

after the indyref it's time to fight back

NOT A PENNY MORE OF TORY CUTS

Richard Neville

1.6 million people of us voted Yes in the indyref in an outpouring of anger at austerity.

Now it has to be built on. Those thousands who came onto the streets and those hundreds of thousands of working class people who voted for an escape need to be mobilised and organised into a force that can take on austerity and win.

We demand that not be a penny more of Westminster cuts be implemented in Scotland. The SNP led Scottish Government must immediately suspend the billions in further cuts that are due in the run up to 2016.

It's time to set No Cuts budgets and stand up to Tory austerity, instead of implementing Tory cuts. Every Scottish council should do the same

This mood for change should be backed up by the the trade union movement. Over six years of below inflation pay rises, cuts to jobs and public services along with the explosion of the use zero hour contracts is reason enough to act. Now Tory chancellor George Osborne has using the Tory party conference to announce that austerity

will be stepped-up even further. Labour's Miliband and Balls are proposing yet more of the same medicine if they are elected next year.

As well as building for a big turnout at the STUC demonstration on 18th October, sustained and co-ordinated strike action by the trade unions is essential.

The TUC and STUC should name the day for a 24hour general strike in order to bring this Con-Dem government to its knees.

If the trade unions were to take a leading role in a struggle against the government and their big business paymasters then it would be a beacon to all those who are sick and tired of cuts and falling living standards.

It would be decisive in tipping the balance of power in favour of the working class.

Come along to the Scottish TUSC conference on November 1st to discuss standing anti-cuts candidates that will refuse to make the cuts and stand up to the Tories.

The energy of the yes campaigners, and many of those who voted no, can be channeled into a mass campaign to defeat austerity. Let's take them on.

- Not a penny more of Westminster cuts to be implemented by the Scottish Government or SNP and Labour councils
- Build a mass movement of strikes, demonstrations and protests against cuts
- For a new mass working class party that fights austerity

Scottish Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition conference

**STANDING ANTI-CUTS AND
SOCIALIST CANDIDATES IN 2015**

Saturday November 1st 12.30

Blythswood Hall
Renfield - St Stephens Centre
Bath Street Glasgow G2 4JP

Speakers include:

Gordon Martin - Scottish organiser RMT union

John McNally - vice president PCS union (personal capacity)

Brian Smith - Glasgow City Unison secretary (personal capacity)

www.tusc.org.uk - Facebook Scottish TUSC - email scottishtusc@gmail.com



An open letter to members of the SNP

It's time to stand up against austerity



Tens of thousands descended into George Square, Glasgow to mobilise for a Yes vote

1.6 million of us voted Yes in defiance of everything Project Fear could throw at us. We showed that we could stand up to the political establishment, the bosses, the bankers and the billionaire-owned media.

From Dundee to Glasgow, North Lanarkshire to West Dunbartonshire, and many more working-class communities besides, hundreds of thousands voted Yes seeking an end to savage cuts and falling incomes.

Rightly, many want to continue the struggle for independence. But also against the politicians and the bosses system that is imposing food banks, poverty, cuts and pay caps on us. The question is what is the most effective way of achieving these aims?

Build a mass working-class party

Socialist Party Scotland called for the creation of a new mass working-class party immediately following the referendum. Had leading campaigners like Tommy Sheridan helped launch such a party, thousands would have joined it.

A party that fought the cuts and stood up for socialist policies would have captured the imagination and support of huge numbers. This was not done and an oppor-

tunity was missed. The failure to launch a new mass party has contributed to tens of thousands of people joining the SNP, hoping in this way to continue the struggle. The SNP are also seen as the most convenient electoral weapon to hit back at the betrayal of the Labour Party. This is understandable.

Will the SNP fight cuts?

Our view is that the new members of the SNP will not find a party leadership prepared to lead a mass campaign against austerity. Indeed, the SNP in power have implemented every penny of the Tory cuts since 2010 in Scotland. Another cuts budget is planned by John Swinney and Alex Salmond in a few weeks' time.

It's the same at a council level. Incredibly, only 7 days after Dundee became a Yes city, the SNP council announced a further £8 million in cuts for next year.

This is not why so many of us campaigned and fought for a Yes majority!

Socialist Party Scotland is demanding that the SNP leaders make a stand and refuse to carry through any more cuts, which are destroying the lives of so many. We hope you will also support this call and apply political pressure on the party leaders to stand up and be

counted. If they don't, you should join with us and help build a mass movement against austerity.

If the SNP leaders declared here and now that they were not prepared to implement another penny of Tory cuts in Scotland, they would get mass support. Without doubt, hundreds of thousands of us would organise, demonstrate, strike and take part in a mass movement to demand a return of the billions stolen from Scotland by the ConDems. What it needs is the political will to refuse to make the cuts.

Set a no-cuts budget!

Socialist Party Scotland is calling on all councils in Scotland and the Scottish Government to set no-cuts budgets. Immediate cuts can be avoided through the use of reserves and borrowing powers, where appropriate, to give time to build a mass campaign to win back the more than £3 billion stolen since 2010.

We shook the establishment to its foundations with the threat of a Yes majority. By making a stand against the cuts, we could bring the rotten Tory government to its knees.

The SNP leadership and the Labour Party will say they have no choice. However, this is not true. It's a political choice. A choice to stand on the side of the working class majority, or to meekly carry through the cuts demanded by the political elite and the bosses.

The first point to make is that public funding for jobs and services would continue as normal. The setting of a no-cuts budget could, in the case of a council, be offset by the use of borrowing powers and reserves as a temporary measure while a mass campaign of political pressure was built to win back the money that has been cut.

In the case of the Scottish Government, by bringing forward future spending and any underspend, a budget could be set that would avoid cuts – even if this also included a possible deficit in the budget towards the end of the year. The important point to make is that this would give time for mass campaigning in the trade

unions and communities for mass mobilisations, which would be a direct political challenge to the Westminster government.

Such a challenge would create a huge political crisis and would, without doubt, spread to England, Wales and Northern Ireland, where many would demand that their councils took the same stand.

One argument we hear from politicians is that setting a no-cuts budget is 'illegal' and we would 'all end up in jail'. Refusing to make the cuts cannot lead to the jailing of a councillor or an MSP. At worst, they could be referred to an investigating officer and a standards body for a breach of the Code of Conduct and threatened with suspension. But this would take many months and whether civil servants would ever act depends on the scale of the movement that was built.

The working-class movement has often had to stand up in defiance of bad laws. The mass non-payment movement that defeated the poll tax in the late 1980s and early 90s was illegal. In England, non-payers could be jailed and hundreds were, including members of Militant (the forerunner of the Socialist Party), who helped lead the mass anti-poll tax movement. In Scotland, they threatened non-payers with Warrant Sales and other draconian measures. But we beat the poll tax and defeated Thatcher, the so-called 'Iron Lady'.

Liverpool did it – why can't we?

Between 1983 and 1987 the socialist Liverpool Council, again led by Militant, refused to make the cuts and demanded a return of the millions stolen from the city by the Tories. Through mass demonstrations, a general strike of the council workforce and huge support at the ballot box, Liverpool defeated Thatcher and millions of pounds was returned, which was used to build new council houses, sports centres and nurseries for the people.

The Tories removed the Liverpool councillors from office in 1987 but only after Labour leader Neil Kinnock had given them the

green light while expelling Militant from Labour as part of the witch-hunt to extinguish socialism from the party. The fact remained that one council defeated Thatcher. Imagine if the Scottish Government and a number of councils in Scotland stood up and said enough is enough? We saw the panicked concessions cobbled together by Project Fear when it thought the referendum might be lost. Of course we could push the Tories and Labour back again, if we fight.

Will voting SNP next year deliver indy

No. It's clear that the SNP won't stand for the Westminster election on a pledge of another immediate referendum. The argument we hear, including unfortunately from prominent socialists like Tommy Sheridan, that voting for the SNP will help bring another referendum by 2020 is wrong.

Socialist Party Scotland supports the immediate transfer of the powers of genuine 'devo max' to Scotland. If this does not happen, we believe another vote on independence can come following the 2016 elections. But we cannot call for a vote for a party that is carrying through cuts in the meantime.

The SNP leaders are also pro-business. They support cutting the taxes of big business and the oil giants, and were against raising taxes on the richest. They currently oppose public ownership of oil and even the privatised gas and electricity companies.

They also proposed a Sterling currency union with the Bank of England during the referendum that would have seen an austerity-laden trap for an independent Scotland. These pro-business policies actually weakened the appeal of independence among a lot of working class people and left Project Fear unanswered.

By continuing to carry out cuts in the run up to a future referendum the SNP can undermine support for independence even further.

In contrast, Socialist Party Scotland campaigned during the referendum for the powers of independence to be used to publicly own our oil, gas and renewal energy sector. For a living wage of £10 an hour, an end to austerity, a reversal of the cuts and the building of an independent socialist Scotland.

anti-cuts candidates

If you want to fight the cuts then your place is with us. Certainly, demand the SNP make a stand. But if they don't, join with us.

Come along to the TUSC conference on 1st November where socialists and trade unionists will be discussing standing anti-cuts candidates next May. Help us turn the slogan of not a penny more of Westminster cuts in Scotland into a reality.

And join with us in the struggle for an independent socialist Scotland. Which would be a step towards a genuine voluntary and democratic socialist confederation with England, Wales and Ireland.

Join the Socialist Party Scotland

VISIT www.socialistpartyscotland.org.uk click on **JOIN or MORE INFO**

EMAIL info@socialistpartyscotland.org.uk

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

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Have you got some news for us?

The paper of Socialist Party Scotland

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Editor: Philip Stott

Take the Liverpool road and fight the cuts

From 1983 to 1987 Liverpool City Council was led by supporters of Militant (predecessor to the Socialist Party). When faced with cuts from central government, they refused to pass them on. Instead, with the slogan "better to break the law than break the poor" they made huge advances for working class people in Liverpool, leading a mass campaign which successfully demanded funding back from Thatcher's government. One of the councillors and leaders of the struggle, **Tony Mulhearn**, spoke to the Socialist.

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

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

We had the choice of either saying there's nothing we can do and implementing the cuts or to fight all cuts. We chose not to implement the cuts and instead to set a 'needs budget', and we launched a fighting campaign. So, we were in the position that councillors are in today, but we took an entirely different stance.

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

There were probably about 13 Militant councillors. But in those days the local party determined policy. Militant and its predecessors had conducted a campaign over decades inside Liverpool Labour Party for the adoption of socialist policies. And that's what the District Labour Party (DLP) did, it adopted socialist policies.

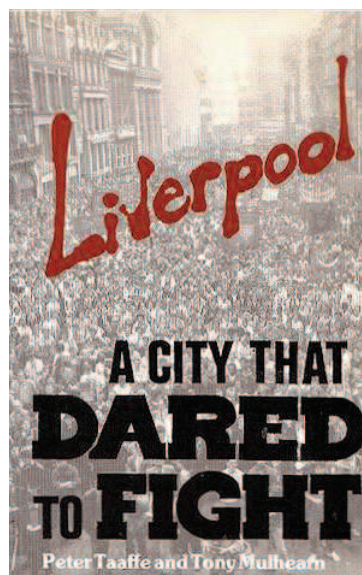
And in those days when the party had determined the policy, the councillors had to carry it out. So the DLP concretised what was contained in Clause IV of the Labour Party constitution in relation to housing, jobs and services - all of which the council then implemented.

What were the biggest achievements of the council?

We built 5,000 houses and flats - gardens back and front in many



Left: 50,000 strong demo in Liverpool in 1983 and Right: the book cover of Liverpool - A City That Dared To Fight (available at www.socialistbooks.org.uk)



cases. We demolished some of the worst housing in Western Europe. We then cancelled all monetary cuts and redundancies planned by the outgoing council. We built six new nursery schools. We expanded council services.

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

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

The DLP was a fine, democratic organisation. It was made up of local authority and private sector trade unions, women's committees, the Young Socialists, party branches and

constituency parties, the Co-ops - all had delegates to the DLP. And that was the spring board we used to reach out to wider and wider sections of the working class.

On that basis we were able to mobilise tens of thousands at the demonstrations - with the magnificent support (unlike today when council trade unions sometimes collaborate with the council over cuts) of the Joint Local Authority Shop Stewards Committee.

On three occasions they organised 30,000 council workers in strike action to defend the policies of the council.

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



Liverpool City Council built 5,000 new homes and flats for the people

support from the labour movement and wider working class communities.

cialist policy and an instrument of capitalism.

How did the right wing respond to your success?

They generated a campaign of hysteria in the capitalist press.

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

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

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

They set the process in motion to reduce the Labour Party to the corpse that it is today - devoid of so-

What do you think were the biggest lessons of Liverpool for today and for the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition?

It was absolutely crystal clear that our policy was one of opposition to all cuts and of putting forward a socialist alternative - by creating jobs and building houses and expanding social services.

These things are rapidly being torn down by the current Labour council in Liverpool and of course being replicated by Labour councils around the country. With almost no exception every single Labour councillor is involved in passing cuts.

TUSC's representatives have been very clear - we won't do that and we'll conduct a campaign like Liverpool did in the 1980s - mobilise the working class in a massive movement of opposition and put so much pressure on the government that they'll either be compelled to back down or be kicked into the dustbin of history.

SNP cuts for Scotland's Yes City

Jim McFarlane

Dundee Unison branch secretary
(personal capacity)

On 19th September Dundee was declared Scotland's YES city. 57% of the people voted Yes - the highest in Scotland - in the independence referendum as a defiant response to years of austerity.

Just one week later the SNP-led Dundee City Council announced they would be making £8 million cuts in the next financial year, with even more savage cuts to be made in the following years.

This follows years of cuts implemented by the SNP run council. Dundee has some of the highest levels of poverty and deprivation in the country. 26% of children are in official poverty. There are higher than average levels of youth unemployment and life expectancy is well below the Scottish average. There has been long term infrastructure investment in the city centre and waterfront areas but this has not been reflected across the rest of the city.

Further cuts of this magnitude will have a devastating impact on local communities. Despite claiming to

protect frontline services it is clearly impossible to do that while carrying out Tory cuts. Hundreds of council jobs have been lost through early retirement and voluntary redundancies.

Councillors and senior management expect the same level of service from less and less staff. The Tory assault on the poor through Welfare Reform has meant an increase in demand for services. Services to the most vulnerable and in need are under threat. Council workers and local communities will have no option but to struggle in defence of jobs and services.

Increased charges, closures of schools, libraries and other facilities must be on the agenda if the councillors continue to pass on the cuts. Hard won terms and condition of council workers will also inevitably come under attack.

The SNP Council and Scottish Government cannot continue to just blame the cuts agenda on Westminster and the Unionist parties. They were elected to stand up for public services, those who provide them and those who rely on them. They have a choice to make. Do they continue to administer the cuts on be-

NO MORE CUTS Lobby at the SNP conference

Saturday 15th November
Perth Concert Hall
Assemble 11.30am

Protest called by Glasgow and Dundee City Unison. Supported by PCS Scotland and others

half of the Tories or do they make a stand for the communities they claim to represent? If they were prepared to join up with the trade unions and local communities in a determined campaign to demand back the millions stolen from the council over the years through cuts then this would gain massive widespread support.

They should clearly state they are not prepared to make a penny more of cuts and set a budget based on the needs of the people of the city and not on the need of the Tories and their pals in big business.

Poll Tax debt write-off

Ronnie Stevenson

Secretary, Mount Florida Anti-Poll Tax Union

The Scottish Government has announced it intends to write-off historic Poll Tax debt in Scotland - and not before time.

This final victory for the anti-poll tax movement, 25 years after the hated poll tax was introduced, is welcome. More than £425 million remains uncollected to date.

In the run-up to the referendum hundred of thousands registered to vote, many for the first time since the Poll Tax. And the highest percentage of people in decades actually voted.

Immediately following the referendum many councils and politicians scandalously began to use the new lists of voters to pursue those who did not pay their full Poll Tax bills. This attempt at collective punishment was the trigger for the SNP government announcement.

After a tremendous campaign of mass non-payment (a tactic led by Militant, the forerunner of Socialist Party Scotland) the hated Poll

Tax was withdrawn and Thatcher resigned.

During that campaign Councillors of all political parties pursued non-payers using the full variety of the methods the state afforded them, including jailing them in England and Wales.

These same councillors have written off millions of pounds of debt owed by businesses over these years. They didn't seem to want to do the same for the paltry debts by comparison arising from the Poll Tax. The Poll Tax non-payment army are remembered with affection, responsible as they were for getting rid of an unfair tax but also Thatcher.

Why it took the SNP seven years of government to propose this legislation is a legitimate question.

Now MSPs and councillors should be taking a lead from the mass movement that defeated the poll tax and start leading a struggle against the austerity programmes being imposed by Westminster.

It's time to stop implementing Tory cuts and refuse to make one penny more of cuts in already decimated local authority services.

Oppose Fracking - Defend our communities

Sean Robertson
Socialist Party Scotland

While the eyes of Scotland were focused on the referendum, the UK government seized the diversion to take the ground from beneath our feet....almost literally.

In the summer the area of land available for licenses to frack and drill for unconventional sources of fossil fuels was massively expanded to include much of central Scotland.

The government weakly claimed that the expansion was needed to secure energy supplies due to instability overseas such as in Russia and the Ukraine.

However, a damning report in the Independent newspaper circulating on the internet revealed the all too cosy links between the ConDem government and the Big Oil capitalists which are driving the fracking agenda forward against the wishes of the vast majority of the population of the UK.

big business

Lord Browne, former BP boss and current chair of fracking company Caudrilla sits in the cabinet. Sam Laidlaw, chief executive of Centrica, which has invested heavily in fracking, is an advisor at the department of transport, while BG Group director Baroness Hogg is at the treasury. This is surely a blatant conflict of in-

terest, at a time when the Government is heavily promoting the massive expansion of racking and shale gas exploitation.

The ConDems this week magnified the possible effects of the fracking nightmare coming Scotland's way by legislating to allow fracking companies to explore for shale gas under private residences without the prior consent of the owners. In response to this the SNP government said they would resist this change.

This stance is to be welcomed, though in a statement to the press, energy secretary Fergus Ewing refused to rule out using fracking to meet Scotland's energy needs saying the energy offered 'both opportunities and concerns' for Scotland.

However fracking and unconventional gas extraction comes with huge risks for the environment, during drilling operations, with tremors and subsidence a major concern and afterwards with the legacy of poisoned water sources and increased green house gas emissions among other concerns.

The effects on the environment and public health could be made even worse for Scottish residents if recent news reports are to be believed.

Channels, such as Russian outlet RT, have reported that INEOS, the operator of the Grangemouth refinery, who you may recall held the country to ransom over legitimate industrial action last year, has been promised a £230 Million loan, un-

derwritten by the UK government, to process the products of European fracking operations into the potentially highly toxic substance ethylene at the site.

Climate scientists now agree that most of the known fossil fuel reserves will have to be left unexploited if we are to effectively fight climate change. In order to have any chance of meeting this goal, Scotland and the rUK must take urgent steps to stop fracking and reduce dependence on oil and gas.

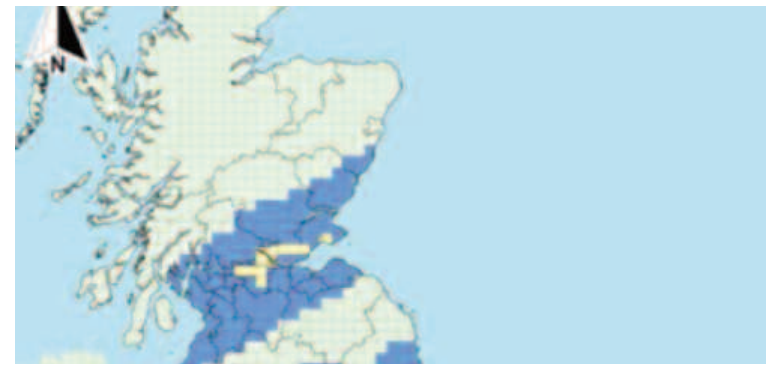
powers

The SNP should use all of the powers over planning currently at its disposal to back the multitude of campaign groups which have sprung up around this highly important and contentious issue and halt all fracking in Scotland, following the lead of Germany and France which have banned all fracking in their respective territories.

However the changes we need to secure the future of our planet for our and future generations are impossible under the current greed driven capitalist system.

In order to reverse climate change and other forms of environmental destruction our energy needs must be met by a system based on need and not private profit.

The environmental emergency we are now facing can only be solved by socialist policies.



Vast areas of central Scotland have been opened up for potential fracking



WE DEMAND

- An immediate, permanent halt to all fracking and unconventional oil and gas extraction in Scotland and throughout the UK
- Oil, gas and renewable energy sectors to be taken into democratic public ownership, with compensation only being paid to those in proven need.
- Nationalise the Grangemouth site as a vital national asset
- Revenues from oil and gas to be used to fund a revolution in renewable energy to unlock Scotland's green potential and secure our long term environmental and energy sustainability by ending our reliance on fossil fuels forever

Can the Greens offer a fighting alternative?

Leah Ganley

The Scottish Greens have made significant gains in the aftermath of the indyref. They have seen their membership soar from 2,000 to 6,000, including many young people, in a desire to seek a radical alternative to the parties of austerity.

The Green Party's manifesto and literature do have progressive demands on social justice with a raft of reforms and policies such as an end to the dependence of the Scottish economy on oil, the banning of fracking for shale gas and a "fairer" taxation system. They favour encouraging co-ops instead of big business through for example, procurement laws and tax rebates.

Unfortunately these policies, principled though they are, are based on the misguided belief that a kinder more socially just and eco-friendly capitalism is possible. This is simply not the case.

In order for big capital to embrace green politics for instance wind and wave power would have to offer more in the way of private profit than oil. Yet oil is the black blood which pulses through the diseased system's cancerous body.

Companies also look for unconventional methods, like fracking, to keep the gas stations stocked and their balance sheets healthy.

So do you have to fight for socialism as the best way to defend the environment? In other words, do you have to be "red to be green?"

This has never been truer than in



today's world. In order to challenge the environmentally disastrous climate change calamity, it is absolutely imperative that oil, gas and energy are taken into democratic public ownership which could ensure that profits earned from those fossil fuel stocks which can still be removed are ploughed into renewable energy projects. Only socialism can deliver this.

While the Green Party are in favour of a kind of limited down public ownership, in banking for example, in which they would set up a kind of parallel system side by side with the private economy to allow community organisations to be set up, this would lead to unnecessary duplication and wouldn't challenge effectively the inequality inherent in the system.

public ownership

Socialists would advocate taking into democratic public ownership the entire financial sector and using the profits generated to fund investment in socially useful public services and industries instead.

In recent years the Green Party in Scotland and in England and Wales

have made significant gains electorally. Unfortunately they haven't lived up to their much vaunted social justice credentials. In charge of Brighton and Hove Council, they party has cut more than £30 million in jobs and services in the last 3 years, including attacks on refuse collections and a draconian £4000 per annum cut in refuse workers' salary. In addition they have been fighting to increase council tax by 4.75 percent.

A bit closer to home, the Green councillors in Glasgow have never proposed any concrete alternatives to cuts budgets in Glasgow City Council, on which they have five sitting councillors.

Carrying out austerity cuts to pay for the mistakes of the capitalist class is a political choice. Those who truly believed in social justice would make a stand and say loud and clear 'we won't pass on a penny of cuts and we won't cut a penny from essential services'.

Only a struggle for socialism and the creation of an entirely new form of society based on need and not private profit can deliver the revolutionary change that we and our environment require.

Will SNP leaders move left after influx into the party?

Luke Ivory

The massive influx of 50,000 new members into the SNP raises important questions about the likely political direction of the party.

Over the last period the SNP have tried to look both right and left at the same time: they've wooed big business with their promises to cut corporation tax, whilst simultaneously trying to win the working class vote by granting some popular reforms such as scrapping bridge tolls, ending the graduate endowment tax for students, and abolishing prescription charges.

Recent moves to scrap Poll Tax debts and changing their modest policy on the minimum wage also signals that a turn to more populist announcements are likely.

The 50,000 who have joined the SNP are undoubtedly made up of people predominantly from working class backgrounds and have got involved in the campaign for a Yes vote in order to build an independent Scotland free from austerity cuts and "end Tory rule forever" as one popular election slogan put it.

They will have joined the SNP as they see this party as the best chance to gain a new referendum on independence and fight back against cuts being imposed by Westminster.

So with further cuts to the block grant to the Scottish Government coming will the SNP actually do anything to resist these Tory cuts?

So far the SNP Scottish Government has carried through over £3 billion in Westminster cuts since 2010. They claim they can do nothing about this. "Our hands are tied"; we need to "balance the books".

However, John Swinney, Finance Secretary of the Scottish Govern-

ment, has always maintained that an independent Scotland would have to remain "fiscally prudent", which is basically just politician speak for carrying our cuts! He is also set to launch another austerity budget for Scotland.

The new members entering the SNP will hope to see the party become more radical with a fighting edge. The direction of travel of the SNP leadership has been clear for some time though. Their main priority is to win the support of big business.

Different visions for Scotland

The bottom line is that the new layers of working class and youth who have become radicalised by the independence referendum want to see a new type of Scotland emerge _ one where ordinary working class people are free from having their lives dominated by the demands of big business and austerity.

The SNP merely want to see a Scotland that is run in the interests of a Scottish capitalist elite, rather than a British capitalist class. These two starkly contrasting visions for Scotland held by the SNP's new members and old leaders are irreconcilable.

It is inevitable that many thousands will look elsewhere when they begin to feel their aspiration to fight back against austerity being stifled by the pro-business SNP leadership. Only a new working class party and a socialist programme committed to opposing all austerity can provide the genuine political home this radicalised new layer of society are searching for.

Huge interest in socialist ideas after the indyref

Over 200 people attended Socialist Party Scotland meetings in Glasgow, Dundee, Edinburgh and Paisley in the days following the referendum. Interest in discussing where now after the indyref, how to defeat austerity and what is socialism has been widespread. We report on the building of the Socialist Party.



Packed Socialist Party Scotland meeting in Glasgow

Leah Ganley

Over 90 people packed into a small room above a pub off Glasgow's George Square to discuss how the fight for an independent socialist Scotland continues after the referendum.

Many were attending their first socialist meeting, for some it was their first political meeting ever.

People were hungry for ideas, to hear not just about independence but about socialist ideas.

We have had hundreds of people from all over Scotland asking to join our party. Many have been inspired by the indyref but also now recognise that independence itself will not fundamentally change society.

Independence alone will not automatically end food banks or stop pensioners dying in winter because they cannot afford to put the heating on. It would not eradicate poverty and inequality. It would not put a stop to all cuts and austerity.

Opening speakers

Two speakers introduced the meeting, Brian Smith, secretary of

tricity and banks into democratic public ownership. This would mean any 'profits' made could be reinvested in public services.

It could introduce a living wage of at least £10 an hour for all workers and end zero hours contracts. Also, tax the rich and big business and use the money to invest in jobs, for example building new homes and schools and developing the renewable energy sector.

This could form part of a socialist planned economy in the hands of the working class to meet the needs of all, not just the 1%.

Many contributions

After the speakers there were questions and comments from the public. Many issues were debated and teased out. People talked about the role of the trade unions and the need for them to break with Labour. A central theme was how the potential power of the working class could be mobilised to continue the incredible struggle and mood for action that has found expression in the Yes movement.

Young people wanted to know where socialists stand on nuclear weapons, gay rights, and more.

Workers wanted ideas to help them strengthen trade union organisation in their workplace to defend conditions and services.

A firefighter stood up and told the meeting about the changes Labour had made to his pension, meaning he has to work much longer, pay more and receive less. He said Labour should be dead to everyone here, to which he received a massive round of applause. He finished his contribution by saying he would be joining Socialist Party Scotland.

Socialist Party Scotland has seen an explosion in interest and people looking to become actively involved in fighting - for independence and for socialist change.

Glasgow City Unison (speaking in a personal capacity) and Philip Stott, secretary of Socialist Party Scotland.

Brian Smith, from Castlemilk, spoke about how he had been inspired by the campaign, with people making the effort to vote who had never voted before, voting for their children's future.

He also talked about the importance of building a united campaign against all cuts and austerity. He mentioned the fact that the SNP in the Scottish Parliament are about to introduce £2 billion worth of cuts next month. These are cuts they have been holding back because of the referendum but will now be pushed through and will have a crippling effect on Scotland's public services.

Brian said that we need to build a new mass working class party to fight the cuts, because all the main parties will implement cuts and austerity.

Philip Stott talked more about what an independent socialist country could look like, what the powers of an independent socialist Scotland could be used for. Firstly it would say no to all cuts and austerity. Instead of lowering corporation tax, we would start by bringing the oil, gas, elec-

parties, seeking a way to fight on. Trade unions are taking strike action in the autumn. Internationally, the mass movements in Hong Kong have shown this is indeed a world in turmoil.

Socialism 2014 in London will discuss all these issues and more. Rallies, discussions and debates are being held not just on the capitalist crisis but on fighting back and building the socialist alternative.

Kshama Sawant, Seattle city councillor and a key leader of the victorious \$15 an hour minimum wage campaign in her city, will be speaking at the Saturday 8th November rally. Kshama is a member of Socialist Alternative, the Socialist Party's co-thinkers in the US.

Newly elected to the Irish parliament, TD Ruth Coppinger, a member of the Socialist Party in Ireland, will also be speaking

Other speakers include Ian Hodson, president of the bakers' union that won that significant victory against zero-hour contracts in Wigan and was the first union to come out for a £10 an hour minimum wage: Mark Serwotka, general secretary of socialist-led PCS union, at the fore-

front of trade union struggle in Britain; and Peter Taaffe, general secretary of the Socialist Party.

Kshama says

"A real mass movement must welcome everyone who wants to join the struggle, but history has shown again and again that movements are most effective when they have a core leadership who refuses to accept the limitations of capitalism and who can build mass support behind a vision of an alternative.

"In my election campaign last fall and in the movement for \$15, I learned that working people are inspired by an unapologetic, principled approach.

"Let's demand what people need to live a dignified life, not just what the political establishment says is 'realistic'.

"To push things forward, we've got to provide a vision of what's possible with the huge wealth working people create - and not confine ourselves to the crumbs this broken system of capitalism can 'afford' to give us." See advert opposite for more details of travel from Scotland.

Joining Socialist Party Scotland



Socialist Party Scotland stall in George Square, Glasgow



"I have always been interested in socialism.

My parents, aunts and uncles are socialists and were political in

things like the miners strike. They have believed in a socialist society their whole lives, now we, as the new generation, have to fight for it.

Some of the issues young working class people from Castlemilk are facing are unemployment, not only that but being unemployed and told it's what they want. Nobody wants to be unemployed, nobody wants to go through most of their young life never living but just existing.

Everyone should be given the chance to work and receive a wage to understand the life they could have.

Other issues we face are not being in control of our resources. We have many young talented people in Castlemilk who don't get to exercise or showcase their tal-

ents. That's because of capitalism that's why we need Generation Fightback"

Tricia - Dental nurse Castlemilk

"You should come and listen to these people speak"

Clyde College student Matthew McDermott to his friends at a stall

"I think we need a radical transformation of society, the referendum has woken people up. I work three jobs and study, but I am going to fight to give the Socialist Party my time because the situation in society is totally unacceptable"

Sarah - part time cleaner and student

"I'm sick of seeing young lassies at the bus stop down the road crying because they have been rung up and told to come into work in call centres on zero hours and then told to go home again. We cant wait for another referendum we have to fight now"

Kirsty - nurse Coatbridge

Come along to Socialism 2014

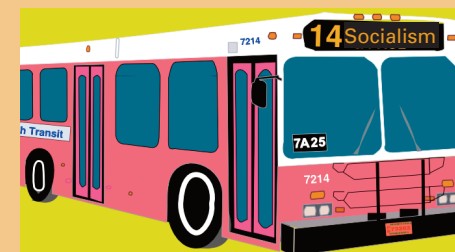
Capitalism is a system in crisis. It is delivering austerity for the majority and unimaginable wealth for a few at the top. Inevitably it is increasingly being questioned.

In Scotland hundreds of thousands of working class people used the referendum as a weapon of mass revolt against austerity and the political elite.

Thousands are joining political

Get on the bus to Socialism

THEME	SATURDAY 2-5PM	SUNDAY 10AM-12NOON	SUNDAY 3-5PM	SPEAKERS AND PARTICIPANTS INCLUDE:
Introducing socialism	Q&A: Everything you ever wanted to know about socialism	20 years of the Socialist Party - socialism in action	Is there a way out of the crisis for capitalism?	James Callaghan
Trotskyism in the 21st century	Trotskyism in the 21st century	Debates on Trotsky's idea of permanent revolution	What happened to the USSR?	James Callaghan
A century of war	Is an end to conflict in Israel/Palestine possible?	What is ISIS and how can it be defeated?	WW1: 100 years since the great slaughter	James Callaghan
Miners' strike anniversary	Forum: the heroic 1984/85 miners' strike	Trade unions today: zero-hour contracts and the general strike		James Callaghan
Preparing for the 2015 elections	Rebel councillors can fight back	In defence of the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition	Can the Greens provide the working class with its political voice?	James Callaghan
Perspectives for Britain	Scotland: the struggle against austerity after the indyref	What will Labour victory in 2015 mean for the 99%?	UKIP, Europe and immigration	James Callaghan
Ideas to change the world	Marxist economics - a user's guide	Marxist philosophy dialectics	The Marxist view of history	James Callaghan
Revolution in our time?	Are we too selfish to change society?	Reform or revolution?	Could the US turn socialist?	James Callaghan
Fighting austerity	Renters rise up: for rent control and council housing	Women in the front line	Forums: can the privatisation bulldozer be stopped?	James Callaghan
Change the world	Caste, race and class - what socialists say	China, Hong Kong and 25 years since Tiananmen Square	Forum: Frack off - how can we stop the destruction?	James Callaghan
Change society	Care crisis: Don't get old or sick in austerity Britain	Revolution storming the stage - is political change possible?		James Callaghan



Socialist Party Scotland are running a coach from Scotland to London for Socialism 2014. Leaving on the evening of Friday November 7 and returning on Sunday night November 9, this an event not to be missed.

Over 1,000 socialists and anti-cuts campaigners will be attending what is sure to be an inspiring weekend of debate and discussion about how to change the world. Contact us to book your seat:

email info@socialistpartyscotland.org.uk
For the full agenda and other details www.socialism2014.net
Facebook Socialist Party Scotland

1.6 MILLION VOTED YES CLASS REVOLT AGAINST

Why we need a new mass workers party



If the "strategists" of British capitalism believed that the narrow No vote in the independence referendum would allow politics to return to "normal", this illusion has been shattered by the events since.

Tens of thousands of working class people, radicalised and angry, are now looking to hit back at the political elite and are seeking out a political vehicle to achieve this.

Huge numbers are now joining political parties that campaigned for a Yes vote. The SNP reported over 50,000 new members in just two weeks; the Scottish Greens have had around 3,000 applications to join. Socialist Party Scotland, Solidarity and other socialist organisations have been inundated with interest and requests for membership.

Socialist Party Scotland believes that a new working class party in Scotland should have been launched immediately following the referendum with the aim of building this into a mass party in a short time.

If this call had been made in a clear way - including by Tommy Sheridan, leading trade unionists, Socialist Party Scotland, Solidarity and other socialist organisations in Scotland - it could and would attract thousands of new working class people and young people to its banner: Including many who participated in politics for the first time during the referendum through groups like the Radical Independence Campaign and other Yes campaigns.

There is enormous and justified anger towards the Labour Party who acted as the main prop for Project Fear in Scotland.

The best way to channel that anger and hit back at the Labour leaders is to ensure a new party for young people, trade unionists, socialists and the wider working class is built: A party that can both stand in elections and help lead mass campaigns against cuts in communities and workplaces.

The SNP offers no way forward. The numbers joining the SNP, a party that has passed on the Tory cuts in Scotland, is a warning of the dangers of delaying launching a new working class party. The SNP are benefiting

from having been seen as standing up against the onslaught of Project Fear.

But, in practice, their pro-big business policies and the fact that they are carrying through cuts means they do not offer any way forward in fighting for the interests of working class people in Scotland.

Indeed the Scottish government plan to implement at least £2 billion in Westminster cuts in the next two years. This act alone will repel many workers and young people who are initially attracted to the SNP.

Transforming

If a new working class party is launched it could transform the situation and allow a real socialist alternative to austerity to be built into a mass force.

A party that would actually oppose cuts in practice, rather than words alone; that would stand for public ownership; for a real living wage of £10 an hour; for an independent socialist Scotland and whose public representatives would stand on a worker's wage.

Socialist Party Scotland believes that such a party should be broad and fully democratic. This means it should have a federal structure that would allow members to join as individuals as well as encouraging existing socialist organisations to take part while retaining their identity and structures.

Crucially, this would also allow trade union organisations to affiliate to a new party. The potential to attract trade union organisations to such a party is considerable.

Despite the initial missed opportunity the potential has not disappeared. Thousands who joined them will be let down by the SNP in the weeks and months ahead. Yes voters will not find in the SNP a party prepared to fight the cuts.

A new mass workers party would give the chance for many Yes and even some who voted No to carry on the struggle in a mass movement to oppose cuts and austerity and for a socialist Scotland.



George Square became the central focus of mass mobilisations in the days leading up to and after the referendum.

Philip Stott

Secretary, Socialist Party Scotland

In the teeth of a ferocious campaign from the British capitalist establishment the independence campaign in Scotland won the support of more than 1.6 million people, overwhelmingly from the working class, securing 45%. No won with 55%.

According to the YouGov polling organisation, support for independence stood at 24% in January 2014. This increased by 21% in nine months as hundreds of thousands of working class people poured into the Yes camp seeking fundamental change and an escape from austerity.

There was a very real threat of a Yes majority in the ten days before the vote which rocked the capitalist establishment to its foundations. However, a combination of panicked late promises of more devolved powers for Scotland and the unleashing of "Project Fear on steroids" by big business, the capitalist media and the Tory, Labour and Lib Dem parties, to save their class interests, secured a No majority.

The fact that so many working class and young people refused to be cowed and voted Yes reflected the desire among the "victims" of austerity to use the referendum as a weapon to hit back at the political establishment.

The charge of intimidation aimed at Yes supporters, and made by Labour and the bosses' press, is farcical. Project Fear was real intimidation. As is the savage austerity that is destroying

working class lives and communities day-in and day-out.

Moreover, the immediate legacy of this brutal intervention by the capitalist class is a radicalised and energised working class in Scotland who have been "educated" as to the lengths that the capitalist elite are prepared to go to defend their own interests.

The overwhelming mood of those who've voted Yes is naturally disappointment, but also that the fight against cuts and for a new political future for Scotland goes on. Indeed, that the momentum needs to be stepped up in the aftermath of the referendum.

Many of these angry and energised working class people can be won to socialism and to a new mass working class party in Scotland. This task of establishing a new political force for the working class is something that socialists and trade unionists need to urgently turn their attention to following the referendum.

Illustrating this mood, Socialist Party Scotland received this text from a 22 year-old from East Kilbride just after the result: "Disappointed with the result but it has helped me make up my mind, so I have sent you an application to join your party. I am 100% behind the Socialist Party"

turnout

A colossal 3.6 million voted in the referendum, an 85% turnout which broke all records. The turnout in working class areas was unprece-

ented. In housing schemes across Scotland it reached 70% plus. This compares with average turnouts in council elections of 25-30%. Hundreds of thousands of working class people voted Yes, seeking an escape from brutal austerity and the capitalist political elite who are implementing these cuts.

Working class strongholds including Scotland's largest city Glasgow, Dundee, North Lanarkshire and West Dunbartonshire voted Yes. Working class communities in cities and towns across Scotland also saw a majority voting Yes.

Some workers did vote No, many reluctantly, when faced by the tsunami of threats and blackmail by big business and the media that jobs would go, companies would relocate to England and that working people would be worse off under independence.

hostile media

The media was overwhelmingly savagely hostile to independence. Only one newspaper in Scotland, the Sunday edition of the Herald, supported a Yes vote. The naked bias of the BBC caused outrage and exposed the corporation as an arm of big business interests.

The failure of the SNP leaders to respond to these attacks, emphasising their desire to cut taxes for big business and seeking a currency union that would have caught an independent Scotland in an austerity trap, left the propaganda of Project Fear largely

YES IN A WORKING CLASS AGAINST AUSTERITY



SNP - no way forward



Tommy Sheridan at a packed Dundee Hope Over Fear public meeting

Unfortunately, instead of leading the call for a new party for the working class in Scotland, Tommy Sheridan has since released a statement to the press - in a "personal capacity" and without consultation with leading members of his own party - calling for a vote for the SNP in the Westminster elections next year.

Tommy states: "I suggest that we in the Yes movement promote continued unity by backing the most likely Independence supporting candidate at next May's election. In concrete terms that means advocating an SNP vote to try and unseat as many pro-No party supporters as possible".

He also adds a caveat that pro-independence parties should not stand against SNP candidates if those candidates commit to "fight all Westminster cuts to welfare and public services". The SNP have in fact implemented the Westminster cuts to the penny in Scotland since 2010.

This statement is a terrible political mistake on every level. Not only has Tommy turned his face against building a new mass working class party, within which he could have played a leading role. Even worse, by calling for an SNP vote he is encouraging working class people who look to him to give political support to a party that is implementing Tory austerity.

Yes alliance

There is enormous pressure, albeit temporary, to go along with the idea of a 'Yes Alliance'. This is a proposal, including among some in the SNP, for a bloc of all the pro-independence parties to inflict maximum damage on Labour in the May 2015 elections. There is an understandable mood for support for this among a layer of young people and sections of workers, given the anger at the parties of Project Fear for this idea.

But the consequences of going

along with this would be to hand over political leadership of the pro-independence movement to the SNP who support a continuation of capitalism and the austerity that inevitably goes along with it. It carries the huge dangers of socialists being seen to give political support for a party that is carrying out a pro-cuts agenda, which is what the SNP are implementing.

Many young people who have joined the SNP will leave in disgust when they see this party carrying on with cuts. A new mass workers' party could grow even further once the real character of the SNP is exposed in practice.

Socialist Party Scotland understands the huge mood that exists to hit back at Labour and the political establishment. We share that desire. However, we cannot support a call for a vote for a party that in a few weeks' time will be implementing a budget of yet further cuts to public services in the Scottish parliament.

The SNP-led Scottish government has carried through over £3 billion in Westminster cuts since 2010. They claim they can do nothing about this: "Our hands are tied". But we have explained many times that if the Scottish government and local councils refused to make the cuts, demanded a return of the billions stolen from Scotland by the Con-Dem's and helped build a mass movement for the money for jobs and public services the Tories could be defeated.

Instead we need to build our own party and stand independently against the parties who are implementing cuts, and this includes the SNP.

Tommy should withdraw this call to vote for the SNP and use the tremendous standing he has among working class people to help build a new mass working class party which would represent a massive step forward in building a mass movement against austerity and for a socialist Scotland.

unanswered.

Another key factor in the result was a lack of confidence in the SNP leadership's proposals for an independent Scotland, which were predicated on a continuation of capitalism and no clear end to cuts. The lack of trust and confidence in Alex Salmond and the SNP was continually expressed by many during the campaign. Most people, when polled, believed that Scotland and their own families would be worse off economically under the SNP's version of independence.

Build a new party

Had a mass working class party existed it could have mobilised far greater support for a Yes vote based on a clear policy to end austerity, for public ownership, a living wage etc.

That means a socialist Scotland that would deliver for the millions rather than the millionaires. The turnouts and mass enthusiasm for Tommy Sheridan and the Hope Over Fear tour, which Socialist Party Scotland played a leading role in, underlines that potential.

It's urgent that moves to build a new mass party are taken now to provide a new political home for the working class. The example of Spain and the rise of Podemos in the recent European elections, which came from nowhere to receive millions of votes, shows what is possible.

If there is a delay in this development there is a danger that the oppor-

tunity can be lost and the pro-capitalist SNP can gain instead. Even Labour, despite its betrayals, could pick up short-term electoral support in the Westminster elections next year, when the question of removing the Tories from government is posed.

As Socialist Party Scotland predicted, the referendum was used as a weapon by huge numbers of working class people to protest against the political elite and the austerity they are inflicting on communities across the country. There was therefore a marked class differentiation in the vote.

The more affluent middle class and rural areas of Scotland voted heavily for No. As did a big majority of the over 55's. While the turnout was high across Scotland, it was at its highest in middle class and rural areas that were mobilised to try and ensure the defeat of a Yes majority. This included areas where the SNP have had their traditional base of support.

Empty victory

The outcome of the referendum is ultimately an empty victory for the capitalist class and the political elite. It has ushered in a new and unstable situation for British capitalism. The conceding of more widespread powers for Scotland is now unavoidable.

The issue of Scottish independence has not been "settled for a generation" as claimed by Cameron. The demand for another referendum will grow, especially following the Westminster

elections in 2015. All the main parties, including Labour, will continue with austerity and Tory cuts.

Most importantly, this referendum has exposed the erosion of support for the main parties of big business, in particular the Scottish Labour Party.

The Tories and the Lib Dems are almost an extinct species in Scotland. But Labour's base of support among the working class will have been undermined even further by acting as the main prop for Project Fear and working hand-in-glove with the Tories. As one NHS worker put it to us: "Labour saved the Union, but it lost the working class."

Incredibly, Labour's leader in Scotland Johann Lamont described the vote as a "victory". Labour's former working class base has been decimated and they will not be forgiven for the role they have played.

There is both disappointment and a real and lasting anger among thousands of working class people at the outcome of the result.

The feeling that the media, big business and the political establishment need to be taken on will grow in the aftermath of the referendum. There is no possibility that the huge radicalisation of working class people that has taken place through the referendum will be dissipated as long as this mood and combativity is built on.

● For updates and to read full versions of these three articles go to www.socialistpartyscotland.org.uk

US-led bombings will widen divisions



The 2003 invasion of Iraq has brought increased instability, conflict and sectarian division in the region

Editorial from the Socialist Socialist Party England and Wales

The brutal bombing onslaught led by US imperialism on 'Islamic State' held parts of Iraq and Syria is pouring more fuel on the fires of civil war. Abhorrence is felt by people across the globe at reports of Islamic State killings and forced displacement of Shias, Kurds, Sunnis and others; and in the west at the beheading of western hostages. But the air attacks will solve nothing. They will only multiply the atrocities, be seen by ordinary people across much of the globe as another round of imperialist slaughter and aggression, and lead to more recruits for the Islamic State on the ground.

Cameron's government, wary of repeating its shock parliamentary defeat when he sought to bomb the Syrian regime in August 2013, delayed a vote this time to make sure of Labour's backing. Also it confined the vote to air assaults on Iraq only - not Syria - and excluded any ground combat; though Cameron has made it clear that he favours widening the attacks to include Syria. Weighing heavily on the MPs' debate was what lay behind last year's parliamentary defeat: the catastrophic long wars on Iraq and Afghanistan with their massive destruction of life and on-going legacy of bloody sectarian division.

Journalist Patrick Cockburn commented in the Independent (26.9.14) that "going by David Cameron's speech to the UN General Assembly, the government has no more idea of what it is getting into in this war than Tony Blair did in 2003". Defence secretary Michael Fallon spoke of another "long, drawn-out campaign".

Yet only 43 MPs opposed it, with a huge 524 in favour. As the US does not need UK military help, "privately, ministers admit the UK's involvement is largely symbolic", said Andrew Grice in the Independent (27.9.14). But Britain's capitalists want to uphold their position and prestige on the world stage, as well as their interests in the Middle East, which together shifted them towards intervention, no matter that it increases the risk of terrorist attacks on British civilians rather than reducing it.

Changed position

This new offensive is a turnabout in US and British policy in the Middle East, from making withdrawals following the terrible failures of the Iraq, Afghan and Libyan interven-

tions, to embark on new attacks that could escalate in scale and last for years. Obama came under increasing pressure from sections of the US ruling class and from various other capitalist powers globally to act against Islamic State because of its aggressive and accelerating role in the tearing apart of Iraq and Syria and its contempt towards the world powers.

Over 40 countries signed up for the onslaught, including Saudi Arabia and a number of other Sunni Arab regimes. Wealthy donors in the Gulf countries had been helping to boost Islamic State as one of the forces against the Iran-friendly regimes based in Damascus and Baghdad, and no doubt some are still doing so. But overall the repressive Gulf elites now feel threatened by the expansion of Islamic State, which among its proclamations has called for the ousting of the al-Saud monarchy.

Also, Turkey's government, having allowed the movements of Islamic State and other Islamist militias across its border with Syria, is considering giving support to the US strikes, not least because of the instability being caused at its own border by Islamic State's present offensive on Kurds in and around Kobane, Rojava, in Syria and the influx of hundreds of thousands of desperate refugees into Turkey.

The Turkish leaders may also view the US missiles as a way of taking some of the initiative away from the Kurdish YPG militia that is linked to the Kurdish PKK in Turkey; a force they are wary of due to its anti-imperialist, Maoist guerrilla roots.

Following the development of mass opposition to George W Bush's wars, Obama tried to create an anti-war image for himself and has declared that the US will not "act as an occupying power". But the US ruling class doesn't want to be seen as unable to defend its prestige and interests across the world - especially in this period of Putin's Russian interventions in Ukraine and China's military manoeuvres in the Asia-Pacific (which have arisen during conditions of stoked up tensions contributed to by interventions of the US in eastern Europe and Asia-Pacific, and of its regional allies). The Islamic State threatening the US capitalists' remaining interests in Iraq and those of their Middle East allies tipped the balance back for them towards renewed military intervention, although they are still struggling to find a strategy for it. They have been able to seize the opportunity provided by a shift in the public mood. Ordinary people's

horror at the brutality and rapid spread of Islamic State - and it promoting its violence on social media - has led to majority support in the US and UK for the air attacks - though notably not for ground troops.

Ground combat

Virtually every media commentator points out that air attacks alone can't win a war against Islamic State.

But sending ground troops would mean again becoming stuck in an unwinnable war, with huge costs financially and to the lives of the intervening troops. So for now the imperialists' strategy is to send military assistance to the failed Iraqi army - widely regarded as a corrupt, largely Shia sectarian force - and to some of the militias already fighting Islamic State, including the Kurdish Peshmerga in Iraq and the FSA in Syria.

However, the world and regional powers are not sending that assistance with humanitarian aims, but rather to fight a proxy war in their own interests on the ground and to buy influence over organisations that might hold territory after the war.

Furthermore, the very existence and growth of Islamic State is a direct result of imperialist intervention - the group first started in the early period of the US-UK occupation - and most of the heavy weapons it has seized and is using were previously supplied to the Iraqi army by the US and to the Syrian army by Russia.

Effects of US-led bombing

The New York Times reported that after the first six weeks of air strikes on Islamic State in Iraq, it still held sway over a quarter of the country.

Meanwhile civilians are also at the receiving end of the missiles - it is impossible for the bombers to target Islamic State only. In addition, oil refineries, grain stores and other businesses and institutions are being destroyed, devastation that will impact massively on civilians regardless of who controls their area.

Many insurgents fighting against both Islamic State and Assad's forces in Syria are incredulous and angry that the US strikes have enabled Assad to strengthen his position - he took advantage of them to retake a swathe of territory near Damascus. Some militias are also furious that the US decided to strike the Khorasan group, an al-Qaeda

offshoot that works with the Syrian opposition Islamist Nusra Front.

In Iraq, despite the recent change of ministers to make the government appear less Shia-dominated, the bombing of Islamic State-held areas has the effect of aiding Shia and Kurdish fighting forces and making the Sunni population feel more vulnerable. It also aids the interests of the Iranian regime, which has close links with some of the Iraqi Shia organisations and government ministers and therefore can tolerate the US strikes.

Sunnis and Islamic State

US strategists want to try to encourage a Sunni opposition movement to Islamic State, as they did in 2007 against al-Qaeda, but Islamic State is more developed than al-Qaeda was, and learning from history it is using extreme brutality to keep the Sunni population in check in the areas it controls.

At the same time Islamic State poses as defenders of Muslims who accept its brand of Salafist/Wahhabi religious fundamentalism. Defence is a key issue for Sunnis in Iraq and Syria - in both countries they have suffered massacres from bombard-

ments either by US-led forces or Assad's military, and in both they have suffered discrimination and sectarian bloodshed.

However, it is the task of the Iraqi and Syrian people, including the Sunni communities, to counter Islamic State and not that of outside powers - global or regional - which will create an even greater nightmare scenario for the masses of the region. Working class people and the poor in Iraq and Syria - across all communities - need to build their own independently organised action from below, starting with democratically organised, non-sectarian defence bodies. They will need to discuss the taking up of socialist ideas, as the only path out of the horrors that capitalism and imperialism have unleashed on the region.

Workers' and socialist organisations internationally need to be at the forefront of spearheading movements against the rounds of imperialist intervention, and demand rights and decent conditions for refugees. We must also be ready to support and assist non-sectarian, independent, working-class based organisations in the Middle East, and uphold the necessity of protection of the rights of minorities and the right to self-determination.

Socialists say: We need system change to beat climate change



Socialist Alternative on the Climate change demonstration in New York

Simon Carter

Ahead of the United Nations summit, hundreds of thousands of people demonstrated in 161 countries to demand immediate action on climate change. An estimated 400,000 marched in New York City last Sunday where the summit was being held and a reported 40,000 in London.

While the 'great and the good' were prominent on the New York demo calling for internationally binding targets on greenhouse gas emissions, the likes of eco-politicians such as Al Gore do not explain how this can be met within global capitalism. This isn't surprising when the NY demo sponsors included corporations like BP, HSBC, Goldman Sachs and JPMorgan Chase.

Targets agreed by the United Nations up to now have either been missed or have been set too low to make any meaningful change. And politicians like David Cameron or Barack Obama remain beholden to 'big oil' and the energy giants. Tinkering with capitalism is inadequate. We need system change to stop climate change.

That was the message Socialist Alternative (CWI in the US) Seattle councillor Kshama Sawant spelt out when she spoke at the New York protest. Kshama, was on a question and answer panel which

included Chris Hedges, Naomi Klein, Bill McKibben and Bernie Sanders and was attended by 900 people in a church in Manhattan (see the full video at socialistalternative.org).

Socialist planning

Record amounts of the principal greenhouse gas - carbon dioxide - are being released into the atmosphere by the little regulated, profit hungry energy companies, as well as transport, agro-chemical and other manufacturing industries.

The consequent increase in heat and energy in the planet is adding to the frequency and intensity of extreme weather events such as floods and severe droughts. In turn, agriculture is being adversely affected leading to price hikes in basic foods and increasing the suffering of billions of poor people globally.

Immediate binding international action to curb greenhouse gas emissions is vital to stabilise the climate but this is unlikely to happen on a capitalist basis where the cornerstone of a competitive system of production is profit.

That is why only international socialist planning of industry, based on nationalised and democratically run economies, can start to mitigate the environmental damage generated by capitalism.

Catalan march for indy

Rob MacDonald

*Socialismo Revolucionario
(CWI Spain)*

On 11 September an estimated 1.8 million people took to the streets of Barcelona in the annual demonstration for Catalan independence. The mobilisation, stretching at least 11km, formed a massive 'V' down Barcelona's two main roads, symbolising the right to vote on the question of independence from Spain - 80% want such a vote.

A cross-section of society took part in the sea of red and yellow - the colours of Catalonia. Despite the official leaders of the protest attempting to confine the demonstration to strictly national demands, many people wore anti-cuts t-shirts. Socialismo Revolucionario intervened with 'La Brexta', a Catalan language version of our paper.



Huge protest in Barcelona in September

ship of the independence movement is not left in the hands of these people.

Only the mobilisation of the working class and people of Catalonia can force the hand of the Spanish state and allow a genuine referendum to take place. For example, a united call for a general strike in Catalonia in defiance of the ruling of the Constitutional Court would get a tremendous response.

Such a movement also requires unity to be forged with the working class in struggle throughout the Spanish state, also suffering the impact of the PP's austerity policies.

Whether or not the referendum takes place, legal or not, the question of what type of Catalonia the people want should be at the top of the agenda.

A Catalonia led by the CIU/ERC will not be much different from one led by PP or the pro-capitalist social democrats PSOE. The struggle for independence must be linked with the struggle to end austerity, to end capitalism and to radically improve the living conditions of all Catalans and peoples across Europe.

Across the Spanish state, the working class is drawing radical conclusion as to the nature of the capitalist crises. The growth of IU (United Left), CUP (left nationalists in Catalonia) and Podemos (new party which evolved out of the 2011 Indignados movement) is a sign of this.

In Barcelona, it is likely there will be some sort of united left electoral challenge called "Guanyem" ('we win'), based around Ada Colau, the

leader of the anti-evictions movement. This is a positive development.

Socialist programme

We need a programme that argues for non-payment of the public debt to the financiers, the ending of all austerity measures, for investment in public services based on needs, for the right of self-determination, and the nationalisation of the banks and key sectors of the economy, under workers' control and management.

With a programme such as this, working people in a socialist Catalonia can voluntarily link up with workers across the Spanish state in a socialist confederation, and also with workers in countries like Greece and Portugal, fighting for an alternative socialist Europe for the mass of people and not the capitalist elite.

This is the best way to win independence and avoid the division of the workers of Europe and Spain.

The Committee for a Workers' International

The Committee for a Workers' International (CWI) is the socialist organisation to which Socialist Party Scotland is affiliated to.

The CWI is organised in 45 countries and works to unite the working class and oppressed peoples against global capitalism and to fight for a socialist world.
www.socialistworld.net

Referendum?

The Catalan government has announced a referendum for 9 November. But it is likely that the governing right wing PP party and the Constitutional Court will block it by legal challenges. The Rajoy government have one eye on the referendum in Scotland and will do anything to avoid such a vote taking place in Catalonia.

The CIU, the governing capitalist party in Catalonia, appears split on the question. All seem to agree that the "rule of law" cannot be broken, which is preparing the ground for accepting the Court ruling banning the referendum.

The ERC (Republican Left, a social democratic, pro-independence party which is leading in the polls) are calling for an illegal vote. But while calling abstractly for "civil disobedience", the ERC gives no clear indication of how this would be organised or what it would look like. They have ruled out mobilising the working class in a meaningful way.

Working class

The truth is that while demands from workers for a referendum increase, the ability of the Catalan capitalist parties to deliver is being reduced. It is critical that the leader-

Labour may win but they offer no alternative



Two Ed's, it turns out, are not better than one

Steve Score

Socialist Party England and Wales

Millions of people are furious with this government. Their living standards have been crushed and their services eroded. This year's pre-election Labour Party conference was an opportunity to enthrone those people to vote Labour. They failed to do so because they provide no real alternative.

Much of the press coverage was about Miliband's mistake of forgetting to mention the government spending deficit and what he would do about it. The Tories and Lib Dems made a lot of this to prove Labour would 'spend too much'. But the text, released to the press in advance, shows he clearly would make cuts and plans to "balance the books", hoping to eliminate the current £75 billion deficit.

Tough decisions?

Ed Balls in his shadow chancellor's speech also talked about not 'flinching' from tough decisions and "not making promises we cannot afford". He did promise to raise the top rate of income tax by a meagre 5%, but at the same time said he would cut corporation tax. On top of this he announced that child benefit, already cut in value over a number of years, will be held down for a year longer than even the Tories had planned, hitting working class families.

Even Miliband's assurance on the NHS, which sounds good at first, with promises of more staff to give them "time to care", is a meagre £2.5 billion more. This is just over 2% of the annual budget for the NHS, and given the increasing needs of the health system is totally inadequate. In the first four months of this year the NHS was already half a billion in deficit on its current budget.

Funding for this is meant to come from a "mansion tax" on houses valued at over £2 million, a small amount from tobacco companies and £1.1 billion from reducing certain types of tax avoidance. This is paltry compared to the £160 billion a year the PCS union points out it is either 'evaded' or 'avoided' by big business and the rich.

Another headline pledge was an £8 an hour minimum wage, but delayed until 2020. Taking into account inflation it doesn't amount

to much. If the current minimum wage increases at the rate of 2.5% per year, roughly what it has on average for the last few years, it would be £7.54 anyway. It is far short of the immediate £10 an hour campaigned for by the Socialist Party, bakers union and others and now adopted, at least on paper, by the TUC.

Trying to catch the mood of anger against the super-rich, Miliband and other leading Labour figures use phrases attacking them from time to time: "People before profit" is one that crops up again and again. But there isn't an atom of real socialism in their programme. In the railways, in the NHS and elsewhere their attack on Tory privatisation does not amount to a promise that it wouldn't continue under Labour.

They will not renationalise the railways, they will just allow the public sector to compete for contracts with private firms. They do not plan to massively expand council housing. They will not reverse the cuts that the Tories have made in public services. The list goes on. They are rooted in capitalism, and cannot provide the socialist solutions that are necessary for working class people.

a party that fights

What is desperately needed is a party that fights for the interests of working class people, one that puts a real alternative to capitalist austerity. As a step towards building this new mass workers' party, the Socialist Party takes part in the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC) which challenges in elections.

Given how much this government is hated, Labour ought to easily win the next election. But that is far from guaranteed, because for many their record and their policies are not seen as significantly different.

They may still win, not because of, but despite their policies. Many will vote for them as the 'lesser evil'. This is understandable, but unless we create a new mass working class force then it will be 'business as usual' after the next election. We are confident that on the basis of experience of the next government more and more people we draw the conclusion that a new party is needed.

Build an anti-cuts voice in May 2015



TUSC will be making a major challenge in May 2015

This letter from Dave Nellist, chair of the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition, was published in The Guardian.

Ian Martin (I can't remember a more spineless opposition, 24 September) sums up the feeling of millions of working-class people. Millions are desperate to get rid of the current government, yet at the

same time depressed because they don't believe a Labour government would mark a real change. As Ian says: "Labour's message to the electorate is clear - austerity is the new reality."

To get rid of the Tories many, like Ian is clearly considering doing, will vote Labour in the general election next year. Others will abstain from the elections in disgust, or even vote for the right wing stockbrokers of Ukip to express their anger. But trade unionists and socialists cannot continue to accept a choice between parties whose policies are so similar you can barely get a fag-paper between them. That only leaves the road open to Ukip and its ilk.

That is why the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC - to which Ian refers) was co-founded by the late Bob Crow to begin to build an electoral voice for working-class people. In May 2014, TUSC fielded 560 local election candidates in nearly 90 towns and cities, in the widest socialist challenge to Labour for 60 years.

In May 2015 - for both the general and the local elections - we are going to up our game, aiming to stand even more widely, to ensure austerity is not unchallenged at the ballot box.

TUSC offers a fighting alternative to cuts

The Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC) is an electoral alliance that stands candidates against all cuts and privatisation. It involves the RMT transport union, leading members of other trade

unions including the PCS, NUT and POA, as well as the Socialist Party and other left and anti-cuts groups and individuals. TUSC is standing in 100 seats in the general election in 2015. www.tusc.org.uk

Hong Kong protests: “umbrella revolution” changes everything

Vincent Kolo

Socialist Action, CWI Hong Kong

The weekend of 27 September changed everything in Hong Kong. Mass popular resistance took to the streets, by night and day, with mass gatherings of up to 180,000, spear-headed by young people.

This, combined with a week-long student strike, has forced the unelected Hong Kong government and thousands of heavily armed riot police to retreat.

As we go to press the mass protests are continuing to grow and people feel enormous self-confidence since defeating the massive police attack of 28 September.

The movement represents a major pushback against the Beijing regime's anti-democratic agenda in Hong Kong and in China.

This is the most serious political crisis in Hong Kong since its reversion to Chinese rule in 1997. There are some features of a pre-revolutionary situation, with a government in deep crisis having suffered a loss of control and authority.

The state institutions - especially the police - are now widely distrusted and despised. The territory's tenuous 'autonomy' as a special region of China is now distrusted or rejected as a fake by a majority of Hong Kong people.

Yet this movement is almost entirely without organisations, programme or leadership, replicating a pattern we have seen in similar mass protest movements around the world. There is a powerful anti-party mood within the demonstrations.

While this 'spontaneous' model has proven itself more than equal to the task of kick-starting the movement on the streets, more will be needed - steps to organise, build democratic strike and occupation committees, and work out a clear programme of demands to take the struggle forward.

China

A crucial issue is the need to spread the movement across the border, by issuing appeals to workers and youth in mainland China to join the struggle against China's one-party dictatorship.

Clearly, as long as the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) rules there will be no possibility of democratic elections in Hong Kong (which is the main focus of this movement).

This task requires greater forces than the masses of Hong Kong alone can muster. Rather than appealing to the US administration or ex-colonial masters Britain for support, as some are doing, the protest movement must seek allies among grassroots workers and youth in China and worldwide.

University students, increasingly joined by school students who have faced huge pressure and threats from school authorities, have extended their strike action.

The main focus of the demonstrations is now to demand the resignation of Chief Executive (political leader) CY Leung, an already hated figure whose role as mastermind of the police crackdown only adds to his list of crimes.

The current protests and occupations evolved out of the week-long school strike, in which around 13,000 university students participated.

These were joined by around 1,500 secondary school students, some as young as 12, on 26 September. That evening, a group of student protesters managed to break the cordon around the 'Civic Square' and began an occupation there.

This is a nominally public protest zone at the government headquarters that has been fenced off by police since July, in anticipation of Occupy protests.

Around 80 demonstrators were arrested. The 17 year old convenor of student group Scholarism, Joshua Wong, was arrested and held for 40 hours, then released without charge.

The arrests of student activists, and excessive police violence, provided the spark for the weekend's mass mobilisations.

The movement has widely been dubbed the "umbrella revolution" on social media, due to the inverted umbrellas used by protesters as protection against tear gas and pepper spray.

On 28 September, the police launched wave after wave of tear gas attacks - 87 times according to their own statement - in an attempt to clear the protests around the government headquarters in Admiralty.

Not surprisingly, China has tightened internet controls, blocking online searches for words such as "tear gas" and banning Instagram.

As rumours of bullets and armoured vehicles circulated, official leaders of the movement called on protesters to retreat.

While most protesters did evacuate the main protest site in Admiralty, new occupations sprang up in two other parts of the city.

Strike

Some sporadic barricades have been thrown across major roads, and a 'general strike' call was issued by the Hong Kong Confederation of Trade Unions (HKCTU).

While the latter is an extremely significant development (it is unprecedented in Hong Kong for a political strike to be announced) the participation of workers in the strike is at this stage quite limited.

So, the police attacks did not succeed as planned in dispersing and quelling the 'Occupy' movement. Instead the protests have spread into multiple occupations, which present a far bigger challenge for the police. Significantly, one of the main slogans chanted towards the police by protesters since the attacks has been "Police, strike!" This undoubtedly poses new problems for police commanders as morale is dented and they are forced to completely re-think their strategies.

Underlining the depth of the current crisis, this is the second time in a month that powerful illusions, built up by the ruling elite over decades, under British and then Chinese rule, have been smashed.

The first occasion was the 31 August decision of China's undemocratic fake 'parliament' (NPC) that killed off popular hopes of free elections for the next Chief Executive.

Explosions

The destruction of decades-old illusions in the impartiality of the state, and Hong Kong's sacred 'rule of law', is a result of the CCP's increasingly hardline, repressive and rigid position, which is in turn a reflection of the deepening crisis within the dictatorship.

The political perspectives for China are increasingly towards a social explosion or series of explosions - towards revolutionary upheavals in other words, a foretaste of which we are now witnessing in Hong Kong.

Despite massive propaganda against the occupation it's evident which side has won the battle for public support through the events of this weekend.

The South China Morning Post reported that office workers on their way to work cheered the occupiers in Causeway Bay.

The newspaper quoted an accountant who said the government had "underestimated the power of the people." There are many reports of passers by bringing water and food and showing support.

Working class

The first stirrings of the working class, which has up to now not made an entrance as a distinct, organised and independent force within the democracy movement, is for socialists the most significant of all developments.

While the response to the strike call has been mixed, reflecting the numerical weakness of the unions in Hong Kong, still some important groups stopped work in anger at the police crackdown.

These included around 200 workers at the Coca Cola factory in Sha Tin, water workers, bus drivers, some bank employees and school teachers.

Although the situation is extremely fast-moving, with sharp variations and changes possible, it seems now that the regime will hold back from unleashing a new repressive wave.

It will probably offer concessions, perhaps sacrifice an unpopular official (as it has done on occasion before) in order to buy time and allow the crisis to pass.

Socialist Action

Socialist Action has been active throughout this movement and is playing an important role in organising strikes among secondary school students through the City-wide School Strike Campaign.

We explain that genuine democracy can only be achieved by linking mass protests in Hong Kong with the coming revolutionary upheavals in China, where the gigantic working class is the most important force to change society and defeat the dictatorship.

The struggle for real democracy cannot be won within the confines of capitalism, which everywhere means the control of politics by unelected billionaires and big corporations.

Capitalism means dictatorship, either by authoritarian regimes or by financial markets. Our alternative is



Mass protests have engulfed Hong Kong in recent weeks

a socialist society and democratically-run and planned economy that can eliminate rising poverty levels, housing misery, unemployment and low-paid contract labour.

● For more analysis and reports on the movement in Hong Kong and also in China see www.china-worker.info and www.socialist-world.net

Unison strike over pay cap

Ian Leech
Glasgow Unison
(personal capacity)

71,000 Unison members in Local Government across 32 branches in Scotland have voted to take strike action in opposition to a 1% rise imposed by the employer's representatives COSLA.

Local Government workers, along with other public sector workers, have been subjected to pay restraint over the past five years leading to an 18% real cut in pay.

In the same period 40,000 jobs have been lost in Scotland.

Unison's claim is for £1 per hour across all the pay scales which, if achieved, would go some way to redressing the under payment of wages over a number of years.

With gas bills up by 38% and electricity up by 28% members are struggling to get through to the end of the month. At the same time FTSE Top 100 bosses received an increase of 14% in 2013.

The strike ballot resulted in a majority for industrial action of 53.5%.

There are many members in local government who are subjected to low pay and, with the Tories recently announcing their intention to continue with public sector pay restraint for the foreseeable future, trade union members will have no



Unison members have had enough if pay cuts and falling living standards

choice but to fight to prevent their wages continually sinking.

Unfortunately, the other Local Government Trade Unions, Unite and GMB, have already signalled their acceptance of the imposed 1%. A fact that may come as a shock to many of their members?

21st October

At the time of writing Unison's plan is to take strike action on Tuesday 21st October with the prospect of further action co-ordinated between groups of branches during a week in November.

There are reported discussions taking place between Unison and

the PCS civil service union with a view to striking on the same Tuesday.

There is a rising tide of militancy across the public sector. This mood has been "dampened down" by the trade union leadership for quite some while.

However it is becoming more difficult for the leadership to prevent action from taking place such as the increasing demands from members for the unions to fight against low pay and the effects of austerity cuts.

A solid strike on pay on the 21st October will increase the confidence of trade union members to fight for pay and other issues where the employers have been getting away with it for so long.

Workers start record breaking strike

Alistair Tice
Yorkshire Socialist Party

Reported telephone conversation - Unison rep for Doncaster Care UK strikers: 'We're planning for Christmas'. Care UK senior manager: 'Oh yes, I know that.'

Even the Don't Care UK bosses know they cannot break the resolve of the Doncaster Care UK strikers. On Monday 29 September a further three weeks strike action started, on top of the 69 days of action taken since February.

The dispute began to fight a 35% pay cut imposed following privatisation of Doncaster's Supported Living Service for Adults with Learning Difficulties and now is for a decent pay rise. But the dispute has always been about defending the NHS.

This inspiring group of workers, still numbering around 60 on strike, were joined on the picket line by one worker re-joining the strike and another striking for the



first time.

The strikers plan another coach to London to protest at Bridgepoint, the private equity company that owns Care UK, and an open top bus around the capital. Solidarity tours are planned in Barnsley, Hull and Nottingham as well as supporting the public sector strikes on 13-15 October. Strikers will also hit the Tory conference.

But the most significant day will be Friday 10 October, when on the 81st day of action, this dispute will become the longest ever involving health and care workers. The strike

committee is appealing to Unison and all its other supporters in the trade union and socialist movement nationally to organise protests on that day at Care UK offices and Bridgepoint companies, such as Pret A Manger and Fat Face.

The continuing strike action combined with the leverage campaign is increasing the pressure on Bridgepoint and Care UK. They know the strikers are not going away. They won't cope with a strike at Christmas. They will be forced to negotiate and make a serious pay offer.

250,000 PCS members to take action

Almost a quarter of a million civil servants will take part in 72 hours of action in the public sector by striking on Wednesday 15 October.

The 24-hour walkout is being co-ordinated with industrial action by unions in the health service on Monday 13 October and in local government on Tuesday 14 October, and comes ahead of the TUC's Britain Needs a Pay Rise demo in London on Saturday 18 October.

The focus of the strikes is pay, with wages frozen for two years after 2010 and subsequently capped at 1%, and they follow the joint public sector strike on 10 July.

Since 2010, taking into account pay cuts, the increase in monthly pension contributions and inflation, many civil servants have suffered a 20% cut in their incomes.

The action will include employees of Westminster government departments and agencies, and the Wales assembly, but not those who work in bodies under the jurisdiction of the Scottish government.

At the Labour party conference (23 September), the PCS launched a new report by tax expert Richard Murphy that shows tax evasion now deprives the public finances of £80 billion a year. Collecting even a frac-



PCS President Janice Godrich

tion of these stolen billions would change the debate about public spending overnight.

Continuing Bob Crow's legacy after RMT elections



Bob Crow (centre) helped transform the RMT into a fighting union

Mick Cash has been elected as the new general secretary of the RMT. The election was called after the tragic early death of Bob Crow earlier in the year.

Bob spearheaded the RMT's transformation into one of the most militant unions with a proud record of defending its members' jobs, pay and terms and conditions.

Under Bob's stewardship, the RMT recognised the need to strengthen the rank and file within the labour movement by initiating the National Shop Stewards Network.

But it also saw the need to fight for a workers' political alternative to the mainstream parties by playing a key role in the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition, confirmed by conference motions at three consecutive annual meetings.

However, the result of the election, in which five candidates stood, did show that there is a need to build a strong left rank and file organisation within the RMT.

This could have ensured that those activists who are determined to fight for Bob Crow's political

and industrial legacy within the union united around a single candidate. This need is still posed as Mick Cash's victory now leaves a vacancy in one of the assistant general secretary positions.

Undoubtedly the pro-big business Labour Party, and behind them the bosses generally, would welcome any opportunity that may arise to reverse the union's bold stance on independent working class political representation.

As Mick Cash is a longstanding Labour Party member, increasingly rare among RMT activists, some union members will fear that his election could make it harder to resist this pressure in the future. Mick's comment that his election will mean that "there will be no deviation from RMT's industrial, political and organising strategy mapped out [by] Bob's leadership" will be welcomed.

The Socialist Party looks forward to continue working with the RMT, now under his leadership.

● Election result: Mick Cash 8,938; Alan Pottage 4,006; Steve Hedley 1,885; John Leach 1,428; Alex Gordon 1,176

CWU political fund ballot begins



Carl Harper
Peterborough CWU member

The Communication Workers Union (CWU) is this month balloting all members on whether to retain its political fund.

All trade unions with such a fund legally have to hold a full postal ballot every ten years.

Recent CWU campaigns, including opposing Royal Mail privatisation, the remote sourcing of BT call centres and post office closures, have relied heavily on the political fund.

The union leadership, recognising the anger towards the Labour Party from rank and file members, has stated that: "Political fund review ballots are not about affiliation to the Labour Party."

Labour allowed the Con-Dem government to privatise the Royal Mail without so much as a whimper.

The Labour leadership went further by overturning the decision of its conference to renationalise the service if it wins the 2015 general election!

The CWU should run a separate poll over its affiliation to the Labour Party.

It is important that trade union members have a political voice. For that reason the Socialist Party supports the retention of the political fund.

But this support is alongside campaigning for disaffiliation from the pro-austerity Labour Party and laying the foundations for a new mass workers' party.

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 Phone 07889135533

Youth FIGHTBACK



Matt Dobson
Socialist Party Scotland EC

A generation has been politicised in Scotland. Thousands have taken part in mass mobilisations on the streets for a Yes vote.

Polls show majorities, 71% of 16-17 year olds and 59% of 25-39 year olds voting Yes. We voted Yes to try and change things to escape from poverty, inequality, austerity cuts and a rotten political establishment.

Although there was a No vote, young people everywhere are politicised.

This is not surprising. What are the options in the society around us? get a low paid job, get into debt studying?, struggle on benefits?

Why is it a constant battle to get

enough wages to live on or to get affordable housing. Society is being run, not in the interest of the majority but to make huge profits for the few. We are exploited when we work, ripped off when we learn, and are disenfranchised from politics.

This was the message that filled Glasgow's George Square and other cities across the country when we came out on the streets.

We followed the example of young people, workers and the poor who have risen up in Spain, Greece, Egypt and other countries.

£10 an hour now!

The bosses are making billions and paying us pennies. We want a

living wage that is enough to afford the basics of life. Trade Unions, including the bakers union and the TUC, organisations which bring workers together are also fighting for £10 an hour.

In the US in the city of Seattle, workers through a mass campaign led by Socialist Alternative council member Kshama Sawant have won \$15 an hour. This shows that through a mass campaign we can win this.

Votes at 16 now!

The politicians and the media like to say that young people are not interested in politics but the majority of 16-17 year olds in Scotland, voted in the Independence referendum, and thousands took part in political

campaigning. We saw the referendum as a chance to change the conditions in which we live.

As it stands 16-17 year olds will not be able to vote in an election, Westminster 2015, which will have a dramatic impact on our lives.

A government will be elected that will no doubt carry out massive attacks on young people, with all the main Westminster parties agreed on policies like cutting benefits for under 25's.

It seems politicians from the main parties are only interested in young people having a political voice when it makes them look good.

We have to build a mass campaign in schools, colleges and communities linking up with workers and trade unions to force the Westminster

and Scottish government to re-extend the vote.

We also need to organise to change society. We live under a system, capitalism which is profit system based on class division, inequality, war and poverty. Young people and the working class suffer austerity - basically payment for the economic crisis caused by the bosses.

There is an alternative, socialism a system run for the billions not the billionaires. Generation Fightback is a new socialist youth campaign that you can get involved with, join and be active in fighting for your rights.

Join Generation Fightback today. generation.fightback@gmail.com Facebook Generation Fightback. Call 07927 342 060 today.

what we stand for

work and income

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

employment. End zero-hour contracts.

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

environment

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

public services

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

rights

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

A mass working class party

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

socialism and internationalism

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