



Solidarity

For social ownership of the banks and industry

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www.workersliberty.org



OPEN THE BORDERS!



See page 5

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!

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Fight Northants privatisation!

By Vicki Morris

Conservative-run Northamptonshire (Northants) County Council is planning to transfer its 4,000 workers to four semi-private "community interest companies" in a bid to save money.

Only 150 staff will remain directly employed by the council, to commission and administer the contracts for services with these new semi-privatised companies, or with fully private companies.

Already, private company Balfour Beatty runs the street lighting and, another, Kier, the roads.

The community interest companies will be able to make surpluses and it is planned they will sell services to other "customers" as well as to the council.

Northants charges a relatively low council tax but like other councils around the country has to find huge savings as central government has cut funding. The semi-privatisation is supposed to save £148 million over four years.

The reality is that savings will most likely be made by



cutting the level of service, and by worsening workers' pay and conditions.

Yet so far the local Unison branch seems not to be opposing the moves. Steven Bennett, branch secretary, is reported in the *Financial Times* saying that the terms and conditions for those moving to the new enterprises will be better than for those remaining on the council payroll, and that consumers are happier with those services that have already been outsourced.

A fight is necessary and possible. Privatised services

are worse for workers providing those services, and for service users, a waste of public money, and a disastrous blow to local democratic control.

The Northants plan is one of several devised mainly — although not exclusively — by Conservative administrations around the country, egged on by big outsourcing companies such as Capita who stand to profit.

In the London Borough of Barnet, the local trade unions, Unison in particular, and a lively political campaign by local residents,

succeeded in delaying a similarly large mass outsourcing plan called "One Barnet". The local Tories are paying a political price for their attacks on workers' conditions and on the quality of public services, although the battle is still raging.

Trade unionists and anti-privatisation campaigners in Northants can build a significant campaign, but an important part of it will be finding ways to support those in the council unions who want to fight.

Carnegie challenges for MUA Queensland top spot

By Shane Bentley
(MUA member, Sydney)

Workers' Liberty supporter Bob Carnegie is again standing for the position of Maritime Union of Australia (MUA) Queensland Branch Secretary in this year's Quadrennial elections.

In what will hopefully be a case of "the early bird catches the worm", Bob began his campaign on March 7, just one day after nominations had opened, by visiting job sites in the north of Queensland.

This is not Carnegie's first crack at the Queensland Branch Secretary spot. In the last MUA Quadrennial elections of 2011, Bob was defeated by only two votes (504 to 506) by incumbent Mick Carr. As Carr is retiring this year, Carnegie will be vying for the position alongside current Queensland Deputy Secretary Trevor Munday and two other candidates.

This time round, Bob has



teamed up with running mate and well respected unionist Paul Petersen. Paul was a "wharfie" (docker) and an outspoken delegate for ten years before being sacked by stevedoring company Patrick in 2009. He has stuck with the MUA and has retrained to become a seafarer.

Bob and Paul have already made numerous visits to job sites, held meetings in town halls and caught up with members after work in local pubs. Their itinerary has included visits to Gladstone (March 7 to 9), Brisbane (March 12 to 18), Mackay and Hay Point (March 25) and again in Brisbane (March 28 to 30). All of this is no mean feat.

Queensland is three times the size of France. From north to south, the Queensland coast is over 2000km (1250 miles) long, and has ports dotted up and down its length.

Their message on the need to turn the MUA Queensland Branch into a genuine rank and file organisation has struck a chord with members. Bob and Paul's campaign policies include the need for elected officials to regularly visit job sites in Brisbane and other ports; the full and effective defence of any MUA delegate facing the sack; an unwavering battle against casualisation; fight-

ing for a 30-hour week with no loss in pay in the stevedoring sector (which is facing massive job losses due to automation); and genuine union democracy, including the rotation of elected officials so that they serve no more than two four-year terms in the same position.

The union-run postal ballot begins on April 28 and closes on June 15. Results are to be declared before July 1.

For more information, see Bob's campaign website: bob4muaqld.org and Facebook group: facebook.com/bob4muaqld

Bob Carnegie UK speaker tour

Bob Carnegie, who has been at the heart of every major workers' struggle in Brisbane, Australia, for more than three decades, is coming to the UK to talk about his experiences and lessons for organising workers.

Bob will be speaking at

the Fire Brigades Union conference in Blackpool on 13 May, in Bristol on 15 May, in London on 16 May and 21 May, in Liverpool on 18 May and at PCS union conference in Brighton on 20 May.

• More information: bit.ly/Bob-speaker-tour

Stop new runways, cut the carbon!

*Grow Heathrow is a community garden space and activist centre in Sipson, in the path of the proposed third runway at Heathrow Airport. Grow Heathrow activist Cameron Richards spoke to *Solidarity* about the project and its place in the wider movement against climate change.*

Grow Heathrow came out of Transition Heathrow, which came out of the 2007 Climate Camp.

That Camp was sited outside the airport, protesting against the plans for a third runway. From that, a group of environmental activists decided to focus on the fight against expansion.

A number of people moved into the local community, and formed Transition Heathrow in 2009, and were later invited to squat a plot of land in the village of Sipson, right in the path of the proposed third runway.

The project has blossomed since then. We're a community garden space providing spaces for workshops. Our electricity and hot water is completely off-

grid.

We do a lot of work with the community, including arts projects. We work with grassroots campaigns such as Stop Heathrow Expansion, the local community campaign against the third runway. We're trying to model a low-carbon economy in a space that they want to tarmac into a climate-change disaster zone.

We won a huge victory in 2010 by stopping the proposals in their tracks, but in 2012 the government established the "Airports Commission", chaired by Sir Howard Davies, which has an explicit brief to recommend airport expansion and a new runway in the south east. This has been narrowed down to either Gatwick or Heathrow. That closes down the conversation completely.

Britain needs to cut its emissions by 80% by 2050; this investment in high-emissions industries takes us in the exact opposite direction.

We work very closely with John McDonnell, the local Labour MP. He's been



a huge supporter of the project, and has been since the beginning. We've worked with him in wider community campaigning. He's completely onside; he's a rarity as a politician, in that he stands up for the people he represents.

We also work with other local politicians, from a variety of parties. There's a strong local majority against expansion, which is cross-party. However, no

political party that might conceivably govern, or be part of a government, has committed to stopping expansion, so for us the fight is sure to continue after the election.

Our wider perspective is for a zero-carbon economy. We want work and production to be organised on a zero-carbon basis, and we try to make our space a microcosmic illustration of how zero-carbon models

can work.

We support aviation workers' struggles, and stood in solidarity with the British Airways cabin crew workers' strike in 2010.

We want there to be low-carbon and ultimately zero-carbon jobs for people to transition into, which there aren't enough of currently. So it's about focusing on the lack of low carbon alternatives being provided in the overall system, not on individuals' current jobs. Many have the skills to and would work in a low carbon economy if one was being offered.

There has to be government initiative to create new climate jobs. At the moment the government has the opposite perspective, creating jobs in high-emissions industries like fracking and aviation.

People often forget that workers at Heathrow are often members of local communities too. Of course they want to keep their jobs, but they don't believe in expansion at any cost.

The wider climate movement has revived signifi-

cantly as people build towards the UN climate conference in Paris in December 2015. But whatever comes out of Paris, the fights against fracking and airport expansion will continue, and they'll have to be led by alliances of the climate movement and local communities.

One of things our project shows is that sustained campaigning around particular issues, and building strong alliances, can maintain action even in the context of the slight dip in the wider movement that followed the last UN summit in Copenhagen. It's about choosing the fights we feel we can make a difference on, and seeing them through.

The environmental movement, working with local communities, will not let a new runway be built, wherever a future government decide they want to build it.

This is a strong movement against corporate pursuit of profit at the expense of the planet; it is a movement that will win.

Left-wing policy passed at NUS

By Sacha Ismail

On the first day of the National Union of Students conference (21 April, in Liverpool), delegates voted for a series of left-wing policies.

On the general election, the current leadership's bland motion calling for a "new deal for students" was amended with much more radical demands put forward by the National Campaign Against Fees and Cuts (NCAFC), including reversing cuts, taxing the rich, public ownership of the banks, open borders and migrants' rights.

The policy passed advocates a serious program of direct action, and alliance with trade unions and the Labour left, whoever wins the general election. Delegates also voted to criticise NUS's "Generation Vote" campaign, a bland effort which focuses on "intergenerational injustice" rather than injustices about class and oppression.

NUS conference has passed left-wing policy but had it ignored before. Per-

haps more significant was the fact that, later in the afternoon, delegates went on to delete, by a clear margin, support for means-testing student grants. A vote on the left motion positively for living, non-means-tested, student grants will come up later.

The general mood at the conference is clearly left-leaning. On the other hand, it is quite small: less than five hundred delegates took part in the vote on means testing. There is a lot less clearly organised factional activity than even a few years ago.

Other important issues coming up include migrants' rights, police repression and presence on campus, housing campaigns, attitudes to the EU and welfare/benefit cuts.

As with the vote for free education at last year's conference, left policy passed at NUS provides footholds for effective grassroots student organising.

At the conference, Workers' Liberty member Beth Redmond is the left candidate for NUS President, and



Workers' Liberty member Beth Redmond is standing for NUS President and national executive

NCAFC member Hattie Craig is standing for VP Higher Education. Beth is also standing for the part-time Block of 15 section of the national executive, along with two other NCAFC members.

Left, leftish and left-talk-ing candidates are standing for the five Vice President positions, and a number may win.

"Cash now" behind loan sell-off plans

By Gemma Short

In July 2014 Vince Cable, the Lib-Dem Secretary of State for Business, Innovation & Skills, cancelled plans to sell the remainder of the higher education student loan book to the private sector.

Why then did Osborne, in December 2014, say that "progress continues" on the planned sale and why are the projected £12 billion gross proceeds still included in fiscal projections?

The answer, has more to do with pre-election jockeying over promises to lower national debt than with student funding. Due to the significant shortfall between annual outfall on new loans and repayment on old ones, the government has to borrow to create new loans, adding to national debt. The sale of such an "asset" as the student loans book to gain "cash now" rather than wait for longer term repayments is appealing to any government wanting a quick fix to "balance the budget".

In 2010 total student loan debt (from the old system of £3000 fees with loans repaid at rates depending on graduate income, and from pre-tuition fee loans with fixed repayment schedules) was about £30 billion. This reached £54.4 billion in March 2014, and due to £9000 fees is set to increase rapidly.

Loan repayments are not expected to reach significant levels until the 2030s (as student loans have a long life and repayments are weighted towards the end of their life). It is expected the total debt will peak in the 2040s at somewhere around £330 billion in today's money.

Loan book sell offs have been used by the government before. In the late 1990s the Labour Government sold a set of the pre-tuition fees mortgage-style loans for £2 billion. The terms of that sale, with the government agreeing to compensate purchasers if greater numbers of students failed to repay than predicted, mean the government is £240 million worse off today than if it

hadn't sold.

Because of the delayed repayment and low interest rates on student loans, their value to private speculators is considered low. As activists in the NCAFC pointed out in 2011, when plans for a sale were leaked from David Willetts' education White Paper, the government would either have to make a deal including compensation if fewer students than predicted made repayments, or impose an increase in the interest rate on loans — in reality a retrospective increase in tuition fees for the graduates repaying their loans. The IFS estimates that three-quarters of borrowers will fail to repay in full.

The "cash now" from selling the student loan book at an "attractive price" to the private sector will represent a loss to the government over a longer term.

Yet as parties scramble to be the most "fiscally responsible" with the most "balanced" budget they may well opt for "cash now".

Basic income: on the side of the people

Letters



In his article “Basic Income: Side-stepping struggle?” (*Solidarity* 359) Kieran Miles gets a number of things wrong. I will attempt to pick up on some of these errors and then address his “questions for the UBI advocates”.

Before proceeding, a point on terminology. Kieran uses the term universal basic income while I prefer citizen’s income. However, the most common term in use seems to be the shorter basic income and I would suggest using this in any future discussion.

In a number of places Kieran is simply not comparing like with like. A “minimum income” is not a basic income and the negative income tax suggested by Friedman and others is, likewise, not a basic income. The system discussed in Cyprus also is not a basic income and if anyone was to suggest to Ian Duncan Smith that his Universal Credit was akin to a basic income I think he would have a heart attack.

The basic income contains a number of key elements without which it becomes, simply, another welfare benefit with all the potential disadvantages they hold. First, a basic income is unconditional; in other words all you have to do is prove your place of residency and that’s it. In this respect basic income is not such an alien idea in the UK.

Until quite recently Child Benefit was a kind of basic income: the only condition being that you were a mother, in which case you simply received a weekly payment and had to do nothing else for it. If you go to prison, win the National Lottery, become unemployed, join UKIP, change sex, move to Chipping Norton or whatever, you will still receive it.

A basic income cannot be withdrawn – therefore it cannot be used as a sanction, one of the major differences between it and Duncan Smith’s Universal Credit. In fact the idea of sanction or punishment (or the threat of it) is central to the Duncan Smith scheme and one reason why it is so pernicious. Basic income is not assessed or means-tested, there are no excruciating interviews to go through, no thirty page forms to fill out and no-one to bully you, pry into your private life and humiliate you in the process.

I’m not sure what Kieran is referring to when he raises the topic of “anti-work” and my own feeling is that this really deserves a separate discussion. Personally (and very briefly), I like what Andre Gorz has to say on the topic of work and

leisure and I fully support the idea of sharing work and drastically reducing the working week. Whether or not automation negates the labour theory of value is not something that keeps me awake at night — if the theory doesn’t fit the real world then the theory needs scrapping or revising.

On the matter of whether or not it is preferable to work in a coffee shop or a shipyard, this is not meaningless although the choice, if there ever were one, no longer exists. In the former, your wages are likely to be shit, hours are long or part-time, the coffee establishment will almost certainly be non-union and it must, surely, be a bit soul-destroying to keep asking: “Is that decaf?” “Full cream or half?” “Would you like chocolate on that?” “Enjoy!” “Have a nice day!” and all the rest of the fabricated bollocks that so-called “baristas” have to come out with every five minutes.

Compared to this, driving rivets into the side of the Titanic might be bloody hard work, but it has its compensations: relatively decent wages, union membership, a sense of community, solidarity and, call me old-fashioned, what was once referred to as the dignity of labour. I realise that, particularly, this latter sentiment is open to a number of criticisms (most of which I would probably share) but, again, this is better left for discussion at another time.

WOMEN

One very important aspect of the basic income which critics rarely seems to discuss is its advantages for women.

As the basic income is paid on an individual basis not to the “head” of the household (frequently a man), a woman has a guaranteed independent income. In the trials in India and Namibia there are a number of examples of women, for example, pooling their basic income and using the money to buy sewing machines to boost family income, setting up small businesses or co-operatives. Think of the significance and potentially liberating effect of this on women in patriarchal societies.

Critics of basic income need to spend a little more time looking at the concrete details of what is involved and base their opinions on the evidence. Kieran mentions the trials in Namibia and India but readers ought to be aware that there is plenty of easily available evidence on these trials. Readers might want to have a look at *Basic Income: A Transformative Policy for India* by Daival et al (published by Bloomsbury this year) which gives 214 pages of detailed analysis of the Indian

trial in Madhyah Pradesh. It can’t be said loud enough that both were a resounding success irrespective of what criteria you use.

Would readers of *Solidarity* and members of Workers’ Liberty support a call for a trial in the UK? Say in some limited and well-defined urban/geographical area like a former Lancashire mill town? A trial of two years, possibly funded by the UK government and the UN, is quite feasible and practical and not the fantasy that it might first appear to be. The results could then be published, analysed, discussed and evidence-based conclusions arrived at.

Finally, in attempting to answer Kieran’s four points I would suggest:

1. I don’t think the universality of a basic income can be guaranteed. But, what can be guaranteed? Was it guaranteed that the miners would win or lose the 84-85 strike? Obviously not; you simply go out there and fight for it. If you expect guarantees then you will often be disappointed.

2. Full employment, increased wages and benefits for the unemployed are all achievable, given certain conditions (and the caveat mentioned previously). My argument would be that basic income would actually help this and not be “side-stepping struggle”. By providing a financial “cushion” it would, for example, help those who go on strike for a living wage or better conditions. Whether or not a basic income is the more achievable demand I simply don’t know, and I don’t think anyone else does.

3. I agree entirely with sharing out work more equally. How would a basic income go against this? I don’t think it would. Again, it could provide a financial cushion while the practical details of work-sharing are developed and put into practice. It would also help in the inevitable gap between losing a job and finding other (shared) work.

4. Does basic income challenge capital? Yes, I think it does, partly because it means people can take more control of their lives (surely a good thing) and make choices which suit them and not some government bureaucrat or unscrupulous employer.

It is not a panacea but basic income is on the side of the people, it enhances freedom at a whole range of levels: within the community, within the family and individually. All of which are anathema to neo-liberals (although they pretend otherwise), the forces of big business, government and the bureaucratic mentality.

John Cunningham, Lancashire

How to insult your readership

Press

By Harry Davies



I’m under strict editorial instructions to leave the *Daily Mail* alone this week. Which is the first time anyone’s ever said that to me.

So I lazily rolled across the barricades to the *Mirror*, a paper I’ve not had much connection with since they stopped running Garth the first time around. But their election coverage is quite interesting, for all sorts of reasons.

It’s primarily geared around people not intending to vote; an admirable move, for sure.

It would appear someone has done some research and created a profile of the sort of person they think doesn’t vote and then calculated the optimal manner to be as patronising as possible to them.

The online election coverage starts with the explanation that David Cameron is the Prime Minister and that Ed Miliband is Leader of the Opposition. And that’s pretty much it. There’s just a big font paragraph at the top of the page with those facts and the date of the election. In case YOU’RE A BIT SLOW and need HELP WITH THE POLITICS. Perhaps the person given the brief of “making ordinary people feel that they understand politics again” has never actually met an ordinary person.

I felt a bit mean making fun of that so I went further in.



The *Mirror* is backing Labour

There’s an explanation of why you shouldn’t listen to Russell Brand when he tells you not to vote (I’m not sure that was actually what he was doing, but I lost track and patience with the whole sorry Brand business about two years ago).

According to the *Mirror* you shouldn’t listen to Brand because it will make you an idiot. There’s a short account of the origins of the word and a picture of a statue with a speech balloon saying “You’re an idiot.”

The site says elsewhere, “voting is the only stick we have

to beat them with”. Well no. As I’ve spent the last few days telling people, we don’t really need a stick to beat anyone with right now, just effective unions and a Labour Party that isn’t all bashful about the working class. But I’m overstepping my brief now. So just allow me to warn you that a “Downton Abbey star says missing your vote is shameful”. Which is really telling it like it is.

But the *Mirror*’s also gone all out to represent all the parties, providing summaries of the main issues and agendas. They include the Greens and Ukip so they are at least putting more effort in than some of the other tabloids.

This is not unbiased reporting (example headline, “Tory lies will kill NHS”). I’m half delighted by this; only half delighted though, as there is no challenge to Labour’s current policies.

There’s a lot of cautious SNP-love going on as well. Not making any statements for them, but using a range of respectful tones when referring to Nicola Sturgeon and citing an online poll which has 58% of *Mirror* readers liking the idea of a Labour/SNP coalition.

And, inevitably there’s a lot of Miliband family man stuff. How Ralph Miliband liked to tell bedtime stories about sheep (and they were Yorkshire sheep, so I’m happy). It’s a shame that there weren’t bedtime stories about the capitalist state and workers’ control. Ed Miliband is quoted as saying that his children have a sense that there is an election coming “and we are the red team”.

True, but only in terms of visual branding.

Open the borders!

After hearing news of the latest drowning of migrants in the Mediterranean sea on Saturday 18 April, Italy's Prime Minister Matteo Renzi asked, "How can it be that we daily are witnessing a tragedy?"

Why does Renzi ask, "How can it be"? As if the 950 deaths had nothing to do with the Renzi government cancelling the Italian navy's search and rescue operation, Mare Nostrum, late last year, an operation which covered a vast expanse of the Mediterranean and in the year from October 2013 rescued 150,000 from drowning.

As if Renzi had not realised the EU replacement for Mare Nostrum would be a much smaller operation and that this would be about policing Europe's borders, not saving lives.

And did Renzi not listen to the people of Lampedusa who have been saying Frontex Triton "security" mission was pointless, as well as pitiless? As Giusi Nicolini, Lampedusa's governor, said "They don't understand who they are supposed to be protecting us from. These dramatic scenes in the Mediterranean that we have been seeing for the past 20 years are of a pure humanitarian nature. People have to be saved."

The fact is that the 950 deaths, the 400 deaths a week before, and all of the 1,750 deaths so far this year are *everything* to do with the European capitalist politicians. They are *entirely* responsible.

RUSTY

They didn't put the people in flimsy wooden vessels and rusty old cargo ships, but they might as well have done.

The policy of refortifying Europe's external borders led to the halting of the search and rescue operation. Their argument? The prospect of possibly not drowning encouraged migrants to attempt the journey. Cancelling the operation was, as one *Daily Telegraph* writer mordantly put it, about "drowning a migrant to save a migrant".

Now the politicians have been forced by the sheer horror and magnitude of the latest shipwrecks to call an emergency meeting in Luxembourg; so far much ringing of hands and an agreement to do something, if only they could all agree on what that something might be.

If Tory Home Secretary Teresa May has her way no change of tack will contradict maintaining Europe's strong borders. No softening of the line from her. Not for refugees fleeing the terror of Syria's civil war, or for Africans who for generations have lived in conditions of mass working-class joblessness, and casual employment, vastly more immense than has ever been seen in Europe; or for Eritreans escaping modern slav-



ery.

No softening of the line when her party is in the middle of an election campaign.

No softening of the line which has seen the proliferation of technologies of control along the EU's external border in the last ten years. Aimed keeping out "irregular" migrants it has only succeeded in forcing migrants to take more dangerous routes into Europe.

What the politicians don't say is that for all their sniffer dogs, identity checks and racial profiling, border controls do not keep out all migrants. All they do is sort migrants into "legals" and "illegals", citizens and non-citizens. And capitalism, even if the capitalist politicians won't admit it, benefits from the super-exploitation of undocumented migrants. These are some of the most dehumanised people of the work-

ing class. As one Ukrainian put it in *Sans Papiers*, a recent investigation of life as an undocumented migrant, "I always faced crap... at work, you know. 'Why we need tractor for digging, we have illegal?'"

Probably the European powers will try to do something against traffickers in Libya and elsewhere. No one would oppose taking action against people who put so many people onto a boat it is certain to capsize or lock hundreds of people into the hold of such a boat so that they are certain to die?

But European state agencies cannot stop trafficking any more than they

can hold back the strong economic and human forces which make people move across the world. A full search and rescue operation must be put in place.

But we also need a working-class and internationalist response.

In the UK, and throughout Europe, workers have powerful trade union organisations that have fought for a hundred and more years to raise the standards of life above meagre subsistence for their members. Those organisations can and should fight to do the same for the people who through absolute desperation make the risky and brave decision to leave their homes and families to come to Europe. That means fighting for the free movement of peoples and ending the conditions which make migration so dangerous.

Open the borders!

Help us raise £15,000

Workers' Liberty stands for a society where the crises, exploitation, and inequality of capitalism are replaced by collective ownership and sustainable planning for people's needs — socialism.

But socialist voices are currently small and marginal. We have to educate, agitate and organise to turn the tide and create an emancipated future.

In order for Workers' Liberty to contribute to that fight we need to expand our sources of funds. We are running a fundraising drive to raise £15,000 by our annual conference in November. Will you help us reach that target?

Recently we expanded the number of workers in our office, and have increased our output of books, pamphlets and other publications. We want to overhaul our website. None of this can be maintained or improved without funds.

We have no big money backers. We rely on contributions from workers and students like you! So please consider:

- Getting a subscription to our weekly newspaper, *Solidarity* — workersliberty.org/subscribe
- Taking out a monthly standing order.
- Making a one-off donation
- Organising a fundraising event in your local area
- Committing to do a sponsored activity and asking others to sponsor you

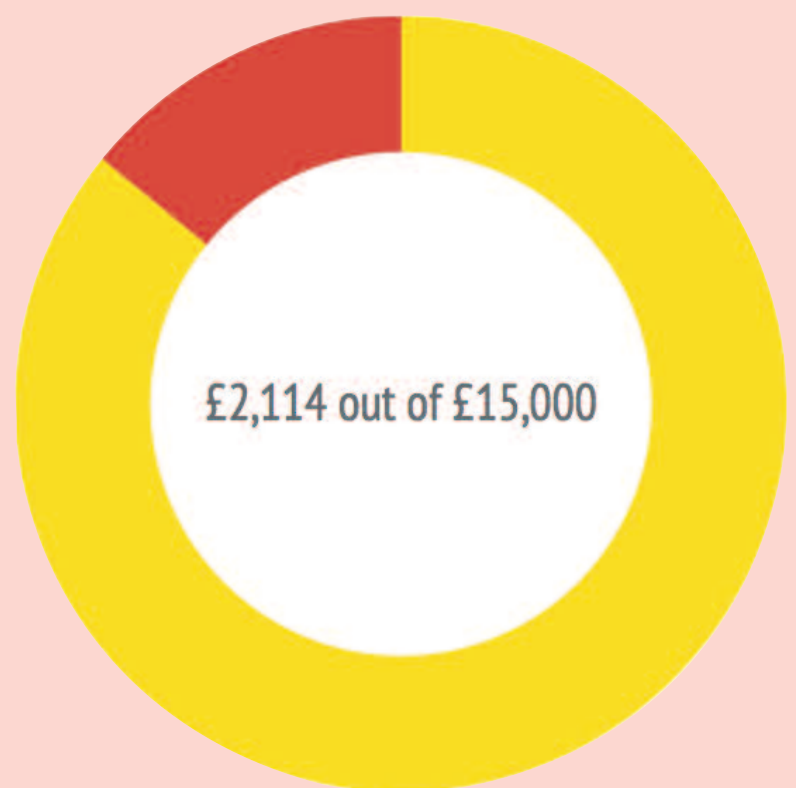
- Buying some of our books, posters, autocollants or pamphlets

For information on standing orders or how to donate visit workersliberty.org/donate. For more ideas and information on fundraising visit workersliberty.org/fundraising

Camila Bassi is planning a "Bolshy Cycle Ride" fundraiser. If you would like to join in visit bit.ly/bolshy-cycle-ride.



Thanks this week to Tim, Alison and an anonymous donation. So far we have raised £2114.



Confiscate the banks!

Private gain, social loss

It wasn't the stars, or geology. It wasn't ocean currents, or the weather. The world economy was brought crashing down in 2008 by the particular way we have allowed it to be organised.

It was brought down by being organised around the priority of maximum competitive greed and the gain of a small exploiting minority.

From the early 1980s to 2008, world capitalism became more and more governed by the drive for quick, fluid gains, measured and coordinated through an increasingly complex and fast-flowing system of world financial markets.

Ever more elaborate forms of credit were packaged and traded, faster and faster. In the years 1990-2007 world trade grew at 8.7% per year; but cross border financial flows grew at 14.4%, from \$1.1 trillion to over \$11 trillion.

As Karl Marx argued in *Capital*, the expansion of credit both gives capital more flexibility and promotes larger, quicker-acting economic crises.

Credit, Marx argued, develops necessarily within capitalism to facilitate the movement of capital from one sector to another, i.e. to allow the equalisation of the rate of profit and to reduce the costs of circulation.

It speeds the movement of capital through its different phases, and increase the scope for the expansion of capital. It pools all that would otherwise rest in individual small drips, and gives to money-capital "the form of social capital" concentrated in the hands of banks.

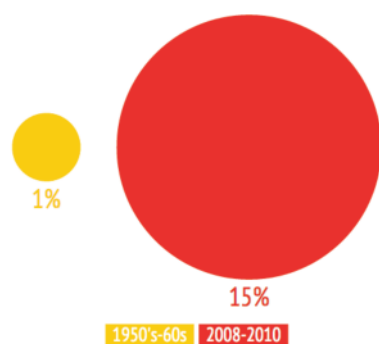
In Marx's theory, profits declared by individual businesses are only segments of total surplus value, which is formed on a social level by the excess of new value produced over the wages paid to productive labour. Banks become the most centralised, compact, pivotal node in the flows of surplus value and of "tickets" to future flows of surplus value.

British banks hold around £20,000 billion in financial assets — enough to buy up all the country's physical assets three times over — or the equivalent of about £800,000 for each household in the UK.

The credit system gives greater elasticity both to capitalist production — and to capitalist overproduction (overproduction relative to available markets).

"The credit system appears as the main lever of over-production and over-speculation in commerce... the reproduction process, which is elastic by nature, is here forced to its extreme limits... The credit system accelerates the material development of the productive forces and the establishment of the world-market... At the same time credit accelerates the violent eruptions of this contradiction — crises — and thereby the elements of disintegration of the old mode of production". (Marx).

Share of total UK profits taken by financial sector firms



There have been periodic financial bubble-bursting crises all through the recent decades. In 2008, the bubble-bursting was big enough that its knock-on effects threatened to ruin the world's leading banks.

Over the time since 2008, millions have lost their jobs and their homes. In some parts of the world, millions starved as a result of the food price rises set going in 2007-8 and from mid-2010.

In 2008, further collapse, beyond the bank crash, was avoided only by the intervention of social control. Governments stepped in with "socialism for the rich". In Britain, the government pumped the equivalent of £18,000 for every child, woman, and man in the country into the banks, in cash, loans, credit, and guarantees, a total of £1100 billion.

Of course, the Government and the Bank of England could not pack up £1100 billion in banknotes to hand over to the banks. The entire total of bank notes and coins in the UK is only about £62 billion.

The Government extended credit and guarantees to the banks. Across the system, a lot of the dodgy assets "cancel out", so not all the £1100 billion in guarantees could ever be called in.

But there was more to it all than the huge notional figures.

The best guess was that the bail-outs brought a £200 billion increase in the national debt. From that have come interest payments, to be covered from taxes, and Osborne's cuts, excused by him with the spurious suggestion that high debt was caused by too much social spending from the last Labour government.

The losses from the crisis were "socialised", while the banks' gains remained "privatised", and they continued to make those gains.

Government-supported or even Government-owned banks have been run in just the same way, by the same people or the same sort of people, as the pre-crash privately-owned banks.

NATIONALISED

Northern Rock was the first British bank to crash during the crisis, and it was nationalised in February 2008.

The government put in Ron Sandler to run it. He was paid £90,000 per month — £1,080,000 per year — even more than the £690,000 basic salary of Northern Rock's previous chief executive, Adam Applegarth.

Northern Rock workers lost their jobs, and Northern Rock mortgage-holders were evicted from their homes.

A few bankers resigned after the crash, but mostly the top bankers are still shamelessly taking home truckloads of loot. British bankers' bonuses over the five years to 2014 totalled about £80 billion. When forced to reduce them, the banks instead paid out similar amounts under the name "allowances".

Those who resigned hardly suffered. Barclays boss Bob Diamond went with a "golden goodbye" of £2 million. Fred Goodwin of RBS went with a £700,000-a-year pension, now reduced to £340,000-a-year after he took out a £2.7 million tax-free lump sum.

The incomes of top bankers — only one small section of the capitalist class — are large compared even with the dramatic social cuts made by the Cameron government: a planned total for 2010-5 of about £18 billion from benefits, £16 billion from education and local services, over five years.

Banks deal in a wide range of forms of what Marx called "fictitious capital". Shares and bonds appear as forms of capital "doubling" the tangible capital they represent on paper, and then financial derivatives double the doubling. All this whirl of paper increases the opportunities for banks to draw profits from fees (an increasing part of their revenues) and from differentials between interest rates here and interest rates there.

The more "financialised" capitalism becomes, the more

surplus value is swirled round the financial world, and the bigger the cut of surplus value taken by banks and other financial operators. The share of total UK profits taken by financial sector firms increased from about one per cent in the 1950s and 1960s to around 15 per cent in the years 2008 to 2010; in the USA, the financial sector's share is 30% or more.

A public utility managing accounts and payments could also organise the supply of credit, allocating it according to socially-decided goals. Banks as they are now do not do that: mostly, they siphon off revenue as intermediaries in the flows of credit.

Some of what they do is just gambling, but gambling with a twist. If they win, they pocket the gains; if they lose, the taxpayer bails them out.

For a workers' government to seize the banks would mean replacing the current nodes of profiteering by a public banking, insurance, and pension utility, oriented to social investment.

Investment would be directed to social goals. Production would be democratically planned, rather than regulated by the swings and slips of chasing after competitive profits. Inequality would be curbed.

In 2012 TUC Congress passed a resolution stating that the chaos created by the major banks and financial institutions "should be ended through full public ownership of the sector and the creation of a publicly owned banking service, democratically and accountably managed".

Activists should press the unions to campaign for that policy.

A workers' government

The call for a workers' government is a call for the labour movement to seek control over and to re-select its political representatives. It urges the movement to push those representatives to take power and form a government which will carry out working-class policies.

A workers' government means a government based on mass working-class mobilisation and accountable to the labour movement — a government which serves our class as the Tories and New Labour in power have served the rich.

The fight for a workers' government can develop fully only as a staging post on the road to full working-class rule in society. A workers' government seeking to pursue working-class policies within a capitalist framework would come up hard against resistance from the unelected state machine and the capitalists themselves. It would be compelled either to push forward in a revolutionary way or to submit and cease to be a workers' government.

The struggle starts now in terms sketched by Leon Trotsky in 1938: "Of all parties and organisations which base themselves on the workers and peasants and speak in their name, we demand that they break politically from the bourgeoisie and enter upon the road of struggle for the workers' and farmers' government. On this road we promise them full support against capitalist reaction. At the same time, we indefatigably develop agitation around those transitional demands which should in our opinion form the program of the 'workers' and farmers' government'."

Public ownership of the banks by a routine bourgeois government is only ever likely to be something like it was in 2008: a means to prop up capitalist economic life until things look good again to reallocate the banks to private profit. The campaign for effective public ownership of the banks is inseparable from the fight for a workers' government.



QE subsidises the rich

In our individual day-to-day dealings, it looks as if the stock of money in the economy is a fixed quantity — if we gain money, it is because we have received a payment from someone else who now has exactly as much less money as we have more money.

From the point of view of the economy as a whole, it is far from fixed.

Most money is created by commercial banks, not central banks. Most money is not notes and coin. Probably you get your wages in the form of a bank credit rather than notes and coin, and convert the wages to notes and coin only bit by bit.

If you have £1000 credited to your bank account for your month's wages, then the bank does not hold on to all of it. It lends out some of it, say £800. The person getting the £800 loan also does not keep the £800 in notes and coin. They put it into another bank account. Then most of it can be lent again... and so on.

The limit to this multiplication of money is the banks' decision to keep reserves, either because they are legally obliged to or out of business prudence.

If banks become more reluctant to lend (or individuals decide to keep more in the form of ready cash, which is also happening), then the total of money in the economy shrinks.

Many people have less money, without any counterpart of someone else having more money. Actual money — as distinct from shakier “financial assets” — becomes scarce.

Usually central banks regulate the total of money in the economy by changing the official interest rate at which the central banks lends to commercial banks. For a long time they prided themselves on their supposed ability to fine-tune economic life through that mechanism.

In the wake of 2008, those official interest rates have been pushed low, yet credit remains scarce. QE means the Bank of England is acting more directly to increase the total of money in the economy, by buying financial assets from the commercial banks. (Doesn't that mean that the Bank of England loses money to exactly the same degree that the commercial banks gain it? No, because pounds are IOUs from the Bank of England. If the Bank of England holds an IOU to itself, that is not money).

The immediate effect is to increase the commercial banks' account balances at the Bank of England. As and when the commercial banks draw on those balances, the Bank of England may have to print fresh notes to pay out. (Thus the description of “quantitative easing” as “printing money”).

The New Economics Foundation estimates that in Britain QE and similar policies have subsidised bankers by over £30 billion a year, by the Bank of England essentially lending them money for free.

against Iran and other countries; for money-laundering; for rigging electricity markets; for manipulating the price of gold; and other misdeeds.

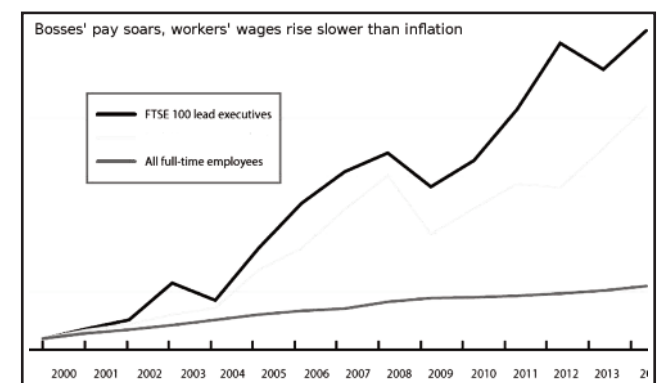
British banks have paid billions for selling “payment protection insurance”, mostly to people who wouldn't be able to claim on the insurance policies they were sold.

Over the five years 2009-13, one researcher has found, just 15 big global banks had to pay or set aside £173 billion for fines or settling claims for misbehaviour. That includes £36 billion from just four British banks, HSBC, RBS, Barclays and Lloyds.

More and more people see, as the conservative *Financial Times* journalist Martin Wolf puts it: “Banks, as presently constituted and managed, cannot be trusted to perform any publicly important function, against the perceived interests of their staff [meaning their top bosses, not the routine staff].

“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”. (2 July 2012).

Inequality has grown since 2000



An engine of inequality

Banks are a vast engine of inequality. They also control the bulk of the fluid, mobile wealth in society. They stand at the crossroads where investment decisions are made.

The control of investment funds by the banks makes it apparently not “realistic” to invest in health, education, welfare, and other public services, but very “realistic” for property developers currently to invest £2-billion-plus per year in building new luxury housing in London at an average of £2.5 million a dwelling.

Despite the banks' great ability to lend, by far the biggest part of sizeable industrial corporations' investment is not financed by bank lending.

It is financed by the corporations' profits, and secondarily by them issuing bonds or shares (essentially, types of IOUs). Banks are at the crossroads of credit, but mostly lend not to big industrial corporations, but to smaller capitalist concerns, to households, to the government, and to each other.

The banks hold about £1300 billion of claims on households for mortgages, and draw considerable revenues from them, in a form of capitalist income which siphons directly from wages rather than flowing from the difference between wages paid and the new value which the buyers of our labour-power gain from our labour.

US figures show that in recent times debt service payments have taken up to 13% of household disposable income, easing after the 2007-8 crash to about 10%. (UK statistics are less accessible, but seem to be similar).

These are figures for payments both of “principal” (the actual amount borrowed for a mortgage or on a credit card) and of interest, so overestimate the exploitation. According to the American economist J W Mason, interest payments were about 8% of household disposable income from the late 1980s to the crash.

By far the bulk of the stock of household debt is mortgage debt rather than credit card debt or other forms of consumer credit. Indeed, and surprisingly, in the USA (the only country for which a good long run of statistics is available), consumer credit ballooned from 1945 to the early 1960s, but has been fairly static as a percentage of GDP since then. Mortgage debt has expanded much more than consumer credit.

However interest rates on credit cards, payday loans, and the like are much higher than on mortgages, and US figures show that monthly debt-service payment on consumer credit totals about the same as monthly debt-service payment on mortgage debt.

A significant minority have large credit-card debts requiring huge interest payments. The Citizens' Advice Bureaus in the UK had 87,000 people approaching them in 2014 for help in managing credit-card debts.

A story commonly told is that the rise in consumer debt has kept markets buoyant. That has been true, if at all, only in limited periods. J W Mason finds: “The rise in [household] debt [in the USA] in the 1980s is explained by a rise in non-demand expenditures [i.e. expenditures which do not generate consumer demand].

“Specifically, it is entirely due to the rise in interest payments, which doubled from 3-4 percent of household income in the 1950s and 1960s to over 8 percent in the late 1980s”.

Getting away with it

The *Guardian* has recently “revealed that HSBC's Swiss banking arm helped wealthy customers conceal millions of dollars of assets, doled out bundles of untraceable cash and advised clients on how to circumvent domestic tax authorities”.

HSBC's response has been essentially that everyone was doing it, and they've cleaned up since: “the compliance culture... in HSBC's Swiss private bank, as well as the industry in general, [was] significantly lower than today”.

Similar scandals have broken again and again since 2009. Several big banks, mostly American but also RBS, have paid billions in fines to settle charges of mis-selling mortgage-backed securities and abusive methods to evict people falling behind on payments.

Banks have been fined for rigging the interest rate at which banks lend to each other short-term, a rate used as a yardstick for masses of financial transaction.

They have been fined, too, for rigging the rates at which different currencies are exchanged; for evading sanctions

Greece's Nazis go on trial

By Theodora Polenta

On 20 April the trial of 69 members of Greece's fascist party Golden Dawn — Greece's "little Nuremberg" — began in a packed room at the Women's Prison of Korydallos, near Piraeus.

It was then adjourned to 7 May, in order to designate defence counsel for one of the defendants who had no lawyer.

The 69 defendants include the head of the party, Nikos Michaloliakos, and all the previous parliamentary group of Golden Dawn.

The matters before the court are:

- The murder of the musician Pavlos Fyssas on the night of 17 September 2013
- The attack on three Egyptian fishermen in their home in Perama on 12 June 2012
- The attack on members of PAME (the trade-union faction of the Greek Communist Party, KKE) on 12 September 2013 in Perama, when nine were injured
- The violent attack on workers from Pakistan in the Ierapetra area on 13 February 2013
- The assassination of Pakistani labourer Zachzat Loukman on 17 January 2013 in Petralona
- The attack on the social space "Antipnoia" on 30 June 2008 in Petralona.

The fascists will try to convince the court that the attacks, injuries, and killings that 145 key witnesses will testify to do not constitute a proof of a criminal organisation. They will try to prove that the "criminal activity" is not directly linked with the operations of a "legitimate political party" but instead with "extreme individuals" and "loose cannon".

THUGS

But on the morning of 20 April, before the start of the trial, a group of Golden Dawn thugs attacked two witnesses and friends of Pavlos Fyssas's family on their way to Korydallos prison for the trial. Both of the witnesses were hospitalised.

Citizens of Korydallos rallied at the city hall from 8 am, protesting against the trial being held in this area, as the courtroom is located near eleven schools. By decision of the municipality of Korydallos, all public buildings in the area were closed for the day.

Anti-fascist demonstrations were organised by the "United Movement against Racism and Fascist Threat" and the Antifascist Coordinations as well as Syriza, KKE, Antarsya and other organisations of the left. A four hour anti-fascist strike was called by the trade unions.

The left and the anti-fascist movement need to use the court case and the justice system as an additional tool in ex-



Nikos Michaloliakos, leader of Golden Dawn

posing Golden Dawn in the eyes of the Greek society and convincing people that Golden Dawn is a gang of murderers and robbers who if given the opportunity will destroy the organised labour and social movements.

Would fascism end with a conviction of the Golden Dawn leadership?

Obviously not. After 2000 armed fascists clashed with the police in the "Beer Hall Putsch" in November 1923 in Munich, Hitler was defeated and captured. The Nazis' newspaper *Völkischer Beobachter* was banned and the National Socialist Party was outlawed.

Hitler was sentenced to five years' jail, subsequently reduced to 8 months.

But then, from the end of the 1920s, the crisis deepened and the Left failed to unite against the Nazis or to propose an exit plan from the crisis. In January 1933 Hitler became chancellor and in March of the same year he got 44% of the votes of the German people in the elections.

Michaloliakos was jailed for a few months in the late 70s after being convicted for placing bombs in cinemas playing progressive films. Yet in 2012 he was elected to the Greek parliament.

But a serious court verdict against Golden Dawn will be a battle won in a war that will then go on under better terms for the antifascist movement.

The anti-fascist movement has to pick up the thread of the great mobilisations of the days that followed the murder of Paul Fyssas and forced the then Tory government and prosecutors to dig up 32 cases of violence by Golden Dawn thugs and proceed to the prosecution of Golden Dawn as a criminal organisation.

We should revitalise, or form where they do not already exist, anti-fascist networks in every neighbourhood in Greece, with information events on every corner, special publications, and meetings, to ensure a massive presence at the trial and emphatically outnumber the Nazis.

Golden Dawn Watch, a newly established observatory for the duration of the trial, formed by Greek and foreign journalists, lawyers, activists, representatives of anti-fascist organisations and so on, will give daily updates from the trial.

Anti-fascists will also demand the transfer of the proceedings from Korydallos to a central area of Athens that

will ensure that the trial is open and public.

We also demand that the government stops parliamentary money for Golden Dawn. Thanassis Kampagiannis, an anti-fascist lawyer at the trial, says: "Golden Dawn defendants will have 100 to 200 lawyers. Too many of them are employees of the Golden Dawn MPs paid from the parliamentary budget, because those benefits have not been cut. This is scandalous, taking into account that there is no legal aid for the victims of the violence of the Golden Dawn".

Opinions that the left should keep its distance, "leave the justice system to do its job", and avoid "attempting political exploitation of the trial", can prove disastrous. The Left needs to declare loud and clear its desire to obtain justice for the victims of fascism.

All the leaders of Golden Dawn should go back to prison and all the businessmen, ship owners and members of the political establishment who have helped them should follow them. Not even one member of the Syriza-Anel government should be allowed to backtrack from those goals, or offer Golden Dawn the rights of a "legitimate political party."

We need to cement the united front of the Greek working class and social movements with our immigrant and refugee brothers to put an end to austerity, racism and fascism.

Syriza left says: "We won't vote for austerity"

By Martin Thomas

On 24 April eurozone finance ministers meet again to discuss whether to release the remaining credits to Greece which were agreed under the last memorandum.

Greece made an outline deal on 20 February, but the eurozone ministers say they want more details before they release cash. In the run-up to 24 April, they are more hard-faced than ever. German finance minister Wolfgang Schäuble has said: "Nobody expects that there will be a solution".

He indicated what way he wants Greece to go by saying: "The UK has done a very good job in the past few years and Osborne has a very good plan for the future" (17 April).

The business magazine *Forbes* (21 April) says that "Greek default [failure to make payments due on debt] is almost a certainty", and eurozone leaders are stage-whispering that they're confident about coping with Greece being forced out of the euro.

Even if there is a deal in the coming weeks to release the credits already agreed, negotiations have to start for fresh credits for future years.

Greece is due to pay €770 million to the IMF on 12 May, and other large payments follow in June and July.

It is conceivable that after all the sabre-rattling, the eurozone leaders will offer a deal which allows the Syriza-led government to offer a few reforms. It is possible that the Syriza leaders will conclude that they have no alternative but to refuse to make payments, impose capital controls, and face the risk of expulsion from the eurozone.

But the possibility that Syriza will capitulate and indefinitely postpone all their reform measures bar a few sops seems all-too-real. And meantime much of the great political capital that Syriza had after its election has been squandered.

The Syriza leaders are touring Europe to haggle with finance ministers, not to encourage demonstrations in solidarity.

Antonis Davanellos, a leader of DEA, a Trotskyist group within Syriza, says: "Everybody knows that if the agreement is an austerity agreement, we will not vote for it. We don't accept that this means we will be expelled from Syriza."

"Our roots in Syriza are important. They are not as big and deep as we would like, and so, for the time being, our emphasis is on this."

"There is a lot of pressure on us. But at the same time, there is a lot of support in the population saying that Syriza is our hope, so stay strong."

"You know the old phrase of the Russian revolutionaries:

Without a revolution in Germany, we are lost. I have heard something similar many times in Greece: 'Without a victory for the left in Spain, we will lose.' That's a common feeling among ordinary people, not just people on the left."

"But the bigger problem is with France and Italy. For a century, the working class movement in Europe has been centred in France and Italy, but there, we don't see the same prospects."

"We are asking for international solidarity and support from the left in Europe, but this isn't just international solidarity. The fight is for yourselves, too — challenging austerity in your own country".

If it comes to Greece being forced out of the euro, radical economic policies will become urgent. Within the eurozone, it is still possible to imagine the European Central Bank giving Greece more credit and the Syriza-led government being able to make social improvements by mild reforms.

Some left-wingers talk as if adopting the drachma instead of the euro would bring immediate improvements. It would not. It would bring rapid chaos unless the government moved fast to nationalise the banks and install wide-ranging workers' control over the production and distributions of the necessities of life.

Put capital on the back foot, then overturn it!

Climate Crisis
By Pablo Vernadsky



Campaigns to force institutions to move their money out of oil, gas and coal companies on grounds of pushing back against climate change is gaining momentum across the globe.

The fossil fuel divestment campaign, started by the US-based 350.org associated with environmentalist Bill McKibben, has begun to gain support from universities, charities, religious groups, local councils and other bodies. Since 2010, around 200 institutions have withdrawn their investments from fossil fuel firms.

These steps have been driven by “Fossil Free” student campaigns, urging universities to get their heads out of the (tar) sands and tackle climate change. Higher education bodies including Stanford University in the US, Glasgow University and the Australian National University in Canberra have decided to switch their investments. In March 2015, alumni from Oxford University occupied a college building after the university council again deferred a decision on divestment.

The United Nations body that coordinates the annual climate talks, the UNFCCC, said last month it was supporting divestment “as it sends a signal to companies, especially coal companies, that the age of ‘burn what you like, when you like’ cannot continue”. The British Medical Association, the Joseph Rowntree Foundation and the World Council of Churches have committed themselves to some divestment. Even the Rockefeller Brothers Fund, set up by one of the original oil barons in the US, has decided to divest.

The *Guardian* has begun a “Keep it in the Ground” campaign centred on divestment. The Guardian Media Group divested its £800 million fund from fossil fuels — the largest divestment commitment to date. It has collected nearly 200,000 signatures on a petition demanding that two of the largest philanthropic health and development organisations, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation in the US and the UK’s Wellcome Trust, divest from fossil fuels. Activists from 350.org are also targeting the big five banks in the UK, which have £66 billion invested in oil, gas and coal extraction.

Reasons for focusing on fossil fuel firms are obvious. Research by the Carbon Tracker Initiative showed that the fossil fuel industry has proven reserves of oil, gas and coal with five times as much carbon dioxide scientists believe can be burned if the world is to remain below the 2°C threshold of dangerous climate change. More recent research by Paul Ekins and Christophe McGlade at University College London put the figure at three times the reserves. Other research by Richard Heede identified just 100 fossil fuel firms that have been responsible for two-thirds of emissions since the



beginning of the industrial revolution. There is an emerging consensus that these reserves are now “stranded assets” — they cannot be burned if climate change is to be tackled.

The divestment campaign therefore has a strong scientific rationale and one that the fossil fuel industry has been unable to rebut. It is also borne of an exasperation with efforts to persuade and cajole businesses to “voluntarily” change their behaviour on climate change.

Socialists should support efforts to put important sections of capital on the back foot, as they seek to profit from endangering the life of the planet. These firms continue to pump out these fuels and to explore unconventional sources such as fracking and tar sands. The divestment campaign has rightly made the links to these issues (such the Keystone XL pipeline between Canada and the US) and sought to expose the web of connections between them. This is a movement socialist activists need to join and add our voices in solidarity.

CAPITAL

However the divestment campaign has some clear limitations. The campaign tends to favour one section of capital — those in renewables — at the expense of fossil fuel capital.

The two forms of capital are not the same when it comes to climate change — more investment now in renewable energy, even when it is privately run, is better than the fossil fuelled status quo. But it is wrong to assume that the “renewables” section of energy capital provides the answer to tackling climate change.

Socialists have no illusions about renewable capital and neither should climate activists. The experience of the occupation of Vestas wind turbine factory on the Isle of Wight in 2009 is instructive. Vestas proved just as rapaciously profiteering and just as disregarding of workers’ rights as any fossil fuel firm. Switching investments to renewables may help some aspects of climate change, but it will leave the system

that drives it — capitalism — intact. The answer is to bring the whole of the energy industry under collective, public ownership and democratic control. That is the best way to get a rational plan for the transformation of energy infrastructure, rather than trying to do it piecemeal via the market.

The divestment campaign does not currently raise any demands to help the millions of workers who would be displaced if the fossil fuel industry was to cease or dramatically decline in the short term. Hundreds of thousands of gas workers, oil workers and others, whether in Europe, the Middle East, Asia, Africa, Australia and elsewhere across the globe cannot simply be sacked and told they have no livelihood. That would be a recipe for driving those workers into the arms of their bosses against the environmentalists. Better, to raise demands around the conversion of skilled work in the fossil fuel industry into other socially (and environmentally) useful production, with guarantees of jobs, retraining and benefits. The just transition approach pioneered by US trade unionist Tony Mazzocchi is apposite.

Activists often present divestment as a matter of ethics, about getting people (good or bad) to make more moral decisions. No doubt better values — solidarity, humanism, equality — count for a lot. But the issue is political and the underlying cause of climate change are economic.

Some capitalists no doubt believe they are good people, give money to charity, treat their immediate circle kindly and to an extent, “care” about the environment. But an idealistic boss remains a capitalist exploiter. Tackling climate change is not about making capitalists invest more ethically. It is about changing the capitalist power relations (particularly in production) that give rise to emissions and building a movement that can overturn these relations and construct equal and more ecological relations in their place.

Activists often cite the example of the anti-apartheid movement as a campaigning precedent, claiming that the divestment strategy helped to bring down the racist state in South Africa. But this is to give too much credit to the agency of business in bringing about social changes and to misread the real story.

In fact militant strikes of South African workers (including many miners) brought the apartheid system to an end. All the great protest movements of the past — against slavery, for the vote, for democracy, for civil rights — had militant working class struggle at their core.

Divestment campaigners are right to target the power of fossil fuel capitalists in causing climate change. But the necessary counter-power is the organised working class, right at the heart of production, with both the capacity and the interest to take on capital of all stripes and to replace the current, irrational system of energy production with a rational, planned, socially and environmentally just system consistent with climate goals.

The battle over Anzac Day

25 April 2015 will be the 100th anniversary of the landings by British, French, Australian, and New Zealand troops at Gallipoli, in Turkey, in an unsuccessful effort to seize Constantinople (now Istanbul) during World War One.

More than any other imperialist sally, this one has become a nationalist legend. This article by Tom O’Lincoln, abridged with thanks from the Australian socialist newspaper *Red Flag*, recounts the history.

From 1916, 25 April was officially named Anzac Day. Australian troops marched in London, and a sports day was held in the Australian camp in Egypt. In the Sydney march, vehicles carried wounded soldiers from Gallipoli attended by nurses.

It sounded benign and reeked of evil. “For the remaining years of the war”, writes the Australian War Memorial, “Anzac Day was used as an occasion for patriotic rallies and recruiting campaigns”. In other words, to gather cannon fodder.

The Australian Labor Party [ALP] should have opposed this trend; after all, it claimed the mantle of anti-war party. Yet its political line contained deep contradictions, vacillating between defence and “anti-militarism”. Nationalism replaced much of its initial socialism.

“The Labor Party is synonymous with ‘Australian’”, said the *Tocsin* in Melbourne. Based on this jingoistic stance, most

Laborites could drift into an uneasy but persistent relationship with the key Anzac organisation, the RSL [Returned Servicemen’s League].

Because the latter had up to 150,000 members at the end of the war, around 80 percent of them workers, Labor and the unions couldn’t afford to ignore it, especially with some veterans returning from the war with their former industrial loyalties weakened.

Complaints in the 20s that Anzac Day had been “hijacked” by the conservatives were futile. Labor had helped the process.

Not that there was no opposition.

Australian forces were dramatically affected by mass soldiers’ revolts across Europe in 1918. The troops held meetings, then found ways to disrupt parades. More than 100 were punished. But none launched measures comparable to the Fremantle and Townsville riots of 1919.

The Communist paper *Workers’ Weekly* argued for workers to oppose the commemoration by attending May Day and other workers’ celebrations instead. It published a letter from a “Class-Conscious Digger” in 1928, who declared:

“April 25 has become a day of imperial boasting and military boosting ... On Anzac Day, capitalists, politicians and priests will don their silk hats and decorations and come out and chant about Anzac in order to build up a new military tradition in Australia, to get ready new Anzacs for recruit-

ing, to prepare young Australia for another bloody massacre.”

There was resistance to the Anzac nonsense even in the right wing atmosphere of the 1950s. Provoked by an RSL campaign against the Communist Party, student journalist Geoffrey Haveers attacked the “yearly pageant of national necrophilia” and attracted surprisingly little complaint. Alan Seymour followed with his 1958 anti-Anzac play, *The One Day of the Year*.

During the Vietnam War, protesters managed to paint P-E-A-C-E across the front of the Melbourne shrine. In the war’s aftermath, a significant minority began to consider the offensive foolishness of telling the world that the Anzacs fought for “freedom” when the Gallipoli fiasco was obviously an indefensible invasion of Turkey.

On 26 January 1988, Australia’s “Celebration of a Nation”, marking two centuries of white Australia, ended in a debacle. Demonstrations by Indigenous people and their supporters finally branded Australia Day with its fitting and enduring title: Invasion Day.

Chastened white patriots had to beat a retreat, and their thinking focused now on turning Anzac Day into the preeminent day of nationalist celebration.

• redflag.org.au/article/battle-over-anzac-day

Scottish Nationalists: a party of austerity

Scotland
By Dale Street



“Neither Nicola Sturgeon nor her deputy (Stewart Hosie) are saying austerity can be avoided. Instead, it’s being re-badged and re-profiled, or spread out for longer. ...”

“The defiant refusal to accept more austerity, which won power for Syriza in Greece last month, is not being offered here. Instead, a serious bid for a share of power in Britain requires a message that won’t spook the markets.”

That was the verdict of BBC Scotland’s business and economy editor Douglas Fraser, and it is about right.

The fact that the SNP are saying that more austerity is unavoidable is at odds with the SNP’s message on the doorstep (and in television debates): that the SNP is the only Scottish party with an anti-austerity agenda.

This kind of incoherence — and dishonesty — permeates the SNP general election campaign. In fact the SNP is not running one election campaign but a collection of mutually exclusive campaigns.

SNP leaders says that this election is not about independence for Scotland but about austerity. In fact, as far as the SNP is concerned, everything is about independence, including this election.

Although both Salmond and Sturgeon previously described last September’s referendum as a “once-in-a-generation” event, both of them — just seven months later — are now refusing to rule out another referendum after the Holyrood elections of 2016.

SNP election activists are far more honest and describe the general election as “a stepping stone” (sic) to another referendum and independence. (So too do the SNP’s “socialist” bag-carriers. But not even the SNP takes them seriously.)

SNP leaders claim that they want to help Ed Miliband into 10 Downing Street. But they don’t actually want anyone to vote Labour! Instead, Scotland should vote for the SNP, Wales for Plaid Cymru, and England for the Greens.

Again, SNP election activists are more honest and want Scots to vote SNP and the Welsh to vote Plaid Cymru because they cannot conceive of voting on any basis other than national identity, and because there is no such thing as an English National Party, they cannot work out how the English should vote.

CARE

Unlike the public face of the SNP, they are also refreshingly honest in declaring that they really don’t care if the Tories win the general election because a Tory victory would be just an additional reason for another referendum and independence.

The SNP makes much of its supposed commitment to ensuring that a (minority) Labour government implements Labour’s so-called “progressive policies” and goes further than its election commitments. But up until only a few weeks ago the SNP were still pushing out the “Labour are Red Tories” line.

On the doorstep SNP activists still punt the “Labour are Red Tories” line with a toxic vengeance, peppered with all manner of accusations of betrayal, treachery and sell-out. (These are people who would have felt at home in the politics of the Weimar Republic.)

Central to the SNP election campaign is the idea that only a vote for the SNP will allow Scotland to “make its voice heard” in Westminster (illustrated by pictures of Tartan benches in the House of Commons).

But independence for Scotland is the SNP’s mission in life. And just seven months ago a majority of Scots rejected that policy in a referendum. Yet undaunted by the fact of having attracted only minority support, the SNP now campaigns as the voice of all of Scotland.

Some SNP activists explain away that contradiction by claiming that most Scots voted for independence but the British state forged (vast amounts of) “No” votes. (This is not the position of the SNP, nor that of most of its supporters. But the proportion of the latter who do argue such a conspiracy theory is frighteningly large. Nationalist movements always provide a natural home for conspiracy theorists.)

Salmond and Sturgeon are demanding that Westminster should hand over to Holyrood control over everything apart



According to Alex Salmond, one of the most stable institutions in the world!

from defence and foreign policy and that Scotland be given Full Fiscal Autonomy. This is not that far removed from the “independence-lite” which the SNP campaigned for in the referendum campaign. So the “democrats” of the SNP now want Westminster — in SNP parlance, that well-known home of “the establishment” — to impose on Scotland the kind of policies rejected by the Scottish electorate only last autumn.

Meanwhile the SNP gets on with ongoing centralising powers in Holyrood. Under the SNP’s council-tax-freeze policy, a council which increases its council tax to pay for services will have its grant from Holyrood cut by the same amount. This means, in effect, the imposition of a financial straitjacket on councils and the control of council budgets by Holyrood.

The incoherence and dishonesty of the SNP’s election campaign(s) become even more obvious when its promises are compared with its record in power at Holyrood and the policies which it promoted as recently as last year’s referendum campaign.

“We want more millionaires, and any notion that an independent Scotland would be left-wing is delusional nonsense,” said Jim Mather, the SNP’s Enterprise Minister in the 2007-11 SNP government. Hardly the stuff of social democracy.

According to Salmond: “One of the reasons Scotland didn’t take to Lady Thatcher was because of Scotland’s strong-beating social conscience. It didn’t mind the economic side so much. But we didn’t like the social side at all.” Again, not the stuff of social democracy.

The same applies to Salmond’s hostility to even a regulated (never mind nationalised) banking and finance sector.

“We are pledging a light-touch regulation suitable to a Scottish financial sector with its outstanding reputation for probity, as opposed to one like that in the United Kingdom, which absorbs huge amounts of management time in gold-plated regulation,” said Salmond in 2007.

A year later Salmond lavished praise on Scottish banks: “The Scottish banks are among the most stable financial institutions in the world.” A few months later the Royal Bank of Scotland reported losses of £28 billions and HBOS also teetered on the brink of bankruptcy. The Labour government of the time injected £38 billions to keep them afloat.

Rather than criticise RBS and HBOS bankers for years of speculative lending and predatory unviable acquisitions, Salmond blamed unnamed “spivs and speculators” and (of course) the UK government for bringing down the banks: “This is London’s boom and bust.”

When the banking crisis was raised as an issue in the referendum campaign, the SNP lied, claiming that there would

have been no such crisis in an independent Scotland because Scottish banks would supposedly have been better regulated.

The SNP is promising that its Westminster MPs will protect and promote the NHS in England. But this is something that they have failed to do in Scotland, despite health being a devolved power.

In real terms, spending by the SNP Holyrood government on health has fallen during its years in office. Holyrood now spends a lower proportion of its budget on health than the Con-Dem government in England. And the SNP Health Minister who presided over these cuts was Nicola Sturgeon.

Since 2009 4,500 jobs in the NHS in Scotland have been cut, including 2,000 nursing posts. An RCN survey found that 54% of nurses in Scotland work beyond their contractual hours in order to meet demand.

Accident and Emergency waiting times in Scotland are worse than in England. A European-wide survey of health-care performance placed Scotland in 16th position — lower than England, despite the latter being subject to Con-Dem cuts.

But spending on private health under the SNP has increased by 47% since 2011 and is now running at £100 million a year. Lanarkshire health board alone spent over £6 million in 18 months, referring NHS patients to private health providers in an attempt to meet its Treatment Time Guarantee.

EDUCATION

The SNP’s record on education, another devolved power, is no better. When the SNP came to power in 2007 Scotland proportionately spent 15% more on education than did England. By 2011/12 that figure had fallen to 0.4%.

A survey by the EIS teachers’ union found that teacher numbers had fallen by 4,000 under the SNP. As local councils passed on Holyrood’s cuts, their spending on education fell in real terms by 5% between 2010 and 2013. Under the SNP, the attainment gap between schools in better-off and worse-off areas has increased.

Youth from working-class backgrounds are less likely to attend university in Scotland than they are in England: 28% compared with 31.5%, according to the Higher Education Statistics Agency.

This is because of the SNP’s cuts to Further Education, the main route for working-class youth into Higher Education. It has “merged” colleges, cut courses, axed 3,600 FE teaching posts, and slashed 130,000 places in FE colleges.

The impact of the SNP’s council-tax-freeze policy — a policy which is the property of the Tories in England — has been to benefit the better off.

When the SNP first introduced the freeze in 2007 it was meant to be a temporary measure, pending the replacement of the council tax by a Local Income Tax (LIT), a fairer form of local taxation than the council tax. But SNP proposals for a LIT quickly evaporated.

The unemployed and low paid who pay no council tax do not benefit from the freeze. For the low-paid in Band A properties who do pay council tax, the annual saving as a result of the freeze is 0.3% of their income (£60). For the better-off in Band H properties, the annual saving is 0.8% of their income (£370).

By 2012 owners of Band G and Band H homes had “saved” a total of over £115 million as a result of the freeze. By the time of the next Holyrood elections, this figure will have risen to £300 million.

At the same time, massive cuts in real terms by Holyrood in the funding of local authorities (combined with the failure of local councils to refuse to implement and to campaign against the cuts) have resulted in job losses (over 39,000 since 2007), cuts in services, and increased charges for services.

According to a report by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, the councils covering the poorest areas have been hit hardest. Between 2010 and 2013 they cut spending by an average of £90 per head more than councils in more affluent areas.

And the people most dependent on the services which are being scrapped year-on-year, or for which charges are being introduced and increased year-on-year, are the people who benefit the least, if at all, from the council tax freeze.

• Next issue: don’t vote SNP, vote Labour!

Hayes beaten in CWU

By a CWU member

The election of Dave Ward, as General Secretary of the Communication Workers Union (CWU), is a step backwards.

Liberalisation of the postal sector and privatisation of Royal Mail should mean the priority for the CWU is building the union across the communication industry, but this has happened very slowly. In telecoms, where privatisation and competition arrived 30 years ago, workers with union recognition are a minority. More focus and resources need to be put into this work to take the Union into unrecognised areas.

Though under Hayes the union could have done more, he at least recognised the need for the CWU to be a union for all communication workers.

RECORD

Dave Ward's track record is much more limited and his "business unionism" approach is pulling in another direction.

Under Ward's leadership there is a real danger that the Union will become even more inwardly focused than it currently is — a club for activists not a campaigning union that leads its members.

Ward, as Deputy General Secretary Postal and leader of the postal executive, has led the union through many strikes. However this is not necessarily an indication of his militancy. Industrial relations in the postal sector have been like trench warfare and the CWU is a lay-led democratic union. Any leader would have to take this stance. In fact, Ward has been accommodating of a "partnership approach" with Royal Mail, the biggest company in the postal sector. The other industrial officers who have backed him in the campaign (and of course his post is now up for grabs) are, in most cases, more right wing industrially.

Hayes was one of the CWU leadership most committed to fighting racism, sexism, homophobia and transphobia and prejudice against people with disabilities in the Union and in society. Billy was progressive on these issues a long time before

the consensus in the CWU accommodated any positive action on equality and diversity. Ward has only latterly accepted that these are legitimate Union issues, and that has coincided with him standing for election.

It is ironic that during the campaign Ward positioned himself as more "left wing" than Hayes. One of his slogans during the campaign was "no blind loyalty to Labour". Yet Hayes has much more progressive politics on the Labour Party and on wider social issues. He is not "blind Labour loyalist", rather a supporter of the Campaign for Labour Party Democracy, and can fairly be described as a socialist of a Livingston hue.

In many ways Hayes' politics are more "left wing" and political than that of most CWU activists. Hayes was an original member of the UCW Broad Left and, after the merger with the NCU to create the CWU joined the CWU Broad Left. The CWU Broad Left is at present a depleted force but it backed Hayes for General Secretary.

The fact that Ward is sceptical about the Labour Party and trade union link is evidence of his lack of political focus, not of a more left approach. In many ways he has ridden an anti-progressive, anti-political tide in the Union (fuelled by an appropriate criticism of Labour's dealings with the union at the height of the New Labour days). In reality he can not even be described as a proper syndicalist — more of a sub-syndicalist.

It is concerning for the future of Royal Mail that the instincts of Ward and his supporters would be to seek unprincipled deals rather than fightback. This makes him qualitatively different from Hayes who, when faced with Mandelson as Labour Business Secretary attempting to part privatise Royal Mail, immediately fought back on the political front and won.

The lack of political trade unionism that is prevalent amongst Ward's supporters is worrying. In the new political challenges that will inevitably arise for the union we may have to reinvent the wheel.

Council workers fight privatisation

By Gemma Short

After voting for strikes over outsourcing by 87%, Unison members in Barnet Council will strike on Thursday 30 April and Friday 1 May.

On 1 May Unison hold a march and rally, followed by a members meeting to review the strike and any proposals from the council. If the council has not moved, a second phase of strikes will follow on Thursday 21 May and Friday 22 May, and a third on Monday 1 June and Tuesday 2 June.

Libraries are one of the services to be affected by outsourcing and cuts. Activists have been holding a "grand tour of Barnet libraries" with marches between local libraries in protest. The next march will start from Chipping Barnet Library at 11.00 on Saturday 25 April.

Unite members at Bromley Council are on strike against mass privatisation of services in the council.

Workers will be taking part in selective strikes, with library workers out on 27-30 April, parks on 5 May, Ast-

ley care centre and passenger services on 13-19 May, and all workers (apart from school staff) on 1, 7 and 19 May.

Workers had previously struck on 7 and 8 April after voting by 87% in favour of strikes against the privatisation.

Tory run Bromley council has £130 million in reserves, yet is privatising the bulk of its services.

The council has also attacked the Unite union, by withdrawing facility time from the branch secretary.



More information: barnetunison.me.uk
facebook.com/bromleyunite
[nitetheunion](https://twitter.com/nitetheunion)

165 jobs to be cut at London Met Uni

By Charlotte Zalens

London Metropolitan University has announced that it plans to cut 165 jobs, including making compulsory redundancies.

Unison and UCU are organising against the job cuts, and both are considering balloting for action. University management set a

time frame of just 45 days to "consult" on cuts, and part of this was during the Easter holidays.

London Metropolitan has seen redundancies every year since 2009, when management proposed 550 job cuts. Redundancies followed in 2011, 2012 and in 2013.

UCU ran a consultative ballot for industrial action

over the Easter holidays, which returned 85% in favour of strikes against redundancies on a 30% turnout. Unison members also voted in favour of strikes by 86% in a similar ballot.

Unison and UCU have sent out an open letter to students making their case against cuts and arguing for their support, and the Student Union ran

a debate with UCU and Unison representatives debating the Vice-Chancellor, where students showed support for the fight against cuts.

• More information: savelondonmetuni.blogspot.co.uk
Sign the petition: chn.ge/1D9nAtT
[#HandsOffLondonMet](https://twitter.com/HandsOffLondonMet)

Anti-academies march

"Stop Academies in Lewisham" will be demonstrating on Saturday 25 April.

The march starts from Hilly Fields school at 12.00 and goes to Ladywell and on to Cornmill Gardens opposite Vale school.

The Prendergast Federation organised "consultation" meetings last week at Ladywell, Vale and Hilly Fields schools. The consultation meetings were barely publicised by the schools and it was left to activists in Stop Academies in Lewisham to publicise them.

At the meetings parents were told that the main ben-

efit for the schools would be extra money, £70,000 for Ladywell and Vale, and £50,000 for Hilly Fields. Yet campaigners say this fails to take into account increased costs that the schools will have out of local authority control.

A parental feedback form has been published by the Federation which campaigners accuse of having biased questions.

Three of the questions are prefaced with statements from the Federation about the benefits of academy conversion.

• More information: stopacademiesinlewisham.org

Rail pay deal rejected

Rail union RMT has rejected new proposals from bosses in a dispute over pay for Network Rail workers. RMT will be balloting its members for strikes, with the ballot closing on 12 May.

An earlier offer was rejected by a massive 93% on a 56% turnout, and since then talks through ACAS have failed to produce significant movement from Network Rail.

The pay proposals include a £500 non-consolidated

lump sum for 2015, a three year deal with an RPI level of inflation pay rise each year, and a "no compulsory redundancies" commitment extended until 2016.

RMT says that the non-consolidated lump sum for 2015 is inadequate, and wants to see the "no compulsory redundancies" commitment extended further into the future, so that staff are not living in fear for their future jobs.

Fightback can stop cuts

London Underground is continuing its closures of ticket offices across the Tube, with offices at major stations such as King's Cross and Brixton now boarded up.

The Hands Off London Transport campaign group, backed by Tube union RMT, has organised protests at many stations. The Labour group on the Greater London Assembly has opposed the closures, and the proposed staffing cuts, and protests have been backed

by Labour MPs and PPCs, as well as candidates from other parties.

The closures are part of a huge cuts plan that — if it is not halted by public and union pressure — will see nearly 900 frontline station jobs go.

London Underground is also planning to make savings by commissioning driverless trains, cutting jobs in its training department, and preparing attacks on Tube workers' pensions.

Other industrial news

More strikes at National Gallery, 21-25 April and 1 May — bit.ly/NG-strikes

Over 500 jobs at risk in probation service — bit.ly/probation-jobs

Bin lorry drivers set for 10 day strike if talks fail — bit.ly/Bin-strike



Fight cuts at FE college

By Gemma Short

Staff at Lewisham Southwark College (LeSoCo) are fighting £7 million cuts that could see 110 full-time equivalent jobs lost by July of this year. The cuts will also see the closure of the college's Camberwell site.

On 15 April staff were called into a meeting by the college's principal-designate, Carole Kitching, who announced the cuts, but were not given the option of asking questions. Staff in Unison and UCU believe the cuts will have a devastating effect on the college and on local communities. The notion that the cuts will "save" the college is farcical. Despite the cuts to teaching and support staff, senior management will be gaining another post!

The loss of 110 full-time

equivalent posts will actually result in the loss of up to 175 jobs including those of part-time workers. 300 staff will be given redundancy notices, as who will lose their job in the process of reapplying is not yet known.

The re-structure will also create new posts. The precedent is that these jobs will be on worse terms and conditions than current jobs.

Further Education (FE) colleges are facing significant



UCU members at LeSoCo on strike in 2013

cant funding cuts from central government funding.

In 2014-15 there was a 19% cut to the Adult Skills Budget and a 17.5% cut in

the rate paid for full-time 18 year-old student. This is on top of a 12% cut in non-school budgets agreed by the Department for Educa-

tion (DfE) in 2010 for the period until 2015. There has also been no increases in funding for pay rises or inflation since 2010. The DfE has announced there will be further cuts in FE funding, but it is as yet unclear where these will fall.

This has led to a situation where FE colleges are running on very tight budgets. Many still continue to spend large sums of money on marketing, management structures and consultants and mock Ofsted inspections, notionally so they are "competitive". Colleges such as LeSoCo are run by management teams that have lost sight of the educational purpose of their college, and instead look at the college as a business.

Due to an expansion in provision by schools, academies and sixth form colleges, FE colleges are left with students who can't get a place in school sixth forms or sixth form colleges.

These students tend to need more support, and therefore require more staff and more funding. The answer is to increase funding

to services that support students, not cut it.

Campaigners at LeSoCo point to £40,000 spent on a mock Ofsted inspection, £177,000 and counting on interim management, £290,000 on re-branding, and unknown amounts on employing consultants.

The college has spent £40 million on a contract to re-develop the site at Waterloo, a building project that has had such disasters as a gym built with a ceiling that is too low, resulting in the building contract running late and over cost. The sell off of the Camberwell campus is a sacrifice to fund the spiralling costs of the Waterloo redevelopment.

PROTEST

When staff were not allowed to ask questions at the 15 April meeting, they started an impromptu protest on the college steps.

This follows a lobby of the college governors on 24 March before the details of the cuts were unveiled.

Campaigners will hold a lunch-time demonstration on Wednesday April 22, and are calling on students to join them. They will also join the UCU demonstration on Saturday 25 April (12.30 at LeSoCo, 25 The Cut, SE1 8LF, to City Hall).

All four UCU branches at LeSoCo have voted to ballot for strikes over job cuts and course closures. Branches cannot be left to battle government funding cuts alone. UCU needs to develop a strategy for FE, and organise a national, political and industrial, campaign to defend FE.

UCU should demand a huge increase in FE funding, reversal of all cuts to adult education, an end to the drive to close FE colleges, and removal of the market from FE.

IMAGINING THE FUTURE

2-5 JULY 2015, BIRKBECK COLLEGE, LONDON

A festival of socialist ideas and leftwing discussion, Ideas for Freedom, organised by Workers' Liberty, is an opportunity to explore, through talks, film showings, workshops and debates, ideas about how our world works, and how we can fight for a better one. This year, the theme of the event will be visions of a socialist, egalitarian, democratic future and strategies to fight for it.

PROGRAMME

THURSDAY NIGHT

WALKING TOUR

FRIDAY NIGHT

'CLASS STRUGGLE OR LOVE THY NEIGHBOUR' - SOCIALISTS DEBATE THE BISHOP OF MANCHESTER

SATURDAY

DAY OF DEBATE, FILM SHOWINGS AND TALKS

EVENING SOCIAL - FUNDRAISER FOR RAINBOW INTERNATIONAL

SUNDAY

DAY OF DEBATE, FILM SHOWINGS AND TALKS

SESSIONS INCLUDE:

TECHNOLOGY - THE END OF WORK?

Aaron Bastani, Nick Srnicek and Bruce Robinson

CLIMATE CHANGE: FUTURE OF ENERGY

Dave Elliott, author and engineer involved in the Lucas Plan

SECULARISM, FEMINISM & SOCIALISM

Marieme Helie Lucas, Algerian socialist and author

THOMAS MORE'S UTOPIA

Cath Fletcher, Workers' Liberty and expert advisor on the BBC's Wolf Hall

IF WORKERS RAN THE RAILWAYS

With transport workers from London and Toronto

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Tickets bought before 1 May

£30 waged, £15 low-waged/student, £6 unwaged

Tickets bought before 13 June

£33 waged, £17 low-waged/student, £6 unwaged

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