

Solidarity & Workers' Liberty



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For a workers' government

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What is the Alliance for Workers' Liberty?

Today one class, the working class, lives by selling its labour power to another, the capitalist class, which owns the means of production. Society is shaped by the capitalists' relentless drive to increase their wealth. Capitalism causes poverty, unemployment, the blighting of lives by overwork, imperialism, the destruction of the environment and much else.

Against the accumulated wealth and power of the capitalists, the working class has one weapon: solidarity.

The Alliance for Workers' Liberty aims to build solidarity through struggle so that the working class can overthrow capitalism. We want socialist revolution: collective ownership of industry and services, workers' control and a democracy much fuller than the present system, with elected representatives recallable at any time and an end to bureaucrats' and managers' privileges.

We fight for the labour movement to break with "social partnership" and assert working-class interests militantly against the bosses.

Our priority is to work in the workplaces and trade unions, supporting workers' struggles, producing workplace bulletins, helping organise rank-and-file groups.

We are also active among students and in many campaigns and alliances.

We stand for:

- Independent working-class representation in politics.
- A workers' government, based on and accountable to the labour movement.
- A workers' charter of trade union rights — to organise, to strike, to picket effectively, and to take solidarity action.
- Taxation of the rich to fund decent public services, homes, education and jobs for all.
- A workers' movement that fights all forms of oppression. Full equality for women and social provision to free women from the burden of housework. Free abortion on request. Full equality for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people. Black and white workers' unity against racism.
- Open borders.
- Global solidarity against global capital — workers everywhere have more in common with each other than with their capitalist or Stalinist rulers.
- Democracy at every level of society, from the smallest workplace or community to global social organisation.
- Working-class solidarity in international politics: equal rights for all nations, against imperialists and predators big and small.
- Maximum left unity in action, and openness in debate.
- If you agree with us, please take some copies of *Solidarity* to sell — and join us!

Contact us:

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Learn the lessons of Savile scandal

By Esther Townsend

Allegations of rape and sexual assault against Jimmy Savile have now reached 340 lines of inquiry with 40 potential victims.

Questions are raised about sexism; gender dynamics; why "stranger rape" persists as the dominant conception of sexual assault; and how behaviours are dismissed as normal or inevitable (a Stoke Mandeville hospital trainee occupational therapist had concerns but thought Savile was "just a pervy old man").

But, as the list of implicated organisations grows, the case raises serious questions about services, accountability and safeguarding.

Fundamentally, a severe lack of communication, a culture of ignoring issues and a lack of clear organisational structures creates space for people to gain influence and power.

There are also questions, perhaps especially for a stigmatised institution such as Broadmoor, with which Savile was involved, of the power of charitable donations — does money and support encourage myopia and buy privilege?

Hierarchical organisations privilege some voices and reduce accountability, as junior workers are told issues are "not their concern".

In the 1970s a Stoke Mandeville hospital nurse reported that Savile was abusing patients but senior police said: — Jimmy Savile is a high-profile man.

He could not be doing anything irregular."

This mirrors the even lower value placed on service users, especially in institutions such as Broadmoor where demonisation and depersonalisation is common. Claims of mistreatment or sexual assault are often dismissed and pathologised as delusions, confusion or deliberate lies.

It is important not to sensationalise the emerging lessons; safeguarding frameworks are now radically different, alongside stringent processes and policies. However, the Protection of Freedoms Act (2012) changed checks for people, like Savile, volunteering with children and vulnerable adults.

Nick Clegg called for a reduction in CRB-checking and the "atmosphere of

suspicion and distrust". Of course grandparents shouldn't have to be CRB-checked before babysitting, but the Coalition government are exploiting "common-sense" principles for their own "sack-workers-and-get-volunteers-in" Big Society agenda — in the process making service users vulnerable.

Cultural attitudes and underlying problems of communication, accountability and discrimination against service users persist.

These must be tackled in order to protect children and vulnerable adults with learning difficulties or mental health problems, who might struggle to communicate their experiences or convince others to believe them.

ATOS out of public services!

By Matthew Thompson

ATOS, the private company notorious for its poor treatment of sick and disabled people claiming Employment Support Allowance, is outsourcing one of its contracts... back to the public sector!

The contract is for assessing entitlement to Personal Independence Payments (PIPs), the benefit replacing Disability Living Allowance. It will go to Larnarkshire NHS, with £22 million of the £400 million ATOS is being paid for PIPs testing.

As a civil servant in the Department for Work and Pensions and then an ESA claimant, I've seen the way ATOS treats sick and disabled people. The so-called medical assessments consist

of ticking boxes on a computer screen and are carried out by doctors, nurses and physiotherapists who have no knowledge of the medical conditions and complex mental health issues of the people they see.

Their function (as ATOS and DWP admit) is to find as many people as possible fit for work.

Channel 4's *Dispatches* programme recently sent a doctor undercover in ATOS. He came under pressure to find people he knew were sick fit for work, leading to stress and anxiety and in some cases premature death for those subjected to the ESA testing regime.

Health professional bodies should look at how their ethical codes requiring them to act in the best interests of patients do not square with achieving ATOS/DWP targets.

West Coast fiasco shows need for publicly-owned railway

By Sacha Ismail

After months of controversy over the awarding of the franchise for the West Coast Main Line railway, the government has offered Richard Branson's Virgin Trains a 13-month extension of their contract, to allow rebidding to take place.

The contract had been awarded to rival operators First Group, but following a public campaign by Virgin the government decided the bidding process had been flawed.

For the labour movement, the issue here is the madness of the privatised railway system, which has combined ever more public funding with enormous fare rises, massive job

losses and the destruction of rail workers' terms and conditions to make billions in profits for the rail companies.

The RMT rail union campaigned for the West Coast Main Line to be taken into public ownership as the East Coast line has been.

The blame for this campaign failing belongs in large part to the leadership of the Labour Party. Put under pressure from the media, Ed Miliband's team refused to commit to nationalising, or anything beyond calling the Tories incompetent.

This is the same Labour Party which ruled numerous party conference motions on the railways out of order, on the grounds that they had no contemporary relevance!

South Yorks NHS services prepared for sell-off



By a healthworker

In South Yorkshire the first series of health services are due to be handed out to private companies under the "Any Qualified Provider" (AQP) programme, which was extended under the

government's Health and Social Care Act.

Under AQP providers of health services are approved for a particular treatment by Central Commissioning Groups and can then be chosen for treatment by a GP and patient.

The government has obliged local health commissioners to use AQP for a set number of services and by this mechanism is forcing through privatisation.

In South Yorkshire treatment for carpal tunnel syndrome, some cardiology tests, and bowel examinations have gone out to tender and although the majority of approved services are NHS, private companies are included on the list. These services represent a small chunk of NHS resources in the area but this is the start of privatisation and fragmentation.

This is all despite the fact that the local commission-

ers have said they oppose the Act, and have not, to date, privatised any major services. The new CCG is also not contracting for any commissioning support from outside the NHS.

Far from being a clinically driven, locally accountable policy, the reforms are being driven by government with the aim of breaking up the NHS and opening the door to profit-driven provision.

Italian students and teachers unite to fight Monti

By Hugh Edwards

On Friday 12 October students from 90 towns and cities across Italy were on the march against the government of Mario Monti.

They protested alongside large sections of the CGIL teachers' union, whose one-day strike was against cuts of one billion euros from the public school budget, part of a package of €12 billion cuts from public welfare. This signals the beginning of a generalised fightback by all the teachers' unions.

The 12 October action took place amid terrible weather; but, undaunted, tens of thousands marched and gathered in squares everywhere to show their anger against the ruthless measures of social cannibalism spearheaded by the government and supported by the parliamentary forces of left, right and centre.

The conditions of life continue to spiral relentlessly downwards for millions of ordinary people, amidst the everyday revelations of the bottomless cesspit of corruption that is bourgeois Italy.

The fury needs to become a fist of mass collective political resistance, against both the immediate attacks of those in power and the social order they represent.

South African labour war spreads

By Martyn Hudson

The labour war which has gripped South Africa's mining sector has spread.

Workers at a Toyota plant struck for four days, and a strike by Johannesburg truck drivers prevented fuel giant Shell from making deliveries. Mo Ibrahim, the Sudanese born billionaire and philanthropist, has now waded in against the ANC government in South Africa for losing its sense of direction and attacking striking workers! He criticised the ANC for perpetuating extreme right policies as he awarded Desmond Tutu a new prize last week.

The controversies within the ANC and the hostility to any media penetration into their internal workings have led some commentators to speculate on a new presidential succession and a possible split in its ranks. ANC leaders have had mobile phones confiscated so no leaks can escape from the higher committees of the party!

SCANDALS

Scandals and corruption are rife in the ANC and there is a clear recognition that the Marikana platinum mine strike has exacerbated the factional struggles.

It is increasingly recognised that ANC rule is often little different from that of its apartheid predecessor when it comes to dealing with labour disputes and critics. Instead of acting as

the left conscience of the ANC the South African Communist Party has displayed its absolute commitment to neo-liberalism and to the elimination of workers' self-organisation.

South African activist Ben Fogel has pointed to the case of Dominic Tweedie, a high ranking SACPer and ironically a former editor of the *Shopsteward* magazine, who backed the cops over Marikana.

WILDCAT

Meanwhile leaders of wildcat strike actions have been meeting in Marikana to intensify the struggle against the official ANC-backed NUM and the corporations.

Drawing up programmes for workers' control and occupations, the miners have refused to be cowed by vicious state repression and are agitating for a general strike against capital in South Africa.

There are many socialists involved in the dispute and in the wider solidarity work, but they are hampered by the ineffectiveness of the left in the face of the

ideological and physical power of the SACP — largely as a consequence of its role in the liberation struggle.

The workers in the platinum belt itself have abandoned their traditional allegiances to the official COSATU-backed NUM and to their political betters. They are talking about working-class self-organisation — particularly the power of wildcat actions to take on the physical repression of the police state and for workers themselves to bypass the official trade union bureaucracy and challenge the perversion of liberation represented by the ANC.

This includes the challenging the ideological narrative of the ruling clique — that the striking workers are gangsters aiming to sow discord and civil war. Neither are the workers Julius Malema's puppets.

The workers will not be silenced by the authoritarian control of the press or by the ANC police bootboys.

A sectarian sidetrack in Syria?

By Chris Reynolds

Is the democratic uprising of the people of Syria against Assad's tyranny being sidetracked into sectarianism?

A recent report by journalist Nir Rosen in the *London Review of Books* (27 September) describes the point of view of Syria's Alawite minority.

Rosen has no illusions about the regime and "the fury of its repression". "In six months in Syria I had been at more than a hundred opposition demonstrations. I had been shot at in many of them". He refers to Alawites who have joined the opposition and are "regarded as traitors against their sect".

But in an Alawite village Rosen saw the funeral of a colonel from state security. The chants were: "Welcome, oh martyr", "We want no-one but Assad".

Alawites are about 10% of the population. They are a religious minority, maverick Muslims, but according to Rosen: "Few Alawites are familiar with the tenets of Alawite faith... For most Alawites, religion is less a rigorous faith than an expression of their culture".

Their community has a long history. "Under the Ottomans they were abused, reviled, and

ground down... They were practically serfs to the Sunni feudal lords".

They gained some routes of social ascent under French rule and then under the Ba'athist regime. Young men from Alawite villages went through the military academies and became strong in the officer corps.

After the Assad dynasty took power in 1971, "the state became the bulwark of Alawite identity".

NEGLECTED

Still many Alawites are poor. They regard themselves as neglected and inadequately protected by the state they are loyal to.

They also see themselves as "more 'liberal' and secular than mainstream Muslims. They point to their use of alcohol, the Western dress codes of Alawite women and their freer interaction with men".

Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and al Qaeda, all intervening in Syria, will be trying to give the opposition a Sunni-sectarian twist. The reflex sectarianism of many Alawites can make that a vicious circle.

As the rebellion becomes bloodier, it becomes more and more vital that secular, democratic, and working-class voices prevail in the opposition.

Scots to vote in 2014 on independence

By Gerry Bates

On 15 October Prime Minister David Cameron and Scottish Prime Minister Alex Salmond agreed a deal for a Scottish referendum in late 2014 about independence.

It's good news that the referendum will have one clear-cut question, rather than offering more options and the possibility of an ambiguous outcome. It's bad news that discussion of Scotland and England,

rather than of class against class, will be pushed to the fore in the midst of global crisis and spiralling inequality.

Independence will not help Scottish workers deal with the crisis, any more than it has helped the workers of other small peripheral nations in Europe (Iceland, Ireland, Latvia...)

All other things being equal, socialists prefer larger, more cosmopolitan, political units. A new border cannot but, to some degree, increase division in a

British labour movement which is currently more or less united.

Overriding considerations which apply with an oppressed nation, or a nation with large fears of oppression, do not apply here. *Solidarity* favours voting no to independence. We do not endorse the status quo, any more than by voting against a wage cut we would endorse poor current wage scales.

We have contempt for people like Alistair Darling, who has joined with the To-

ries to run a "patriotic, cross-party" no campaign, "Better Together".

We will make our own arguments, and our own case for Britain to be reorganised as a democratic federal republic.

Polls currently show a 2:1 majority against independence, but Salmond must hope that further economic chaos will boost separatist feeling as in Flanders and Catalonia.

His tactic is to "minimise" independence and reassure the cautious. His

independent Scotland would retain the Queen and the pound. Together with his deputy Nicola Sturgeon and some of his senior ministers, Salmond is pressing at the SNP conference, in Perth on 18-21 October, for the SNP to agree that an independent Scotland would stay in NATO.

An SNP independent Scotland would, however, he says, be different because it would have lower corporation and business taxes.

ANTONIO GRAMSCI: WORKING-CLASS REVOLUTIONARY

Antonio Gramsci was a leader of the Italian Communist Party in its revolutionary days, and spent all of his last years bar a few weeks in Mussolini's fascist jails. *The Prison Notebooks* he wrote in jail have been quarried to justify many varieties of reformist or liberal politics.

This booklet discusses a major recent study on the *Notebooks* — Peter Thomas's *The Gramscian Moment* — and argues that the *Notebooks* were in fact a powerful contribution to the working-out of revolutionary working-class strategy in developed capitalist societies.

£4 from AWL, 20e Tower Workshops, Riley Road, London, SE1 3DG. Order online at www.workersliberty.org/gramscibook

After 20 October, organise!

Maria Exall

The TUC has called its second mass demonstration in two years against the Coalition Government's cuts agenda.

The first, on 26 March 2011, was successful in mobilising a large number of people from labour movement, campaigning, and community organisations to take to the streets.

The focus of 20 October (slogan: "a future that works") is against job cuts as well as against "austerity".

The TUC is in a unique position to call this demonstration. It is the only organisation with links to all the unions and the ability to reach out to community and campaigning organisations.

Individuals and groups of marchers will all have their own agenda, from the "pink/black bloc" called by Queers Against the Cuts, to those fighting to keep their local library open. The show of the strength and diversity of the opposition to the brutal policies of the Tories and Lib Dems is very important.

Precisely because of the diversity and breadth of support the demonstration will attract, the bourgeois media will both downplay and misrepresent the march. They will construct a negative narrative, as they did in March 2011, by juxtaposing pictures of speakers at the rally with those of protesters breaking glass, and by overreacting to any additional peaceful protests (such as the occupation of Fortnum and Masons in 2011). They will use the power of the media to suggest that

supporting even the moderate demands of the march is in fact to side with "troublemakers".

Our business as socialists is to recognise the popular support for the calls to reverse austerity and make clear political demands that mobilise people to fight the cuts in their workplaces and their communities.

This is the time to organise and popularise the case for a socialist response to the economic crisis. To explain politically what being "against austerity" really means. Our enemy is not "austerity" (which always comes over to me as a positive albeit moralistic demand that I should diet/go the gym/ not waste my disposable income on intoxicating substances). It is the capitalist class. It is they who are asking working-class people to pay for the crisis, and demonising different sections of the class in order to divide and rule.

On a gut level, large numbers of people in the UK know this. They know that the attacks on benefit claimants, people with disabilities, public sector workers, the cuts in the provision of the services they rely on, or the fact that their young relatives or friends cannot get a job, are not the result of an inevitable economic fate. They are rather the deliberate actions of a class which wishes to shrink the state, take away our rights at work, and intimidate working people in order to increase economic exploitation.

But there are also large numbers of working-class people who do not know that these things are not inevitable. To them, they appear as immutable economic laws rather than political choices by a partisan bosses' government.

It is our job to organise with those who know, and persuade those who don't, of the real causes of "austerity", the real way to fight them, and our real alternative.

Socialist regroupment in Australia

Letters

Regular readers of *Solidarity* will remember our coverage of the regroupment talk on the Australian left. Socialist Alternative, a group which used to be widely reviled as sectarian, has gained ground, is planning merger with the smaller Revolutionary Socialist Party, and has talks set with the Socialist Alliance.

On 11 October I talked on the phone with Mick Armstrong, a longstanding leader of Socialist Alternative (S Alt).

He said that SAlt has been "able to broaden its activities"; "but that's been going on over a period of years". Contrary to what some say, it is not a "rapid change or major break".

"On an international level, there's been a shift in outlook... We've had more outreach to other forces which don't come from our ideological tradition". S Alt subscribes to the same ideological tradition as the SWP in Britain, but comes from a group expelled in 1995 from the "official" SWP-linked group in Australia, which is now called Solidarity.

"But for people like myself who go back to the '70s — we've been involved in situations before where we've attempted to regroup or work with people from other backgrounds".

We talked about the history of the SWP-linked current in Australia, which was originally Draperite rather than Cliffite, and about the political evolutions of the SWP even since 1995,, which S Alt has shared. such as on Islamism.

S Alt's statement says the RSP merger can be done because both groups have resisted the shift to the right by "much of the left". Does "much of the left" mean Socialist Alliance and Solidarity?

"We don't just mean that. It's a much broader thing..."

The S Alt constitution permits factions outside pre-conference periods — unlike the IS/SWP since the early 1970s — but says that factions must dissolve after a conference decides.

"We are in the process of rewriting our constitution. I can't guarantee what's going to happen, but I'll say that clause will

go". Public expression of dissent is not prohibited by S Alt; but, I said, it is not S Alt custom and practice. S Alt's monthly magazine is not like the AWL's press, or that of the old LCR in France, where serious disagreements are routinely debated in public.

"Yes and no. It's not the norm [to have disagreements in the public press], but it's not ruled out." Over East Timor in 1999, some members publicly disagreed.

But not in the press? "No. But at public meetings, which to us mattered more. Compared to other groups, we put less emphasis on the printed press.

"We could put out a fortnightly publication if we wanted to, but we're much more interested in doing public meetings, campus meetings, meetings after demonstrations, that sort of thing".

I concluded by saying that we appreciated S Alt's work in support of the QCH dispute and want to work with S Alt on a defence campaign for Bob Carnegie against the contempt of court charges he faces. Mick said he thought S Alt would be up for that.

Martin Thomas, London

Hobsbawm, party and class

To explain why Eric Hobsbawm backed Kinnock over the Labour left as "a pre-occupation with party over class" seems to me misleading ("The paradox of Hobsbawm's legacy", *Solidarity* 260).

I don't think this is his view, but Liam McNulty's phrasing implies that Marxists prioritise "class over party". While in a "first principles" sense this has an element of truth — because we put the goal of working-class self-emancipation higher than allegiance to any organisation as such — in practical terms it is wrong.

As Trotsky put it in 'What next? Vital questions for the German proletariat' (1932):

"The interests of the class cannot be formulated otherwise than in the shape of a program; the program cannot be de-

fended otherwise than by creating the party. The class, taken by itself, is only material for exploitation. The proletariat assumes an independent role only at that moment when from a social class in itself it becomes a political class for itself. This cannot take place otherwise than through the medium of a party. The party is that historical organ by means of which the class becomes class conscious. To say that 'the class stands higher than the party,' is to assert that the class in the raw stands higher than the class which is on the road to class consciousness.

"The progress of a class toward class consciousness, that is, the building of a revolutionary party which leads the proletariat, is a complex and a contradictory process. The class itself is not homogeneous. Its different sections arrive at class consciousness by different paths and at different times. The bourgeoisie participates actively in this process. Within the working class, it creates its own institutions, or utilizes those already existing, in order to oppose certain strata of workers to others. Within the proletariat several parties are active at the same time. Therefore, for the greater part of its historical journey, it remains split politically."

This was not said in order to justify the bureaucratic twists and turns of the German Communist Party. Trotsky: "there isn't the slightest need for this... theory in order to establish the necessity for a [workers'] united front [against the Nazis, which the Stalinists opposed]".

I think Hobsbawm's rallying must have had more to do with the "Popular Front", anti-class struggle politics which — as Liam explains — he had grown up politically with and then developed. By the early 1980s, the Eurocommunist current around *Marxism Today* had concluded that working-class struggle had no prospects because the Thatcherites had "hegemonised" such a big swathe of workers, and that the only alternative was a "broad popular alliance" stretching from the Labour right to the Liberals and even Tory "wets".

That included opposition to left struggles, however limited, for democracy and working-class policies in the Labour Party.

Sacha Ismail, South London

Tories – the antidote: Fight for a workers' government!

WHAT LIES AHEAD WITH THE TORY/LIB-DEM COALITION GOVERNMENT?

Seventy per cent of their planned cuts are yet to come. The Government plans to cut £50 billion from the Health Service.

Its Health and Social Care Act, which aims to transform the NHS from a public service into a marketplace based, for now, on government funding channelled through GPs, will make the cuts hurt worse.

By quarter 2 of 2012 there were 97,000 fewer staff in state schools and FE than before the 2010 election.

Benefits are being cut, first disabled benefits and housing benefit. George Osborne announced a further £10 billion of benefit cuts in the Budget.

WHAT ABOUT LOCAL GOVERNMENT SERVICES?

On 10 October, Northamptonshire's Tory council presented council unions with a choice: 3.6% pay reduction and other cuts; or over 300 compulsory redundancies.

That is an aggressive expression of a general trend. The Government will cut local authorities' "formula grant" by 27% between 2011-2 and 2015-6.

The average person has already suffered cuts in local services of £238 per year. Councils spent £2052 per person on services in 2010-11, and £1814 in 2012-13.

It will go on. Labour councils which say they have no choice but to pass on the cuts will end up chopping the most cherished services.

If any number of Labour councils defied the Government, and used their town halls as platforms to mobilise the labour movement and working-class communities against cuts, then they could push the Government back. But so far only very few Labour councillors support defiance.

DOES THE GLOBAL CRISIS MAKE CUTS INEVITABLE?

Britain's 1000 wealthiest people increased their riches 4.7% from April 2011 to £414 billion in April 2012. Directors' pay at the top 100 companies rose 49% in 2010-11 and 14% in 2011-2.

Most workers' real pay has fallen, and is likely to fall further for years to come. Between 2010 and 2011 the average of household incomes fell 5.7%.

The Government's cuts are not primarily a means to cut the budget deficit. At present, by depressing most incomes and thus the Government's tax take, the cuts are *increasing* the deficit. The Government wants to use the crisis to screw down workers' standards so that a subsequent capitalist recovery can enjoy higher profits and a balance of forces tilted further in the bosses' favour.

CAN WE STOP THE CUTS?

Strikes and militant demonstrations can stop individual cuts. In Southampton, the Tory city council cut workers' pay. After rolling strikes, the unions got pay levels restored by a new Labour administration elected in May 2012.

Such victories are precious. But the Labour administration in Southampton is making other cuts. The cuts will be stopped across the board only by a vast mobilisation sufficient to oust the coalition government and replace it by a government which will reverse cuts.

WILL ED MILIBAND REVERSE THE CUTS?

Ed Miliband talks about taking on the "predators" and shaping "an economy that works for working people". But he won't reverse the cuts.

He hasn't even promised not to make further cuts on top of the Tories'. He will continue the coalition's public sector pay freeze.

The only good promise he has made is to repeal the Health and Social Care Act. Even on that, he also says that he rejects a new "top-down reorganisation of the NHS" — which means he will leave in place the current Tory "top-down reorganisation of the NHS".

The difference between Labour and the Tories is that the unions have 50% of the votes at Labour Party conference, and Labour depends on them for funding. If the unions fight they can turn Labour round.

They are not fighting yet. At the Labour Party conference, early October, the union leaders limited themselves to bland motions, and reserved militant talk for media moments on the side.

DO GOVERNMENTS HAVE A CHOICE?

The financiers who trade government bonds in global markets can quickly punish governments. But governments do have a choice. Financiers will lend even to a left-wing government if the government has a workable plan.

Beyond that, to seize economic levers sufficient to reverse the neoliberal tide, a left government would have to expropriate the banks and high finance — take them into public ownership, with minimal compensation, and under social and democratic control.

Why not? Martin Wolf, economics writer for the conservative *Financial Times*, says: "Banks, as presently constituted and managed, cannot be trusted to perform any publicly important function... Today's banks represent the incarnation of profit-seeking behaviour taken to its logical limits, in which the only question asked by senior staff is not what is their duty or their responsibility, but what can they get away with".

WHAT SORT OF GOVERNMENT COULD CHANGE THINGS?

A workers' government — a government based on and accountable to a mobilised, militant labour movement.

It is the sort of Labour government that we could have if the unions sharpened up and really fought for policies like the public ownership of the banks — voted through as policy by the TUC congress in September — and if they cleared out the careerists which dominate the parliamentary Labour Party and the Labour wonkosphere, to replace them by committed representatives of the working class. (27% of current Labour MPs come from backgrounds as political advisers or aides; 12% from the media; 11% from the law; 15% from the voluntary sector; only 9% from manual jobs).

We need a strong rank-and-file movement in the unions to force such policies on the union leaders.

We must start by mapping out the political programme needed for a workers' government, and rallying round that programme the working-class organisers who can form the skeleton for the future rank-and-file movement.

Help us raise £15,000

Our new book, *Antonio Gramsci: Working-Class Revolutionary*, is now available to buy from radical bookstores, online, and from local AWL branches.

A public launch meeting for the book, featuring presentations from its editor Martin Thomas, and contributor Peter Thomas (author of *The Gramscian Moment*), will take place in London on Wednesday 31 October.

In publishing the book, we aim to re-assert the class-struggle soul of Gramsci's politics, an immense contribution to revolutionary strategy and thought.

Gramsci's is a legacy much distorted by Stalinist, "neo-Marxist", "post-Marxist", and quasi-post-modern claims on him, all contending that the real lesson of Gramsci's work is that workplace-based struggle between workers and bosses must somehow be left behind, moved beyond, or replaced as the defining core of revolutionary politics.

Publishing the book is part of our ongoing attempt to put class and class struggle back at the heart not only of how Gramsci's legacy is understood, but at the heart of what it means to be left-wing.

That is one of the fundamental reasons the Alliance for Workers' Liberty exists. But we are only able to exist, to publish books, and carry out our other work because of the financial support of those who agree with that project.

Please support our drive to raise £15,000 by May Day 2013. You can help our fundraising drive by:

- Taking out a monthly standing order using the form below or at www.workersliberty.org/resources. Please post completed forms to us at the AWL address below.
- Making a donation by cheque, payable to "AWL", or donating online at www.workersliberty.org/donate.
- Organising a fundraising event.
- Taking copies of *Solidarity* to sell.
- Get in touch to discuss joining the AWL. More information: 07796 690874 / awl@workersliberty.org / AWL, 20E Tower Workshops, 58 Riley Road, London SE1 3DG.

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£1,083

We raised £1,083 this week from increased standing orders and donations. Thanks to Jean, Matthew, Gemma, Maria and Sean.

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A workers' plan to beat cuts

By Daniel Randall and Sacha Ismail

Our bosses, and the governments which serve them, are determined not to waste the economic crisis. They want to use it as cover for driving down social costs, freezing wages, cutting jobs, so that when the economy revives profits will be higher.

The “austerity” (cuts and anti-working class measures) imposed by the Coalition are part of a comprehensive project to reorganise and reshape society so it better serves the interests of the rich.

That project is more than the sum of its parts. It is not simply an accumulation of individual attacks that we can attempt to fend off, one at a time. It is a social strategy, a plan.

Wage freezes, like the public sector pay freeze currently in place and which Labour has committed to continue, help bosses claw back money from their employees' pockets. Other cost-cutting measures, like the spate of closures of final salary pension schemes across the private sector, do likewise.

The government's attacks are designed not only to screw down social costs but to cripple our ability to fight back, not just in the here and now but for the foreseeable future. Schemes like the McNulty reforms on the railway — which propose driver-only operation for trains — are designed to break the power of trade unions in key sectors of the economy. Attacks on facility time in the public sector have a similar motivation.

Welfare cuts and attacks on the health service mean that working-class people are paying, with our wellbeing and sometimes with our lives, for a financial crisis created entirely by the market-worship and greed of the rich.

The response of the labour and anti-cuts movement must be more than the sum of its parts, too. Our strategy has to involve more than reacting to the latest attack and desperately trying to defend the status quo. Just as the Tories, Lib Dems, and Labour leader have their plans for reorganising society to better serve the rich, we need a plan for reorganising society so the vast wealth and productive capacity that exists can be made to serve human need.

We need a workers' plan for the crisis: a set of working-class policies and strategies to force the ruling class to concede and, go beyond that, to fight for a workers' government — a government that will govern in the interests of our class in the same way Cameron and Clegg govern in the interests of his.

A workers' plan is not a shopping list of nice things we wish would happen. It starts from the struggles of workers now, and tries to sum up the logic of those struggles as demands that are aimed both at winning victories in the immediate term but also at posing the question of power: which interests should predominate in society? The “interests” of capital and its markets, or the interests of human and ecological need?

Our workers' plan is not a once-and-for-all, too-precious-to-be-amended text, but an attempt to help the labour movement develop a political alternative to the Coalition's austerity project. It is something that AWL members want to fight for but also discuss and debate with comrades in trade unions, community campaigns, student unions. We would hope those organisations can campaign around elements of a workers' plan. We see it as part of the struggle to transform the working-class movement as a whole into a democratic, confident, and assertive movement that is fit to rule.

The 20 October demonstration is — should be, could be — a staging post in that struggle.

• More: workersliberty.org/workersplan

No cuts to jobs and services

We need a massive campaign of industrial and political action against the cuts, starting now, not at some point in the future after the TUC demo.

Struggles must be fought around clear demands, and fought to win — not simply to express displeasure at some already-taken action of the bosses or government.

The precise focus and demands of industrial campaigns will vary from sector to sector, but the principles must be universal: not a single job loss, not a single cut to services.

Expropriate the banks, tax the rich: use the wealth to create jobs and rebuild services

The Coalition's “there's-no-money-left” mantra is nonsense.

The richest 1,000 individuals in Britain have a combined wealth of £414 billion, nearly four times the amount of the total budget deficit. The rich have become richer during the crisis; 2010-2011 the 1,000 richest increased their wealth by £77 billion. A 50% “super-tax” on the income of the top 1% in Britain would immediately balance the budget without needing to increase taxes for the other 99% at all.

Banks are still making huge profits — in 2011, HSBC made £13.8 billion profit, and Barclays made £5.9 billion. Their wealth should be seized, without compensation, and the entire banking sector placed under democratic public ownership. Its huge wealth could then be democratically

distributed to meet social need — to create jobs and rebuild public services.

Rebuild the National Health Service

Even at its most bureaucratised and cuts-damaged, the NHS represented an island of a saner, more rational way of organising society carved out of the inhumanity and chaos of capitalism.

The Health and Social Care Act is a huge blow to working-class living standards. Every further cut, privatisation, and sell-off must be resisted industrially and politically, and the unions must launch a high-profile campaign to rebuild public healthcare, not just to pre-Coalition levels but also by abolishing the PFI schemes and part privatisations introduced under New Labour.

The NHS should provide top-quality healthcare for all, free at the point of need. Hospitals, clinics, and other facilities should be run as public services under the democratic control of workers and service users, not run by unaccountable managers and consultants. Unions should fight for the Labour Party to act on its policy, passed at its 2012 conference, to rebuild the NHS, and demand that is campaigned on now as well as being included in the 2015 manifesto.

Living wages, and living benefits, for all

The minimum wage has institutionalised low pay for hundreds of thousands of workers.

Its tiers create inbuilt age discrimination, meaning that a 19-year old worker can be paid less than a 21-year old worker for doing the same job. Its apprentice rate is just £2.65. The minimum wage should be replaced with a universal living wage that represents enough to live a full and decent life, not just enough to scrape by on. Unions should calculate their own “living wage” figures. Similarly the state should guarantee a living income for those out of work, or unable to work.

Create socially-useful jobs, cut the working week

A super-tax on the wealth of the rich and the expropriation of the banks would free up the wealth to fund a huge job-creation scheme.

The jobs that are created should be in socially-useful industries (transport, healthcare, renewable energy, etc.) and should involve enjoyable, stimulating work, not alienating drudgery. Any companies declaring lay-offs should be taken into public ownership.

The working week across the economy should be cut to a maximum of 35 hours to share out work and maximise the time working-class people get to spend outside of work.

Free education

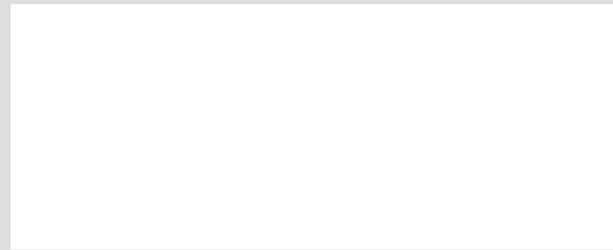
A generation of working-class young people are being priced out of further and higher education by the abolition of EMAs and huge increases in university fees.

At primary and secondary levels, the proliferation of Academies and Free Schools is turning education into a business rather than a public service. Fees at all levels should be abolished and replaced with living grants for all students in post-16 education. Universities should end cuts and course closures, and raise funds by cutting top bosses' pay.

Education should be rebuilt as a space for people to develop as critical, creative individuals; schools, colleges and universities shouldn't be training grounds for the unthinking, obedient workers of tomorrow. That means getting the “employability” agenda out of education, and ending big business control and influence over curricula and research.

Support the National Campaign Against Fees and Cuts — build student-worker unity in struggle.

Fight for a workers' government!



Above: strikes in Greece. A struggle for a workers' government is a real prospect there.

Capitalist governments ultimately concede workers' demands when they are scared of the alternative to not conceding them. That means that big victories can have a dual character — concessions forced from governments, but also a means by which governments save themselves from a worse fate.

The demands and policies in this workers' plan are not intended to be unrealisable fantasies. They are intended to be winnable demands, struggles within which we can develop the confidence to fight not just for reforms but for power.

But anything we win is unstable unless the working class is able to conquer social power. Agitation and campaigning around a workers' plan has to be accompanied with agitation for the idea of a workers' government — a government based on and responsive to the needs and interests of our

class, just as the current government is based on and responsive to the needs of the rich.

A workers' government would impose policies to serve the working-class majority without concern for their potential impact on bosses' profits. It would rely for its power not on the feeble democracy of Parliament but on an extra-parliamentary movement of working-class organisations in workplaces and communities.

Any possible workers' government in Britain would involve some elements of the Labour Party, but could only take power on the back of struggles so wide-ranging that they would shake up (and, in all likelihood, break up) the current Labour Party to such a degree as to render it unrecognisable.

Ultimately, a workers' government would have to culminate in the working class smashing the capitalist state machine in the clean sweep of revolution or it would fall. But fighting immediately for working-class government is part of the process by which we can help a majority of our class develop the consciousness and confidence to take that revolutionary step.

The Tories, Lib Dems, and New Labour leaders' austerity agenda is a plan for consolidating the power of the rich. Their governments are of the rich, by the rich, for the rich. The workers' government is our alternative.

• More on the workers' government idea — see page 5

Decent housing for all

Housing is a basic human right.

End evictions and social cleansing. A mass programme of council house building would provide both housing and jobs, and should be democratically planned locally to meet need. Housing stock hived off to social landlords or ALMOs by local councils should be reclaimed. The empty second (and third, and fourth) homes of the rich should be expropriated and converted into affordable housing. End evictions and attacks on Travellers and Roma people; guarantee protected sites for Traveller and Roma communities.

Free the unions

Tony Blair once boasted that Britain's labour laws are "the most restrictive in Western Europe".

The anti-union laws should be abolished and replaced with a positive charter of workers' rights, including the right to hold workplace ballots, the right to picket effectively, and the right to take solidarity action.

Open the books

Workers need access to all company accounts.

That way, we can challenge the bosses' version of what is and is not "affordable" and determine how to solve the crisis on our terms.

Fight racism and the causes of racism. End immigration controls, for workers' solidarity across borders

Although the BNP has been set back electorally, far-right and fascist ideas are still growing in society, feeding on the despair and alienation created by the crisis.

The workers' movement must resist the BNP, EDL, and other far-right organisations wherever they appear — not just by holding polite counter-rallies addressed by mainstream politicians that celebrate the status quo, but by organising to physically confront the fascists in the street and preventing them from gaining a foothold in our communities.

Attempts to set workers against each other — white against black, British-born against migrant — help the bosses keep us weak. Immigration controls should be scrapped to guarantee freedom of movement. If the wealth workers create is

free to travel across borders uninhibited, workers should be able to live wherever we like too.

The crisis is international, and as governments across Europe and international financial institutions collude to impose severe austerity measures on the collapsing economies of Greece and Spain, the tendency of the ruling class to collaborate across borders is made clear. We have to match their unity with a greater unity of our own, acting in solidarity with the struggles of workers across the world, and taking united action where possible.

Extend democracy, defend civil liberties. Curb the power of the police

Having the opportunity to vote, once every five years, for one of three political parties whose leaders share a neo-liberal consensus, while we have no say whatsoever in the political and economic decisions they take every day that hugely affect our lives, is not a full democracy.

Parliaments should be annual, with all MPs immediately recallable. Political representatives should be paid an average workers' wage.

Meanwhile, the assault on basic democratic freedoms must be pushed back. For the right to protest, and an end to "kettling". Abolish the Territorial Support Group and Forward Intelligence Teams; disarm the cops. End racist harassment and stop and search. Justice for the families of victims of police brutality. For genuine accountability over the police, not the meaningless sham of elected "Police Commissioners".

Resist the offensive against free speech — no-one should be jailed for stupid and distasteful statements on a Facebook status.

Transform the unions

To make our unions capable of organising the necessary action, we need rank-and-file networks in every industry and union, giving a space for workers to organise independently of union bureaucracies, to push the unions into action and — where necessary — to act independently.

Rank-and-file networks should fight for all disputes to be controlled and directed by democratically-elected strike committees, made up of workers involved, and for sustained industrial action to be financed by strike pay. All union officials with a role in the unions' activity should be elected, and union officials should be paid no more than a worker's wage. Use union funds to support strikes and finance organising campaigns in unorganised workplaces.

We need proper industrial unions — there is no reason for teachers to be in a different union from teaching assistants or the workers who clean their classrooms. Build cross-union shop stewards' committees in every workplace with multiple unions as a step towards industrial unionism.

For working-class political representation

The working-class movement, and immediately the organised labour movement in workplaces, needs a political wing through which it can represent itself in the political sphere, including in Parliament.

The labour movement's current political wing — the Labour Party — is woefully inadequate. Its structures are hollowed out, and its leaders are committed to maintaining the neo-liberal consensus. Getting the affiliated unions (which represent a majority of organised workers in Britain) to assert themselves against the Labour leaders within Labour Party structures is the first step to winning independent working-class representation.

This means fighting to restore Labour Party democracy, demanding Labour councillors refuse to make cuts and vote against cuts budgets, and initiating de-selection processes for Labour councillors and MPs that push through cuts.

Getting ready for upheavals

AWL

By Martin Thomas

The Alliance for Workers' Liberty meets for our annual conference on 27-28 October, to map out our broad lines of policy for the coming year and to elect a new national committee.

In order to get informed decision-making, this conference is prepared for with discussion bulletins and regional pre-conference meetings. Last-minute extra discussions have also been set up — an evening meeting in London on 24 October, an e-meeting, by webchat, on 21 October.

The overall perspectives document which the outgoing committee will put to conference highlights two levels of the political situation.

On one level: unresolved capitalist crisis, which means continued depression at a global level and a high possibility of further economic dramas, for example in the eurozone. In Britain working-class conditions are being squeezed deeper and longer than in the 1930s or under Thatcher;

All that makes upheavals likely before long. Maybe not mass strike waves, which are more likely to come with some economic recovery than in the depths of the slump; but explosive local industrial struggles, street protests, and “molecular” radicalisation of individuals.

On another level, Britain now has a period of working-class lull following the setback on pensions on 19 December 2011, which with each passing month becomes more like an outright defeat.

We cannot end the lull at will. We can refuse to allow it to depress our activity. We can and must make sure that AWL uses the relatively quiet time for political education and training, for sharpening our routine of public political advocacy — stalls, sales, meetings, etc. — and for our own education and training.

URGENCY

In pre-conference discussion the first draft was criticised for not grasping the urgency of the political dilemma of the labour movement: the contradiction between the implicitly Labourite anti-Toryism of a thick seam of workers and Labour's commitment to cuts, pay freezes, etc.

An amendment adopted by the AWL national committee calls for us to address this dilemma by arguing “for the need to regroup, from out of the currently fragmented and incoherent militant anti-Tory constituency, a purposefully class-conscious force that... organises in the unions and the Labour Party for working-class policies” such as rescuing the NHS as a public service, reversing the cuts, expropriating the banks, winning workers' union rights.

The amendment warns that this idea means setting ourselves to spread ideas in the movement, and not just administrative busywork (drafting statements, collecting signatures, organising meetings) so as somehow to concoct a token semblance of a broad union-Labour left.

The other long documents for conference are on “recruitment, education, and training” and on trade-union activity. Quoting Plekhanov — “the promotion of the growth of the class consciousness of the proletariat is the sole purpose and the direct and sacred duty of the socialists” — they argue that our educational and self-educational role is central everywhere: not just being “best builders” or “best helpers”.

Despite the industrial lull, we can and should build up union rank-and-file caucuses like the school workers' LANAC and develop and multiply the few workplace bulletins which AWL branches have recently started alongside the longstanding Tubeworker bulletin. The report warns that these bulletins demand hard work, but explains their value for building roots and influence in workplaces.

A report on publications details the progress AWL has made by moving to a weekly paper from early 2011, and argues for boosting the distribution, sale, and discussion of the paper as central to AWL's political profile. It notes the new possibilities for publishing books and booklets with new

technologies, and an amendment calls for investigating the possibilities of a new AWL magazine.

A lengthy report on activity among students analyses the Government's plans in detail, but expects a range of piecemeal battles rather than a “big bang” of cuts and fightback. It prioritises the development of a consistent AWL profile of general politics (not just student-unionist concerns) on campuses.

A report on feminist activity notes soberly that last year's hopes for sizeable mobilisations of working-class women against cuts, and of student women, have not come good. It maps realistic plans for activity in those spheres, and notes the success of the Women's Fightback discussion group in London and the possibilities of extending that model.

There is controversy about the details of how to elect the new AWL committee.

Some comrades have proposed the conference elect a nominating commission, of members who have experience and knowledge but are not candidates for the committee. The commission would discuss and recommend a slate to AWL conference.

The vote at conference would then be entirely free. No-one would have to vote for or against the slate. Members would vote for individual candidates just as they would as if there were no commission.

STRUCTURE

The argument, however, is that the nominating commission can help structure the debate by giving a proposal for a balanced NC, as a whole, which comrades can then propose amendments or alternatives to, rather than a discussion dominated by rival recommendations for individual candidates.

Last year's AWL conference debated a similar idea, and rejected it as cumbersome and likely to dampen debate in the conference about the new NC. We will see whether opinion has shifted.

Another proposal calls for a commission that would not recommend a slate, but would just collect and publish information about the candidates nominated.

A third proposal, supplementary rather than alternative, calls for AWL to organise more joint-union-fractions meetings and national and regional day schools so that we all gather more information about each other's activities, qualities, and defects over the year.

The discussion on the international report should be interesting. AWL has livelier prospects for international connections than for some time.

Observers will attend from the Iranian Revolutionary Marxist Tendency and L'Etincelle (France), and the conference should receive greetings and messages from many other groups, including Marksist Tutum (Turkey) and Workers' Liberty Australia.

AWL members in Britain have become more aware of the activity in Australia recently, with the Queensland Children's Hospital strike. We'll be discussing a new international campaign, in defence of our comrade Bob Carnegie who is being pursued for “contempt of court” by the main contractor at QCH.

The former owner and chairman of Rangers Football Club was the biggest beneficiary of the club's tax avoidance scheme.

Football in our times

Peter Burton reviews *Downfall: How Rangers FC Self Destructed* by Phil Mac Giolla Bhain.

This book tells the story of the incremental implosion of Rangers Football Club and raises issues of greed, abuse of power, press complicity but also what campaigning using digital media can achieve.

Rangers FC Chairman Sir David Murray, motivated by both year-on-year league success and the lucrative potential of the later stages of the European Champions League, borrowed heavily from banks at a time when banks were only too happy to lend to a big brand name like Rangers. Heavy borrowing combined with the illegal use of a tax avoidance scheme to play player's wages and bonuses eventually led to the club's bankruptcy earlier this year.

The sports journalists who ought to have been shining a light on Rangers growing financial problems were kept compliant with regular Murray “exclusives” and junkets such as all-inclusive holidays.

It was left to bloggers like Phil Mac Giolla Bhain and the anonymous “Rangers Tax Case” to expose and report what was going on at Rangers Inc. (The honourable exception, as the author notes was Graham Speirs — sports journalist with *The Herald* — who was quickly “frozen out” of the Murray circle).

The book is set out in four main sections — Finance, Media, Fans and the Scottish Football Association — each following a straightforward chronological path through blog postings relevant to the topic. Each page, each section is annotated with footnotes leading you back to the internet links and postings on this story.

The book is based on prescient blogs that followed the unfolding events in a story that says much about the period from Thatcher to the present day.

Unlimited credit borrowed to build a club on sand, compliant and biased journalism, a tax avoidance scheme used to attract the best international players and line the pockets of the Rangers Board of Directors and the inevitable denouement as journalists with some integrity utilised the new digital media to pressurise the Inland Revenue and banks into investigating.

As Alex Thomson of Channel 4 News notes in his promotional foreword, this is not just a book for football fans.

• www.philmacgiollabhain.ie

Anti-Toryism is on the increase, as is support for Labour; but Miliband is committed to cuts and pay freezes

Illegal in 76 countries

By Paul Penny

Homosexuality is illegal in 76 countries around the world, and in 10 of these punishable by death or life imprisonment. In many parts of the world, LGBT people are recurrently subjected to targeted killings, violent assaults, torture and sexual violence — and the situation is getting worse.

In December 2011, Barack Obama said the US would use its foreign aid to promote LGBT rights around the world and combat attempts by governments to criminalise homosexuality. David Cameron followed with threats to withdraw aid for countries that do not accept homosexuality. Many African nations reacted bitterly to the new dictates and accused western leaders of interfering and neo-colonialism.

LGBT activists in Africa are generally opposed to cuts to overseas aid linked to LGBT rights. They worry that some African leaders will push through anti-homosexuality legislation in defiance. These fears have proven well founded.

In April 2012, the Nigerian Senate approved a bill to further criminalise homosexuality, using David Cameron's threat to cut aid to rally public backing. The new law imposes prison sentences of up to 14 years on same-sex couples entering into cohabitation; those "witnessing" or "abetting" such relationships also face prison.

In the Gambia President Yahya Jammeh told Western leaders, "We do not need your aid money. You can keep it. Homosexuality is forbidden in this country".

Jammeh's comments came shortly before a police raid on a bar in the resort town of Kololi. 19 gay men were arrested and charged with conspiracy to commit "unnatural offence" and "publicly displaying homosexual activities". Four months later, on 1 August 2012, the court case collapsed and all charges were dropped. Although they are free, the men involved are now social outcasts following their names, addresses, and photographs being published in Gambian newspapers that marked them as "perverts".

South Africa is the only African country to allow gay marriage and adoption; even so, LGBT people face daily discrimination and violence, especially in the townships, where lesbians are often targeted for "corrective rape" in the belief that sex with a man can change their sexual orientation. The National House of Traditional Leaders has now called for parliament to remove a clause in the constitution that guarantees equal rights to homosexuals.

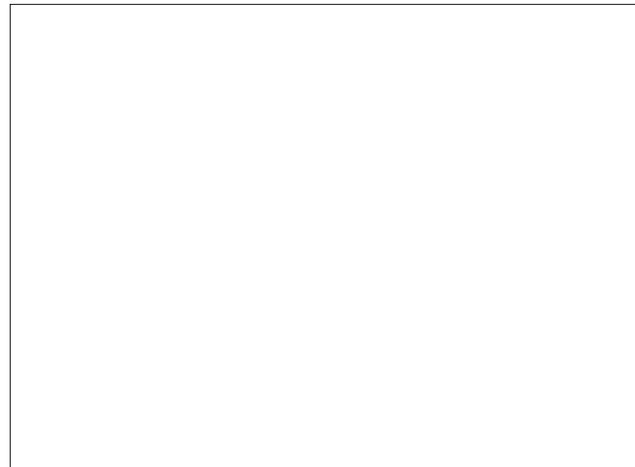
EVANGELICALS

Ironically many African leaders have enthusiastically welcomed American Christian evangelical colonialists into their countries and these have made Africa their virulently anti-gay project in recent years.

These same African leaders have propagated a distorted revisionist version of colonial history, advancing the ideological prejudice that homosexuality is "un-African", and a "Western sickness" new to the continent. In fact it was anti-homosexual legislation rather than homosexuality that was introduced by external forces, and homophobia is the remnant of old colonialism.

In 2009, Zambian Reverend Kapya Kaoma wrote a salient report, "Globalizing the Culture Wars: US Conservatives, African Churches, and Homophobia" arguing that "Africa has become a key theatre as the US right mobilise African clerics in US culture war battles — in particular over the role of gay and lesbian people in the lives of church and society." He described how American evangelists, faced with their failure to suppress homosexuality in the US, have taken their homophobic war overseas, and US neo-conservative groups have enticed African clerics with financial incentives in return for support of their anti-gay agenda.

On 30 March 2012, LGBT rights group Sexual Minorities Uganda filed a US federal lawsuit against anti-gay "Christian" extremist and Holocaust revisionist Pastor Scott Lively, accusing him of violating international law by inciting the persecution of LGBT people in Uganda, and Ugandan parliamentarians to further criminalise homosexuality. Lively apparently, warned that homosexuals were a perilous threat to Ugandan culture and that homosexuals committed child rape and were "recruiting African children into homosexual-



Bigots are everywhere, and getting more confident

ity". At a 2009 conference in Kampala Lively issued a call to fight against a "genocidal" and "pedophilic" gay movement, which he described as "the most dangerous social and political movement of our time". The lawsuit says that in doing so he is responsible for inciting the murder of LGBT rights activist David Kato in 2010.

Uganda's now notorious Anti-Homosexuality "Kill the Gays" Bill is still pending (after delays in parliament) and if passed would impose life imprisonment on any person convicted of homosexual activity, and the death penalty for "repeat offenders". Ugandans would be obliged to report any homosexual activity to the police within 24 hours or face up to three years in prison. In February 2012 the bill was re-introduced by David Bahati to the Ugandan parliament.

Bahati has been closely linked to a Washington-based secretive international right-wing Christian organisation called The Family (aka C-Street) — whose members include numerous neo-conservative US politicians. Bahati first floated the idea of executing homosexuals during The Family's Uganda National Prayer Breakfast meeting in 2008.

SPONSOR

The Family is also believed to sponsor Pastor Dr. Martin Ssempe, leader of the Ugandan National Task Force Against Homosexuality, and notorious for showing scatophagic hard-core gay pornography in his church and at conferences to promote the "Kill the Gays" bill.

LGBT Ugandans are routinely denied health care and regularly sacked just for being LGBT. Many suffer brutal attacks but cannot report hate crimes to the police for fear of additional beatings, curative rape or arbitrary arrest. Nonetheless Ugandan LGBT rights activists continue to organise and fight for their human rights. In August 2012, in an outstanding show of defiance, almost 100 people marched in Uganda's first ever LGBT Pride parade, and over a weekend of events in Entebbe. Thankfully, the weekend passed peacefully in spite of a police raid and arrests.

LGBT rights activists Frank Mugisha, Kasha Jacqueline, Geoffrey Ogwaro and Pepe Julianare are now suing the so-called Ugandan Minister of Ethics and Integrity, the Rt. Rev. Father Simon Lokodo MP, and the Attorney General, Peter Nyombi, for the illegal infringement on their right of freedom of association and assembly under article 29 of the constitution of Uganda. In February 2012, Lokobo accompanied armed police to shut down a workshop for LGBT rights activists at a hotel in Entebbe and arrest prominent activist Kasha Jacqueline, who fled to avoid capture.

Evangelists and other religious fundamentalists and anti-democratic forces have also been active in other countries around the world.

In Saint Petersburg, a bill has recently been passed that makes it illegal for any person to speak in public or publish any article about being gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender. Despite homosexuality being decriminalised in 1993 by former President Boris Yeltsin, deep-rooted homophobia is still widespread. The St Petersburg legislation, written by Vitaly Milonov, a deputy with Prime Minister Putin's United Russia party and an Orthodox religious activist, emerged just before the parliamentary elections on 4 December 2011, and was al-

most certainly concocted to increase the vote for the ailing ruling party and President Medvedev.

Since 2006, four regions in Russia have enacted a ban on "propaganda" of homosexuality. The Russian federal legislature, the Duma, is now considering a national version of the law.

In June 2012, the Tverskoy District Court of Moscow upheld as lawful a decision by the Moscow City Government to ban gay pride parades in the city for 100 years.

In Sofia, Bulgaria, over 2,000 people took part in the fifth LGBT Pride rally on 30 June 2012. However, 600 police were present to separate participants from opponents — including almost 200 neo-Nazis and far right wing skinheads. Thankfully, the event passed without any injuries, despite the nationalist party Gvardia's billboard campaign saying "Gay Parade Allowed — Smoking Banned. Which is more harmful for the nation?"

On 6 June, Father Evgenii Yanakiev, a local priest in the Orthodox Church, advised people to "throw stones" at the Pride participants and called for politicians who supported the march to be "drowned in the sea with millstones tied around their necks". The Church backed Yanakiev.

In Lithuania, on 26 June 2012 Lithuanian MP Petras Grazulis — a member of the Parliamentary Group for the Traditional Family — failed to make it illegal to campaign on issues related to sexual orientation and gender identity and illegal to organise LGBT Pride events or provide sexual health information to LGBT people. Only two years ago, Grazulis was part of a mob of anti-gay demonstrators at Baltic Pride 2010, the first LGBT march to be held in Lithuania.

UNSURPRISING

In January 2012, Pope Benedict XVI declared that same-sex marriage threatened "the future of humanity itself". It is unsurprising therefore, that in Brazil — where 123 million people (64.6% of the population) are self-declared Catholics — a survey carried out by LGBT rights group Grupo Gay da Bahia (GGB) found there was a gay hate crime every 36 hours in 2011.

In Iraq, the LGBT community continues to live in terror as sectarian militias control the streets in the warfare that has ensued since the 2003 US-led invasion.

Hundreds may have been killed (it is almost impossible to calculate) in the past few months. The attacks are increasing. Survivors are quoted as saying militiamen invade homes and interrogate victims before killing them in order to identify other potential victims.

Human Rights Watch has reported at least 200 gay men have been murdered since February 2012. Death squads have targeted two separate groups — known homosexuals, and young men perceived to be gay because they dress as "emo" — a Western-influenced style, which for some in Iraq is associated with homosexuality.

In Iran, the theocratic regime criminalises and oppresses homosexuality and Iranian leaders claim that homosexuality does not exist in their country. Since the 1979 Iranian counter-revolution, all sexual relations that occur outside of heterosexual marriage are illegal. Homosexual relations that occur between consenting adults in private carry a maximum punishment of death. Lesbian same-sex relations are punishable by 100 lashes, with the death penalty being imposed after the fourth offence. A recently exposed Wiki Leaks cable estimates the number of executions could be between 4,000 and 6,000 individuals.

The LGBT rights movement is engaged in an unprecedented global culture war against religious fundamentalists who continue to malign LGBT people as enemies of faith, family, and freedom. LGBT people are routinely used by anti-democratic forces as scapegoats for the social instability of the capitalist system, serving as a functional distraction from other human rights violations, corruption, misgovernment, economic problems, rising food prices, and political tyranny. By claiming society's moral disintegration and asserting LGBT people are eroding a "traditional" way of life, political demagogues and religious leaders see to create a climate of opinion out of which to gain support.

Fight for an end to violence and discrimination against LGBT people!

Syriza and the struggle

By Theodora Polenta

Since the May and June elections in Greece issues that previously were discussed only in the small meetings of the revolutionary left have become part of the everyday discussion of ordinary people, new to the struggle and new to revolutionary jargon.

What should be the tactical and strategic aims of a left government? Should the left wing tendencies form a united front on a trade union level, or a political level, or both? What type of party organisation is required? Democratic centralism, pluralism, federalism?

What is the relationship and the relevance of the different ideological streams of the left? Reform or revolution? Parliament, neighbourhood community meetings and movements, workers' control, solidarity networks: how do they fit together?

At the epicentre of this discussion is Syriza, which saw its percentage increase from 4% in 2009 to 27% in last June's elections.

To oversimplify, Syriza has three tendencies. The centre tendency of Synaspismos backs Syriza's president Alexis Tsipras. The left, represented by Panagiotis Lafazanis, is broadly supported by the Left Stream of Synaspismos and by the majority of Syriza's 12 other components (which include two Trotskyist groups, DEA and Kokkino). Then there is a group of ex-Pasok MPs represented by Alexis Mitropoulos.

This article is concerned with Syriza's central leadership, and its tendency over the summer to soften its anti-memorandum anti-systemic edge and converge towards to a social democratic stance filling the vacuum left by the discredited and politically lifeless Pasok.

In June Syriza did well mainly because it promised that it would form "a government of the left" that would "cancel the memorandum".

Working-class people and youth voted for Syriza in the hope of a unilateral, immediate overthrow of the Memorandum and cancellation of the debt.

Since 17 June several prominent members of Syriza — Dragasakis, Papadimoulis, Stathakis, as well as Tsipras — have adopted more "rounded" positions, a policy of compromise with the status quo which is very far from what was declared as Syriza's programme.

STREETS

Straight after the elections, Tsipras gave an interview to Reuters saying stating that he "did not intend to call the people onto the streets". Syriza would wait until "the three party coalition government would collapse of its own accord and Syriza would become the government".

Syriza representative Panos Skourletis pointedly asked all members of Syriza to be careful when making public political statements as now Syriza was a party of 27%, not of 4%.

Syriza's electoral promise to nationalise the banks under workers' and public control has been overshadowed by talk about the advantages of EU action to save the Greek banking system.

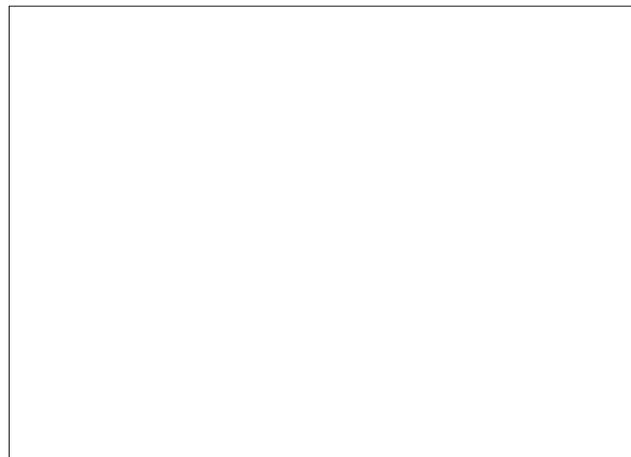
During his speech at the Thessaloniki International Fair in September, Tsipras made another political shift to the right, arguing for "the cancellation and renegotiation of the Memorandum" (i.e. a new Memorandum) as the only way that the creditors could continue to get their money.

"This is the only credible and viable option to get the country out of the recession, to effectively finance the recovery, to restore debt sustainability through development... With the Memorandum Greece will collapse and the creditors will lose their money" he said.

Addressing Greek capitalists, Tsipras stressed the need to "restore the country's competitiveness" and pledged to use "creatively the geo-strategic importance of the country", i.e. to bring back to the Greek capitalists their profits in the Balkans, Eastern Europe and the Middle East.

He promised to "further enhance the shipping industry with a national programmatic agreement with the shipping industry and the ship owning world" with a "review of their tax cuts and exemptions".

The ship owners will never agree to establish a "national framework agreement ... for the review of their tax exemp-



Alex Tsipras of Syriza with Bernd Riexinger of the German Die Linke (Left Party)

tions" as Tsipras hopes. Already they have responded by stating — if you want to tax us, you have first to find us.

Tsipras abandoned Syriza's call for nationalisation without compensation and under workers' control of privatised sectors and instead advocated harmonious cooperation of the public and private sectors.

"Instead of privatisation we promote business partnerships and development partnerships with intergovernmental agreements" says Syriza's energy programme.

Syriza's "nationalisation of the banks" was reduced during the speech to "cancellation of the privatisation of the Agricultural and post savings banks and their reestablishment under public control", and the creation of a "special purpose bank".

Tsipras further retreated on Syriza's position on the debt, calling for "renegotiation of the loan agreement and bailout fund", "a moratorium on repayment of interest for a specified period", "writing off large part of the debt", and "repayment of the rest of the debt dependent upon the country's development".

In fact, all the three components of today's coalition government (New Democracy, Pasok, Democratic Left) were elected on a promise to "renegotiate" and "gradually disengage" from the memorandum. but now say they have no choice but to push through new cuts. Why a government of the left, led by a part which EU and IMF leaders witch-hunted in the June election) will get a more generous response to requests for renegotiation is a serious question not answered by the leadership of Syriza.

"NATIONAL PLANS"

When the protesters gathered at the Thessaloniki International Fair, Tsipras made no call to escalate industrial struggle beyond the one-day general strike already called by GSEE and ADEDY.

In his speech words such as "internationalism", "strike", "socialism", "immigrants" or "racism" were absent. He appealed to "patriotic and democratic" Greeks, or to "every Greek person", "omitting" to raise the issue of the legalisation of hundreds of thousands of immigrants who live and work in the country. His speech was saturated with talk of "national plans", "sovereignty", "national independence", "national imperative" "national capital", "national wealth", and especially "national strategy".

Tsipras and Syriza's chief economist John Milios visited Horst Reichenbach, the chief of the EU cuts "task force" in Greece. After the meeting Milios stated: "The main thing is to agree on some goals. We have agreed with Reichenbach on the target of balancing the budget first and then creating primary surpluses".

The argument that the weapon of the strike has waned in conditions of crisis so the workers should turn towards a political solution is anti-dialectical and one-sided. A government of the left will not be viable if it is supported only by workplaces that have abandoned the strike weapon. A left wing government can be viable only if connected with workers' struggles and organs of workers' and community control.

There is the dividing line between those who cultivate a "wait until the next election" attitude and those left wing forces in and outside of Syriza who organise the battles in the here and now, from factory to factory, school, hospital, from neighbourhood to neighbourhood.

Syriza is moving at a very slow pace towards its conference which aims to transform Syriza to "a single party of the radical left". The conference was planned for November, has now been shifted to December, and may be further delayed.

Despite the right wing shift of the leadership of Syriza, Syriza still remains the main hope for the working class and community movements, because it is the only medium that promises a left government in the next period. The forces of the radical and revolutionary left, whether they are inside or outside Syriza, have a duty to intervene in these processes, raise a radical socialist programme, and campaign for real internal democracy in the party.

Now, after the relative lull of the summer, and after the massive protests against Merkel's visit, no day passes without strikers in the streets: teachers, hotel employees, metal, transport workers, doctors and health workers, council workers...

In response, Tsipras has shifted back to the left a bit. He has welcomed the general strikes and helped organise the Merkel protests (alongside PAME and the revolutionary left).

In a recent meeting in Ioannina, Tsipras stated that Syriza's priority is supporting industrial and neighbourhood action in order to stop the new 13.5 billion package of cuts. An escalation of the struggle will overthrow the government and impose new elections.

The efforts of Syriza's left should follow three directions.

One, the organisation of the struggle for the overthrow of the cuts and the government,

Two, intervention in all Syriza's organs and initiatives to contribute towards the formation of a single democratic party of the radical left with internal democracy and multiple tendencies

Three, promoting an industrial and political united front between Syriza, KKE, and Antarsya, as a precondition for the government of the left.

A government of the left, based on struggles, would not be the endpoint, but would open the door to the well-matured necessity of building another society, which has our needs as its priority, a socialist, radical-democratic society.

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Threat of school strikes forces climbdown

By a teacher

As reported in *Solidarity* 260 (10 October 2012), teachers at Bishop Challoner school in East London voted to strike in opposition to a threat from the headteacher to impose a "mock" Ofsted inspection.

Bishop Challoner teachers had previously voted not to cooperate with or participate in any such inspection or observation, as part of the ongoing industrial action by the NUT and NASUWT teaching unions.

Following the strike vote, a series of one-sided "negotiations" followed, consisting of the head sending out a series of increasingly embarrassed emails in which what had initially been presented as a compulsory inspection was first reduced to a partial observation,

then a voluntary opt-in process for individual departments, then a voluntary opt-in process for individuals (i.e. teachers could opt out even if their departments opted in), then something that would only affect senior management.

A meeting on Tuesday 9 October agreed that, while positive, the climb-down was not to be trusted. Workers were also angered by the head's attempt to divide staff on the basis of

department or grade. The 9 October meeting again voted overwhelmingly to strike if any observations of any description went ahead.

Throughout the entire process there was no communication from the headteacher to union reps in the school. She consistently attempted to either ignore or bypass the democratically-elected representatives of her own employees.

Eventually, she agreed to negotiate with the union at

a regional level but it was not clear whether school reps would be allowed to participate in the meetings. However, regional NUT reps insisted that a school rep attend. Having previously cancelled a meeting with school reps, the head then dismissed official communication from the school NUT group to her as "anonymous emails".

EMERGED

A new proposal has emerged from negotiations, which is for a "paired inspection" rather than a mock Ofsted.

This would only be possible if the school adopts an observation protocol in line with NUT policy. Given the underhand behaviour of management throughout this dispute, and the head's consistent refusal to com-

municate openly with union reps in the school, school reps are insisting that members vote on participation in any observation or inspection process before it takes place.

The experience at Bishop Challoner school shows that teachers have enormous strength and power. Simply taking a stand in a meeting sent our head into a tailspin and forced a series of embarrassing climb-downs. Other teachers across the country can do the same as part of the NUT/NASUWT action; you'll be surprised how much you can achieve.

Ultimately, we have the power because we make the schools run. We, and not the senior managers, are responsible for delivering our pupils' education.

University unions divided on strikes

By Lucy Clement

Ballots on this year's Higher Education pay claim have produced mixed results amid disillusion over the handling of the pensions dispute.

Following three years of increases well below inflation, employers were offering a pay rise of just 1% — a real-terms pay cut of 12% over four years. The unions asked for 7%, guaranteeing that no staff would get less than the Living Wage (£8.20 per hour in London; £7.30 elsewhere), and action on the gender pay gap (still 15%) and casualisation.

University and College Union (UCU) members — lecturers, researchers and academic-related staff —

voted against strike action (44% for, 56% against) but in favour of action short (70 to 30%). Unison members voted by the narrowest of margins for a strike (50.3 to 49.7%).

Votes for strike action were stronger in Unite (63%) and Scottish teachers' union EIS (54% for strike, and 72% for action short).

LET-DOWN

Many union members feel let down by the failure of one-day strikes in the long-running pensions dispute.

In post-92 universities, where academic staff are in the same pensions scheme as teachers, morale has also been dented by the decision of the National Union of Teachers leader-

ship to effectively call off its pension dispute.

One-day strikes are particularly ineffective in universities due to the ease of rescheduling work for another day. Rolling strikes that closed services like IT, libraries or finance sections for longer periods could have more effect, but require a high degree of local confidence and organisation, currently lacking in many branches. In contrast, action short of a strike, like the assessment boycott used in 2006 when lecturers withheld exam and coursework marks, has proven strength as a tactic.

That may explain why many UCU members felt action short made more sense than strikes.

Tesco jobs fight

Delivery drivers for Tesco based in Doncaster could strike for 48 hours from 18 October.

Drivers' contracts have been transferred to Eddie Stobart Ltd., who have given a 90-day notice of termination and no guarantee of re-employment.

The drivers have already held a march through Doncaster town centre.

Charity workers' second strike

By Clarke Benitez

Workers at human rights charity Amnesty International struck for the second time on Wednesday 10 October.

They are striking in opposition to a cost-cutting programme from manage-

ment which could lead to compulsory redundancies.

Unusually for the charity sector, Amnesty's income has continued to grow during the recession. Workers are particularly angry that the charity's bosses are pressing ahead with cuts despite this fact.

A statement from the workers' union, Unite, said that they had "no confidence" in Amnesty's management.

Amnesty workers first struck on 12 September.

Striking for work/life balance

areas are demanding twelve-hour rosters, which would give them more time off in between shifts and improve work/life balance. Workers previously voted by 100% to strike.

RMT general secretary Bob Crow said: "The RMT will not allow Network Rail to ride roughshod over the clear democratic will of our members to improve the quality of their work/life balance.

"That is why we are now stepping up the strike action again and we remain available for meaningful talks."

By Ollie Moore

Railway signallers involved in a months-long dispute with Network Rail over roster arrangements struck on Friday 12 October, in what rail union RMT promises will be "the first in a series of strikes".

Signallers working in the Stirling Middle, Stirling North, and Dunblane

Northants cuts battle

By a GMB member

Northamptonshire County Council has begun a consultation with a view to making £4 million "savings", including a 3.6% reduction in workers' pay.

The proposals also include cuts to sick pay, no pay increments, no pay award for 2013 or beyond, and mandatory unpaid leave of two to three days per year.

The Council's alternative proposal, which will also be investigated, is to push through 250 compulsory redundancies (which could equate to more than 300 workers, as the proposed redundancies are full-time equivalents rather than single posts).

Rachelle Wilkinson, an officer for the GMB union, which organises at the council, said:

"Class cuts like a knife through everything that this Tory-led government and its councils propose and deliver.

"In the same breath as announcing this proposal, the council spoke of further proposals to spend £43 million on a new suite of council office. They also talk of receiving The Blue Riband prize from the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills.

"This was awarded to the council for a £10million loan given to the Silverstone racing circuit ... and an investment of a further £1.5 million in the Silverstone wing [a conference centre and banqueting facilities at the racetrack], allowing the super-rich posh boys, to quaff their Bollinger in comfort."

Shop stewards at the council should hold cross-unions all-members meetings immediately so workers can discuss how to fight back.

Strong talk and class hostility from union officials in press statements is a good start, but a workplace-led industrial and political campaign will be needed to beat these proposals.

Members of teaching unions NUT and UCU at K College in Kent struck for half a day on Monday 8 October as part of a battle to save 145 jobs. The workplace is spread over six campuses and has more than 25,000 students. College bosses want to make cuts to shrink an £11 million deficit. 57 jobs have already been lost, and workers fear that campuses in Ashford and Dover could be sold off altogether. Staff walked off the job at 1pm and held pickets and protests at college sites.

Solidarity & Workers' Liberty

Tories' new attack on civil servants

By a civil servant

The Government has ordered all departments within the civil service to undertake an urgent review of terms and conditions.

Departments have been told that "This is our opportunity to tackle those terms and conditions where we have been less responsive in the past as well those that have left the Civil Service open to ridicule".

We know that privilege days will be in the scope of the review; though not the one associated with the Queen's Birthday (obviously the Tories' devotion to the Queen outstrips their determination to worsen conditions for public sector workers).

According to the *Guardian*, who have seen leaked Cabinet Office documents, the review will look

PCS picket line, Milton Keynes, 30 June 2011

at "aspects of working life.... susceptible to radical change, including employees' annual leave, occasional days' leave, sick pay, hours of work, the ability of employees to move from one job to another and probationary periods".

WORK HOURS
Currently staff in London work 36 hour net (and outside London a 37 hour net) week.

As the leaked documents talk of lengthening the working week, presumably the departments will propose increasing working hours in London or in London and outside it.

Departments will begin talks with local unions on or after 16 November on their proposals arising from their reviews.

Now most of the terms and conditions being reviewed are contractual and

in theory cannot be changed without agreement. At the moment there is no hint that the government wants to "bust" the contracts.

So the danger in that case is that if terms for existing staff cannot be changed then new entrants to departments will be put on worse terms and so we will have a two tier workforce.

LEADERSHIP

Clearly a firm lead from the union leadership is required, particularly in light of the danger of the two tier work force.

What is needed is an all-union response rather than allowing each department to go its own way.

The civil service union PCS has been talking of a national fight on pay; obviously we need one now on the defence of terms and conditions — and we need it urgently.

Walmart strikes spread

By Ira Berkovic

Strikes against American retail giant Walmart, which began in warehouses operated by Walmart's suppliers in southern California and Illinois, have now spread to 28 stores in twelve states across the USA.

The Illinois warehouse workers have already returned to work, having secured their key demands of reinstatement of all who were fired or suspended for on-the-job organising, as well as full back pay for all workers who took part in the three-week strike.

The workers' grievances against Walmart are numerous. Attacks on workers' rights include non-payment of overtime, non-payment for all hours worked, health and safety problems, below-minimum-wage salary levels, unilateral changes and cuts to hours, and management bullying and intimidation. In interviews, and in placards on picket lines, many strikers have described the strike as being simply for the right to speak up about conditions at work without fear of retaliation from managers.

Speaking on Amy Goodman's "Democracy Now" radio show, Walmart worker Mike Compton explained how the strikes are the result of workers simply being pushed too far by bosses. He said: "I work in a Wal-Mart warehouse in Elwood, Illinois. The conditions are terrible... a lot of safety issues. We have broken equipment that was not getting repaired. They just push us to work at a rate that makes it even more unsafe. We finally just had enough, and we started to organise. We started a petition, asking for some basic rights. And our managers refused to take it. So, that was kind of the final straw. We decided that was it, and we walked out

that day."

Most of the workers involved in the strikes are not unionised, but they are being supported by union-backed workers' centres such as Warehouse Workers United (affiliated to the "Change To Win" coalition, one of America's two main union federations), Warehouse Workers for Justice (connected with the United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers, which organised the 2008 occupation of the Republic Windows and Doors factory in Chicago), and Our Walmart (linked to the United Food and Commercial Workers).

Although the strikes currently involve only small numbers of employees in each store, their significance is enormous.

SPARK

They are a demonstration of how, even when bosses go to huge efforts to prevent workers from organising and fighting back, it only takes on group of workers to create the first spark which lights a fire.

Described by rank-and-file magazine *Labor Notes* as "US labour's most powerful foe", Walmart represents 2.3% of America's GDP. It is the largest private employer on the planet, as well as the largest retailer. Until this strike wave, a 2006 dispute in a Florida store was the only acknowledged industrial dispute between Walmart and its employees in America. It is notoriously anti-union, providing extensive training for its managers in how to keep their stores and warehouses union-free, and creating a draconian work culture which has seen workers sent home or suspended for wearing union t-shirts or badged.

A number of labour movement commentators in America have heralded the strike wave as a potential "game-changer".

Defence campaign for QCH dispute organiser

By Martin Thomas

Bob Carnegie, community protest organiser in the Queensland Children's Hospital dispute in Brisbane, is being sued on 54 separate counts by the main contractor, Abigroup.

Abigroup is seeking damages on the grounds that Bob defied a court order which they got, instructing him to stay away from the community protest.

The (right-wing) Queensland state government has applied also to be part of the court case.

A defence campaign, the

and their law firm to try to bring people to heel by the threat of legal action. We'll certainly be fighting this one".

The first court hearing is on 17 October, but legal advice is that the case will run for several months. The charges could lead to fines of up to \$400,000, and maybe a jail sentence.

As part of the dispute settlement, Abigroup agreed to drop legal proceedings against a number of QCH workers. We now need a big campaign to force Abigroup to drop its vindictive action against Bob Carnegie.

It is an attempt to intim-

idate not only an individual, but every organiser in every workers' battle in future.

The Trade Union Defence Committee is also organising a benefit to raise funds for the workers who lost nine weeks' pay in the dispute.

It will be on Saturday 27 October, from 7pm at the Serbian Hall, 243-7 Vulture Street, South Brisbane.

• Secretary of the campaign: Ian Curr, iancurr@bigpond.com or +61407687016. Web: workersbushtelegraph.com.au

Bob Carnegie

Trade Union Defence Committee, has been set up in Brisbane, and socialists will be working to spread the campaign across Australia and internationally.

Bob says: "It's an act of intimidation by Abigroup