in some ways to the late 19th century when the mass workers' movement developed. Now it is a question of rebuilding or building afresh workers' organisations. A complication is that, in many countries, workers have the bitter experience of the decay or collapse of the old workers' organisations, with especially the former social democratic, socialist and communist parties now mostly being transformed into pro-capitalist or totally capitalist organisations.

### rearming the workers' movement

The CWI is, in many countries, playing a key role in this rebuilding and, where appropriate, arguing that a start must be made to create new political parties of the working class as a step towards building a mass socialist workers' movement. But it is not just propaganda. In Britain,

South Africa and Nigeria CWI sections have been instrumental in steps being taken to form new parties. In countries like Australia, Ireland, Sri Lanka, the USA and Sweden, CWI comrades currently fight elections under their own banner.

Where left parties exist, like PSOL in Brazil and Die LINKE in Germany, CWI comrades are active in them while also arguing what steps need to be taken to further build them as socialist organisations. This is essential because without a clear socialist programme new workers' parties can follow the path of the old ones, like the PT has in Brazil, or simply eventually collapse as the Prc has recently done in Italy.

Arguing for such a programme is part of our CWI tradition. But from our beginning we have not been just debating policies, we have always been active - participating in and initiating struggles, big and small.

But in many ways these first four decades are really only a pre-history. We are already in a tumultuous period, everything is either being questioned or soon will be. The experiences of this period of capitalism, the growing environmental crisis, with no future on offer to the vast mass of young people, will produce revolutionary storms. The CWI will play a full part in these events, including the building of a movement that can finally end this brutal, chaotic and unfair capitalist system and make life a pleasure for all.

● Read more about the CWI and our ideas at [www.socialistworld.net](http://www.socialistworld.net)

# Young people and the independence referendum

Euan Kane

Dundee Socialist Party Scotland

In September of this year, the people of Scotland will be asked to decide on whether Scotland ought to remain a part of the United Kingdom or to secede from the union.

Roughly seventy percent of these new sixteen and seventeen year old voters have already registered, and intend on exercising their rights.

However their vote is cast, they have a say in one of the most important political decisions of the century thus far.

But what exactly are the factors motivating a group generally treated with condescension by the mainstream political parties?

Perhaps it is the prospect of tuition fees being introduced at Scottish universities as they were in England. The big business unionist

parties have shown no firm commitment to fighting their implementation north of the border. The most 'generous' offer from any of them to English students being Labour's so-called radical reduction of tuition fees to a mere £6000, a promise only set to come into effect following the election of a Labour government to Westminster in 2015.

However, it also needs borne in mind that under the SNP students from England, Wales and Northern Ireland are also having to pay massive tuition fees for studying in Scotland, underlining the fact that education is not genuinely free.

With this in mind, it is no surprise that the unionist parties that make up the Better Together campaign had opposed the enfranchisement of 16 and 17 year-olds. But this is not the only, or indeed, the main, issue which has motivated such interest

from the young. Despite the assertions of the mainstream press, the purported recovery of the UK's economy from the depths of recession has not improved the bleak outlook for many young people who have decided not to enter higher education.

Zero-hour contracts requiring availability at any time with no assurance of a minimum number of hours per week have become increasingly commonplace for those entering employment after leaving school.

This has not been helped by the Westminster government's campaign of austerity measures against public services, including the capping of housing benefits for under-25s. The Labour party also seems set on carrying out the coalition's cuts as far as big business deems necessary. This has alienated young work-



ers, though the Nordic aspirations of Alex Salmond and the SNP-led Yes campaign, the promises made in the White Paper proving unconvincing.

Hundreds of thousands of young people will be voting in September, looking for a decent future, includ-

ing the right to a job and a living wage. Whatever the outcome of the vote, young people will need to organise to fight for that future. Youth Fight For Jobs should be built to ensure that the interests of young people are put centre stage.

## Socialist Alternative make gains in the US

Socialist Alternative  
CWI in the US

Kshama Sawant's election as city councillor in Seattle has received repeated national media attention.

Kshama is a member of Socialist Alternative - co-thinkers of the CWI in the US.

This has helped to revive interest in socialist ideas and establishing Socialist Alternative as a pole of attraction for workers and youth looking to get active in the struggle against capitalist crisis.

Kshama's victory and the heightened national profile of Socialist Alternative come at a time when people are searching for a political alternative to the two corporate parties on a scale not seen in decades.



The response was viewed online by nearly 100,000 people - more than either the Republican or Tea Party responses!

This shows the demand for an alternative to the pro-capitalist policies of the two major parties. The political impact of Kshama Sawant has spread far beyond Seattle!

In 2014, people have joined Socialist Alternative from 45 new cities - several of them have already developed new groups in their areas.

From the Bay Area, California, to Birmingham, Alabama; from Portland, Oregon to Portland, Maine; and from Washington, DC, to Honolulu, Hawai'i, new members are organising in their workplaces, campuses and communities.

In February, Socialist Alternative held our first Southern Regional Conference with activists from Florida, Alabama, and Louisiana.

### New branches

People across the US are seeking out a socialist alternative to the global crisis of capitalism. Carolyn Elerding of Columbus, Ohio, is building a new branch of Socialist Alternative in her community because "it seems that more and more people want to work together to address the inequalities built into our current system."

Our numbers are still small considering our massive goals to transform society, but our recent growth shows the tremendous trajectory of Socialist Alternative.

This year, we will play a key role in Seattle and beyond in the fight to increase the minimum wage.

We are also well-positioned to be the left-wing of the coming move toward independent working class politics.

### Growing fast

Across the country, we're growing at a faster pace than we ever have before. Our membership has increased by over 200 since our election victory - and more than half of that growth has been in areas where, previously, Socialist Alternative did not have established branches.

Sawant is using the momentum of our election victory to lead the 15 Now campaign, which is poised to win the highest minimum wage in the US.

As a result, people across the country have been convinced that socialist ideas are an effective guide to strategy for winning real gains in living standards.

In March, 21 cities across the US participated in a week of action for a \$15 an hour minimum wage.

Branches of Socialist Alternative, including brand new branches, led these actions in support of a truly historic step forward for working people.

Requests to join poured in by the hundreds on our website following Kshama's election victory and again following her appearance on Democracy Now!

But the largest flood of interest came after Kshama gave a response to President Obama's State of the Union address in January.

## Socialist election campaign in South Africa



WASP members are promoting the message of socialism means freedom

Workers and Socialist Party  
South Africa

With the South African elections taking place on 7th May the Workers and Socialist Party's (WASP) election campaign is at full throttle. Hundreds of activists are working round the clock in communities and workplaces across the country to build the party and win votes. Despite our small resources, we are winning over communities and workers to our banner with our five key election messages:

- Nationalisation under working class control
- United struggle for real service delivery
- Fight for decent jobs for all
- Working class MPs on workers' wages
- Only socialism means freedom

The Gauteng Civic Association, which organises in the Pretoria townships of Atteridgeville and Mamelodi, has agreed to affiliate to WASP. They are organising a service delivery protest on 29 April and have invited WASP to play a full part. In the same area, the residents of the desperately poor informal settlement 'The Hills', just next to Atteridgeville, have asked for WASP's assistance to campaign to force the municipality to provide running water, sanitation and electricity.

Recently we were able to take journalists around the settlement to expose the municipality's inaction and in doing so gaining WASP the second news item on the primetime TV news slot. Just another few kilometres down the

road, last week the township of Olievenhoutbosch exploded in a service delivery protest over lack of adequate housing in the area. We are working to link up the three neighbouring communities into a united service delivery protest of the whole of Pretoria West.

With the crucial support of the Congress of South African Non-Racial Civic Movements (COSANCOM) in the townships around Johannesburg - Alexandra, Tembisa, Freedom Park and Soweto - WASP supporters have been out putting up posters and fixing boards to lampposts. In the Vaal, the Working Class Coordinating Committee (organised in ten Vaal townships) called for a WASP vote and is working hard to campaign for us.

The Bekkersdaal community - famous for its militant struggle for basic services and its call to boycott the elections - is reversing that position and giving its support to WASP. A mass community meeting will take place there on 27 April - the commemoration of 20 years of 'freedom' - and WASP is to be given a platform and endorsed by the community leadership.

In Limpopo, comrades are visiting rural villages daily, holding public meetings and winning support from WASP. Across the entire province community members can be seen wearing their WASP T-shirts with pride.

### Youth campaign

The Socialist Youth Movement is also taking off, with branches now established in numerous university and college campuses in several

provinces with Limpopo in first place. Secondary school students are enthusiastic campaigners in Limpopo and Gauteng.

Campaigning is taking place in the other major cities of Durban and Cape Town too, with an important base of support at the Numsa-organised Toyota factory in Durban and across the small industrial sites in Cape Town. In the Western Cape, the shack dwellers' movement Abahlali baseMjondolo has decided to join COSANCOM and WASP.

### trade union support

WASP has won important bases of support amongst members and shop stewards of the National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (Numsa). Numsa's December special congress voted to withdraw support from the ANC in the 2014 election. In the Free State, Cape Town, Tembisa, Klerksdorp, Krugersdorp, Witbank, Rustenburg and elsewhere, WASP is working closely with Numsa members to turn out the vote for WASP. In the Gauteng goldfields, WASP supporters are active in the townships and hostels around the mines campaigning at many shafts including Kusaselethu, KDC East, KDC West, Anglo Gold Ashanti and Westonaria shafts.

On the East and West rand - the industrial heartland of the country - WASP supporters are campaigning at the huge factories. WASP's presidential candidate - Moses Mayekiso - is still recognised by workers here after his many years as a metalworkers' trade union organiser in the area.

WASP is the only workers' party standing in the election. Despite an increasing silence from the media on WASP and the disappointing decision of the entire left in South Africa not to call for a vote for WASP but rather to either spoil ballots or vote 'against' the ANC, we remain confident that we will win enough votes to secure representation in the National Assembly.

This will be a crucial bridgehead in the development of a mass workers' party in the coming months and years. WASP is playing the role of a pioneer assembling the forces that can achieve this historic task.

- You can follow the outcome of the election after May 7th on [www.socialistworld.net](http://www.socialistworld.net) and [www.socialistpartyscotland.org.uk](http://www.socialistpartyscotland.org.uk)

# Care workers strike delivers

**Brian Smith**

*Glasgow Unison branch secretary*

Nearly 400 UNISON members in Glasgow City Council's homes for older people have secured important concessions and forced back an anti-trade union and anti-collective bargaining approach from the Labour controlled council. Members took seven days of strike action in January and February in what became an increasingly bitter dispute.

In late February, due to the increasing pressure on the council and the threat of a further nine days of strike action, leading council officials and Labour politicians offered to meet with the UNISON Branch. The council tabled a revised offer which included additional funding of just under a £1M, extra jobs, enhanced compensation payments and other concessions.

In early 2014, the council moved ahead with the implementation of cuts in shift payments, changes to job roles and a move to twelve and a half hour shifts.

The changes included 122 full time workers losing £1495 per year and 60 part timers losing of £794 per year. The Council also refused to maintain the wages of any worker who had been in a temporary higher graded post for less than four years and sought to alter the job roles of the lowest paid workers to include the administration of medicines.

UNISON members viewed the new staff to resident ratio on the new twelve and a half hour night shift as inadequate and a risk to the care of the 600 residents.

During late 2013, the Council had tried to bully workers into agreeing to the changes on an individual basis through the issuing of five individual letters, ignoring the normal collective bargaining arrangements



Care workers took seven days of strike action in January and February 2014

(a similar approach was tried and also failed in October 2013 in a dispute with over 1,000 pupil support assistants from the same UNISON branch). Under pressure workers signed up to these changes through fear of their jobs. Nevertheless, members voted by 3 to 1 to take strike action.

## huge impact

The strikes had a huge impact on the residential service, secured very good media coverage, won widespread support from residents and their families and rattled the senior council managers and politicians.

The council's initial response was to publicly attack their own workforce including a bizarre and unfounded public rant by the social work director about strikers wearing "dark clothes and balaclavas whilst wandering about the gardens of the homes" during strike days.

The UNISON branch organised members meetings during the strikes, called two protests at the council chambers, co-ordinated

public leafleting and ensured that generous strike hardship payments were made when required.

The branch also received hundreds of messages of support from across the UK and some magnificent donations to the strike hardship fund from other UNISON branches.

Compared to where we were in January, the revised offer had more positive than negative aspects. In a ballot of the members, 69% voted to accept the revised offer.

The strikers also pushed back the anti-trade union, anti-collective bargaining approach adopted by the council at the beginning of the dispute. In that respect, the dispute has had a positive impact across the trade union movement in the city and beyond.

With Glasgow City Council expected to make further cuts of £100 million over the next two years, its more than likely that workers pay and terms and conditions will be under threat again. Effective and determined strike action will need to be used again and again, where necessary, to defeat the cuts agenda.

# Doncaster Care UK strike an inspiration to workers



**By Alistair Tice**

*Socialist Party - Yorkshire*

After another four days of action over Easter taking us to day 20, the Doncaster Care UK strike is not just solid but stronger than ever.

On Friday 18th April, the strikers' rally voted in a secret ballot to strike again, next time for two weeks in May.

Such has been the financial support flooding in that strike pay is being increased to £50 a day.

On Saturday 19th, 300-400 strikers and supporters marched through Doncaster to a great reception from local onlookers.

Solidarity speeches came from the bakers' union, RMT rail union, NUT teachers, expelled Hull Labour councillor Gill Kennett, Disabled People Against Cuts, South Yorkshire Freedom Riders, other Unison branches and health workers including three activists from Gwalia Social Care in Swansea who will soon be striking over the very same issues.

Care UK striker and shop steward Kirstine Carbutt finished the rally with an impassioned speech: "Care UK blame the council.

The council blame the government. Where does it end? A phrase comes to mind - shit rolls downhill, and doesn't it just! It's not the MPs at the top having to tighten their belts, it's not the shareholders of Care UK or its directors and management. No it's us on the shop floor. AGAIN, the lowest paid. Well I for one am sick of going to work to struggle and budget... That's why we're striking back".

## Labour refuses solidarity

Last week, a few of the strikers met with two of Doncaster's Labour MPs and a representative of Ed Miliband (Doncaster North MP). Nothing came out of the meeting apart from a letter from the MPs to Care UK asking them to "negotiate to end this long running dispute".

At the resulting meeting with the arbitration service Acas on Sunday 20th, Care UK had nothing new to put on the table. One of the stewards attending said: "That's two hours on my life i'll never get back!" The May strike goes ahead.

So after 20 days of strike action against "a cost of living crisis" of 35% pay cuts and privatisation of the NHS, still not a single local Labour councillor or MP has publicly supported the strikers.

That's why the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC) has organised a protest lobby of Ed Miliband's surgery on Thursday 22nd April and on the same day TUSC supporters will protest outside Care UK offices around the country.

# NHS staff to ballot for action on pay

**Alan Manley**

*Tayside Healthcare Unison Branch Chair (personal capacity)*

NHS staff in Scotland have had a 1% pay rise imposed on them by the Scottish government. This miserly attempt to compensate us for working in a service under severe financial strain, with reductions in staffing numbers, accompanying an increase in clinical activity, is simply not enough.

We have had 2 years of pension contribution rises, increases in national insurance and the rising cost of living means that NHS pay does not make ends meet for hundreds of thousands of staff. More than a third of NHS staff who are non medical are paid less than £21,000 The lowest 2 pay points-bands 1 and 2 are below the living wage.

At Unison's recent national Healthcare Conference in Brighton, the debate on pay became the central theme of beginning a fightback on all the issues that threaten the service itself. In England the Con-Dems have not even agreed to pay the full 1% to all NHS staff! 58% of staff will get nothing.

This award has been amended by the Scottish Government. We are getting a consolidated rise, meaning all NHS staff will get the 1%. However, despite this, Unison members in Scotland joined the chorus of disapproval that led Uni-

son to decide unanimously that we will be building a campaign of industrial action to fight pay restraint in the NHS. The increase in the cost of living, plus 3 years of pay freezes means most NHS staff saw the value of their pay fall by between 8% and 12% from 2010 to 2013.

A number of NHS workers spoke of the reality of poverty pay leading to pay day loans, debt and despair. The weight of anger being felt across the NHS over all the issues we face is being reflected in the idea that we simply must fight.

NHS staff do not traditionally take industrial action, but when we do as in 2011 over pensions, the effect is profound. But confidence needs to be built because determined action is needed.

## no repeat of 2011

In contributing to the pay debate I had to remind our union leadership that the mistakes of that campaign cannot be repeated. We cannot be led up the hill to retreat back where we came as was the case over pensions, when Unison's UK leadership decided there was no mood for further action. We need to show the Tories that the mood in the NHS is for a fightback.

Key to all this is translating the need for action into slogans, demands that can unite the campaign. Crucially, it is clear that



Unison in health across Scotland will need to consider how we can match the events and action expected in the rest of the UK.

To that end we have been advised that we establish our own industrial action strategy taking account of the different aspects of our pay campaign due to the actions of the Scottish Government.

As we go to press branches across the country are making necessary preparations for a ballot. With a concerted campaign that co-ordinates the ongoing battles across the public sector we could smash the pay freeze.

# Keep PCS a fighting left union

**By John McNally**

*PCS vice president*

The ballot for the PCS President and National Executive Committee (NEC) elections opened on 16 April and closes on 8 May. At stake is the leadership of one of Britain's most important unions.

The ballot of the PCS' 270,000-strong membership is significant not just because of the union's size and the importance of the jobs of its members.

But because the left-led PCS is recognised as one of the most consistent and outspoken critics of the government's austerity programme and a leading organiser of opposition and action against government attacks.

Under the leadership of the Democracy Alliance - an alliance between Left Unity, in which Socialist Party members have played a key role, and the PCS Democrats - PCS has been transformed into a fighting, campaigning and democratic union.

The Democracy Alliance candidates seek re-election based on their record in office, on a programme of:

- Defend jobs, conditions and services.
- Organise to defeat the attack on check-off and union facilities.
- End the pay freeze. Oppose privatisation and off-shoring.
- Fair pensions for all.

- Improved conditions for call centre members.

- Oppose the discredited Performance Management system.

- Challenge discrimination, lack of childcare facilities, unfair sickness rules. Equality for all.

- Defend the welfare state.

- Continue to campaign for our alternative to austerity, including improving jobs and services, investment in public services, climate jobs and tax justice.

PCS's stand against the government's austerity programme received overwhelming support of the membership in a recent consultation exercise covering over 80% of PCS branches. PCS activists and members are absolutely convinced that joint coordinated industrial action is the best way to win.

The current NEC will be challenged by right-wing candidates of the old discredited 'Moderate' grouping re-branded as '4themembers'.

They believe there is no alternative to the cuts and that the union should do nothing but accept the attacks on terms and conditions.

In order to meet the many challenges faced by PCS members by a government intent on further cuts and privatisations it is vital to re-elect a strong, dedicated, determined left leadership.

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

# End zero-hour exploitation

By Steven Manley

Youth Fight For Jobs member

I had the misfortune to have a zero-hour contract in the summer of last year. The job was advertised as "fruit picking" in my local paper. However, I was given a different job husking strawberries, a job I wasn't capable of doing due to my low muscle tone.

I had informed my line manager of this and that didn't stop them dismissing me for a lack of productivity. In total I made £100 from this job, only £10 more than I received when I was on Job Seekers Allowance.

Employees were regularly under scrutiny from line managers who would threaten staff with dismissal each day in a bid to increase productivity. It didn't, and the high turnover of staff was evident.

Many of the staff said they were unhappy with the conditions of the job and the way they were treated by those in charge. I wanted to leave

but knew that walking out from this job would have an effect on my benefit so I was forced to put up with it.

The on-call arrangement of zero-hours contracts means that you don't know from one week to the next what hours you are working. Statistics show that 6 in 10 people on zero-hour contracts are low paid.

This proves that these jobs fail to provide a decent standard of living for working class people and additionally can have an effect on the wellbeing.

The trade union Unison's report on zero-hour contracts highlighted the fear faced by employees, no clear definition of employment rights, lack of a weekly income, employees being vulnerable to abuse employees working beyond agreed hours.

Figures also show that since 2010 the numbers of people on zero-hour contracts have continued to increase and are being used by companies like Asda, Tesco, Sports Direct, McDonalds and Subway and are wide-



spread in the public sector as well.

The use of zero-hour contracts is capitalism's way of punishing and exploiting working class people. They exist to bolster a system based on sustaining the wealth of the rich and the powerful.

The Con-Dem government say that a recovery is taking place in

Britain and that things are improving for people, but the massive growth in zero-hour contracts shows how far out of touch they are with the reality for millions.

Youth Fight For Jobs and Socialist Party Scotland is demanding an end to zero hour contracts. We are campaigning for a living wage of £10 an

hour and proper contracts with a guaranteed weekly hours and trade union rights for all workers.

If the bosses system can't afford such modest demands we need to build a movement to break with capitalism and build a socialist alternative that would genuinely meet the needs of the working class.

## what we stand for

### work and income

- For the unions to take immediate action to increase the minimum wage to £8 an hour without exemptions as an immediate step towards £10 an hour. For an annual increase in the minimum wage, linked to average earnings.
- Reject Welfare to Work; for the right to decent benefits, training or a job without compulsion.
- A maximum 35-hour week without loss of pay.
- All workers, including part-timers, temps, casual and migrant workers to have trade union rates of pay, employment protection, sickness and holiday rights from the first day of

employment. End zero-hour contracts.

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

### environment

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

### public services

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

### rights

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

### A mass working class party

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

### socialism and internationalism

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