



FIGHT TO DEFEND OUR NHS

By a Scottish NHS worker

Scotland's NHS is in crisis. The recent Audit Scotland report into the NHS exposed a ticking-time bomb caused by massive under funding. The scale of cuts planned by Scotland's fourteen health boards this year is a staggering half a billion pounds. Almost double that of last year. The cost of drugs paid to the profiteering pharmaceutical companies has rocketed by 10%. The number of patients waiting for appointments has grown to 275,000.

"Unprecedented savings", i.e. cuts, will be made, says the report. But this will provoke an explosion of anger in communities facing the downgrading of hospital services, a GP crisis and NHS staff who will face the brunt off these cuts.

Despite the claims of the SNP-led Scottish government, investment in the NHS is woefully inadequate.

"Realistic medicine in a time of austerity" is the message from Scotland's top NHS planners. But for workers it's pay restraint, record staff turnover and unbearable workloads.

Nothing other than the building a mass campaign involving communities and NHS trade unions can stop the slow strangulation of the NHS in Scotland.

We need an end to politicians who implement cuts. But the SNP and a majority of Labour politicians are failing to offer the fighting defence of the NHS that is needed.

The NHS trade unions must take the lead in a national campaign to demand and end to cuts and a fully funded NHS. An emergency conference of trade unions alongside community campaigns should be organised to draw up a plan of action, including an all Scotland demonstration in defence of the NHS. Our health service is under attack like never before. It's time to defend it.





What we think

Will Brexit lead to i

SNP hesitant on independence referendum

The Scottish National Party (SNP) government in Edinburgh have published a consultative Independence Referendum Bill in response to the threat of Scotland being taken out of the EU through a "hard Brexit".

Nicola Sturgeon, Scotland's first minister, in launching a "new conversation" on independence said: "I am determined that Scotland will have the ability to reconsider the question of independence...if that is necessary to protect our country's interests."

Is a second indyref therefore now a certainty? As the BBC Scotland political editor Brian Taylor correctly surmised: "Consultation does not mean decision. It does not mean a date for a ballot. It does not mean action. It does not mean a referendum will definitely happen".

So why the prevarication by the SNP leadership? After all, the SNP manifesto committed the Scottish government to the right to a second vote if there was a "significant and material change of circumstances; for example Scotland being taken out of the EU against its will."

The answer to this is partly illuminated by the opinion polling since the Brexit vote of June 2016. Despite a 62% to 38% vote for Scotland to remain as part of the EU, there has been no significant increase in support for independence since.

Indeed with 1 million people in Scotland - including an estimated 33% of SNP supporters - voting to leave the EU, attitudes towards Brexit are more complex than the SNP leadership had anticipated.

"Before we start talking, we must listen". This comment from Sturgeon typifies the cautious approach towards the timing of a new referendum.

The Brexit vote, to the surprise of SNP strategists, has not produced a qualitative change in support for independence.

A series of opinion polls shows support for Scottish independence on average at 46%, just 1% higher than the 45% who voted for independence in the 2014 referendum.

Significantly, only half of those who backed Remain said they would prefer independence and membership of the EU to staying part of the UK with no EU membership.

The SNP MSP Alex Neil has now admitted he voted leave,



Alex Salmond (left) and Nicola Sturgeon (right) launching the independence white paper in the run-up to the 2014 referendum

along with "a number of other colleagues." He also commented that among SNP supporters there was a "hardening of attitudes towards the EU". Many, he thought, would vote against independence if it meant being bound into accepting continued membership of the EU.

Brexit alone is therefore unlikely to provide enough of a bounce to give the SNP leadership the confidence to call a second referendum in the short-term.

Twists and turns

The threat of indyref 2 is currently being used as a bargaining chip in negotiations with the Tory government at Westminster. Playing for time and until the polls shift decisively, the SNP have changed tack over the EU. From being the "material change of circumstances" that would trigger a new vote, a referendum is now simply "on the table", effectively to apply pressure for a favourable deal over Scotland's access to the single market. The nature of the Brexit settlement, soft or hard, is the line in the sand. But by definition this approach is opaque and open to further movement.

Sturgeon has been calling for

a "bespoke deal" for Scotland and also Northern Ireland that would see Scotland having a different relationship with the EU than that of England and Wales, who voted to leave. She has also made clear that a UK "soft Brexit", an arrangement that would mean continued membership of the single market, would also be acceptable. Perhaps alongside the transfer of powers over immigration to Edinburgh. Even the signing of Article 50 - which would open up the start of formal talks between the UK and the EU over the detail of Brexit - may not immediately trigger a move towards a new referendum.

Angus Robertson, the newly elected SNP deputy leader, summed up the approach of the SNP when he commented: "If the United Kingdom delivers on the [Scottish Government] priorities... then I don't see how the Scottish Government would pursue a further independence referendum."

Theresa May has refused thus far any notion of a "Flexit" (a flexible exit with differing agreements for the nations and regions of the UK). She has insisted that the "UK will leave the EU as one". But, if the possibility of a break-up of the UK was posed, concessions could well be made to Scotland.

What the response of the EU



Angus Robertson, the newly elected SNP deputy leader, summed up the approach of the SNP when he commented: "If the United Kingdom delivers on the [Scottish Government's] priorities... then I don't see how the Scottish Government would pursue a further independence referendum."

member states would be, particularly Spain and Belgium who have their own troublesome national questions to consider and who could veto any Brexit deal, is also highly problematic.

Nicola Sturgeon's arguments in favour of maintaining access and indeed membership of the single market is very much the majority position of British capitalism.

Above all else, trade and profits are the over-riding concerns of big business, both in the UK and the EU. Sturgeon's offer of a bloc with "moderate" Tory, Lib Dem and Labour MPs in defence of the neo-liberal single market and the EU exemplifies how far to the right the SNP leadership have shifted. The growing internal strife and potential civil war inside Tory ranks over the Brexit talks is another key factor in

this unfolding drama.

The deepening crisis facing the Tory government was illustrated by the decision of the High Court judges that Westminster MPs would have to agree to Article 50 before it was triggered.

The open splits among the ruling class can make an early general election more likely. It also opens a new space for a left wing, anti-austerity alternative to grow.

Rightward shift

The impact on the SNP leadership of Brexit, the collapse in the oil price and the defeat of the referendum in 2014 has been significant. In 2011-12, Scotland's geographic share of North Sea oil revenues was worth £9.6 billion. Last year, 2014-15, they slumped to £60 million. This has contributed,

indyref 2?

alongside the lack of any real recovery in the economy, to a sharp increase in the overall notional Scottish fiscal deficit, which currently stands at 9.5% of Gross Domestic Product (GDP), double that of the UK figure.

There is currently a growing phalanx of leading SNP politicians who are calling for the party to be more "honest" about the economic challenges that would face an independent Scotland under capitalism. George Kerevan, an SNP MSP, commented recently that: "an independent Scotland would face five years of fiscal consolidation". In other words continued austerity.

The SNP have established a "Growth Commission" to discuss ways to reduce the deficit and grow the capitalist economy post-independence. The chair of the business-dominated commission is ex-SNP MSP Andrew Wilson, who is managing director of a major lobby firm that advises big business. Many SNP supporters were shocked at the blatant pro-corporate character of the party conference in October. Businesses were able to sponsor a "members lounge" for £23,000, a lounge exclusively populated by SNP MPs, MEPs and MSPs for £11,500 or the conference dinner for £12,500. For a mere £200-a-head you could go to a dinner attended by Nicola Sturgeon and finance secretary Derek Mackay at which, "corporate organisations and professional associations could learn more about the SNP in a relaxed and informal setting." The SNP's MP for Dundee West – a constituency containing some of the poorest areas of Scotland - has recently put an offer in to buy a castle in Angus for over £600,000.

strikes

The recent strikes on ScotRail by conductors who are members of the RMT trade union saw SNP ministers, not least Nicola Surgeon, openly side with management. Strike action by college lecturers and support staff has been, effectively, strikes against the Scottish government and their role in cutting college funding. The growing crisis in Scotland's NHS and the implementation of cuts by SNP councillors and MSPs is undermining their base of support.

Nicola Sturgeon's approval

ratings have fallen to just 15%, only just ahead of Tory leader Ruth Davidson (Labour leader Kezia Dugdale is the most unpopular politician in Scotland).

The party membership has been falling away from activity at, for the SNP, an alarming rate. The recent election for deputy leader of the party saw only 70 more people take part than in 2014, even although over 40,000 new members had the right to vote this time.

The opening up of a new political space to the left of the SNP is now evident. This was underlined by the increased support for the Scottish Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC) candidates in the Scottish elections in May 2016. Scottish TUSC will also be standing as widely as possible in the council elections in 2017.

Labour in Scotland show no signs of recovery, hamstrung as they are by the lack of a "Corbyn surge" in membership and an anti-Corbyn, right-wing Scottish leader. Scotland was the only part of the UK that saw Owen Smith defeat Corbyn in the recent Labour leadership election. In addition, Labour is crippled by a disastrous policy on the national question in opposition to Scottish independence. Unfortunately, a policy supported by Jeremy Corbyn.

Pressure to act

While an immediate announcement on a second independence referendum has not been made there are significant countervailing pressures on the SNP leadership to be seen to act. A major factor in launching the "conversation" on independence was the need to assuage the base of the SNP. As the pro-independence commentator Iain Macwhirter wrote in the Herald newspaper: "Nicola Sturgeon's listening exercise is of course a delaying tactic: something to keep the activists engaged without actually committing them to a full-scale campaign."

But delay is not a strategy for the long-term. The SNP remain committed to independence. They risk losing a portion of their electoral support if they are not seen to articulate that demand.

However, at some point a crossroads will be reached over whether to call a second referendum on independence. There is a majority in the Scottish parliament – between the



Trade unions protesting at the Scottish parliament demanding a no cuts policy from the SNP



A programme for a socialist government for Scotland would be based on democratic public ownership of the economy, a reversal of privatisation, a living wage of £10-an-hour and a charter of workers and trade union rights. This has to be linked to the building of a voluntary and democratic socialist confederation between an independent socialist Scotland and a socialist England, Wales and Ireland as a step to a socialist Europe.

SNP and the Greens - for such a vote. Nevertheless, Westminster would have to agree to such a legally binding referendum through the signing of a section 30 consent order. It is unclear what the attitude of the May-led Tory government would be. She could refuse to sign an agreement for a second referendum on Scottish independence, particularly if there was a significant chance of losing. Under this scenario, the Scottish parliament may well vote to hold an advisory referendum that, depending on the outcome, could usher in a major constitutional crisis for the British establishment.

A second indyref is, over the next few years and perhaps sooner, very likely. Socialist Party Scotland would support a critical vote in favour of independence.

The political and economic conditions will be markedly changed from the 1st indyref in 2014. A new economic crisis can emerge that would raise even more clearly the need for a socialist solution to the problems facing the working class. The SNP's platform has also shifted significantly to the right. Certainly their record in power of presiding over years of austerity and attacks on workers' rights, is creating the space for left and socialist ideas.

Socialist policies

By standing on a fighting platform in favour of an independent socialist Scotland and a reversal of all austerity, socialist ideas could grow dramatically. A programme for a socialist government for Scotland would be based on demo-

cratic public ownership of the economy, a reversal of privatisation, a living wage of £10-an-hour and a charter of workers and trade union rights. This has to be linked to the building of a voluntary and democratic socialist confederation between an independent socialist Scotland and a socialist England, Wales and Ireland as a step to a socialist Europe.

There is no solution to any of the problems we face: poverty, deprivation and cuts within the crushing straitjacket of capitalism.

It is this approach that Socialist Party Scotland argues that the trade unions and the socialist left should adopt in building a new mass working class party in Scotland. A party to challenge austerity and all those who are implementing it, including the SNP.



SNP support big business and U-turn over Heathrow expansion

Sean Robertson
Dundee

The UK Tory government has approved a third runway at Heathrow, despite environmental and climate concerns.

The SNP have performed an amazing U-turn to support the move having previously refused to support expansion at either of the UK capital's two major airports, Heathrow and Gatwick.

The SNP's decision means that it is more likely that the expansion proposal will win a majority of support among MPs. The decision to expand Heathrow will infuriate envi-

ronmental campaigners as well as local residents.

It also highlights the UK's lack of genuine commitment to tackling man-made climate change, despite agreements like COP21 which voluntarily commits governments to lower greenhouse gas emissions.

Existing UK legislation commits the government to cut CO2 levels by 80% of 1990 levels by 2050.

To meet these targets, the government would have to cut emissions to below the 2005 levels.

The Heathrow expansion taken together with the government's recent decision to force

fracking onto communities in the North West of England will add to the production of Hydrocarbons when action to decrease their use is desperately required.

The Tory government's actions, while obviously a retrograde step in environmental terms, are hardly surprising coming from a government which gives tax breaks to oil corporations and has former fracking company board members as governmental advisors.

The SNP's u-turn comes after the company operating Heathrow airport had a private airport-style lounge and bar for three days at the recent SNP

conference in the Clyde Auditorium, and a full page advert in the conference agenda.

By taking the side of the Tory government in support of the Heathrow expansion, the SNP's green credentials lie in tatters.

Scandal-hit

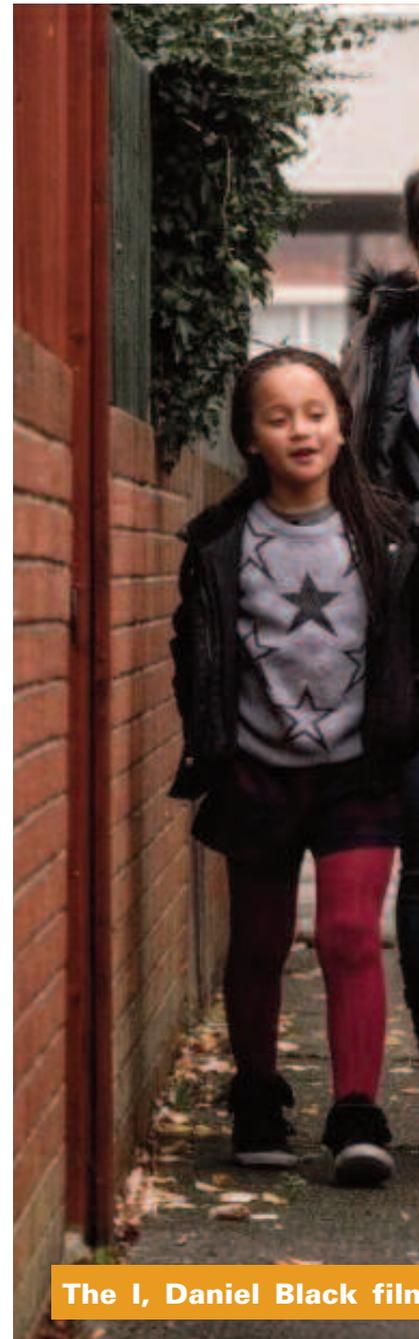
The SNP's public image has already been affected negatively in recent months. Numerous scandals, such as the overt welcoming of support from the hated Murdoch owned Sun newspaper and the investigation into several elected representatives for alleged financial irregularities, have dampened enthusiasm for the party.

Manmade climate change is a problem of capitalism's making but it is not one capitalism can solve.

Ineffective global agreements like Kyoto and COP21 are indicative of the fact that while leaders of all parties, including the SNP, pay lip service to green issues. They have no appetite to really challenge big-business polluters.

Only socialism; a global economic system planned to meet social and environmental needs, can deliver the real, lasting changes required in our transport, energy and industrial infrastructure that can save us from catastrophe.

It would mean massive investment into research to produce those alternatives and the creation of real quality jobs on decent wages for workers. This is in contrast to the race to the bottom in wages and conditions driven by the privatised transport and energy industries



The I, Daniel Black film

Orgreave: Establishment cover up goes on

Dave Carr
Socialist Party England and Wales

Tory Home Secretary Amber Rudd has ruled out an inquiry into the violent police assault on striking miners picketing Orgreave coking plant, South Yorkshire, in June 1984.

Rudd - clearly seeking to protect from exposure the political establishment's role in conspiring to break the miners' strike (1984-85) - justified blocking an inquiry on the grounds that "ultimately there were no deaths or wrongful convictions".

The fact that there were no deaths given the repeated baton charges by mounted police was purely fortuitous. Nonetheless, hundreds of miners were seriously injured on that day.

That alone should merit an inquiry.

Moreover, there were no "wrongful convictions" only because 95 miners facing charges of unlawful assembly had their cases dropped after six weeks on trial because police evidence was deemed 'unreliable'.

Last year - despite evidence of assaulting striking miners and subsequently perverting the course of justice and committing perjury - the so-called Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC) said it would not pursue a criminal investigation into the actions of South Yorkshire police on that day "because of the passage of time".

The Orgreave Truth and Justice Campaign (otjc.org.uk) has long campaigned for a full and independent public inquiry



into the 'Battle of Orgreave', which would include looking into whether the "actions of the police at Orgreave were influenced by political pressure from within the highest ranks of the government of the day."

The battle for truth and justice over the miners' strike and the events of Orgreave will continue.

Benefits cap scandal

Matt Dobson
Socialist Party Scotland

20,000 Scottish children and 7,000 families are being pushed further into poverty as Theresa May's Tory government lowers the existing benefits cap by £6,000.

The highest amount a household can receive in benefits is being cut from £26,000 to £20,000 families can lose up to £115 a week.

Viciously coming in before Christmas, this as anti-poverty and housing charities warn will make the destitute choose between heating and food.

Those already in temporary accommodation will now be at even more danger of homelessness.

The working poor who the

Tories claim to be sticking up for with this cap are a redundancy or a default on a loan away from being affected. Even before this cap one-in-four children in cities like Glasgow are living in poverty.

Socialist Party Scotland demands that the SNP Scottish Government should immediately mitigate this cap and the sanction regime.

This can be done immediately using existing mechanisms like the Scottish Welfare Fund, plus the powers coming in 2017 over benefits.

These measures should be taken alongside building a mass campaign with trade unions behind an anti-austerity, no-cuts budget, demanding the billions stolen from public services and welfare.



...n has been widely acclaimed for its accuracy

I, Daniel Blake shows the horrors of austerity

Amalia
Socialist Party England and Wales disabled people and carers' group

Thousands of people have died since the implementation of 'work capability assessments'. This is what the new Ken Loach film 'I, Daniel Blake' is all about.

Iain Duncan Smith, the politician responsible for this system, who lives rent-free in a £2 million mansion, considers the film extreme. Meanwhile, he disingenuously criticises Theresa May's latest round of benefit cuts.

In 2012, then-chancellor George Osborne was booed during the London Paralympics, just a few months after his government's Welfare 'Reform' Act passed.

This brought us - among other things - the 'bedroom tax', 'personal independent payments' to replace 'disability living allowance', and benefit sanctions against sick and disabled 'employment and support allowance' claimants.

Last spring there was another massive outcry against the Tories, who wanted to further cut disability benefits, by £30 a week. Iain Duncan Smith



Everything in the film "rings true" to those who know that, at any time, they may well become Daniel Blake. Millions of workers don't know if or when we'll become sick or jobless.

resigned over this, totally hypocritically: £15 billion went from the welfare budget while he was work and pensions secretary.

Cuts have tragic consequences. People lose their homes, their families, their communities, their health - mental and physical - and tragically, all too often, their lives.

But the stories of suffering that have surfaced since 'I, Daniel Blake' premiered are many. Right-wing hack Toby Young denies the wealth of real evidence, saying the story didn't "ring true" - because the characters were not "scroungers"!

Everything in the film "rings true" to those who know that, at any time, they may well become Daniel Blake. Millions of workers don't know if or when we'll become sick or jobless.

The film starts with the absurdity of a work capability assessment. It's a one-size-fits-all, Catch-22 in-

terrogation. It shows a single mother sent from London to Newcastle because of the lack of council homes. It shows someone who hasn't eaten in days opening a can of beans at the food bank and eating it there and then.

tears

People in the cinema were crying. It's a film that can make you very emotional. But getting angry is not enough. We also need to organise.

Enough is enough with the slanders! Enough is enough with this inhumane system! Enough is enough with deaths from benefit cuts!

We are not scroungers. We are people who are entitled to a dignified life.

Scrap the Tories' welfare counter-reforms; abolish work capability assessments; invest in jobs, homes and services for all.

Organise and fight back!

Glasgow Labour's anti-union attack

The Glasgow Labour council leader has made a shocking anti-trade union attack on striking Community Safety Glasgow (CSG) workers and Glasgow City Unison.

Frank McAveety was quoted in the press (Evening Times 3/11/16) before the latest round of strikes, saying: "At a time when the poorest in Glasgow are having benefits slashed by hundreds of pounds, wage rises in the thousands are not good enough for the Unison leaders."

"The Unison leaders are putting the jobs of their members at risk and the lives of the Glasgow public at risk on a strike on Guy Fawkes weekend."

Glasgow City Unison responded to the attacks in a press statement and with a protest outside the city chambers the next day.

"Cllr McAveety's attempt to undermine our members' just case by making comparisons to those out of work is the worst kind of divide and rule tactics."

"If he is so concerned about those out of work then why is the council cutting jobs? We want fair pay and good jobs for all people in our city."

"Cllr McAveety also fails to mention the fact that the CSG pay review has given the CSG Director an increase of £5,000 - he now gets £107,000! The Director also had personal use of a company car worth £33,000. Is that fairness?"

"Most shift workers in CSG have had poor or no shift payments for years."

"The council can't just wish that away by giving them something now without a comparison to the rest of the council. The increases in core pay in

no way compensate for the lower shift payments compared to all other council workers."

Unfortunately for Glasgow Labour, Unison members back the fighting strategy of the union. Unison in Glasgow with a fighting socialist leadership has won significant victories against McAveety's Labour administration by successfully campaigning with the other unions against the attacks on public holidays, winning a strike over pay for CSG CCTV workers earlier in the year and the 17-week strike of the Homeless Caseworkers in 2015.

The Scottish Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC) will be standing anti-cuts candidates who back the fightback of the trade unions against McAveety's Labour in May 2017.



Striking workers wearing Frank McAveety masks

Tories attack redundancy rights

David Semple
PCS rep, Greater Glasgow branch

Consultation on plans to slash public sector redundancy payments by 25% and which remove the requirement to make an offer of voluntary redundancy before moving to compulsory job losses - has just closed. Socialist-led PCS, whose members have faced 86,000 job losses, a pay rise capped at 1% and huge pension cuts in the last five years, has responded with clear opposition to the proposals.

On 7th November, a ballot of union members began, with clear advice from the union's National Executive Committee to reject the changes proposed by the government. Faced with hundreds of office closures in the two biggest areas, HM Revenue and Customs and the Department for Work and Pensions, with the potential for job losses, members have been participating in workplace meetings up and down the country and are clearly opposed to the plans.

The government has attempted to put a gun to the head of civil service unions, announcing that if they do not accept the initial proposals, then more draconian plans will be put in place. Scandalously, Prospect and FDA, two civil service unions, without any discussion of coordinated opposition, have acquiesced to the attack and are recommending their members accept the change. Disappointingly, Unite have not put up a recommendation in their ballot on acceptance or rejection. Only the prison officers union, POA, has joined PCS for clear rejection.

A united campaign of industrial action, allied to using Parliament as a platform to denounce the attack and bolster support for taking on the government, could stop the attack.

PCS Left Unity, the broad left grouping in which Socialist Party Scotland plays a key role, has sought to use the all-members ballot to build opposition to this latest round of cuts, with members' meetings organised at workplaces throughout the

UK and campaigning events planned. Mood hitherto, on the shop floor, has been muted. In some ways this reflects the huge success of PCS as a campaigning union in avoiding compulsory redundancies in the past. It also reflects the massive numbers who have left the civil service voluntarily over the last few years.

There is also uncertainty around the potential impact of the Trade Union Act and the undemocratic threshold it imposes on strike ballots. For PCS this will mean attempting to get 50% of union members to vote in an all-members' strike ballot, something that has never happened before.

Tactical questions have not stopped Socialist Party Scotland members in PCS from arguing clearly for opposition to this new Tory attack, convening members' meetings across Scotland and ensuring union members are involved in showing publicly our opposition, through lobbies, workplace protests and ultimately through the ballot to reject the proposed cuts.



College support staff strike for fair pay



Jim McFarlane
Dundee City Unison secretary (personal capacity)

Support staff in Scotland's colleges have taken two days of strike action as part of their campaign for a fair pay deal.

Picket lines across the country have been well attended and the determination of members could not be doubted.

The UNISON and GMB members are in dispute after lecturing staff received a £450 flat rate rise in May 2016.

Many college support staff were offered a flat rate of just £230. UNISON has been asking for £450 flat rate payment for

all support staff in 2016. There are 5,000 college support staff in Scotland they include people working in administration, admissions, funding, catering, cleaning, welfare advisors, security, classroom assistants, technicians and others. These tend to be lower paid posts.

UNISON has suspended further planned strikes after holding talks with Colleges Scotland at ACAS on 27 October and 2 November 2016.

The employers have also ignored a Scottish Government request to resume active negotiations. The revised offer presented at ACAS is 1.5% pay increase for all support staff earning £22,000 per year or

more; and £400 for all support staff earning less than £22,000.

UNISON is quite rightly calling on members to reject this latest offer. But some members may feel let down that the union has suspended further action after two well supported strike days, increased union membership and a clear case of an unfair pay offer in comparison to their lecturer colleagues.

The latest offer has been won through struggle. Socialists in UNISON call on members to reject the offer and return to action to win the pay claim in full and avoid employers attempts to enshrine a two-tier workforce.

RMT expose ships of shame



Philip Stott

The RMT transport trade union has exposed the scandal of sailors serving aboard Northern Isles ferries being paid as little as £4 an hour. On Friday 4th November, the union organised a protest against the company responsible, Seatruck, and at the offices of an SNP MP and MSP in the city.

RMT regional organiser Gordon Martin said: "We're here today because of the ship of shame - the Seatruck vessel on the Scottish Government contract - is paying below the national minimum wage, way below the living wage, and exploiting foreign workers."

"This is a government contract so surely if Seatruck are not paying what the government believes to be an accept-

able rate of pay the contract should be null and void."

Sercu - who runs the ferry service - sub-contracted the ferry route between Aberdeen and Shetland to Seatruck. Seatruck refused to pay the minimum wage saying it would "distort its fleet-wide pay structure". Under UK law, the workers are not covered by the minimum wage legislation because they are not deemed to be ordinarily working in the UK. The fact that this scandal is happening under a Scottish Government contract is a disgrace. It shows the need for the nationalisation of the ferries to ensure decent rates of pay and terms and conditions. The RMT are to be congratulated for fighting to defend the rights of foreign workers and exposing the SNP government.

Dundee health centre victory

Leah Ganley
Lochee health campaigner

Local campaigners in Dundee have been victorious in their fight for more GPs and other resources at their local surgery.

About six months ago, residents in Lochee faced the potential of Lochee Health Centre closing as it was discovered to be operating with just one doctor, instead of three. The situation was so desperate the surgery was taken over the health board, NHS Tayside.

Some patients were waiting eight weeks for an appointment; people with long term illnesses and the elderly were often not getting their repeat prescriptions; mothers were told to take their children to the pharmacist instead of seeing a doctor because they had no appointments.

Amidst all the worry, Lochee members of the Scottish Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC) launched a petition to demand the health board act immediately to ensure the surgery did not close and GP provision be restored to a minimum of three full-time equivalents. Very soon, hundreds of local residents had signed the petition.

TUSC called a public meet-

ing to bring residents together to discuss the situation facing the health centre. It was decided a campaign would be launched to defend their health centre.

Lochee is one of the poorest areas of Dundee, with life expectancy 10 years' lower than in the wealthiest areas, such as Broughty Ferry.

active campaign

Over the coming weeks and months, the residents built up their campaign through a series of petitioning, public meetings, lobbies and political pressure.

During this period, several attempts were made to engage with local SNP representatives, including the SNP MSP for the area and the Health Minister, who is a Dundee MSP, to no avail.

But this didn't stop the campaigners! They carried on fighting for proper investment in their health centre. There was a sign that the campaign was beginning to be successful when NHS Tayside stated they would be funding two additional part time GPs.

This was welcome news but not enough in the eyes of the campaigners. This was only the equivalent of two full time doc-

tors. So, the continued in their fight, stepping up political pressure.

In October, the announcement was made that Lochee Health Centre will be going up to five GPs (whole-time equivalent of three GPs) in November.

Other resources have also been pledged by the health board, including extended appointment times and an Advanced Nurse Practitioner.

The health board has also said, that not only do they wish the centre to remain open, that they now want the it to become a "model" service which sets examples of best service and practice.

This is a fantastic achievement for everyone who was involved in defending Lochee Health Centre. However, this is just one of the many cuts taking places in the health service in Dundee.

We have a great fight on our hands to protect our health service, with £175m of cuts announced by NHS Tayside in the next five years, including £55m assigned for the next year alone! (see article below)

So, we must remember in the coming battles, that this victory shows what collective, community action can achieve when ordinary people come together to fight for something.



Leah Ganley (left) lobbying a meeting of the Tayside health board

NHS Tayside facing the deepest cuts

By a Unison member

NHS Tayside has been set a savings target of £58m for this year alone as part of a £175m package of savings expected in the next 5 years. This after government bailouts for each of

the last 4 years in order to meet savings targets. This money requires to be repaid unless the Scottish government write it off, which they have the power to do. Attempts to balance the books have been hampered by the need to use agency staff to

cover shortfalls in staff numbers, especially in clinical posts.

NHS Tayside expects to have paid £8m in agency staff for 2016/17. This cost has risen by 39% in one year. Added to this is the £9.3m due to staff who were not paid correctly whilst on annual leave.

NHS Tayside is not unique. If you add debts owed to private companies under PFI, which was used to build 3 mental health hospitals in Tayside, a further £14m per year can be added to the £175m the health board is expected to cut from its budget up to 2021.

A perfect storm is brewing which highlights the disastrous policy of Tory cuts carried out by the SNP. Every health board in Scotland is underfunded but expected to make savings. Already we are seeing community based campaigns sprout up to defend existing services.

The role of NHS trade unions will be key in defending staff from the intensification of workload, let alone other issues of terms and conditions.

Stress, low pay and overwork

Scotland's NHS is facing a crisis. Years of under investment has created an impossible situation for NHS staff. We asked a healthcare assistant and Unison shop steward at a hospital in Dundee for her view on the health secretary Shona Robison's claim that there is sufficient funding and record numbers of staff working in the NHS in Scotland.

"My ward, along with a few other wards in our hospital, are under staffed. More paperwork is expected from the trained staff, which then means healthcare assistants are left to do the majority of the work. The only thing we don't do is the medication.

Tayside NHS have overspent on their budget. The money they spend on bank staff and agency is crazy. We've just got our Xmas off-duty and we are so short-staffed we're gonna spend a fortune on agency staff. We think they should be

employing more permanent staff. Our patients are more challenging and we're getting verbally and physically abused. As healthcare assistants, we are now fighting for a band 3 as we're still a band 2, alongside the domestic staff. We feel we're been overworked, under paid and under valued. Staff moral is very low and stress levels are very high.

I feel the patients don't get the proper care they should be. Shona Robison should know how short staffed we are as her mum was in my ward."



Junior Doctors protest in England

Photo Paul Mattson

Have you got some news for us?



The paper of Socialist Party Scotland

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FACEBOOK Socialist Party Scotland

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October 1917 witnessed the Russian Revolution and the overthrow of the capitalist and Tsarist regime. For the first time, power was in the hands of the working class. Next year, 2017, sees the 100th anniversary of this historic, world-changing event. Socialist Party Scotland and the Committee for a Workers' International will be preparing special written material, dedicated websites and public events to commemorate the events of 1917 - which involved two revolutions - and culminated in the victory of the Bolsheviks. In this feature (an edited version of an article written to commemorate the 90th anniversary), **Peter Taaffe**, from the Socialist Party England and Wales, looks at the lessons of October 1917.

The October 1917 Russian Revolution instituted for the first time working-class power. As tsarist General Zalesky, speaking for the 'dispossessed' capitalists and landlords, said when he mournfully surveyed the Russian Revolution:

"Who would believe that the janitor or watchman of the Court building would suddenly become Chief Justice of the Court of Appeals, or the hospital orderly manager of the hospital, the barber a big functionary, yesterday's ensign [junior military officer] the commander-in-chief, yesterday's lackey or common labourer burgomaster, yesterday's train oiler chief of division or station superintendent, yesterday's locksmith head of the factory?"

But that was precisely what Russia became after the Bolsheviks led the Russian masses to overthrow the landlord and capitalist system, crowned by the tsarist dictatorship, that was a torture chamber for the mass of the people. Moreover, only in

Russia, following the October overturn, did the workers take power and establish real workers' democracy.

In the last 90 years there have been many opportunities for the working class to follow the path of the Russian workers of 1917. In the post-second world war period, a revolutionary wave even greater than that following the Russian Revolution swept Western Europe - in Italy, in France, even in Britain, where troops voted Labour en masse because they were determined to end the mass unemployment and poverty of the interwar years.

In 1968, in France, there was a general strike of ten million workers, the greatest in history. They occupied the factories and reached out for power but were blocked by the leaders of their own organisations, the Communist Party, trade union and 'socialist' leaders.

In the Portuguese Revolution of 1974, the capitalist state disintegrated. The great majority of Portugal's officer caste was enor-

THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION

October 1917: When the



The leaders of the October revolution and the Bolsheviks, Lenin (below left) and Trotsky (above), gained mass

mously radicalised, moving in the direction of socialism, (in Russia, the officers remained implacably hostile, in the main, to the revolution).

In all these cases, the revolutionary process took place in Europe, in 'developed' advanced industrial countries. Revolution, a social overturn, unfolds when there is no other way out. Before this, the masses advance and retreat several times before they believe it is necessary to undertake the 'final assault'. This is how the Russian Revolution developed over nine months, through different phases of revolution and counter-revolution.

The July Days prepared the ground for the counter-revolution's offensive, with its brutal hounding of the Bolsheviks and massive slander. This culminated in tsarist General Kornilov's attempt, under the cover of the Kerensky coalition, to drown the revolution in blood with a march on Petrograd.

The Menshevik/Social Revolutionary coalition government was suspended in mid-air as the masses themselves, under the leadership of the Bolsheviks - some of them released from jail like Trotsky to defend Petrograd - smashed Kornilov's coup.

A revolution is not the product



Revolution, a social overturn, unfolds when there is no other way out. Before this, the masses advance and retreat several times before they believe it is necessary to undertake the 'final assault'. This is how the Russian Revolution developed over nine months, through different phases of revolution and counter-revolution.

of a handful of individuals proceeding to stage a 'coup', as capitalist historians argue.

The agricultural revolution in Russia - one of the tasks of the capitalist-democratic revolution - could only be implemented by a workers and peasants' government coming to power. The Bolsheviks, and only the Bolsheviks, worked for this throughout the tumultuous events of 1917.

Initially, the masses were confused and hostile to the Bolsheviks' ideas.

Slowly, as the masses saw and understood what the Bolsheviks stood for, hostility to their policies was remoulded into deep, implacable support. One soldier in the Moscow garrison said: "After the attempt of Kornilov, all the troops acquired a Bolshevik colour... All were struck by the way in which the statement (of

the Bolsheviks) came true... that General Kornilov would soon be at the gates of Petrograd."

Growth of Bolsheviks

The Bolsheviks grew massively in August and September. The masses "drink up the Bolshevik slogans just as naturally as they breathe air". Conversely, the Social Revolutionaries and Mensheviks collapsed; the former from 375,000 votes in elections to the Moscow Duma in June to only 54,000 in September.

The Petrograd garrison boasted 90% for the Bolsheviks, in some detachments over 95%. In the shop and factory committees, the same process was clear. At the beginning of the revolution in February, the Bolsheviks were a small minority with 1% or



UTION

working class took power



Mass support among workers and the poor in the run-up to October 1917

2% in the soviets and only 4% when Lenin returned to Russia in April 1917.

At that stage, Lenin declared: "We must base ourselves only upon the consciousness of the masses. Even if it is necessary to remain in a minority, so be it ... We will carry on the work of criticism in order to free the masses from deceit. Our line will prove right. All the oppressed will come to us. They have no other way out." And so it proved in the tumultuous months following Kornilov's defeat.

Revolutions, ultimately, arrive at decisive moments when power is posed. If the oppressed masses do not seize the opportunity, then a downswing occurs where the former exploiters seek to take back the revolution's gains through counter-revolution.

Sometimes this assumes a bloody character, as it did after the defeat of the 1925-27 revolution in China, in the bloody terror of Chiang Kai-shek's Guomindang and the murder, rape and brutality of invading imperialist armies like the Japanese.

Undoubtedly, if the working class had not taken power, then a new Kornilov and a reign of terror, not the 'tranquil' humane

capitalist democracy dreamed of by capitalist professors, would have ensued. But a revolution is determined by the whole preceding period and the existence of certain prerequisites. In Russia, the ruling classes – the nobility, monarchy, bureaucracy and the politically weak capitalists, with no real roots in the mass of the people – were rotting away.

The oppressed nationalities' demands for freedom were denied by the compromisers. The revolt of the peasantry and the demand for the land was widespread. 77% of the peasant departments were in revolt that autumn. The working class – concentrated in big factories and a dynamic force – felt that they "could no longer live like this". This was undoubtedly the mood in autumn 1917.

These conditions may exist, yet a revolutionary opportunity can still be missed through faulty leadership. History shows this, both before 1917 and since. Friedrich Engels, co-founder of the ideas of scientific socialism with Karl Marx, pointed out that there can be periods in the life of society when 20 years is like one day and then there can be one day when the events of 20 years are concentrated.

Broadly speaking, this is what

characterises a revolutionary period. Lenin, in urging the Bolshevik party to lead the revolution, wrote from the Finnish underground where murder threats had driven him after the July days, that the fate of Russia could be decided in two or three days.

In reality, the possibility of the working class and poor peasants taking power lasted only two or three months, probably in September and October. Immediately before the October overturn, the masses in Petrograd and elsewhere were becoming impatient, muttering that perhaps the Bolsheviks were like other parties, would dither and not take power. To the left of the Bolsheviks, the anarchists began to grow.

Fearful that the Bolsheviks could miss the opportunity and, from exile, fearing that even the soviets had degenerated under Menshevik and Social Revolutionary influence, Lenin urged the Bolshevik party to take power, basing itself on the more representative shop stewards and factory committees.

Trotsky, present in Petrograd, was more in touch with the colossal changes being wrought in the soviets. The 'parent' of all Russia's soviets, the Petrograd soviet, swung decisively towards



the Bolsheviks. Meanwhile, Kerensky's coalition government sought to move the most revolutionary battalions of soldiers out of Petrograd, obviously in preparation for a march on 'Bolshevik' Petrograd.

To counter this the Petrograd soviet, which had installed Trotsky as its chairman in September, organised a Military Revolutionary Committee to defend the revolution's gains. This body carried through the October insurrection. For this to be achieved, it needed the existence of the 'subjective factor', the Bolshevik party. The existence of this party led to the successful October Revolution.

International impact

There were revolutions in Germany in 1918, in Hungary in 1919 and a series of upheavals which, if the working class of the rest of Europe had possessed a leadership like the Bolsheviks, would have completely transformed the situation in Europe and the world, and with it changed history.

The role of a mass party cannot be separated from the process of revolution. It is like the forceps for an obstetrician at a difficult birth. Without this, revolutions can and have resulted in abortions.

Despite abundant revolutionary opportunities in the 20th century, only in Russia did the working class directly take power and establish – for a short time (1917-23), it is true – workers' democracy. This meant the election of all officials, the right of recall, no official to receive more than the average worker, etc.

Because of the blight of totalitarian Stalinism, the atrophy and collapse of the old working class organisations – the social democracy and communist parties – and their hollowing out into empty bureaucratic machines, new generations of young people and workers tend to reject the idea of 'parties' and even organisation.

Yet, without the lever of a mass party with a farsighted revolutionary leadership, history shows that a revolutionary opportunity can be squandered with terrible consequences for the masses. The lesson of the Russian Revolution is that a party is required but one that bases itself on politically aware workers with their conscious control, democracy and influence reflected at all levels.

The Russian Revolution, the greatest single event in human history, was carried through on the basis of the most democratic organisations of the working class, the soviets (workers' committees) and of the most democratic workers' state ever seen.

It degenerated not because Stalinism was inherent in Marxism-Leninism, as Daniels and others imply, but because of the Russian Revolution's isolation. Lenin and Trotsky never perceived it possible to establish socialism in isolation in such an economically and culturally backward society. Only the triumph of the European revolution would have guaranteed the maintenance and extension of the democracy from the outset, through the construction of a European socialist united states.

Instead, the young workers' state was confronted with civil war, as the dispossessed landlords and capitalists collaborated with 21 armies of imperialism to try to destroy this state. At one stage, the revolution was confined to two cities, Petrograd and Moscow. The rest of Russia was in the hands of landlord-capitalist reaction.

However, the revolution's class and internationalist appeal ultimately led to victory, which would have been impossible without the mass support of the European and worldwide working class.

Much as some sneer at the prospect of revolution in the modern era, capitalism is a failing system. Socialism, and the revolution necessary to usher in this new society, will become a reality in the 21st century world.

Socialism and the arts

WOMEN



Juan Pedro Flores Gonzalez's Art and Revolution

Elaine Mallon
Lothian, Socialist Party
Scotland

Art is a language that everyone can speak. The tangible creation of something that came entirely from your imagination is a unique experience. Participating in each step is empowering and it's this very empowerment that's deliberately attacked under capitalism. Even for industrial workers, the pride of seeing a finished product they contributed to is vanishing in front of their eyes.

Cheap mass production is turning workers and artists alike into repetitive zombies with no real value or knowledge in society.

Devalued and desperate for work is exactly the mindset that capitalism thrives on. Trotsky said that mending this separation between the intellectual and physical plays a key role in a socialist revolution.

Bringing the inner world into the outer world of tangible reality, art allows the expression of ideas that are beyond articulation and language. In a world where people feel more and more alienated and abandoned by society, where education is poorer when you're poor, art can still reach out and improve the lives of people who dare to think and create. Art and music have been around longer than language, they speak to our senses, our emo-



Capitalism has butchered artistic expression beyond recognition. In today's political climate it has been reduced to its profit and investment value. Monet and Picasso have been reduced to acquisitions and investments, sought after by the super-rich and sold on for obscene prices.

tions and our instincts giving it enhanced powers of communication that run far deeper than language and intellect. It's often good judgment that prevails, rather than following rules.

Artists often learn quickly there's more than one way to approach a problem or answer a question, encouraging multi-perspectives about the world around us. Picasso and Matisse, two of the main founders of cubism represented this 3 dimensional, multi-perspective view in much of their work.

butchered

Capitalism has butchered artistic expression beyond recognition. In today's political climate it has been reduced to its profit and investment value. Monet and Picasso have been reduced to acquisitions and investments, sought after by the super-rich and sold on for obscene prices.

They've become assets that are easily hidden from tax collectors, hoarded in high-secu-

rity vaults and art bunkers. Museums in the 21st century are struggling to cope with rising costs and massive cuts in funding. They're shamefully being forced to sell off collections to private buyers, restricting public access to important works appropriated by the ultra rich.

agitprop

During the Russian revolution art was used to communicate important ideas, encouraging literacy, political education and participation in the revolt. This was called Agitprop.

There was even an agitprop train that travelled the length and breadth of Russia spreading news of the revolution. The outside of the train was covered in protest art. Inside there would be literacy lessons, exhibitions, gramophone recordings of speeches, films and lectures.

Films were just as important as any other medium during the revolution. Eisenstein released Battleship Potemkin in 1925. The dramatisation of the

mutiny that occurred in 1905 when the crew rebelled against their senior officers, proved an inspiring example of uprising. Its notorious reputation saw it banned in various countries over the years but still remains an all time classic to this day. It was named the greatest film of all time in 1958 and continues to receive the highest standard of reviews online. An example of the deep communication that art can provide even several generations after its creation.

Shostakovich

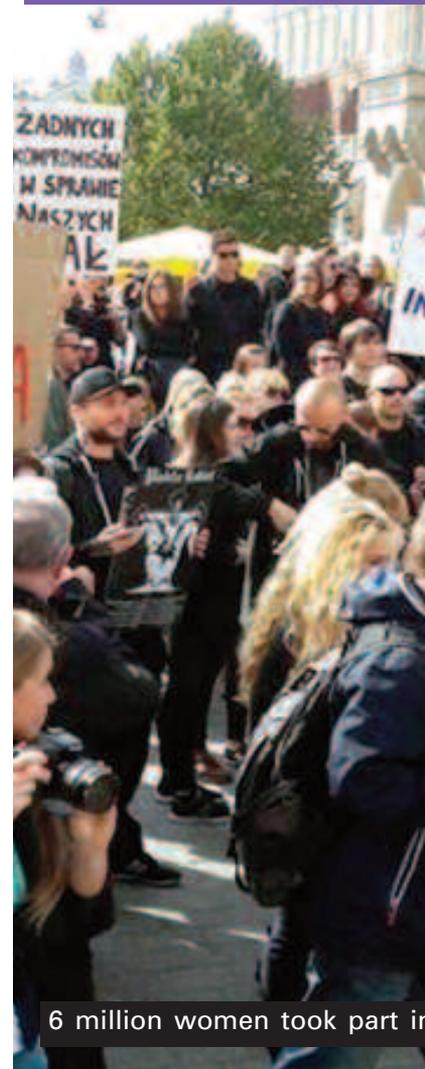
A great musical phenomenon took place in Russia in the 40s. German troops had completely surrounded Leningrad, people were starving to death, conditions were horrific and the future bleak, but, on the evening of 9th August 1942, the loud cacophony of German warfare was temporarily silenced by a live orchestra! Loud speakers had been hastily rigged-up across the front line and a strange sound - that terrified some of the community at first - was eerily carried throughout the city.

A classical concert performing Dmitri Shostakovich's 7th symphony was performed and broadcast across the land. It would become more familiarly known as the 'Symphony of Leningrad' but never before had a piece of music become such a powerful symbol of resistance or such an effective tool of psychological warfare.

One eyewitness recalls that spectators were moved to tears when the musicians arrived for the performance in their shabby concert clothes, poverty stricken skeletal figures in dinner jackets and gowns. Three members of the orchestra died of starvation before the premiere even took place.

The score was photographed on 900 pages of microfilm and put in a tin can that was flown across enemy lines. It was a courageous act and although the siege would continue for another two years, claiming the lives of nearly a million civilians, German officers who were later captured admitted that on hearing the Leningrad symphony they instantly knew the city could never be defeated. Shostakovich initially dedicated the piece to the life of Lenin then amended the dedication to the city of Leningrad on its completion.

It stands today is one of the



most important performances in history. A performance that had a direct effect on the minds of everyone present. A haunting example of the power of music.

People are already being plunged into poverty, workers are participating in strikes all over the country. We need to formulate an artistic response to spread the revolutionary message. Get involved, participate, stand up and fight, create your own revolutionary art and spread it far and wide!

● For more on socialism and art: Bad Art on Facebook



FIGHTING BACK



in a general strike in Poland to defend abortion rights

Sinead Daly
Socialist Party Scotland

The recent Ched Evans case, where the sexual history of the victim was allowed to be heard, has raised serious concerns among women's rights organisations, with many arguing that this ruling has put us back 30 years.

It's not just the impact of the ruling on this young woman. It will have untold impact on women's confidence of reporting sexual crimes in the future. We already know that far too much focus is centred on the behaviour of women who have been victims of sexual crimes; how much did she drink, why did she invite him home, what was she wearing, the list is endless, with little, if any, attention to the behaviour of men who commit such vile acts.

Most women choose not to report the crimes. This court decision will do little to reassure women in coming forward in the future!

These numbers don't relay the horror, fear and impact of these experiences. And yet they are just the tip of the iceberg. Most women do not report domestic and sexual crimes to the police.

The expansion of the internet and mobile phone technology has enabled the Porn industry to expand its businesses. It's now a major industry with an estimated worth of \$25bn in annual profits and it accounts for 30% of all internet traffic. The consequences

November 25th marks the annual 16 Days of Activism to End Violence Against Women. Unfortunately, in the year of 2016 – women and men still need to campaign and organise to end the wide spread prevalence of gender based violence.

- 58,104 – is the number of reported incidents of domestic abuse in Scotland last year
- 2 – the number of women in the UK murdered every week at the hands of their partner or ex-partner
- 10,273 – the number of reported sex offences in 2015/16 a 53% per cent rise from 2006/07. 43% of these crimes were against women under the age of 18.
- 29% of 16-18 year old girls say they have experienced unwanted sexual touching at school
- 59% of girls and young women aged 13-21 said in 2014 that they had faced some form of sexual harassment at school or college in the past year.

are alarming. The industry and its cheerleaders would have us believe that this is women being sexually empowered and this is what gender equality looks like. These messages are so pervasive that for many young people this is what many now believe sexual relations should be. It is not surprising, therefore, that we are seeing increasing levels of 'peer on peer' sexual harassment and sexual violence/abuse among young people.

Fighting Back

There's an increasing willingness of women taking direct action against gender specific oppression. The magnificent general strike of 6 million women in Poland demanding

the reversal of the banning of abortion is one example. In Ireland tens of thousands of men and women are demanding the government act to implement the woman's right to choose.

The Socialist Party in Ireland is campaigning to repeal the eighth amendment, which enshrines an abortion ban into the Irish constitution. One of our TDs (MPs), Ruth Coppinger, is moving this amendment in the Irish parliament in November.

Across Latin America, we've seen massive demonstrations against sexual violence in places like Venezuela, Bolivia, Brazil, and Colombia. We need to build a strong movement of women and men to fight to end the gender pay gap, gender inequality and gender based violence in all its forms.

Corbyn movement at a crossroads

Philip Stott
Editor, the Socialist

Socialist Party Scotland welcomed Jeremy Corbyn's emphatic victory in the recent Labour leadership contest.

The defeat of Owen Smith, although not unexpected, is a significant blow to the capitalist establishment in Britain and their own "Blairite tendency" that still dominates the Parliamentary Labour Party (PLP).

However, no matter the scale of Jeremy Corbyn's achievement, there is zero possibility of the Labour right accepting the result. On the contrary they are already preparing to fire the starting pistol on the next phase of the civil war inside the Labour Party.

In this they will have the full support of the bosses' media, the billionaire elite and all the enemies of the working class and socialism.

Labour is, as we have consistently explained, two mutually

exclusive parties coexisting within the same formation.

It is clear that the Labour right and the capitalist elite they represent intend to fight on to try and regain their formerly unchallenged control of the Labour Party.

To counter the threat of a new onslaught against him and his anti-austerity platform, Jeremy Corbyn must end any attempts at conciliation and compromise with the Blairites. Urgent rule changes to return democracy to the Labour Party membership are vital.

Central to this must be the right of party members to select, and if necessary deselect, Labour MPs, councillors and MSPs.

Labour councillors who continually vote through cuts in services must also face challenge by the ranks of the party to create a real anti-austerity movement. Democracy and the rights of party members and trade unions to decide pol-

icy and control over their elected representatives is vital. It is therefore a major mistake that following the leadership election Jeremy Corbyn and John McDonnell are seeking a compromise with the right.

They have claimed that the "vast majority of MPs" should have no concerns about deselection. While the Blairites should be removed from Labour, all anti-cuts forces – including the Socialist Party – should be welcomed into a re-constituted federal Party.

Scotland

At this stage the right wing are still in the leadership of Scottish Labour. Kezia Dugdale openly come out against Corbyn and backed Owen Smith.

It is vital that the Corbyn-supporting left challenge for the Scottish leadership, in addition to drawing up proposals for the democratisation of the

party. The overwhelming majority of Labour councillors in Scotland are also opposed to Corbyn and have voted through cuts at a local level.

The catastrophic impact of years of right-wing Blairite control combined with its role in opposition to Scottish independence has shattered the electoral and activist base of the Labour Party in Scotland.

Reflecting this weakened position, the Corbyn surge has had a muted echo in Scotland. Owen Smith won a majority of the votes from Scottish Labour members.

Changing this position would require the Corbyn left in Scottish Labour to fight for an anti-austerity policy based on a refusal by Labour councillors and MSPs to implement cuts as well as a clear policy in favour of public ownership and opposition to all forms of privatisation

In addition, the blanket opposition to Scottish independ-



ence must be re-thought. A socialist policy on the national question in favour of independence, while opposing the SNP and their pro-big business policies, is essential.

Jeremy Corbyn and his supporters, including Momentum, attempts to seek a compromise with the right can only lead to demoralisation and defeat.

A chance to build a new workers' party can be squandered unless the decisive steps outlined above are taken urgently.



As we go to press, the US presidential election is about to take place. According to one opinion poll, 25% of young Americans would prefer a meteor to destroy Earth than see Donald Trump or Hillary Clinton in the White House! As **Patrick Ayers** and **Ty Moore** of Socialist Alternative (US co-thinkers of Socialist Party Scotland) argue, if ever there was a case for a new political party to represent the 99% then this presidential election is it. For the full analysis of the election result see www.socialistworld.net

US PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION: THE DISASTROUS FAILURE OF 'LESSER EVILISM'

A majority of those planning to vote for Hillary Clinton will be 'holding their noses' as they cast their ballots on 8 November, motivated by fear of Donald Trump rather than positive support for Hillary.

The problem for Clinton is the more voters learn about her legacy of promoting an aggressive corporate agenda, the more they dislike her.

Liberal commentators have focused on Trump's bigoted hard-core base which, while significant, remains a distinct minority of voters. Fatally missing from most liberal analysis (and political strategy) is that the main fuel powering Trump's campaign is popular rage at the corporate corruption of the political establishment.

Clinton's corporate campaign is incapable of tapping into this mass desire for change. Unfortunately, the failure of union and progressive leaders to offer an independent, anti-establishment challenge to Trump leaves the right wing an open field to exploit the popular anger.

Polls show that Bernie Sanders (see picture opposite right), a self-described democratic socialist, remains the most popular politician in

America, and it remains clear he would be a far stronger candidate against Trump than Clinton.

But as the Democratic National Committee's fierce backing of Clinton proved, the Democratic Party tops are more firmly committed to maintaining their alliance with Wall Street and big business than they are to defeating Trump and the right wing.

Faced with the horrifying prospect of a Trump White House, it is understandable that millions of ordinary people who completely oppose Clinton's Wall Street politics will nonetheless cast a vote for her on 8 November.

Self-defeating

At the same time, using popular opposition to Trump as a veil, most union and progressive leaders are arguing for a dangerous and self-defeating 'lesser-evil' strategy that endlessly reduces our movements into pressure campaigns on the corporate controlled Democratic Party.

Bernie Sanders himself, who won mass support for exposing Clinton's deep corporate corruption when he stood in the

Democratic primaries, is a living demonstration of the corrosive logic of lesser evilism. Since Bernie started heaping praise on Clinton in order to turn out the vote against Trump, his credibility has waned and attendance at his rallies has dramatically dropped off.

The policy of covering up for the corporate character of the Democratic Party remains a central strategic failure of the unions and progressive leadership in America.

This strategy also paved the way for the Tea Party and their sweeping electoral victories in the 2010 elections for Congress and state legislatures.

When Obama took power amid the 2008 financial crisis, his first act was to bail out the Wall Street banks. These banks showered him with campaign contributions as millions lost their homes.

However the union and progressive leaders were fearful of embarrassing the Democrats. They failed to mobilise the enormous anger at Wall Street into a left opposition movement, leaving Tea Party Republicans an open field.

Wherever the left fails to organise a bold, fighting, working-class challenge to

corporate politics-as-usual, popular rage at the failures of capitalism will be channelled behind right-wing 'anti-establishment' figures like Trump.

Socialist Alternative gathered over 125,000 signatures urging Bernie to run all the way through November and use his massive base of support to build a new party for the 99%.

But now that Sanders endorsed Clinton, we are urging a vote for the Green's Jill Stein in all 50 states to register the strongest possible protest vote against racism and corporate politics, and to help popularise the need for independent politics.

If the unions and the wider left organised a strong working class challenge to Clinton and Trump, they would be far more effective at peeling away Trump's soft supporters, those who are not hardened bigots but rather working class people looking to "kick out the bums" overseeing our corrupt political establishment.

Jill Stein

We understand why people will vote for Clinton in swing states to block Trump. But Socialist Alternative is campaign-

ing for Jill Stein throughout the country as the best way, in this period of heightened political debate, to strengthen support for what's most needed: political independence for our movements and a new party of the 99%.

Since the 2008 economic crisis, the "American Dream" has unravelled and opened up unprecedented space for building the socialist movement and launching a new mass party of the left. Capitalism is mired in an ongoing global crisis, and there is no prospect for a return to the previous era of generous social welfare states without mass struggle and a socialist transformation of society.

● Read more on the socialist analysis of the US elections - Socialist Alternative online pamphlet: 'The Failure of Lesser Evilism: Why Fighting the Right Means Building a New Party of the 99%' socialistalternative.org/failure-lesser-evilism/



Students get socialist

This term, Socialist Students, initiated by Socialist Party Scotland, has quickly grown across Scotland. We now have newly active university societies and groups at Aberdeen, Glasgow, Strathclyde, Heriot-Watt, University of the West of Scotland and Edinburgh universities.

At the freshers fairs we found a huge openness to socialist ideas. Hundreds of students told us they rejected neo liberal austerity capitalism and were looking for an alternative. Political ferment, reflected in the surges behind Jeremy Corbyn and Bernie Sanders, as well as the legacy of the independence referendum, has had an impact. "Socialism" is an attractive idea for many students and young people.

"Capitalism is failing our generation" our freshers leaflets said which chimed with students facing debt, low pay, insecure work and an unaffordable education. Many Scottish young people feel betrayed by the SNP's role in implementing austerity.

growing interest

Roan James, Strathclyde University Socialist Students told us: "We have had new people and lots of interest in our ideological meetings on What is Socialism in the 21st Century? The Relevance of the Communist Manifesto today, and Who was Trotsky? In Glasgow, the



Solidarity from Socialist Students to students in Spain

Socialist Students societies at the two biggest universities intervened at a Jeremy Corbyn rally getting more activists around us. We have also been leafletting film showings of I, Daniel Blake.

We organised international solidarity with the Spanish Students general strike on 26th October, with rallies at both universities which involved students from the Spanish state. We also mobilised support for the Unison college staff strike for fair pay and for a Reclaim the Night - End Violence Against Women in West Dunbartonshire"

Sean and Iain, Heriot-Watt Socialist Students said: "At Heriot-Watt we hosted the first

Scottish national co-ordination meeting of Socialist Students from which we planned two successful national days of action in support of the students in Spain and for rent control in student accommodation.

We are campaigning against the extortionate rent that students pay to live in halls. This can be anywhere from £100-£250 per week and is a massive contributor to student poverty.

"Our aim is to start a movement for mass action on this issue, inspired by rent strikes that took place last year that forced universities to concede and give students affordable housing. The Student Association at Heriot Watt is supportive of the campaign."

Why I joined Socialist Party Scotland

Mark McGowan, Glasgow

"Growing up in Glasgow, a post-industrial community with some of the most deprived communities in the country, I always felt the need to be political. Combining this with having family members who were always vocal about their left-wing ideas, it made complete sense to me to research and invest time in politics. In my eyes, the only serious alternative was a complete overhaul of the current structures - socialism.

I understood - especially in the wake of movements such as Corbyn, Momentum and Brexit - the need to organise. I feel absolutely disillusioned with the two-party system that dominates British politics, and the SNP establishment that now controls much of the political sphere in Scotland.

Thus, the Socialist Party Scotland seemed like the only credible party to join. Socialist Party Scotland are an inclusive party. They have a healthy mix of discussion and activism that allows you to learn more whilst having an active involvement in the local community and internationally."

Hailey Slate, Aberdeen

I've always been angered by inequality, such as systematic racism, sexism, homophobia, and the disenfranchisement of the working class/minorities. It wasn't until I came to university and started studying mi-



nority languages/cultures and realised that capitalist cultural imperialism was to blame for their decline. I ended up joining the Socialist Student Society on campus just to gain more perspective.

I decided to join the Socialist Party because there isn't currently any political party whose agenda concerns the best interest of racial and cultural minorities.

In the US, presidential candidates fight over our vote on the campaign trail, but can't actually be bothered to tend to our needs once they reach the White House.

Socialism outwardly recognises capitalism as the root of racism and classism and actively works to stop it. That alone makes me hopeful that advancing socialism could potentially bring the equality to our society that so many factions claim to strive for but never seem to do anything about.

"Let us learn" revolt at Glasgow art school

By Glasgow Socialist Students members

Several hundred students boycotted classes and organised a mass picket right in the middle of an open day at the Glasgow School of Art (GSA) on 27 October. They were motivated by anger against cuts and demanding more facilities to "let us learn".

A fire in 2014 destroyed a large part of the campus and management have failed to invest and respond to the reduced space for students effectively. Placards and chants highlighted that many students are paying high fees of "£50 a day".

One student, Euan, spoke to the Socialist: "GSA are saying they will bring in 25% more students but we are already 'hot-desking', there is no space. We have tried every form



of dialogue and this was the only option left, the turnout today shows them we are serious. We want change."

Other students explained that they couldn't get access to material or technicians despite the college's renowned reputation.

GSA management, reflecting their panicked embarrassment at their open day being over-

shadowed by the creative protest powers of their own students, screamed at picketers to stay off the roads in front of the media cameras and tried to stop students being interviewed. As the protest grew they put up steel barriers around the picket, students responded by chanting "Glasgow School of Barriers!"

Mass meetings should be

called of the GSA student body to discuss and debate the next course of mass action. The class boycott was an important tactic that should be repeated to achieve the widest possible participation of students.

Occupation should also be seriously considered. Building links with trade unions on campus is also vital.

Socialist Students in Glasgow mobilised support from the wider trade union movement. On the same day we were involved in a protest with Glasgow City Unison at the grand lavish opening of the new Glasgow City College campus. These struggles should be brought together.

Socialist Students offers these ideas from our experience of participation of student struggles and hopes to be part of a discussion with GSA students about the way forward.

GSA students commendable action shows that if a lead is given then students will fight to improve their conditions.

Kate Tempest

Kate Tempest's new work 'Let Them Eat Chaos', is amazing. Seven people, in one street "counting sheepishly their mistakes"

"And these are the only times you have known.

"Is this what it's come to?" you think,

"What am I to make of all this?"

Esther's worried about the world tonight.

She's worried all the time. In fact she don't know how she's supposed to put it from her mind.

That is the lead-in to 'Europe Is Lost' - which goes on to say:

It's big business baby, and its smile is hideous.

Top-down violence, a structural viciousness.

Your kids are doped up on medical sedatives.

But don't worry 'bout that, man. Worry 'bout terrorists.

The music complements the work perfectly. Buy the album.

MASS STUDENT STRIKE ROCKS SPANISH STATE



Further strike planned for 24th November to fight the PP government

A tidal wave of protest swept through the streets and squares of Spain on 26 October. Two million, mainly school students, took part in a strike organised by Sindicato de Estudiantes (SE - students union). The students union has announced another strike for 24 November. **Claire Laker-Mansfield**, national organiser of Socialist Students (England and Wales), who was invited to participate by Izquierda Revolucionaria which plays a leading role in SE, reports.

The strike was solid - with over 90% participation. But students did not simply stay at home. More than 200,000 young people joined the demonstrations that had been organised in over 60 towns and cities. This was a mighty day of resistance.

In Madrid alone, 60,000 students swept through the streets. The mood on the protest was an infectious mix of anger, determination and empowerment. For thousands of those taking part, this was their first major demonstration - a first experience of taking collective action.

So, as well as anger, there was also joy and optimism. There was renewed confidence that austerity was not just a fact of life, that it could be fought and defeated.

The strike's most prominent demand was to abolish the 'revalidas' that are being introduced by the government. These first existed under the dictator General Franco and are a series of compulsory exams that students are forced to take at different stages of their schooling.

expectations

Under the plans, students who fail to pass the tests will be prevented from progressing to

the next stage in their academic study. What's more, qualifications they have already obtained will not be valid.

If rolled out in the way the government intends, these exams will prevent thousands of students, especially those from working class backgrounds, from accessing university. Worse still, thousands more could be forced to leave education early, with almost no formal qualifications. In reality, the intention is to brand young people as 'failures' and to lower their sights and expectations.

But it is capitalism that is the real failure. Spanish youth unemployment currently stands at a staggeringly high 45%. So the student strike was also, in part, a protest against the dire prospects young people are faced with and the doors that are being slammed in their faces.

As well as demanding an end to the Francoist 'revalidas', the strike was also against the 'LOMCE' - a government decree which includes swingeing cuts to education.

One of the chants which rang out most often was 'Si Se Puede' - yes we can. This was the slogan used by the anti-eviction housing movement that has swept Spain. It showed the way the school students taking part in the strike saw

themselves as participants in an overall movement against austerity and its effects.

One of the warmest receptions for speakers addressing the crowd was for a striking Coca-Cola worker. "Workers and students unite" was repeatedly chanted as the march went on.

In Madrid, teachers were also on strike that day. Their trade unions had supported and called for a demonstration to take place in the evening. But this was not repeated elsewhere.

The isolated nature of the teachers strike in Madrid was

not due to a lack of anger or willingness to take action among education workers. Instead, it was the fear by the trade union leaders of what might be unleashed. So, like in Britain, the right-wing trade union leaderships are attempting to block the development of mass struggle.

Parents

But despite the inadequacies of the trade union leaders, tens of thousands of workers joined the demonstration that had been called in Madrid that evening. One of the factors in the huge success of the strike was the support of the national parents association (CEAPA). As well as taking part and jointly calling the evening march, CEAPA also helped organise for thousands of parents to keep their young children off school during the strike day.

This was the first action of its scale for a number of years. And it broke the dam, setting

loose the enormous discontent and anger which exists within Spanish society. Just a few days later a mass protest took place in Madrid against the formation of the right-wing Partido Popular (PP) government.

One word that protesters repeatedly chanted was 'traitors'. They were referring to the rotten capitulation of the so-called Spanish Socialist Workers Party (PSOE) leaders. A majority of PSOE MPs abstained in a parliamentary vote to elect the prime minister.

The result of this abstention was to hand power to the right-wing PP, despite their failure to win a majority in the election. So on 26 October, the anger at this impending historic betrayal was enormous.

Anger

More mass protests have taken place opposing the formation of an unelected PP government. The SE has declared



ES general secretary Ana Garcia (left) and Socialist Students national organiser Claire Laker-Mansfield (right) speak to the press



It was not just in Madrid where thousands of students joined protests. These are a few examples of the fantastic protests that took place all over the Spanish state.

In the Basque country, more than 10,000 marched in Bilbao, 5,000 in Donostia and thousands more in Vitoria/Gasteiz and Iruña.

In Catalonia, more than 50,000 filled the streets of Barcelona, with thousands more in Tarragona and Girona and dozens of other towns. Almost 10,000 marched in Valencia, with thousands more in Alicante. In Galicia: 5,000 in A Coruña, 3,000 in Ferrol and thousands more in other towns. 5,000 in Zaragoza.

In Andalusia it was spectacular: 15,000 in Granada, 10,000 in Sevilla, 7,000 in Malaga, 2,000 in Cadiz and over 1,000 in Almeria and Huelva... Thousands also marched in Extremadura, the Canary Islands, and the Balearic Islands, in Murcia, Castilla y León, Castilla La Mancha, and Cantabria.

that, unless the government meets its demands, in particular by scrapping the 'revalidas', a further student strike will take place in November. Given the anger that is boiling over, there is every possibility that this could be as big, or even bigger, than the first one.

Throughout the day, the leaders of the SE, including Ana Garcia the general secretary, were interviewed by the main television channels, newspapers and other media. Ana was able to express the intense anger and determination of her members.

This stood in contrast to the leaders of the major trade unions. But Ana was also able to raise the need for a generalised fightback - helping to apply pressure to the tops of the trade unions to do their jobs.

The international solidarity that was organised by socialists and trade unionists around the world played a big part in boosting the confidence and determination of students and workers.

On the demonstration, I was able to mention only a small number the solidarity actions that had been organised by the Committee for a Workers' International (CWI). But every example I gave generated huge cheers.

The action organised by the CWI in Hong Kong - in which Spain's consul general physically assaulted and attacked a protester - served to demonstrate the establishment's fear of movements like these, as

well as the dangerous conditions which socialists work in in many parts of the world.

This action made a particular impression and has since been reported in two major national newspapers in Spain. But it was also the scale and scope of the solidarity effort which helped buoy people. There were protests in more than 20 countries worldwide.

taste of struggle

The strike that took place on 26 October has given workers and young people in Spain a fresh taste of struggle.

It has broken any fragile social peace that had existed and paved the way for a new phase in the fight against austerity and the capitalist system which demands it.

And this determination to fight will not stop at the borders of Spain. Around the world, on the basis of capitalism, the next generation faces a bleak future.

Some of the biggest cheers at the rallies in Madrid came when speakers raised the need for socialist change.

That is a foretaste of the huge movements that are to come, movements that will fight for an end to the rotten capitalist system and fight for a socialist society in the interests of the 99%.

It was not just in Madrid where thousands of students joined protests. These are a few examples of the fantastic protests that took place all over the Spanish state.



what we stand for

Socialist Party Scotland fights for a socialist society, democratically run for the needs of all and not for the profits of the few.

We oppose every cut and austerity measure by fighting in the trade unions, communities, colleges and schools for every possible improvement in the lives of working class people. Organised, we, the working class and the 99%, have the potential to change society.

Because capitalism is a world system, the struggle for democratic socialism must be international. Socialist Party Scotland is part of the Committee for a Workers' International (CWI), a socialist organisation that organises in over 40 countries.

www.socialistworld.net

work and income

- For trade union action for a £10 an hour minimum wage. No age exemptions. For an annual increase in the minimum wage, linked to average earnings.
- Reject Workfare; 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 protect the environment.

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 play a central role in helping to build a new workers' party.

socialism and internationalism

- Tax the rich. For a socialist government that takes the major companies in Scotland into public ownership 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.
- No to the bosses European Union. For a socialist Europe and a socialist world free from poverty.

Glasgow trade union revolt

Workers fight Labour cuts

□ For socialist councillors who'll fight austerity instead of implementing Tory cuts



Left: Glasgow Jannies have taken 29 days of strike action this year. Right: Unison members are planning strike action against privatisation of the ICT service

Matt Dobson
Socialist Party Scotland

Heroic council workers are fighting cuts, low pay, privatisation and overwork in Glasgow.

Glasgow Labour council is trying to drive through the privatisation of its ICT services.

There is anger and a strong will to fight. In Glasgow, ICT workers have voted by 96% to

back strike action against the attacks on terms and conditions privatisation represents.

School janitors have taken 29 days of strike action so far in 2016. Community Safety workers have been walking out every weekend throughout the autumn. In both cases it's because of unfair pay by their "arms length" employers.

The socialist-led Glasgow City Unison branch are at the

heart of these struggles. It shows what is possible when trade union members have a leadership they can trust to fight with them and against all cuts and privatisation.

Instead of Labour and the SNP implementing Tory austerity, we need anti-cuts councillors that build a fight back.

£500 million was cut from councils in Scotland this year. Since 2008, 40,000 jobs have

been lost from councils across Scotland. Both Labour and SNP councils are attacking workers conditions.

Workers and users of council services need councillors that support and act on the policy of the local authority unions in Glasgow and Dundee which is for no-cuts budgets.

Councils should use all financial mechanisms to stop implementing cuts and build a

mass campaign to demand a return of the billions stolen in austerity by Holyrood and Westminster.

The Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC) will be standing anti-austerity fighters in the 2017 council elections on this manifesto, alongside a wide range of socialist and anti-privatisation policies.

Get involved with Socialist Party Scotland and TUSC.