

# the Socialist



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Formerly **Militant**

- Richest 1,000 families have doubled their wealth since 2009
- Worker's wages have fallen by more than 10% - same as Greece

Cartoon by Alan Hardman



# SOCIALISM

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**Jim McFarlane**  
*secretary Dundee City Unison*  
*(personal capacity)*

The Trades Union Congress (TUC) reported recently that workers in the UK have seen the biggest fall in real wages in the developed world. Between 2007 and 2015 our real wages fell by 10.4%, a drop in income matched only by Greece.

There has been no real recovery in the economy for the vast majority of people. Redundancies, wage cuts and benefit sanctions are the daily norm for many working class people. Perpetual austerity is the clear aim of those in power.

Despite the empty rhetoric of new Tory Prime Minister Theresa May, about building a just society that everyone benefits from, the reality is very different.

The richest 1,000 families in the UK have seen their wealth increase by 112% since 2009. They now own more than the poorest 40% of the population.

The elite continue to live a life of luxury built on the misery of the rest of us. Philip Green's blatant asset stripping of British Home Stores (BHS) workers' jobs and pensions are just the tip of the iceberg.

Austerity is open class warfare led by the wealthy and powerful. It continues due to the inaction of most other mainstream politicians. In reality the SNP and anti-Corbyn right-wing Labour are guilty of implementing cuts as well. Those Labour politicians who back Corbyn should refuse to vote for cuts.

The inability or unwillingness of some trade union leaders to organise a fightback – especially those at the top of the TUC – is letting them away with murder.

The Tories are determined to continue to drive down the living standards of the working class. We need a clear socialist alternative to this miserly struggle for existence.

Workers' struggles give inspiration and are an example of what needs to be done to build a force capable of changing things for working class people.

An increase in strikes, occupations and other forms of industrial struggle will give confidence to millions across the UK and internationally. It will also test out those politicians and parties who currently only oppose austerity in words.

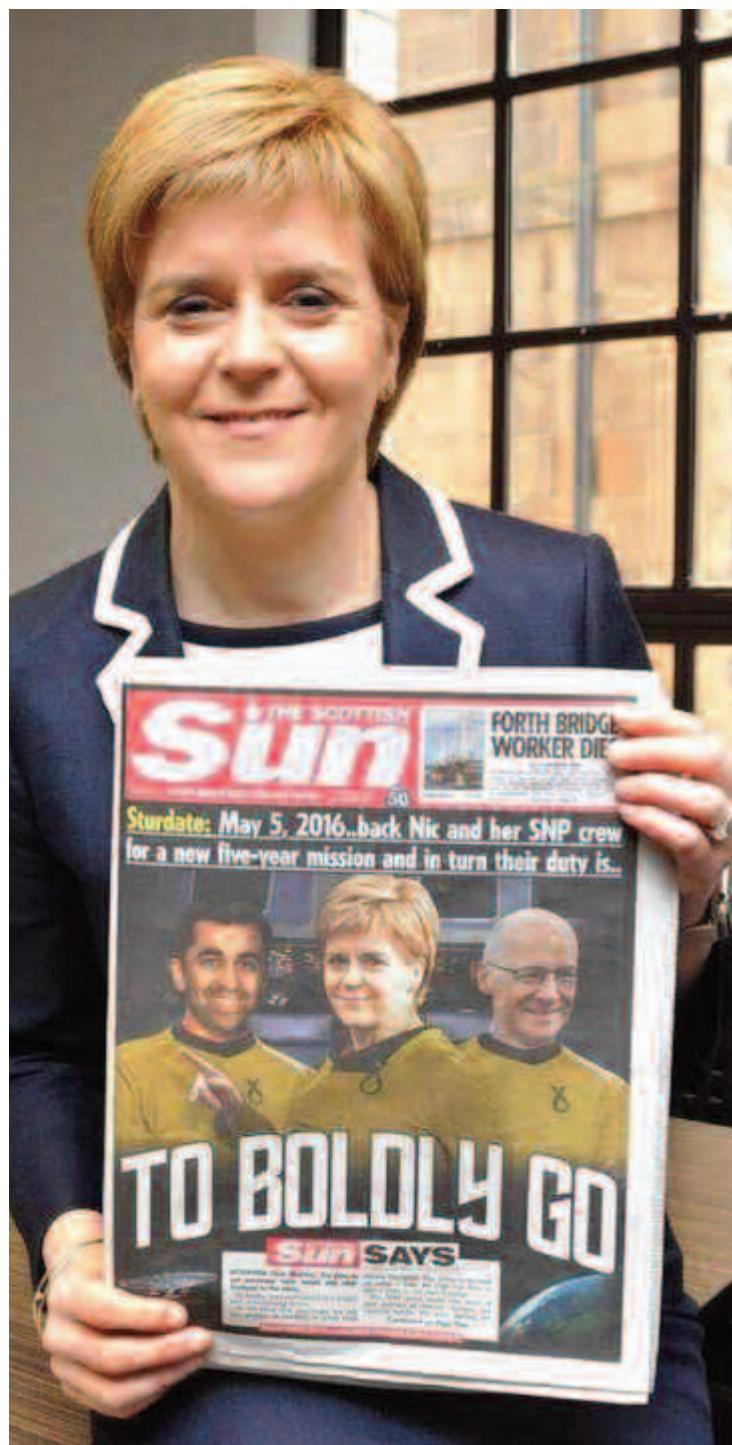
## socialist change

Millions of people are looking for a political alternative to cuts and unending inequality. That's why those parties and leaders who speak out against austerity can get huge support. But they also need policies that are prepared to point the finger at the real problem; capitalism.

We know capitalism cannot offer us, the 99%, a future. Austerity and inequality are part of its DNA. It's the rule of the 1%. That's why we need to build a movement for socialist change. That won't happen without fighting leaders in the trade unions and an active socialist base in the workplaces and communities. Time to get active and organised. Get involved today.

## Editorial: What we think

## After Brexit: SNP hesitate over indyref 2



SNP leader Nicola Sturgeon posing with the Scottish Sun newspaper in the run-up to the 2016 Scottish parliament elections

The 62% to 38% vote for Scotland to remain in the EU led to First Minister and SNP leader Nicola Sturgeon to immediately declare that another independence referendum was “on the table”.

While a second independence referendum is likely in the next period, the political reality now confronting Sturgeon and the SNP is full of complications and sees them at their most vulnerable since the surge in support for the SNP in late 2014.

Polls did show a spike in support for independence in the days after Brexit at the end of June, rising up to 54% (Survation Poll the Scotsman 29th June).

However, even this increase is too small for Sturgeon and the SNP, who would want polling of around 60% to be confident to call and then hope to win a second referendum.

Polls over the last two months, with the crisis over Brexit showing no signs of abating, have shown no increase in this, and even evidence of a fall back in support for independence. A You Gov poll on July 29th showed support for independence back down to 47%.

### Hesitation

Concerned voices have now been heard against the idea of Sturgeon and the SNP jumping through the “post Brexit window” (the two-year period following the triggering of Article 50).

Ex SNP cabinet minister Alex Neil recently warned “We need to convincingly address the fiscal position of an independent Scotland, our currency plans post-independence, the impact of the recent dramatic fall in oil prices and the need for a more ambitious plan for transforming the economic and social life of Scotland. To hold a referendum before all these issues are addressed would be a high risk strategy”.

Pro-independence columnist

Iain MacWhirter (Herald 15/8/16 “Timing is crucial and now is not the time for Indy ref two”) states these issues could affect the outcome of independence referendum negatively “for a generation” and aren’t worth the risk even if it means waiting until the 2020s.

The SNP costed their pro-independence campaign on North Sea oil being at \$100 a barrel in 2014, now it has dropped to \$40 with no sign of immediate recovery.

Even before the shock of Brexit, the economic indicators showed the slide towards recession in Scotland. The Scottish Chamber of Commerce (15/8/16) reported weaker growth than the rest of the UK in the first two quarters of this year. Uncertainty post Brexit has also increased over the issue of the currency.

The dramatic fall in sterling has raised concerns that a run on the banks would take place after another political shock like independence. Neither sterling (the SNP’s option in 2014) with monetary policy controlled by the Bank of England or the Euro are seen as a break from austerity and crisis.

Pro-independence radical groups like the Common Weal have proposed the creation of a “Scot-pound” that could redistribute wealth, but have not answered the reality of the ruthless capitalist bond markets internationally who would undermine such a currency.

### socialist policies

Only bold socialist policies backed by struggle from the working class, taking the major companies and banks into public ownership, which the SNP is fundamentally opposed too, could protect a new currency from the capitalist vultures.

A majority of independence supporters and significant sections of radical workers and youth voted remain, out of revulsion at the pro big business racist character of the

official leave campaign. Yet an estimated 400,000 (40% of the 1 million that voted leave) YES supporters voted to leave the EU. (David Torrance Herald 16/8/16).

The reality of the EU being a ruthless bosses club with austerity built into its DNA, will have been apparent to many and will become more so as the institution’s crisis continues with likely political and economic shocks coming over the next few months.

The developing Eurozone banking crisis, continuing sovereign debt crisis in Southern Europe and the politically explosive referendum over Italy’s constitution can further undermine the EU. Socialist Party Scotland, TUSC and unions like the RMT put forward a socialist case for EU exit.

### Shifting right

Brexit has provoked a further shift to the right by the SNP leadership. Taking its increased post referendum support from working class and young people for granted, they are focusing on trying to win over more middle class layers and sections of big business. This has led to internal SNP discussions in an effort to “redesign” independence more openly in favour of business interests.

As Socialist Party Scotland has consistently raised since 2014, a sense of betrayal towards the SNP leadership would develop over time, leaving a colossal vacuum for a genuine anti austerity socialist alternative.

We support the democratic right for a second independence referendum which could potentially be an even more profound revolt against austerity, with more far reaching aspirations in a socialist direction, than in 2014.

An independent socialist Scotland and a free and voluntary socialist confederation of Scotland with England, Wales and Ireland towards a socialist Europe.

## 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.

# Solidarity with struggle for abortion rights in Ireland



Repeat the 8th campaigners in Dublin

**Sinead Daly**  
Unite member and Socialist Party Scotland

The Two Women Travel live tweets about the 48 hour journey by two women for an abortion from Ireland to the UK has taken Twitter and the world media by storm.

Their reason for doing so was simple and poignant: "We made this journey in stern solidarity with all our Irish Sisters who have gone before us. #Repealthe8th."

For generations, successive governments have been happy to export the 'problem' of abortion to the UK. 4,284 women traveled from Ireland to the UK in 2015 – an average of 12 women a day. For many women the cost of travelling is just too much – it

can cost anywhere up to €1,700. Thousands more women have had to take the the internet to buy abortion pills which they can be seized by Customs. It is a criminal offence for anyone who assists a woman to procure an abortion in Ireland (including these pills) and they can face up to 14 years in jail.

Despite these oppressive measures there is overwhelming support for changes to abortion laws. The most recent poll showed 75% support for a repeal of the 8th Amendment. The 8th Amendment is the section of the Irish Constitution which equates the life of a woman to that of an embryo. No legislation can be introduced until the constitution is amended.

TDs (MPs) from the Anti-Austerity

Alliance (of which Socialist Party in Ireland are members) and People Before Profit have tabled a bill to Repeal the 8th Amendment in October 2016. They have been mobilising support across the country and indeed the world to try and put as much pressure on the Irish government to take action.

● An international day of solidarity will take place on Wednesday September 28th. Socialist Party Scotland have organised a lunch time protest at 12.30pm, outside the Irish Consulate in Edinburgh.

Make sure and come along to show your support and solidarity. More details of the protest can be found at:

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

## Come along to Socialism 2016

The background is crisis-ridden capitalism, a system so unequal that the richest 1% of the world's population own more wealth than all the rest of us combined. War, poverty, unemployment and austerity blight the lives of billions.

But this experience is leading increasing numbers of people to search for an alternative. A YouGov poll revealed that more people in Britain have a favourable view of socialism than of capitalism. 47% of people surveyed in the US said they would vote for a socialist for president.

A socialist society would be able, through planning the use of the world's enormous wealth and resources, to provide decent jobs, homes and services for everyone.

But what is socialism? What is Marxism? Will it work this time? Is there an easier way to change the world? How can we kick out the Tories? Can Jeremy Corbyn win? What role can workers and young people play? Do we need parties? What about terrorism? How can we defeat racism?

The Socialism 2016 weekend will give us a chance to discuss the key



Socialism 2016 is weekend of socialist discussion and debate, hosted by the Socialist Party. It will take place on the 12 & 13 November 2016. Transport is going from Scotland. [www.socialistparty.org.uk](http://www.socialistparty.org.uk)

questions facing us in the struggle to change the world. How can we build a powerful working class movement? How can we unite our movement in the face of division and sectarianism?

At Socialism 2016 you can hear from key activists in the fight against austerity and capitalism. The weekend will feature discussion on Marx-

ist theory and its relevance today. It will celebrate the history of workers' struggle and draw out the lessons.

Socialism 2016 will bring together working class fighters, trade unionists and youth and student activists, anti-cuts campaigners, and people who want to change the world, for a weekend of discussion and debate on the socialist alternative.

## Health campaign demands funding



Fighting to defend health services in Lochee

**Leah Ganley**  
Socialist Party Scotland, Dundee

Dundee residents in the Lochee community have vowed to continue their fight for more investment in their local health centre, including three full time GPs, after winning some concessions from the health board.

The Invest In Lochee Health Centre campaign, which has been ongoing for several months, was established when angry residents discovered Lochee Health Centre, which has just under 5,000 patients, was operating with only one full time GP, when it usually has three, as well as severe shortages of admin staff.

Lochee is one of the poorest areas in Dundee, having some of the worst health records in Scotland with massive poverty and inequality, including drug and alcohol addictions. And people living in Lochee have a 10-year lower life expectancy than people living in Broughty Ferry, the wealthiest area of the city.

Dundee Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC) initiated the GP campaign by launching a petition and a series of public

meetings. The petition calls for three, permanent, full time GPs, adequate admin support, a guarantee the centre won't be closed and an end to all cuts in NHS Tayside.

Over the past few months, through a series of petitioning, public meetings, lobbies and political pressure, there have recently been announcements that the centre will not close; that another GP has been recruited and claims by the local SNP MSP the health centre will now become an "exemplar" service.

However, in the next five years NHS Tayside has committed to making £175 million of cuts, an average of £35 million a year.

The GP practice was taken over by the NHS Tayside in March this year because it was struggling so badly. But this is only one of many struggling practices in the city.

Campaigners have welcomed the limited concessions, which shows the politicians and health board are under pressure, but have said the measures don't go far enough and so the campaign continues until the demands are met. The campaign shows what can be achieved when ordinary people get organised and demand action.

## Profiteering landlords pocket billions

**Matt Dobson**  
Socialist Party Scotland, Glasgow

Private landlords are being subsidised by the poorest renters, those who are unemployed or on low wages and incomes.

Benefit payments to private landlords have doubled to £9.3bn during the past decade. 47% of those claiming housing benefit are in-work households. A scandalous condemnation of the poverty wages many workers are forced to survive on.

Almost one in three housing benefit recipients, or 1.5m households, now lives in a privately rented home, up from a quarter in 2008, according to government figures sourced by the National Housing Federation, which represents housing associations.

The NHF points to figures showing the housing benefit bill going above £24 billion annually since 2007 and concludes the government would save £2.2 billion a year if these tenants were in social housing. Research from the Chartered In-



stitute of Housing consistently shows private rents increasing faster than housing benefit.

Tenants under 35 have less housing benefit and are vulnerable to homelessness. The Socialist opposes the measures in the new housing bill including the extension on the right to buy.

A massive program of public investment into council house building is needed, as is urgent rent controls to end profiteering by landlords. Funding could come from taxation of the super rich and big business, including greedy landlords. Public ownership of the big construction companies and land would also cut housing costs.

# Trotskyism's rich history in Scotland



Militant led the campaign of mass non-payment that defeated the poll tax

**Ronnie Stevenson**

*Socialist Party Scotland and a supporter of Militant since 1975*

The right wing of the Parliamentary Labour Party, aided by their friends in the media, have tried everything to undermine Corbyn's leadership.

One of the tactics has been to make out that a shadowy number of "older Trotskyites" are manipulating the thousands who have joined to support Corbyn. Any lies will do to try and defeat Corbyn. Unfortunately, at no stage do they explain the ideas of Trotskyism but instead use it as a sort of swear word to frighten people.

The ideas of Trotsky, of a democratic workers' socialist revolution and the creation of a democratic socialist federation of the nations of the world, was manifested in the first years of the Russian Revolution in 1917 and has inspired millions across the world.

He and Lenin led a revolution, which changed the lives of the Russian people for the better, although Stalin and his followers derailed the move to a democratic workers socialist state through a regime of terror. Lenin opposed him in the last few years of his life, as did Trotsky until a Stalinist assassin murdered him in 1940.

The ideas of Marxism and democratic socialism were always strongly accepted within the Labour and trade union movement, although increasingly the leaders of the movement embraced the ideas of a reformed capitalism as the way forward. It was against that background that the ideas of democratic socialism were kept alive by the Trotskyite movement.

## Militant

In Britain, the Militant newspaper was first published in 1964. Based on groups in London, Liverpool, Glasgow and South Wales where the Trotskyite tradition had been kept alive.

From that beginning the ideas were accepted by activists throughout the length and breadth of Britain and increasingly world wide, leading to the founding of the Committee for a Workers' International (CWI) in 1974 to coordinate that work.

Supporters of Militant won the support of a majority of young people in the Labour Party Young Socialists (LPYS) in 1970. Under Militant's leadership, the LPYS be-

# Militant



Protest against the expulsion of Militant from the Labour Party in the 1980s

came the most active campaigning group in the Labour Party. Militant also gained increasing support from the best of the activists in the trade union movement.

These processes were reflected in Scotland and laid the basis for the growth of Militant here. We were to the fore in gaining the principle of the automatic reselection of Labour MPs and the election of those wishing to stand as Labour candidates.

As a result Militant supporters came close to being selected as Labour candidates in Glasgow Central, Provan and Pollok. Militant supporters earned leadership positions within the POEU (telephone workers union), the CPSA (central government workers union), SOGAT (the print workers union), NALGO (the local government workers union), the EEPTU (the electricians union) as well as within the NUM (miners), the TGWU – forerunner of Unite – and the GMB.

## Miners strike

The miners strike of 1984/5 was one of the bitterest confrontations between the bosses and the working class. Militant worked tirelessly in support of the miners and many miners joined our ranks. They were convinced by both the industrial programme Militant advanced for the miners to achieve victory and the political programme of the democratic socialist transformation of so-

ciety. Unfortunately, the leaders of labour and trade union movement left them to fight alone against a ruling class who used everything but bullets against them. The defeat had a big effect on the confidence of the working class to fight back.

Labour councils across Britain were next in the firing line for the Tories. Some council leaders made bold statements about defying the Tories and efforts were made to organise a united front to refuse to set a rate and demand more money from Westminster. Unfortunately they capitulated, one by one, leaving the Militant led Liverpool Council to fight alone.

The Liverpool Labour Party fully backed the strategy drawn up by Militant supporters of demanding a return of the millions taken out of the council's budget. Whilst new schools, leisure centres, council houses were being built and new jobs created, there were mass meetings, demonstrations and localised general strikes to put pressure on the Tory Government to fund the programme. It was successful. The Tories paid up.

Neil Kinnock, the ex-left who had stabbed Tony Benn in the back in the fight against the right wing, had become leader of the Labour Party. Instead of praising the success he attacked the Liverpool Labour councillors and organised their expulsion, which emboldened the Tories in their attacks on the courageous Liverpool 47 councillors. They were



Leon Trotsky was, alongside Lenin, the leader of the 1917 Russian revolution



Mass movement in Liverpool led by Militant defeated the Tories in 1984

removed from office by a Tory-appointed, unelected auditor and surcharged. Such was the admiration for their stance the surcharge was entirely paid off through donations large and small from the working class of the city and beyond.

## Poll tax

Starting in Scotland, the Militant strategy of mass non-payment to beat the Poll Tax led to its defeat. Mass leafleting, huge public meetings, demonstrations and defence of non-payers was organised. It stopped the poll tax and led to the resignation of the hated Thatcher.

During this time the Labour Party leaders were turning further to the right and the expulsion of Militant led us to draw the conclusion that work in the Labour Party was not the best way to advance the cause of socialist change.

In Scotland, from the early 90s, Scottish Militant Labour (SML) became the face of Militant. Tommy Sheridan, the leader of the poll tax struggle was elected to Glasgow District Council whilst serving a prison sentence for his anti-poll tax activity.

The hatred of the Tories led eventually in 1997 to the election of the

Tony Blair government. He quickly demonstrated why Thatcher called Tony Blair her greatest legacy, as he introduced one anti-working class measure after another.

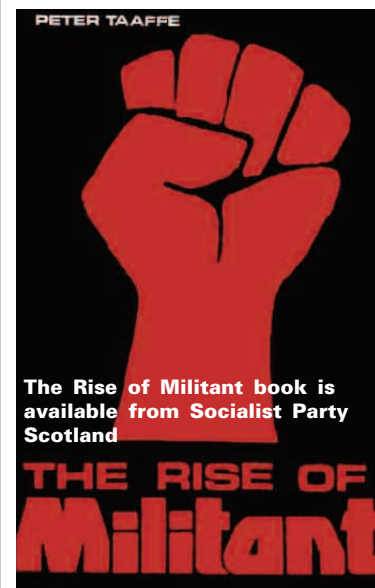
The collapse of Stalinism in 1989/90, and with it the idea, albeit temporarily, that there was no alternative to capitalism had a huge ideological impact.

The workers' movement and socialist consciousness was driven back. Under this pressure some of the leaders of SML moved in a nationalist and left reformist direction, drawing the conclusion that the ideas of Marxism and Trotskyism were no longer important. They launched the Scottish Socialist Party, but their political mistakes led to its shipwrecking.

Many of us carried on with building a distinctly Marxist party, now called Socialist Party Scotland. Our party has played an important role in, for example, the struggle against the Bedroom Tax. We have also pioneered the building of the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC), as well as playing a vital role in the trade union movement in Scotland.

Bernie Saunders' cry for political revolution in the US and the overwhelming support for Corbyn are magnificent examples of a mass desire to change the way we live.

It is 76 years since the Stalinists – the opponents of international socialism – murdered Trotsky. Nevertheless Trotskyism, the idea of unrelenting struggle against the bosses and the democratic socialist transformation of society, will yet become the property of the oppressed masses of the world that will secure their liberation.



# Brexit was an anti-establishment uprising



The RMT trade union, Socialist Party Scotland and TUSC campaign for a socialist exit from the EU

## Socialist Party Scotland Statement on the EU referendum

Britain's EU referendum produced a political earthquake that has shaken the capitalist elite to its core. Tory prime minister David Cameron announced his resignation while the Blairites in the Labour Party launched a campaign to remove Jeremy Corbyn. Fear has gripped the EU institutions and European governments.

Writing in the Financial Times, the mouthpiece of British capitalism, Philip Stephens commented: "This was a vote that changed everything. Economic and foreign policies crafted over nearly half a century overturned in the course of a single night. A political establishment shattered by an insurgency against the

elites. A vote against globalisation. A decision that weakens Europe and the west. Political earthquake is an understatement."

The Guardian said: "For some, voting Leave was not just about Europe; it was a vote against the entire political class and the economic system they operate."

It's important to underline the reality that millions of working class people, including in Scotland, used the referendum to hit-back at the political elite responsible for austerity, low pay and poverty. It was, in that sense, reminiscent of the 2014 Scottish independence referendum.

The attempt, unfortunately also by some sections of the left, to ascribe to this vote a completely or overwhelmingly racist and reactionary character is wrong. Yes,

racism and anti-immigrant views were a factor, not least because of the role played by both sides of the official campaigns which were thoroughly divisive in seeking to whip-up an anti-immigrant mood.

We completely understand that many with a left, anti-austerity and anti-racist outlook, including many young people, voted to remain, disgusted by the reactionary pro-Brexit leaders.

Yet their racist and pro-business propaganda of both Remain and Leave could have been cut across to a large extent had the trade union and Labour leaders offered a fighting left opposition to the EU. This was exactly the approach taken by the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition and Socialist Party Scotland.

As it was the primary factor in the 52% to 48% vote to leave the EU, and this is recognised by the capitalist strategists, was the working class revolt against austerity and the political elites.

## Scotland

In Scotland, there was a 1.66 million (62%) to 1 million (38%) vote majority for remain. The 38% vote to leave was higher than many polls had indicated in the run-up to the referendum.

Turn-out was lower by around 6% compared to England and Wales. In Glasgow only 56% of the eligible voters took part.

A major factor in the lower turnout was the general disgust among a section of the working class towards both "official" campaigns who were seen as two wings of the establishment. However, in many working class areas the vote to Leave was higher than the 38% average.

In Dundee where there was a 40% vote to leave, a left Labour councillor who was campaigning for Remain commented: "There are strong parallels between disenfranchised working class Scots voting Yes in 2014, and working class people across the UK voting to Leave (and it's not just in England). "Having spent yesterday in Kirkton [a working class area of Dundee] and then at the count, I saw these boxes being opened and sorted. So, I know the majority there voted to leave."

More affluent areas voted heavily in favour of remaining part of the EU. Students and young people, for anti-racist and internationalist reasons, voted by a big majority in favour of staying.

The other important factors as to why there was a lower Leave vote in Scotland was the disgust with which

Farage, Johnson and Gove, the main leaders of the Brexit campaign, were viewed. Much of their campaign was tinged with English nationalism, especially from the Ukip leader Farage.

In addition the SNP, the biggest party in Scotland and still with some authority following the 2014 indyref, ran a major campaign in defence of the EU as a "progressive, job creating" institution. They argued in favour of an "open, tolerant Scotland" and this contrasted with the xenophobic campaigns of much of the Remain side.

The Scottish Greens, Labour, the Tories and the Lib Dems, alongside the SNP, produced a joint statement the day before the vote claiming the EU was: "vital for jobs, investment and opportunities for the people of Scotland."

The SNP's role as part of "Project Fear" will not be forgotten by many working class people. Despite the unremitting pro-EU propaganda, more than 1 million people, including around a third of SNP supporters, voted in favour of exiting the EU.

With almost 40% of people having voted in Scotland to leave the EU, and unless and until polls in favour of Scottish independence change markedly, an imminent referendum is not likely (see editorial on Page 2).

## working class struggle

The outcome of the referendum is a catastrophe for the ruling class in Britain. While the capitalist class are in chaos, it is urgent that the working class finds its own political voice. The referendum result shows the enormous potential for a mass fight back against austerity."

This is precisely the task the working class and the trade unions, alongside the socialist forces must turn to with urgency.

# Join the Socialist Generation!

## Generation Socialist

Facebook: Generation Socialist

Under capitalism, young people face a bleak future. The focus in schools and colleges is on passing tests rather than learning.

Cuts mean there are less and less courses and funding for teaching and facilities. The jobs that exist are low paid and how can you know if you can afford to live if you don't know how many hours you are working?

Finding a job on benefits is a brutal experience with the constant risk of being sanctioned. It's too expensive to find somewhere to live with rent costs.

But we can change things and fight back. College lecturers and teachers went on strike recently and won pay rises and stopped education cuts. In September Unison college workers are planning to strike over pay and Generation Socialist will be supporting them. This shows we should organise collectively and fight back together.

Generation Socialist is fighting for a socialist future. Capitalism: a system based on the drive to profit is the cause of inequality, poverty, wars, environmental destruction and discrimination. It's a failed system that cannot be managed better for our generation.



Marching against austerity cuts

We can see there is huge interest in anti-austerity left-wing ideas from the support for Jeremy Corbyn and Bernie Sanders in the US, the vote

for YES in the Scottish independence referendum represented this as well. Generation Socialist says; A political and social revolution is

needed: that means socialist change! A society where the major parts of the economy would be under public ownership and democratically planned and run for the benefit of the 99%.

Our task is to build mass movements of the working class and young people, we need to be organised in trade unions and we need a mass anti-austerity party with socialist policies to fight for our interests. This autumn we are campaigning at the schools and colleges on these issues:

- No more education cuts and unfair testing, living grants and EMA for all students and pupils
- Scrap student debt.
- Rent costs should be controlled for all accommodation. Affordable rented homes need to be built.
- A £10 an hour minimum wage for all workers, no age exemptions, and the abolition of zero hour and exploitative contracts.
- All workers should have trade union rights. Scrap workfare and benefit sanctions.
- The SNP government and councils should refuse to make Tory cuts and invest in schools, colleges, public services and youth services.
- 16-17 year olds to have the vote in all elections.

## Pensions before bosses' profits

Workers in the steel industry have been told their pensions cannot be afforded by bosses and they must sacrifice to save their jobs. Yet it turns out pension schemes are fully fundable as long as the big corporations stop giving away billions to shareholders.

Britain's biggest companies paid their shareholders five times more than they spent tackling their pension deficits last year.

FTSE 100 companies with "defined benefit" schemes, which offer a guaranteed income in retirement, paid £71bn in dividends last year compared with £13.3bn in pension contributions.

Nearly a third of FTSE 100 companies could have wiped out their pension deficits in 2015 with the cash they handed to shareholders.

There has been huge public anger at the pensions robbery in BHS where Philip Green and his family received hundreds of millions of pounds while the pension deficit widened.

The Socialist calls for an opening of the books of these large companies to trade union and public scrutiny. These corporations should be brought into public ownership to protect pensions and stop the looting.

# Will the Corbyn Scottish Labour



Jeremy Corbyn supporters. (Photo Paul Mattson)

Can the massive influx of new members into the Labour Party that propelled Jeremy Corbyn to the UK Labour leadership on an anti-austerity wave, and who are fighting to keep him there, lead to a recovery of Labour in Scotland?

**Philip Stott** looks at the tasks facing the Corbyn movement in Scotland

A feature of the inspiring movement around Jeremy Corbyn – in essence an attempt by radicalised anti-austerity young, working and middle class people to reclaim the Labour Party from the Blairite agents of capitalism – has been its muted echo in Scotland.

Scottish Labour has been in an existential crisis since the independence referendum of 2014. Two cataclysmic election defeats later and the once dominant “People’s Party” have been reduced from 41 to a single Westminster MP. Relegated to third place by the Tories in the Scottish parliament elections this year, there seems to be no end to the decline.

The first wave of Corbynistas into Labour in 2015 saw the party membership in Scotland increase by a modest 4,000. While the membership of Labour across the UK has rocketed to over half a million, in Scotland the surge has been far more modest in its scale.

According to an analysis in the Financial Times in early 2016 the Scottish total stood at 19,000. This number

will have increased a bit since as a result of the second wave as part of the #KeepCorbyn influx. Nevertheless, the proportion of the UK membership contributed by Scottish Labour has fallen to below 4%, a historic low. The contrast between the 80,000 who joined the SNP following the 2014 independence referendum and the few thousand who have joined Labour during the Corbyn events is striking.

Inspiring mass rallies have taken place in towns and cities across England in particular in support of Corbyn’s current re-election campaign – the largest political meetings in decades. The public meetings that are planned later in the campaign for Scotland are unlikely to match the scale of those in England.

## Factors

There are a number of factors as to why this is the case. Principle among them was the damage inflicted on Scottish Labour by the disastrous de-

cision to form a bloc with the Tories in opposition to Scottish independence. Coming on top of Labour’s transformation into a rightwing, Blairite, pro-capitalist party during the 1990s, Labour’s role in the referendum campaign led to the shattering of their already weakened base among the working class in Scotland. As a result the SNP, who stood to the left of Labour during the last 20 years, have emerged, albeit temporarily, as the dominant force in Scotland.

In addition, Scottish Labour have also been hampered by the lack of a left leader. Kezia Dugdale, Labour’s Scottish leader, is supporting Owen Smith for leader. Following the attempted coup by MPs in July, Dugdale said: “I cannot see how Jeremy can continue without the backing of the Parliamentary Labour Party.” She even appointed one of the coup plotters, Ian Murray, to her own shadow cabinet after he resigned as Corbyn’s shadow Scottish secretary. Dugdale has spent much of the summer in the US on a government funded “leadership

course” combined with a 3-day visit to support US capitalism’s preferred candidate, Hillary Clinton at the Democratic convention. In addition, the role of Labour councillors in carrying out cuts in those councils they still control, Glasgow, Lanarkshire, Edinburgh etc., have left Labour as a toxic brand for big sections of the working class in Scotland.

There is quite widespread sympathy and passive support for Corbyn in Scotland. But it has not translated into an active movement as yet. His general perceived weakness and failure in taking on the right of the party and his tendency, up to now, to seek compromise with the pro-capitalist majority in the PLP have raised further doubts in the minds of workers and young people.

However, there has been a shift leftwards among local constituency Labour Parties recently, reflected in the number who nominated Corbyn for the leadership. 61% of Scottish CLPs who backed a candidate supported Corbyn. While this is not as overwhelming as the 87% of CLPs who supported him in England and Wales, it is a significant advance on last year when only 33% of Scottish CLPs nominated Corbyn.

Moreover, it is significant that the right-wing candidate Owen Smith was

unable to get a nomination from any CLP in Glasgow, Lanarkshire, Edinburgh, Dundee or Aberdeen. The majority of his nominations came from Labour Parties covering the more rural parts of Scotland.

Nevertheless, the relatively small numbers of those participating in the nomination meetings is also a contrast with England. Reports indicate that some of the Glasgow CLP meetings had only 20-30 in attendance. This compares poorly with the many hundreds strong CLP meetings that have taken place in London, Bristol, Merseyside etc. There is evidence that some of the Blairites are abandoning the Labour Party in Scotland. Most likely because the opportunity for their careers as elected MPs, MSPs and councillors are now currently hugely reduced.

## How can Scottish Labour recover?

To undermine the electoral base of the SNP, itself the beneficiaries of a huge anti-austerity movement following the indyref, will require a clear left and a consistent socialist political alternative.

Socialist Party Scotland supports Jeremy Corbyn against the right. We will also support all efforts to win the Scottish Labour Party to a clear anti-austerity and left policy. An attempt to accommodate the Labour right is impossible. The civil war that is taking place inside the Labour Party will have to result in the emergence of a victor. Either a newly constituted left party is created by the defeat of the pro-austerity, pro-capitalist right or the Labour Party will remain under their control and will never recover in Scotland.

It looks likely that Jeremy Corbyn will win the election against Owen Smith. This is despite the deluge of vitriol against him from the vast majority of the establishment media and the use of exclusions and the courts by the Labour right to remove up to 200,000 new members from taking part. But the majority of Labour MPs will never accept Corbyn as leader. They represent the capitalist class inside the Labour Party. In that sense they are the real “entryists” into a former working-class party that was hi-jacked by big business interests. Nor does the ruling class as a whole want to give up what they see as an historic conquest: the transformation of a party that at its base represented the political expression of the organised working class into a party that defended the interests of capitalism.

Jeremy Corbyn and his supporters in Scotland would be making a huge

# Can an uprising save Labour?

mistake if they sought to repeat the “compromise and conciliation” strategy with the Blairites that they have employed up to now. It may be that the right as a whole, or a sizeable group of MPs, will split away and form, effectively, a new party if Jeremy wins. However, that is not certain and a more protracted battle may take place. Either way the left in Scottish Labour, possible around a figure like Neil Findlay, should challenge for the leadership immediately as part of a campaign to transform Scottish Labour into a fighting anti-austerity party.

## A democratic party

The Labour Party should be opened up to all anti-austerity and left activists, including the right of affiliation by not just trade unions but also socialist organisations and anti-austerity campaigns etc. This would be more like the federal model that the Labour Representation Committee, the forerunner of the Labour Party, was founded on. It brought together socialist organisations and trade unions, including the ILP, the Social Democratic Federation and at a later stage the British Socialist Party that evolved into the Communist Party.

Some of these organisations had pioneers such as Keir Hardie, John McLean and James Connolly as participants. To even pose the question that such stalwarts of the socialist and Marxist movement would be excluded because of their membership of pre-existing socialist organisations shows how absurd the argument of Tom Watson, and the leadership of Momentum for that matter, that the “Trotskyite” Socialist Party has no place in the Labour Party.

Democratic structures including the mandatory reselection of MPs and MSPs should be rapidly introduced by Corbyn and the left. Above all, a fighting anti-austerity platform should be debated and adopted which has support for widespread democratic public ownership and a refusal to implement cuts at its core.

This would require a change of approach by Jeremy Corbyn and his supporters in Scotland who have so far refused to support the demands of many trade unions to set no-cuts budgets. Labour shadow chancellor John McDonnell, speaking at a Momentum meeting in Glasgow in February 2016 said: “It’s clear we cannot go down the road we took in the ‘80s in some places of defiance of cuts. We have to say the real culprits are the Tories and up here the SNP, that’s why we need to be in government in 2020.”

The refusal to take a fighting stand



Jeremy Corbyn speaking to thousands of supporters outside Westminster

over austerity under Corbyn and McDonnell’s leadership will undermine the possibility of a recovery in Labour support. Scottish Labour’s “solution” to the cuts crisis in local government – supported by the Labour left as well – has been to call for income tax increases and council tax rises. This policy would hit working-class people and has allowed the SNP to portray Labour as being prepared to shift the burden of austerity onto low-paid working families.

The SNP are increasingly vulnerable to a challenge from the left on a clear anti-austerity, socialist platform. The scale of the cuts they have implemented through domination at Holyrood and in the councils they control, as well as the SNP leadership’s shift rightwards following the Brexit vote, has opened a new space. The modest but significantly increased votes for Scottish Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC) candidates in May reflected this new mood. If Scottish Labour were to adopt that type fighting of approach then it would be possible to begin to rebuild what has been destroyed by decades of Blairite right-wing domination.

## National Question

In the context of Scotland, a complete overhaul in Labour’s position on the national question is as vital as a fighting anti-austerity policy. To his credit, Jeremy Corbyn has rightly criticised Scottish Labour’s participation in the “Better Together” campaign with the Tories. However, he has also indicated his view that it was correct for Labour to campaign against inde-

pendence in 2014. In addition, key Corbyn supporters in Scotland, heavily influenced by the disastrous policy of the Communist Party of Britain, still seem to be arguing that Labour would oppose independence again in the context of a second indyref.

To put it bluntly, if that position was not to be changed a sustained recovery in Labour’s support in Scotland would be ruled out. While a second indyref may still be a few years off, although it could take place sooner, a correct approach to the national question will play a decisive role in whether a mass working class party can be built in Scotland.

Both Jeremy Corbyn and the Labour left in Scotland should reassess their position on Scottish independence as a matter of urgency. As a minimum they should adopt a policy that is clearly in favour of the Scottish people to self-determination and concretely for a second independence referendum, with the timing of that to be decided. In addition, a full discussion should take place, including in the trade unions, on how an internationalist, left and pro-working class policy in favour of independence could be developed.

The position advocated by Socialist Party Scotland of an independent socialist Scotland as part of a voluntary socialist confederation with England, Wales and Ireland is a concrete way of fighting for working class unity across Britain, while standing for the democratic rights of the Scottish people. Only this, linked to a fighting policy against all cuts, would allow Labour to cut across the pro-business nationalism of the SNP leadership.

As we anticipated long in advance of

the 2014 indyref, and as it subsequently proved, the referendum became a lightning rod for the mass anger of broad sections of the working class and then youth. It is very likely that a second referendum would be seen in the same way by millions of working class people in Scotland. If Scottish Labour did not change its position on independence then it would suffer the same fate as it did after the 2014 referendum.

## Anti-austerity mood

A second victory by Jeremy Corbyn over the Blairite establishment and the capitalist class that lie behind it would be a huge step forward. It could open the door towards the building a new mass working class party, including in Scotland.

An overhaul of the democratic structures of the Labour Party, its effective re-founding as a distinct anti-austerity and pro-socialist mass movement could have a major impact in Scotland. On the other hand, a continuation of “cuts as usual” by Labour councillors, seeking an accommodation with the right wing, a refusal to face up to the national question and a rejection of a fighting policy would throw away that opportunity.

As has been seen in the US with Sanders, Europe with Podemos and Syriza, the Corbyn surge itself and the tidal wave that joined the SNP in 2014, there is huge support for anti-austerity ideas. But a correct programme, underpinned by socialist ideas and a rejection of capitalism, is essential if these movements are to succeed.

## Keep Corbyn and build the anti-austerity movement



Jeremy Corbyn speaking in Durham

.....Continued from page 12

This means taking on the main bases of establishment Labour, in the Parliamentary Labour Party (PLP), the national party apparatus and, locally, the big majority of Labour councillors.

The national structures of the Labour Party would also need to be opened out and democratised. A federal approach would mean allowing political parties that were prepared to sign up to a clear anti-austerity programme to affiliate to Labour as the Co-op Party still does.

A fight should be launched for the immediate introduction of mandatory re-selection which would allow local parties to replace their MPs at the next general election. MPs should have the Labour whip only if they agree to accept the renewed mandate for Corbyn and his anti-austerity, anti-war policies.

## Fear

Many Labour supporters will fear that a split would weaken the Labour Party. In fact the opposite would be the case. A group of 40, or even 20 or 30, MPs who consistently campaigned against austerity and defended workers in struggle, would do far more to strengthen the fightback against the Tories than 232 ‘Labour’ MPs, a majority who vote for austerity, privatisation and war.

A re-founded anti-austerity Labour Party could quickly make electoral gains. Let’s remember that Greek party Syriza, initially on an anti-austerity platform, went from under 5% to winning a general election in just a few years. Podemos in Spain has gone from not existing to vying for power in a shorter time.

The movement in support of Corbyn opens up a very important opportunity for working class people in Britain. It creates the possibility of the formation of a new radical workers’ party, able to attract all those workers and youth wanting to fight back against capitalism.

# US election: Trump in trouble polarisation deepens



Left: Socialist Alternative (the sister party of Socialist Party Scotland in the US) campaigning for a new party for the 99% Right: Republican candidate Donald Trump



Kshama Sawant, elected twice as a socialist councilmember in Seattle

**Tom Crean**  
*Socialist Alternative, New York*

The presidential election campaign is heading into its final phase now that the Democratic and Republican conventions are over. The result was the anointing of the two most unpopular major party nominees in living memory although Trump is right now definitely winning the unpopularity competition.

Progressive workers, women, black people, Muslims and immigrants are legitimately afraid about what an unhinged Trump presidency would mean. But millions of people are also sickened by the choice at the top which is contributing to significant support for both Jill Stein of the Greens and Gary Johnson of the Libertarians.

This presidential cycle has witnessed an upheaval against the political establishment of both parties not seen in decades. In particular

there was the mass support for Bernie Sanders' call for a "political revolution against the billionaire class" fuelled by pent-up anger at unprecedented inequality and the neo-liberal attacks against working people over the past 30 years. The more than \$200 million raised by his campaign from ordinary people proved once and for all the potential for a new political force representing the 99% independent of corporate control.

Donald Trump's campaign in a distorted way has also channelled anti-establishment and working class anger but is using that to further a nationalist and racist right populist agenda which is in reality deeply hostile to the interests of working people and the oppressed.

## Ghost of Nixon

At the Republican National Convention in Cleveland, Trump focused

on a "law and order" message playing on fears of racial strife and terrorism, consciously modelled on the odious Richard Nixon.

But he also demagogically talked of standing up for the "forgotten men and women" in working class communities devastated by the loss of good paying industrial jobs. Since then he has come out in favor of changes to the tax code that would represent a further shift of wealth to the 0.01% showing how hollow the "I feel your pain" rhetoric really is.

The liberal media have focused on Trump's white working-class supporters as motivated centrally by "racial insecurity" caused in part by the country's changing demographics. It is undoubtedly true that xenophobia is a key part of Trump's appeal for a section of the Republican base. But the frequently crude attempts to dismiss the white working-class as one reactionary mass are fundamentally wrong.

For one thing a large section of the white working class rejects Trump, for various reasons including being repelled by his nauseating misogyny, anti-Muslim and anti-immigrant tirades or simply because they don't believe a billionaire blowhard actually has their interests at heart.

Many of the poorest white Americans are completely alienated from the political process and will not vote. And of those inclined to support Trump there is more than one motivation. Besides those actually attracted to the xenophobia there are many looking to punish the establishment of which Hillary is such a consummate representative.

There is a reason why Bernie Sanders crushed Donald Trump in every poll for months and that is because a section of the people prepared to consider Trump, given a choice, would have opted for a clear pro-working class and anti-racist

candidate. This shows the danger of trying to oppose right populism with a candidate of the status quo like Clinton. There should be no illusion on this score: whether Trump wins or loses, a right-wing force is emerging in the U.S. which can only be defeated by a mass movement of working people and the oppressed.

## Establishment attacks Trump

In the weeks since the convention, we have seen a full court press in large parts of the corporate media to damage Trump. Significant sections of the ruling elite have their own reasons for going after him. First of all they are not happy with Trump's isolationist position in foreign affairs including his opposition to trade deals or talk of pulling back from NATO commitments. Secondly they have concluded that Trump is incapable of "pivoting" after the primaries to be more "presidential". They see his attacks on one group after another and his completely unscripted and undisciplined approach as potentially seriously damaging the institution of the presidency which they value greatly and further undermining the credibility of the political system. They worry – not without reason – that a President Trump could unleash civil unrest on a scale not seen since the 60s and 70s.

Of course Trump still has his ruling class backers but it is striking how wide the elite coalition against him has become: Republican generals and intelligence agents as well as a slew of prominent Republican political operatives and a number of prominent Republican capitalists like Meg Whitman, the CEO of Hewlett Packard, who says she's supporting Clinton. Even reactionary

figures like the Koch brothers who have played a key role in bankrolling the right in the last period are steering clear of Trump. More Republican elected officials might join this chorus if it wasn't for the fear of losing their own jobs due to the wrath of Trump's supporters.

As long as Hillary, clearly now the favored candidate of Wall Street and the corporate elite, can keep the focus on him her position strengthens. The danger for Hillary is if the focus returns to her. After the FBI report on her use of a private email server during her time as Secretary of State – which confirmed that she had been less than truthful in her public explanations – the polls showed her neck and neck with Trump.

It is also open to question what Clinton's message is besides "stop Trump". The ruling class would like a President Clinton who has made as few promises as possible but this is also a dangerous approach in dealing with Trump who is clearly prepared to make a lot of promises.

## The DNC walkout

From the start of Bernie Sanders' historic campaign, Socialist Alternative argued that he should have run as an independent. By accepting the framework of the rigged Democratic primary system, he set the stage for the betrayal of the political revolution after likely losing. In the end he tragically gave his fulsome endorsement to Hillary Clinton, who represents Walmart and Wall Street.

But if Sanders was standing all the way to November there would be the potential for a left vote on a historical scale. But despite the serious limitations of Sanders' campaign, millions got an education in how the political system and particularly the Democrats really work.



# ...ble as political



Bernie Sanders is backing Hillary Clinton rather than running himself as a candidate for the political revolution

Wikileaks only confirmed what folks already knew, that the Democratic National Committee, under Debbie Wasserman Schultz, was in reality an extension of Hillary's campaign. The clear conclusion was that the Democratic establishment were prepared to go all out to prevent Sanders winning.

Why? Because as a party which serves the interests of corporate America they are opposed to the pro-working class program which Bernie ran on including single payer healthcare, a \$15 minimum wage and opposition to the Trans Pacific Partnership trade deal.

If the ruling elite seem distressed about the prospect of a President Trump that is nothing compared to how they would have reacted to the prospect of a President Bernie who in his own words intended to act as "the organizer in chief".

But to the great credit of Sanders delegates they were not prepared to go out quietly. Despite the efforts of the corporate media to keep the story under wraps, the Democratic convention in Philadelphia was the most contentious in 50 years.

The walkout of half or more of Sanders' delegates on the Tuesday night of the convention reflected the anger at the way the primary had been stacked against them which was all brought back by the Wikileaks data dump. But it also reflected the disbelief at Hillary's

choice of Tim Kaine, a supporter of bank deregulation, as a running mate all while talking about "party unity". Only days before Clinton announced her VP choice, Kaine also reiterated his support of the TPP.

Socialist Alternative was proud to have played a role in helping to organize this walkout which was an affirmation of the political revolution. But even among those who walked out there was a clear differentiation between those who still believe the Democratic Party could be reformed into a party which represents the interest of the 99% and those who, like us, believe this is impossible and have decided to support Jill Stein of the Green Party as the best way to continue the political revolution in the November election.

Sanders meanwhile has set up Our Revolution which is supporting a number of Democratic candidates in "down ticket" races who are standing against representatives of the establishment and the status quo. Sanders clearly sees this effort going on past 2016.

### Johnson and Stein

Stein is now getting up to 5% in some polls while Johnson is polling near 10%. Both campaigns are feeding off the desire for more political choice than the dysfunctional two party system offers but they also

point in fundamentally different directions. While advocating progressive measures on some issues including civil liberties, the Libertarians adhere to a free market fundamentalism which would make the situation facing working people if anything even worse than it is today. Stein's platform on the other hand is a continuation of Sanders' call to end the domination of the 0.01%.

We utterly reject the argument that a "vote for Stein is a vote for Trump". A vote for Jill Stein in November is a vote for single payer healthcare, tuition free college, ending mass incarceration and a transition from a fossil fuel based economy through a "green new deal". The key issue for us is how to rally those forces who see the necessity for a complete break with corporate politics.

### Build a new party

We fully recognize that millions who reject what Clinton represents will in the end hold their noses and vote for her to stop Trump. We also want to see Trump lose badly but we see the question of laying the ground for a new political force as primary.

Forty years of neoliberal Democratic policies helped drive a big section of the working class into the arms of utter reactionaries. The solution to this is not to keep supporting those same Democrats but to build our own political party.

We must begin to prepare for the major social struggles that are going to be unleashed in the coming years. We recognize that many genuine Bernie activists will continue to try to reform the Democratic Party and we will seek to engage them in an ongoing discussion about the way forward.

In Seattle, Socialist Alternative member Kshama Sawant proved the effectiveness of independent politics by winning election and reelection as a councilmember as well as winning the first local \$15 minimum in the country.

We also aim, alongside others, to continue to demonstrate in practice what a new independent politics based on determined struggle and directly challenging the corporate political establishment can achieve.

## No military rule



Workers' and left organisations must fight oppression in Turkey

The recent failed military coup d'état in Turkey has been followed by a massive purge of the state machinery and assault on democratic rights by right-wing president Recep Erdogan. Workers' and left organisations must mobilise to fight for democratic rights. An abridged version of **Sosyalist Alternatif** (Socialist Party Scotland's Turkish counterpart) statement is printed below.

On the night 15 July, a section of middle-ranking generals, ex-generals and colonels of the Turkish armed forces tried to seize power and overthrow the AKP government and president Erdogan.

The military plotters took control of state radio and TV and the biggest private TV channels, from which they broadcasted a declaration announcing the takeover against the 'illegitimate, corrupt and anti-secular regime of Erdogan and the AKP'. They declared a curfew and martial law, arguing in favour of a new constitution.

Competing wings of the state machine were engaged in violent confrontations all through the night, with the police apparatus remaining largely loyal to Erdogan.

The president and prime minister both made appeals to the people to resist the coup attempt. Calls from the mosques were also issued to rally behind the government. A few thousand people, mostly right-wing Islamists and AKP core supporters, poured onto the streets as a result.

Planes and helicopters from the army shot at demonstrations in the two main cities. By Saturday morning, more than 150 state forces on both sides and over 50 civilians had been killed.

The majority of people and all political parties opposed a return to military rule.

Most of the army's ranks are military conscripts who were not ready to line up behind the violence organised by the coup plotters - who are entrenched privileged officers, interested in taking power for themselves. Hence the coup did not find the sufficient social and political base to be carried through.

### Growing crisis

A growing political crisis in Turkey has intensified since last year's elections in the context of a mounting crisis in the economy and narrowing social support for Erdogan's regime. The AKP government has used the judiciary and military apparatuses during this growing political deadlock, suppressing opposition voices inside and outside the parliament, and using the army to crush Kurdish opposition. The ruling party's attempt to force through a constitu-

tional change towards a presidential system is part of the same increasing authoritarian tendency. This repression provided the tools that the coup plotters turned against the AKP itself.

Both sides are only offering a variant of capitalist dictatorial rule over the majority, one in civilian clothes and the other in military uniform.

These methods cannot solve the crisis gripping the country, but only exacerbate it, and will provoke bigger turmoil in the future.

The failed coup will now be used by Erdogan to concentrate power within his own trusted circle, and to clamp down further on democratic rights. This is already being seen, with many judges, civil servants, academics and teachers arbitrarily removed from their posts and the government's intention to reintroduce the death penalty.

These measures are presented to counteract the military plotters, but will be conveniently in place to counteract future struggles against the regime.

People's resistance to military takeovers cannot be left in the hands of the rotten AKP regime. Mass united action by the labour movement and the left needs to be built - independently of the ruling party's staged mobilisations, which have occasionally used violence against political opponents and offer no alternative.

The workers' movement and left organisations need to urgently organise self-defence committees against the violence used by both sides.

### a new pole

A third political pole around the working class, the poor and the youth needs to be built against all attacks on democratic and political rights, the state offensive against the Kurdish people, and the neoliberal policies defended by both factions of the capitalist class.

The growing, multi-sided crisis engulfing Turkey is a reflection of the crisis of capitalism on a world scale. Only a struggle for socialist change, linked to workers' solidarity internationally, can put an end to the chaos and violence hitting Turkey.

## Have you got some news for us?



The paper of Socialist Party Scotland  
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# Fight back against cuts and debt

## WE NEED A LIVING GRANT FOR ALL!



NUS Scotland march to the Scottish parliament in 2016

Photo credit NUS Scotland

College and university students starting the new terms are facing a damaging cocktail of rising debt, cuts to courses and increased living costs. The Scottish Government have failed to tackle these issues and in fact have contributed to a worsening situation for students in Scotland. **Sean Robertson**, a member of the Heriot Watt Socialist Students Society, looks at why students across Scotland should be active and organised and ready to fight back.

### Drowning in debt

A recent Audit Scotland report shows that average student debt is set to almost double to £20,000 in just 3 years.

Students from the most deprived communities will be hardest hit. Funding from grants and bursaries has fallen by £25 million, while funding via loans has increased by over £150 million since 2013.

The debt gap between richest and poorest students has more than doubled under the SNP. The report also found that the Scottish Funding Council had cut funding to universities' teaching budget, which will intensify pressure on them to find funding elsewhere or to implement further cost cutting measures on campus.

The Scottish Government has cut the public funds they have handed to universities by six per cent in real terms since 2010/11, with drops in the money earmarked for teaching, research and bursaries and grants for the poor.

Audit Scotland highlights a 7% cut in research funding over the past two years, with the universities including Aberdeen, Edinburgh, Glasgow and St Andrews suffering reduction in Research Excellence Grant money. We have also seen protests in Dundee by students and staff at the cuts to humanities.

All this flies in the face of the SNP government's supposed plans to reduce the attainment gap and make education more accessible to poorer students.

### Cuts to colleges

Over 140,000 FE college places have been cut by the SNP government and many courses and facilities have been lost with college mergers. EIS-FELA college lecturers successfully went on strike for improved pay and conditions earlier this year and Socialist Students were on the picket lines with them to show solidarity with their fight against cuts to education.

Striking lecturers in Dundee said that the new arrangements in colleges meant that the staff got less face to face time with students, lowering the quality of their education, especially for students with special educational needs.

The lack of available college places exacerbates the chronic youth unemployment rates in Scotland, which sit at 13% according to government figures, as well as diminishing the skill base and therefore quality of employment available to young people.

### Rent won't wait

In addition to the difficulties caused by education cuts and rising debt, students in Scotland face high living costs. In Edinburgh, high rents and below average term time incomes led to the capital being rated as the least-affordable city for students in the UK.

In a survey of 2500 students regarding affordability, Scottish cities

faired badly, with 9 of the top ten affordable cities being found in other parts of the UK.

Average rents for accommodation nationwide is £109 per week, meaning that the majority of a student's measly loan has to go on paying rent and there is an increased impetus on students to find work at the expense of their studies.

Even in University provided accommodation, rents are sky high. At Heriot-Watt, for example, rents can be £154 per week for room in a shared flat!

### Right to education

All of these cuts and attacks on living standards are unnecessary. Politicians at Holyrood and in local authorities the SNP and Jeremy Corbyn's Labour who verbally oppose austerity should refuse to implement cuts.

They should set no cuts budgets and build a mass campaign to demand the money stolen in austerity by the Tories at Westminster.

Choosing to go into full time education should not mean choosing poverty. And we should not have to pay for an economic mess created by the bankers and the billionaires in the first place.

That's where socialism comes in. There's more than enough money in society to pay for high quality free education, as the recent Westminster vote to renew Trident at the cost of hundreds of billions pounds highlights. Get involved and fightback today. Join with Socialist Students!

### Pride not prejudice



Socialist Party Scotland and TUSC activists marched at Glasgow Pride on 20th August (see picture above).

The march drew 3,000 people and thousands more attended throughout the day. We distributed 1,000 Socialist Party Scotland leaflets linking the issues LGBT-Phobia with the fight against austerity, racism and the struggle for a socialist society.

Our leaflets raised the need to build a mass movement against cuts and unite in a militant LGBT movement against bigotry. This got a good response from large numbers of young people. Rachel, a school student from Finnieston, told the Socialist: "It's good groups like the Socialist Party are here to keep Pride political. Tories like Theresa May have backward ideas that need challenged".

Young people were keen to find out more about socialism and Socialist Party Scotland.



### Socialist Students fights for:

- The writing off of all student debt. The introduction of a living grant for all to replace the current system of loans. Free education for all students in the UK

- Massive public investment into public services such as education. Tax the super rich and big business, take back education services from privatisation

- For a £10 an hour living minimum wage without exemptions, scrap zero hour contracts, for the creation of decent jobs and ap-

- prenticeship with full trade union rights. For students to have the right to claim housing benefit and JSA, if unemployed, out of term time.

- For rent control of student housing decided by democratically elected committees of students trade unions and institutions.

- For fighting student associations and NUS. For a mass campaign to fight on debt, fees, rent and cuts and for socialist change in society.

www.socialiststudents.org.uk, Twitter @socialiststudents

# ScotRail: RMT strikes win concessions from bosses



the new trains to the driver rather than the guard. And wanted to use this as a pretence to remove the safety-critical role of the guard from services in Scotland.

The RMT are fighting to retain control of the train doors in the hands of the guards on current and future services. The union is also campaigning for a safety-driven review of the current Driver Only Operated (DOO) trains run by ScotRail.

It is to the great credit of the RMT and its membership that they have stood up against a barrage of management propaganda throughout the strike.

In addition, as Socialist Party Scotland have consistently explained, this has also been a dispute against the SNP-led Scottish Government.

Both Nicola Sturgeon and SNP transport minister Humza Yusuf have read only from the prepared script of ScotRail management. Sturgeon claimed falsely in the Scottish parliament that 'the dispute is about who pushes the button to open the door on the train'.

This is exactly the line trotted out regularly by ScotRail/Abellio bosses." Humza Yusuf consistently called for the union to suspend the strikes, even although no decent offer had been forthcoming from management.

The pro-management role of the SNP leadership underlines the importance of building a fighting political voice in Scotland.

The work of the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC), which involves the RMT alongside Socialist Party Scotland is an important part of that task.

## Socialist Party Scotland reporters

As we go to press negotiations are taking place between the RMT union and ScotRail management.

This follows 12 days of strike action by RMT members who work as conductors (guards) on ScotRail services.

The strikes so far have wrestled important concessions from management. The new offer from the Dutch-owned rail company Abellio marks a vindication of the determined and principled stand by the union in defence of safety on ScotRail trains.

RMT general secretary Mick Cash commented: "The progress we have been able to make in this dispute is entirely down to the resilience, determination and strength of our ScotRail members who have taken wave after wave of rock-solid action in defence of rail safety." ScotRail management have now agreed to:

- A guarantee of a guard on the new fleet of electric trains due to be introduced in 2017. ScotRail wanted to remove the trained conductor from these services.

- A guarantee that the conductor will retain their fully trained roles over safety procedures

- Train services will not run unless there is a competent conductor on board.

- Discussions between ScotRail and the RMT to agree to a method of train dispatch for these services will now take place

On the basis of this framework, RMT reps agreed by a majority to suspend five days of planned strikes to allow talks to take place.

## safety first

These talks will also involve Aslef, the train drivers union. Management want to transfer responsibility for opening and closing the doors on

## North sea oil workers take strike action over attacks



Unite and RMT members took strike action on eight north sea rigs

**Jamie Coccozza**  
Unite member, Glasgow

North sea oil workers took strike action for the first time in a generation in July and early August. A further round of strikes have been suspended when Wood Group agreed to talks.

The mood of oil workers was summed up by the huge mandate for action: both Unite and the RMT saw ballot returns of over 98% voting in favour of strike action and a work to rule. Almost 400 workers employed by the Wood Group were involved in the action.

The Wood Group, who supply labour to the eight Shell platforms involved, are intent on cutting pay and allowances by up to thirty per cent to maintain profitability, including a change to the shift cycle which would mean working extra weeks offshore with no extra pay. This follows on from attacks last year at the onset of the oil crisis.

Unite regional officer John Boland said: "Strike action by our members is not a decision they take lightly, but they have been pushed to the limit by an employer unwilling to rethink proposals to slash their pay and allowances.

"This is the third series of redundancies, and cuts to our members wages and terms and conditions in the last two years. Our members have already made sacrifices and are experiencing the effects of the imposition of a three week working cycle which means more time offshore and less time with their families, for the same salary.

This strike came hot on the heels of a 24-hour walk out at the Fawley

refinery in Hampshire when it transpired foreign workers were being paid less than half of the rate for the job.

Furthermore, unofficial action took place in some North Sea platforms in April, which provided an important springboard for the impending action.

The main parties of big business (and big oil and gas) in Holyrood and Westminster have remained silent over the impending action, which is not surprising given the various tax breaks for investment and exploration handed out to companies like Shell.

Despite profit levels falling by a fifth, the Wood Group still managed to record £105m in profits in 2015 and increased dividends to shareholders by ten per cent, with the intention of at least matching that rise this year.

The global slowdown in the oil and gas sector has led to 8,000 job losses in the North Sea oilfields, with more to follow and an onslaught on pay and terms and conditions underway. It is estimated that 120,000 jobs linked to the oil sector across the UK will go by the end of the year.

Resentment towards the bosses, given long-standing health and safety concerns in the industry, will only be intensified by such dangerous strike-breaking methods.

Socialist Party Scotland stood as part of the Scottish Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC) in the 2015 General Election and the 2016 Scottish Parliament Election. TUSC were the only organisation standing to make a clear call for a publicly owned oil and gas sector.

## Fawley strike defeats "race to the bottom" exploitation

**Declan Clune**  
Southampton & South West Hampshire TUC (personal capacity)

Striking Unite members working for contractors NICO at the massive Fawley refinery in Hampshire have won an important victory for trade unionists against the bosses' race to the bottom. This strike was against contractors paying migrant workers

from Bulgaria and Italy £48 for a 10-hour shift instead of the £125 union-agreed rate paid to British workers.

This attack on the unions came to a head with the first official strike on Thursday 14 July for over 30 years. Pickets received strong support, with refinery workers joining the picket on their way to work and others offering to come out on unofficial strike. This action shows the

enormous potential to cut across the bosses' attempts to cut wages and the racist attacks of right-wing politicians on migrant workers.

As striking pickets told the Socialist: 'There is no future for the next generation of young workers on £48 a day! All the workers at Nico will now be paid the same rate for the job. The 'pay parity' deal is backdated to September last year.

## Jannies are fighting for pay justice



UNISON trade union members employed as janitors in Glasgow's primary, nursery and additional support for learning schools have, as of the end of August, taken 24 days of strike action since January in their dispute with Cordia, an arms length company of Glasgow City Council.

Cordia is refusing to pay a Working Context and Demands Payment (WCD) to school janitors and is

using spurious arguments to justify not making this payment. There are five levels of annual WCD payment ranging from just over £500 to over £1000.

The janitors began industrial action on 19 January 2016 by boycotting weeding, litter picking, snow clearing, salt spreading, leaf clearing, heavy lifting, spillage clearing and animal clearing.

Schools cleaners, catering staff, education support workers, teachers and headteachers have all been advised by their trade unions not to undertake the duties which the janitors are boycotting.

There are five levels of annual WCD payment ranging from just over £500 to over £1000.

Brian Smith Secretary of Glasgow City Unison said: "UNISON is very clear that the janitors meet the criteria to be awarded the WCD payment.

"Cordia has spent thousands of pounds every month since January trying to undermine the official boycott of the duties through the use of non-trade union replacement workers. They would be better getting round the table and sorting out our legitimate claim."

## RMT conference backs TUSC

The 2016 annual general meeting (conference) of the Rail Maritime and Transport Workers Union (RMT) at the end of June took place against a backdrop of heightened conflict in both the industrial and political arenas.

RMT's battle against downskilling and the removal of safety critical guards on Southern rail services and on ScotRail are bitter disputes.

The conference took a clear position on the anti-union legislation. It repeated RMT's call to the TUC for general strike action should the new act be used to prosecute any TUC affiliated union. The RMT will also seek agreements with trade unions to support each other should the powers be used.

On the union's political strategy, conference overwhelmingly agreed

to continue participating in the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC). A TUSC fringe meeting attracted half of the delegates.

They committed to support Corbyn but felt that, at this time, it was essential to maintain an electoral alternative to Labour that was 100% anti-austerity.

Delegates, a number who have stood as TUSC candidates, were clear that we will not give blanket support to Labour councillors who cut jobs and services or MPs who vote for austerity and war.

**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  
www.socialistpartyScotland.org.uk

# Keep Corbyn

## Build a fighting anti-austerity movement



The biggest left rallies in a generation are taking place in defence of Jeremy Corbyn's leadership of the Labour Party.

The Blairites' attempted coup has mobilised a second wave of support for Corbyn, bigger even than the first one that thrust him into the Labour leadership eleven months ago.

Opposing and attempting to defeat the movement behind Jeremy are all the forces of the capitalist establishment, within Labour and without.

The capitalist media is doing all it can to promote the previously unknown Owen Smith, brushing his past as a lobbyist for pharmaceutical company Pfizer under the carpet, and allowing him to falsely pose as a 'socialist'. Smith hopes that this, combined with attempting to appeal to Remain voters by calling for a sec-

ond referendum and claiming, on no grounds whatsoever, to be more electable than Corbyn, could convince a more passive layer of voters to support him.

### Anti-austerity

The best answer is for Corbyn to appeal to potential voters on a clear anti-austerity platform - with his programme of last year as a starting point.

Some of his recent announcements, including pledging to build 500,000 council homes in his first term, to introduce rent controls, and to end privatisation of the health service, are welcome and have the potential to be enormously popular.

Unfortunately, however, there have also been some retreats from

the pledges he made in his initial leadership campaign, undoubtedly in the hope of pacifying the right.

Nationalising the energy companies is supported by a majority of the population, yet this has been dropped from this year's election platform. It is also unacceptable that his previous promise of free education - abolishing tuition fees and introducing a living grant - seems now to have been diluted to 'cutting' student fees by an unspecified amount.

The huge support for Jeremy is because he is seen as representing a break with the pro-capitalist, pro-austerity, pro-war politicians that have dominated parliament for the last 20 years. Far from retreating from his initial programme, he would gain more support by building on it. He should, for example, call unequivocally for nationalising

the steel industry. A call on Labour councils not to implement any more cuts to public services, the position agreed at the Unite and GMB conferences recently.

Even in the best, most likely scenario of Jeremy again winning with a large majority, it will not resolve the issues. The civil war, now it is out in the open, cannot be simply called off. There is no possibility of the Labour right accepting Jeremy Corbyn as leader, as they themselves have made very plain.

Owen Smith himself said: "I think there is every likelihood that the party will split if Jeremy wins this election. I don't think it's a risk, I think it's a likelihood."

However, it is not certain that the right will take this path in the short term. It is possible that they will hesitate and cling on, hoping to over-

throw Corbyn at some future point, or that some will split while others remain.

As George Eaton put it in the New Statesman: "Many [of the PLP] now believe that is only through a general election that the party's internal struggle will be resolved." What they mean by this is that Theresa May will do their job for them by calling an early election, defeating Corbyn, and they imagine, forcing him to resign.

### Tasks

The worst response to Jeremy's re-election would be to attempt to make peace with the Blairites. Instead a serious campaign is required to consolidate the victory and to transform the Labour Party into a genuinely anti-austerity, socialist party..... *Continued on page 7*