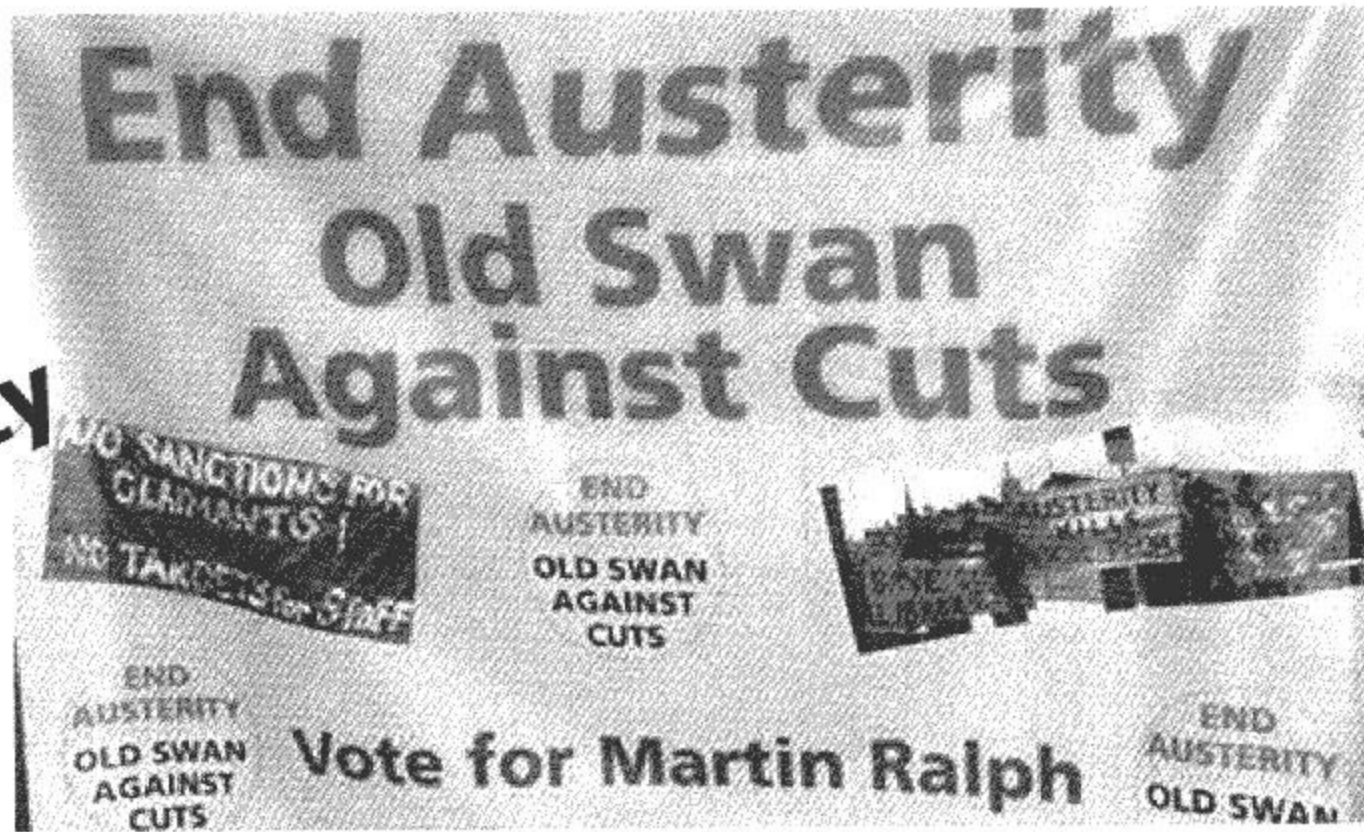
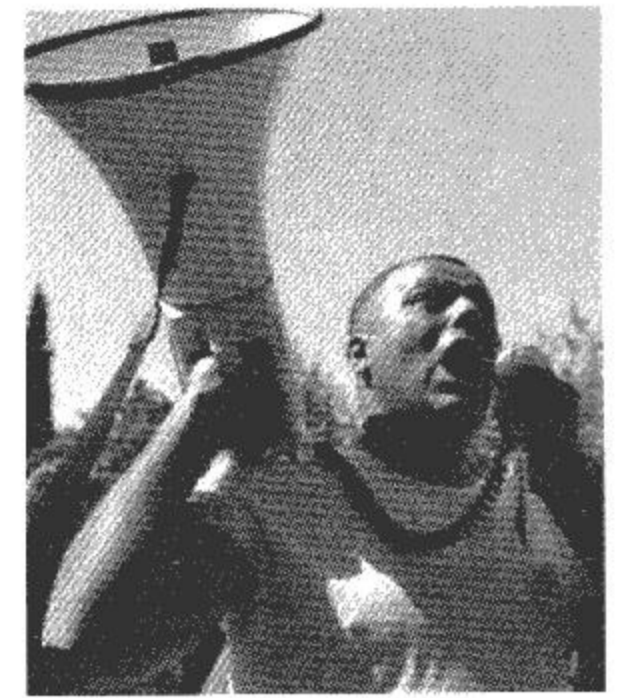


Shining example
of communities
fighting austerity



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Greece strikes



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Socialist Voice

Number 24 | June/July 2016

INTERNATIONAL SOCIALIST LEAGUE | INTERNATIONAL WORKERS LEAGUE - FOURTH INTERNATIONAL

£1

French strikes continue



Build solidarity actions

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EU – Tory and
bosses
referendum

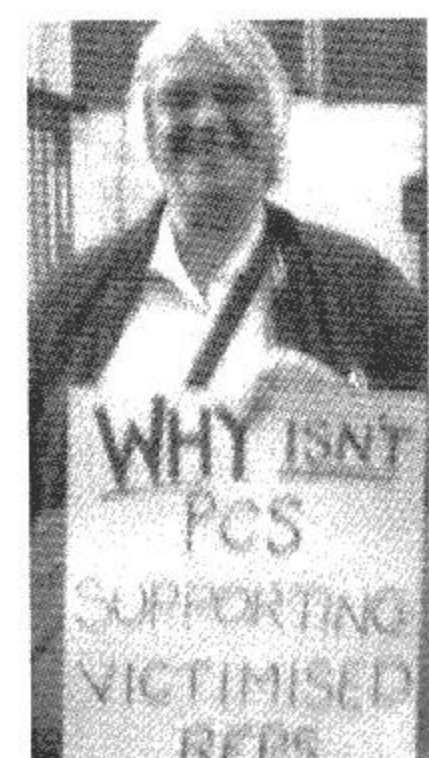
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Socialist Voice

Monthly newspaper of the ISL
International Socialist League,
British section of the IWL-FI
(International Workers' League)

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CHECK OUR FACEBOOK!



International Socialist League

WRITE TO US!

We want to know your opinion about our newspaper. Write to ISL at "News from Nowhere", 96 Bold Street, Liverpool L1 4HY



isinfo@talktalk.net



Join the International Socialist League!

1 The ISL aims to build a party that represents the interests of workers and youth because none of the main parties can represent their full interests.

Today the Tory government is unleashing one of the heaviest attacks on workers' rights in the post-war period.

They want to erase all the rights won by workers in the post WW II struggles.

The ISL know these attacks have to be met with strong resistance and genuine militant trade unionism united with community struggles.

We campaign for unity of action in the struggle with workers, youth and other left forces. But neither the TUC nor the Labour Party fights for united class action culminating in a general strike against austerity. Both have held back the working class fight against austerity especially since the pension strike of 2011. We cannot wait another five years.

2. Capitalism offers only crises, wars, poverty, racism, sexism, oppression and environmental destruction.

Those who rule us criminalise our struggles and divide us: Black against White, men against women, unemployed against employed, old against young, indigenous against immigrant and so on.

We fight fascism and every type of oppression: racism, homophobia, sexism, amongst others. Oppression is meant to divide us and divert the struggle against austerity and capitalism.

3. A different social system is possible, one based on a planned economy, on the needs of the vast

majority which can eradicate hunger and unemployment internationally.

A social system that will lead towards the emancipation of every man and every woman.

Only a workers government and nationalisation under workers control without compensation can achieve this. The Labour Party even under a left leader does not want this.

4. Today there are only two roads: either capitalism which will drag humanity towards destruction, or workers take in their hands the direction of the economy. That is why it is necessary and urgent that workers organize themselves for a program of class independence from the rulers and their government.

5. The perspective of class independence of the working class requires the construction of another left, revolutionary, fighting socialist internationalist party. This is the aim of the ISL.

6. A socialist economy can only be won by a revolution. But to do this a revolutionary party is needed.

7. For this ambitious purpose a party only in Britain is not enough.

An International revolutionary party is needed. No type of reformist party can lead the struggle for workers control (e.g. Greece) to end the dictates of the EU or the IMF.

In the UK no variant of the Labour Party will lead the fight for socialism.

That's why the ISL, with dozens of other parties on different continents, is building the IWL-FI, the largest and most dynamic revolutionary organization in the world!

Come and join us!



1st No Austerity Conference in Italy (May 28-29, Florence)

The conference of Italian rank and file unions and social struggle was a great step in the coordination of struggles in Italy and Europe as a whole against neoliberalism.

There were dozens of workers' delegates from all over Italy discussing and wrestling with ideas of developing the fight against austerity with great

enthusiasm.

Emanuelle Bigot from Solidaires and the International Trade Union Network explained the struggles of working men and women against the jobs act of Hollande in France. There was ample space here for women for struggle and internationalism.

The battle front No Austerity was born!



OSAC a shining example of communities fighting austerity

INTERNATIONAL SOCIALIST LEAGUE STATEMENT

The End Austerity Old Swan Against Cuts election campaign was dedicated to Kathy Laird, who was a member of the ISL and OSAC. She died unexpectedly in December 2015. She was a tireless frontline worker who would have been proud of the campaign

The results of the UK elections of 5 May reveal the continued erosion of loyalties to the old established parties and increased support for anti-austerity struggles.

With a few exceptions the Labour Party under the leadership of Jeremy Corbyn did not make much headway. They did not inspire workers, as there is no rousing call to fight and take to the streets.

The main reason Labour did not inspire a mass of workers is that when it comes to anti-austerity it is just talk. They support austerity and cuts continue. The failure to oppose austerity brings to mind Syriza's capitulations in Greece because Tsipras, their Prime Minister, made many promises to oppose the EU's austerity plan, but in the end, he agreed to austerity.

The real opposition to Tory and Labour

A member of the International Socialist League, Martin Ralph, was the local election candidate for End Austerity Old Swan Against Cuts, (OSAC) in Liverpool. Six candidates stood, including the Greens. OSAC came second, with 395 votes, doubling to 12 percent previous results. The Labour councillor was re-elected with 2,260 votes, 69 percent. The Liberal Democrats, who have the second number of seats in the city, came third, with 278 votes.

OSAC was delighted that all the hard work paid off, delivering over 8000 leaflets, on the streets every day talking to and listening to the people on the streets. There were many emails and Facebook messages from new people promising to vote for OSAC, many messages critical of Labour such as "Labour are Tories in red ties," to "you're against Tory and Labour? You mean against capitalism?"

OSAC's message was clear, "The Labour party under Corbyn's leadership claims to be anti-austerity. But we need to fight austerity now, not wait for promises in the future."

The only way to achieve our demands was, "by mobilising on the streets



with communities and unions to push Liverpool City Council to vote for a needs budget and by building a local and national campaign that links councils who set a needs budget with the trade unions who are willing to fight. Such a struggle will have to be done in close connection with communities in a common struggle against Tory austerity."

The demands we put forward in the election campaign included:

- A socialist welfare state
- Free, high-quality public services under public control.
- All refugees welcome, full rights and access to work, services and benefits.
- Support for all international struggles against austerity.
- End the bombing of Syria and the Middle East.

It was important to talk about the "anti-austerity" positions of Corbyn by explaining that the Labour Party will never lead the working class against austerity or in the fight for socialism. The Labour Party is a capitalist party with one outlook — reformism.

Throughout the campaign the one name that cropped up time and again was Joe Anderson, Labour's right wing Liverpool Council Leader and Mayor. He received just over 50 percent in the Mayoral election but is very unpopular amongst workers and the poor.

Corbyn's leadership team fully endorsed Joe Anderson, showing that support for Corbyn ends up as support

for Labour's right wing who control all Labour councils and Liverpool and London's Mayors.

Local supporter Gordon Waring summed up the OSAC result, "Let's get this straight Old Swan Against The Cuts is a small, community-based party in the Old Swan area of Liverpool. They have no financial backing whatsoever, and yet they have got more votes than the Tories, the Lib Dems, the Greens and UKIP. Let's just think about that for a moment. With the right backing just imagine how many more votes they would get if they stood in more areas."

The Old Swan result was one of the best of the left in the country. The other main group, the Trade Union and Socialist Coalition, stood 302 candidates; OSAC came within the top ten anti-austerity candidates in England.

OSAC's programme pushed for a workers' solution to find a way out of austerity, in a struggle for socialism based in action.

Workers beware watch the count

Three official vote counters were overheard joking about the OSAC name. Official complaints were made. And during the count an OSAC observer saw 50 OSAC votes being placed beneath 50 Liberal Democrat votes. Fortunately, she raised the issue and it was corrected.

Left Unity

After the national council of Left Unity had taken a majority decision not to

OSAC a shining example of communities fighting austerity

stand against the Labour Party, OSAC offered one name End Austerity to those local groups which were considering standing as Left Unity, such as Stockport and Wigan.

John Pearson and Left Unity's Stockport group opened up another front against the government's austerity and its local implementation by the Labour Party and others.

John increased his vote of 0.7 percent last year to one percent, in a city that now has Labour in control. This year draconian cuts will now be made by the new Labour leadership.

TUSC

The Trade Union and Socialist Coalition (TUSC, an electoral coalition of the Socialist Party, Socialist Workers Party, activists and the railway workers union RMT) had some good results. TUSC candidate Kevin Bennett standing in Fairfield & Howley ward Warrington polled 921 votes (76 votes less than the third-placed Labour). In Coventry, TUSC achieved 19.8% in one ward, five wards in various cities reached up to 10 - 11 percent.

In Liverpool TUSC stood 17 candidates, achieving up to 10 percent of the votes. And the TUSC candidate for mayor Roger Banister got 5.07%.

However, TUSC and the Socialist Party still have illusions that Labour will become an anti-austerity party. In Coventry, TUSC did not stand a candidate in a by-election, "...in an attempt to open up a dialogue with the Labour Party on fighting austerity." (TUSC website).

"...TUSC hasn't yet had the opportunity to sit down with Jeremy to discuss what he can do to encourage Labour councillors, in Coventry and elsewhere, to help lead a serious campaign against the Tories' massive funding cuts to local government."

Do they believe that the Labour Party will start fighting austerity and reverse their retreats? Do they believe that those having a reformist outlook and unable to break with the right-wing can represent the interests of the working class? It seems they do!

Building a socialist and workers alternative to austerity

It is very important to raise the flag of working class independent candidates who are fighting against austerity and for socialism.



During the election campaign, Martin Ralph was invited to speak on behalf of the UCU (University and College Union) to students at a meeting organising to fight tuition fees, cuts and the privatisation.

However, several members of the Labour Party, including the chairperson from Liverpool's Momentum (a Labour controlled organisation) argued that way forward was to join Labour and fight for socialism. Martin pointed out that Corbyn had abandoned his no fees election promise and that the leadership endorsed Joe Anderson. In Liverpool, protests against council cuts over the last six years have never been supported by Labour Party banners, or members speaking against the cuts.

Martin promised that all such future protests will continue to offer an open microphone for any Labour Party members who want to oppose the cuts. Those same Labour members remained quiet and gazed at the floor.

The Tory government austerity programme, unless stopped, within a

few years will see the end of local public services, the National Health Service and public education. No one on the left disputes this.

However, differences are over what to do about it.

A problem is the vast majority of the left (including the SP and SWP) see the Labour Party with Corbyn leading as a solution and able to open the road to socialism.

However, many of the promises made by Corbyn have already been abandoned like the fight for nationalising energy companies and he endorses Tory austerity and cuts by supporting local implementation by Labour councils.

The recent suspensions of anti-Zionist and BDS activists illustrate the inability of his to stand up to the right-wing in the party, strengthening the right-wing.

Labour's programme does not fight against Tory Austerity.

Those who fight austerity in deeds, as well as words, are increasingly taking the struggle to the streets of Europe.

OSAC openly supports general strikes in Greece, Italy and France and is for a workers Europe, not the dictatorship of the EU and IMF. We need to link struggles nationally and internationally with a joint struggle of workers across the world.

OSAC has proven that workers will not only respond but will fight where there is trust and a call to action. We face a future of struggle, and our campaign was seeking to continue that struggle during the election.

To fight cuts speak out

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ELECTION RESULTS ACROSS THE UK

IRELAND: "Victory for the marginalised by the marginalised"

MARGARET MCADAM

"People Before Profit is a 32 County party that stands in the tradition of James Connolly who predicted that partition would produce a carnival of reaction. We believe that the only way to bring people together across this island is by building a grassroots movement from below, based on people power and socialist politics, not one that is based on locking in the two existing Irish states."

One of the most interesting victories in the fight against austerity was in northern Ireland, where two candidates from People Before Profit (PBP) won seats to the Northern Ireland Assembly.



West Belfast has long been a Sinn Féin stronghold and the former seat of party leader Gerry Adams. However, Sinn Féin together with the Democratic Unionist Party is implementing neo-liberal policies. "Under the latest 'Fresh Start' agreement, Sinn Féin is supporting the removal of 20,000 jobs in the public sector and has opened the door to a widespread sell-off of public assets. By contrast, it is planning to cut corporation tax on big business."

While Sinn Féin speak 'left' in Dublin, they implement cuts and privatisation policies in the north.

In a further step in their relationship with the political elites the Sinn Féin leadership welcomed the British Ambassador to the 2016 Ard Fheis.

In contrast, after years of work campaigning in the community and fighting against austerity, PBP's Gerry Carroll, who describes himself as a revolutionary socialist, topped the poll in the Republican heartland of West Belfast.

Against the odds in Foyle Derry, PBP's Eamon McCann took the seat defeating Sinn Féin's Martin McGuinness who was brought in to wrest one of the seats. McCann contested his first election there in 1969 and had never won. Now seventy-three he doubled

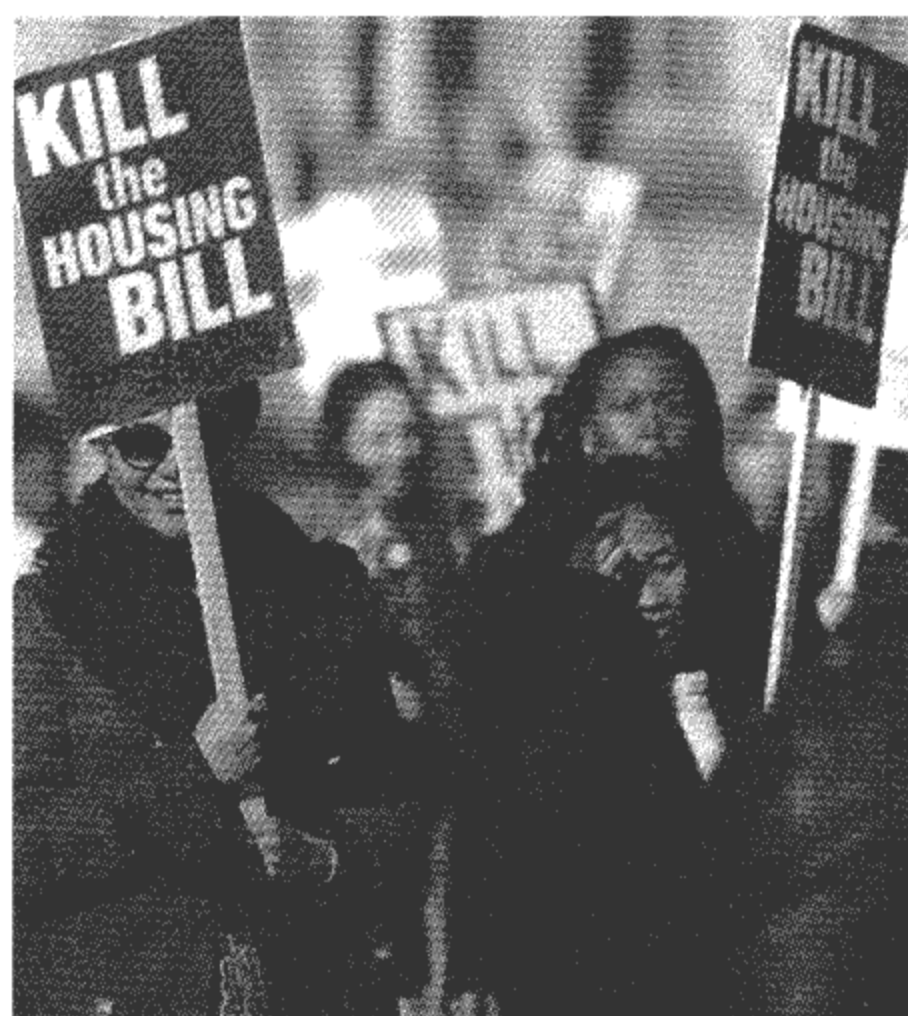
his nearest rival's votes campaigning on green and orange issues, fighting austerity and on the exact same issues he fought almost fifty years ago. Significantly in his acceptance speech he placed "a duty on all of us to take up women's rights seriously" promising that "PBP will be defending and advancing ... a woman's right to choose." He then led the audience in a rendition of the *The Internationale*. McCann is a journalist, writer and campaigner, a leading civil rights figure from the 1960s who has consistently campaigned on left wing issues.

The votes for People Before Profit are against austerity and against the support that Sinn Féin and the Social Democratic Labour Party give to neo-liberalism.

Their politics held sway with working class families in areas where there is a high level of unemployment and deprivation. PBP are 32 county campaigning organisation, for a united Ireland.

London

The Labour Party's Sadiq Khan won the London Mayoral's contest', ending Tory Party control. Khan is the son of an



Social housing is in deep crisis in London

immigrant, whose father was a bus driver and whose mother was a seamstress. The Tory candidate, Zac Goldsmith attacked Khan as a dangerous in a shamefully racist campaign, who had links with Muslim terrorist organisations. Khan received a decisive 1,310,143 votes.

Khan is not left wing, he is pro-business and is supporting Israel. No left-wing anti-austerity stood hence the working class had no alternative choice.

No doubt some workers including immigrants (whose communities form a



The new Labour mayor agrees with privatisation

majority of the population in London) voted against austerity, privatisation and racism. Khan is someone who will continue the right wing policies of former Tory Mayor Boris Johnson.

He will support the city bankers and attack the tube and other workers. Although public transport and housing are in deep crisis, his capitalist solutions will only deepen the crisis for a huge number of workers.

Scotland

The Scottish election was held to return 129 members to the *Scottish Parliament*. It was the first parliamentary election in Scotland in which 16 and 17-year-olds were able to vote. The Scottish National Party took 63 seats (down 6), the Tories 31 seats (up 16) and Labour 24 (down 13), other seats went to the Green Party and Liberal Democrats.

The humiliation the Labour Party suffered in the 2015 general election continued, a party that used to govern Scotland was pushed into third place by the Tories.

The Scottish National Party is a national bourgeois party, but it is further to the left than Jeremy Corbyn's Labour Party on some issues. This includes no tuition fees for university education in Scotland, and standing up to the bullying and blackmail of both Tory and Labour in the Scottish independence referendum last year.



Anti-austerity demo Scotland 2015

In or Out, a boss's argument Boycott the referendum Defeat Tory and EU austerity

INTERNATIONAL SOCIALIST LEAGUE STATEMENT

How to vote in the EU referendum on 23 June has split Tory, Labour, trade unions and the Left. However, many are undecided. The choice is between Britain in an imperialist Europe, or, imperialist Britain outside of the EU. That is why the International Socialist League calls on young people, workers and working class communities to reject their offer and actively boycott the referendum. We need a workers and socialist solution, In or Out is not the answer.

UK In or Out

Cameron's referendum is an argument about the best way for bosses to hammer workers and maximise their own profits and wealth. Both In and Out agree on the basic principles: deny immigrant rights; support austerity; smash workers' rights; cut pay and conditions; use racism and xenophobia to shift the blame away from themselves; and defend the City of London and British capitalism's position in the world. In or Out, what divides them is the best way to achieve all of this.

Cameron was forced to hold the referendum in answer to the challenge from UKIP and the Out bloc of Tory MPs in a debate driven by xenophobia, racism and nationalism. The Out campaign, a carnival of reaction, is based on hostility to migrants and refugees.

In or Out both support the privatisation UK health services, public services, and Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP).

Both are irrevocably committed to the interests of transnational capital and freedom for the banks.

A new form of EU colonialism has developed whereby wealth is being directly transferred from the periphery to the core, particularly in Greece, Ireland and now Ukraine. One form it takes is a colonial transfer of capital through interest payments on an ever increasing debt.

The EU austerity policy imprisons the smaller nations in Europe, while outside of Europe seeking to enslave Middle East



One of many protests against austerity and the EU

countries and other parts of the world. EU gives huge sums to Turkey while Erdogan kills Kurds, Turkish protestors and trade unionists, and supports Israel and a solution in Syria that includes Assad.

EU power struggle

There is a struggle between the main powers in Europe that involves British capitalism wanting to proceed with minimum regulation but with protection from German and French banks and businesses. Cameron's deal aims to defend British banks and transnationals in the EU so that like locusts ravaging the land, they can scour for resources and profit in Europe and across the world.

The City of London is largely in favour of staying in the EU. The EU is a strong force for neoliberalism, privatisation and driving down workers' wages.

But hedge funds, small business groups and some larger capitalists see a way to resolve their economic problems by breaking with Europe.

The EU referendum asks the British electorate to support one way or the other for imperialism. We need a solution that opposed both varieties of imperialism.

For a workers not a capitalist way out

A recent EU report noted that non-residential investment (excluding households buying houses) fell as a

share of GDP and the main reason was "a reduced level of profitability." The Commission found that Europe's profitability "has stayed below pre-crisis levels."

The approaching referendum coincides with an approaching third phase of the world crisis despite Tory talk of a rosy economic future. With increasing levels of personal indebtedness the future is not rosy.

The interests of the workers, immediate or in the future, are not of concern in this referendum.

Labour for In

Corbyn has abandoned his previously Eurosceptic position in which he previously attacked the EU as a paradise for "greedy bankers and multinationals" that could not be reformed, and has secured a deal with the right wing and the trade union bureaucracy by supporting the In campaign.

Alan Johnson, who is leading the Labour In campaign says, "The EU referendum will be the most profound political decision of my lifetime in terms of its effect on our national prosperity and Britain's position in the world."

"The Labour campaign that I lead will put the country's future above party machinations, emphasising the contribution that the EU has made to peace and prosperity across our

continent" [our emphasis].

However, immigrants, the Greeks and other small countries will disagree! Ask those who are being sanctioned in Britain, unemployed steel workers, junior doctors, railway workers and the millions working casual or zero hour contracts, ask all the striking workers in Europe if they agree!

After its brutal treatment of the Greek people during 2015, the EU has proven to be an anti-democratic autocracy committed to permanent austerity, whatever the human cost.

The EU's free trade agenda over the past 20 years has shown that the radical reform necessary to turn the EU around is impossible.

The Out

The right-wing Out campaign focuses on EU law and immigration as the cause of the problems of the British working class, championing insularity, racism, nationalism and xenophobia.

It has already become a factor in deepening Cameron's war against migrants in Calais, and draconian attacks on benefits and housing are being announced almost daily.

Campaigners for Out come from a section of the bourgeoisie (represented in the "Business for Britain" campaign), small businesses and sections of the middle class, some represented in UKIP and other racist groups. However they also come from the left as with George Galloway, who recently shared a platform with Nigel Farage (UKIP).

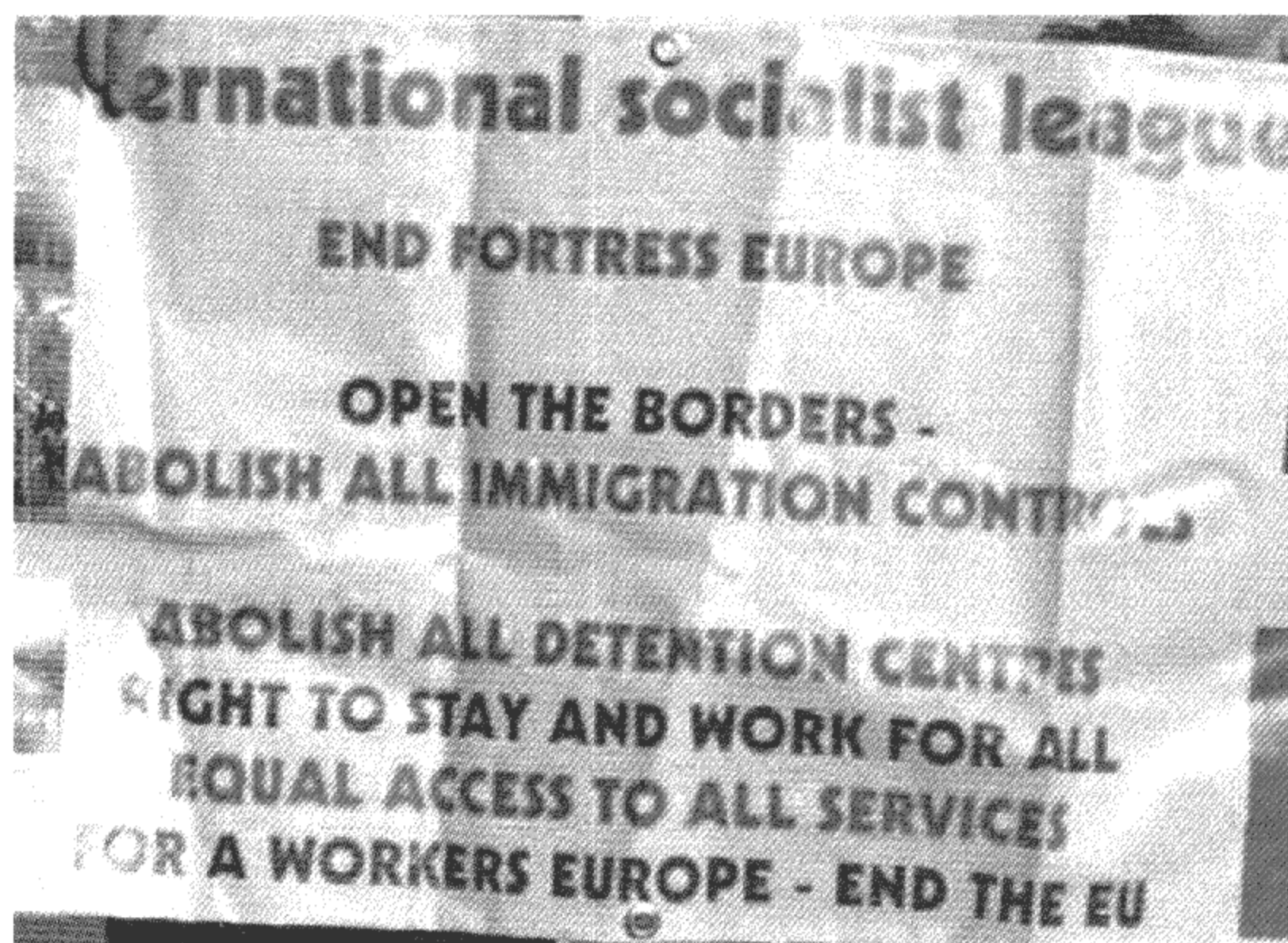
The Socialist Party supports the Out campaign, but also argue (see Socialist Voice August 2014) that "no immigration controls" would "be a barrier to convincing workers of a socialist programme".

However "no immigration controls" is a leading demand in the fight for a socialist programme and for socialism. Opening the Calais' border, and granting safe passage to all who want it, is important to show to all immigrants that we are in solidarity with them. We believe that indigenous and immigrant are one working class. We say, unlike the Out 'socialist and trade union' campaign: All immigrants are welcome here.

EU a noose for the working class

The majority of trade union leaders support the In vote. But the EU is a noose for the working class.

Some workers think the EU protects services and jobs from Tory austerity.



Nothing could be further from the truth. The EU imposes zero-hours contracts, casualisation and poverty pay, and is destroying collective bargaining across Europe as part of its structural adjustment programme.

Even the European TUC, which campaigned for a "In" vote in the Greek referendum for more austerity, openly admits that "cuts in salaries, cuts in public services and weakening collective bargaining rights are all on the agenda".

The EU neoliberal employment model supports wages to reflect productivity, which means cutting wages even further, alleging the need to compete with the 'core' high-investment economies of France and Germany.

The European Commission, IMF and the European Central Bank now directly intervene in national wage negotiations in Ireland, Greece and Romania to weaken collective bargaining. Previously in Romania, 98 per cent of workers were covered by collective agreements. Today that figure is around 20 per cent.

Workers' jobs cannot be protected by clinging to the EU. Neither austerity, this government or the EU can be reformed. That is why workers across Europe are opposing EU attacks and taking to the streets.

Already in 2016 there have been many strikes. With junior doctors and railway workers in Britain; transport workers in Barcelona; air-traffic controllers, dock workers, truck drivers and more than 5.6 million civil service workers in France; railway workers in Belgium; civil servants in Portugal; general strikes in France, Italy and Greece,

Neither Austerity nor EU can be reformed

The will to fight lives on in the streets

of Europe. A workers' and people's Europe can only be built from below to overthrow the nightmare vision imposed by the undemocratic institutions from above.

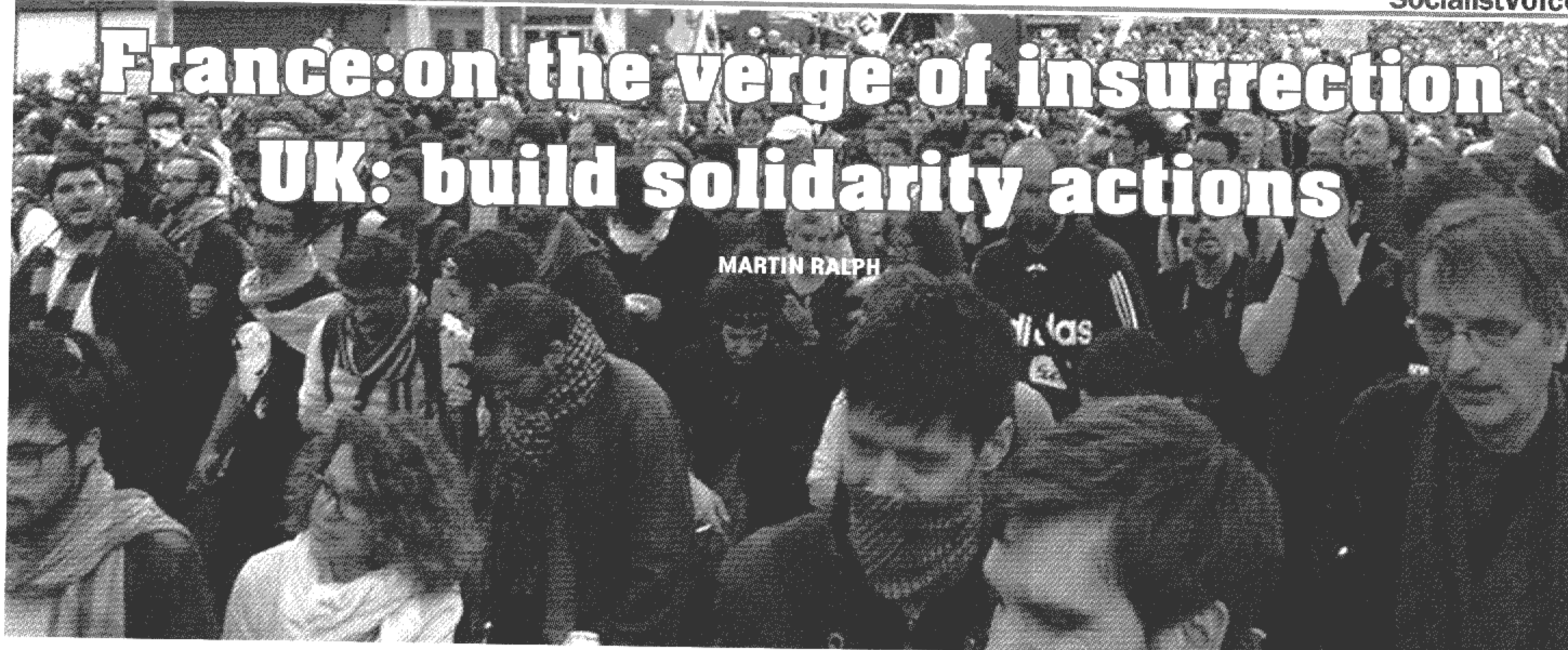
Britain is an oppressor nation and we cannot support one side or the other of our oppressors in this particular referendum.

We support unconditionally the right of Greece, Spain, Portugal and Ireland to leave the EU because the EU, European Central Bank, and IMF, have imposed austerity in all these countries and have turned them into semi-colonies of the EU. The only way out for the smaller countries, for immigrants, for all workers is to leave the Euro and the EU.

We call for a campaign to champion the rights of workers, to support all workers' struggles across and to expose the self-seeking xenophobic and profit motive of both capitalist camps. We also call, based on the need to support oppressed nations within Europe, to bring this government down, break up the EU by the actions of workers, and for a free socialist states of Europe.

- **Only working class mobilisation can end austerity!**
- **Down with the Tories and EU!**
- **One working class: Immigrant and indigenous!**
- **For a free socialist united states of Europe!**

Write isinfo@talktalk.net for more information



MARTIN RALPH

On 26 May gigantic mobilizations took place in more than 60 cities following eight days of strikes. The struggle is against Hollande's government (Socialist Party) labour code, known as the "El Khomri Act".

Minister Khomri aims to introduce greater "flexibility" of work, weaken national contracts in favour of local contracts (Article 2), allow an extension of working hours (up to 12 hours a day), reduce overtime pay and allow dismissals without constraint.

Hollande intends to impose the measures without parliamentary debate by using part of the French Constitution which allows a law to be imposed by decree. The pressure from workers is so great that a free vote in parliament could be against these proposals.

Oil Refineries, construction, commercial, and health workers have been on strike. New strikes are planned with transport workers including main line and metro worker, and workers in nuclear power plants (in France they provide nearly 80 percent of energy produced).

The mobilizations are mainly called by the CGT (largest trade union federation), Force Ouvriere, FSU and Solidaires and student organizations. Youth protests organised by Nuit Debout) are growing every day.

Three labour unions, among them the CGT and Solidaires plus three students' organizations (Inter-Union), are calling for a further general strike 14 June. "The faster our actions bring the economy to a stand-still and affect the profits of the directors and shareholders, the faster we will win!" explained Solidaire.

The Economist claimed, "For the past week, France has felt like a country on the verge of civic insurrection."

Labour and union leaders ignore French struggle

Demonstrations and strikes took place on 9, 13, 26, 31 March, 28 April; and again 1, 17, 19 and 26 May.

The British Labour Party and most trade union leaderships have ignored this, while the Economist, 27 May article says the battle is "over the future of the French left." Not a small political question! The Economist also comments on the level of public support, which is splitting the government, "62 percent told a poll that they thought the CGT-led strikes were justified. In another poll 70 per cent said the law should be shelved in order to end the blockades."

Movement spreads the government creaks

The fighting spirit of this growing movement is remarkable considering that taking advantage of the November bombings, the government had decreed a state of emergency, with curfews and highly restrictive measures (supported in parliament, helping the bourgeoisie in a covenant of "national unity") that are being used against protestors.

But the reactionary measures of the "socialist" government have not managed to stop the rising movement. Various government ministers, who had initially ruled out any amendment of the measures, began to open chinks in the negotiations, while at the same time sending police to attack the demonstrators with tear gas and gas bombs; arrest activists; searches of trade union offices at the forefront of the fight (like the headquarters of our comrades in Solidaires).

Union bureaucracies (like CGT) are currently driven by the impact of the struggle beyond where they would like to be (they tried to limit strikes to particular

sectors), have begun negotiations with the government in exchange for recognition of their role and marginal changes, and are willing to try to curb the movement.

But the bureaucrats will not have an easy task because in the struggle there is a growing awareness by workers and young people of their power and of their opponent's weaknesses.

International action now!

The first duty of every fighting union, social and political organization is for street demonstrations in solidarity with the French struggle. International solidarity means taking urgent actions now and to develop similar struggles in our own countries.

A great task

Various versions of neo-reformism are in crisis across the continent. However, revolutionary Marxism was torn to pieces by the revisionism of Mandel's (the main leader of a current of a Fourth International) heirs in the New Anti-Capitalist Party (NPA) who, after calling to "unite revolutionaries and reformists" are now in a deep crisis – and abandoned Trotsky's view of the necessity for a revolutionary international.

As in the past again the main task will be resolved by forging a mass alternative in the thick of the struggle: but in France today this mass leadership does not yet exist.

It is the same in Britain. For example Left Unity does not consistently oppose the Corbynism, one reason why they did not stand in the local elections this year to challenge the Labour Party.

The ISL and IWL-Fourth International is engaged in the fight for the great task of building a mass alternative.

Greek workers strike against austerity

MARTIN RALPH

On 6 May the union rank and file in Greece forced the trade union leaderships to call and extend a general strike for three days. It was the fourth general strike to take place under Tsipras Syriza government.

Greece's largest labour union, the private sector GSEE, the powerful PNO seafarers union, and the Confederation of Public Workers' Unions (ADEDY) called the strike. Together they represent over 2.5 million workers. Strikes were also organised by PAME, the coordinator of unions led by the Greek Communist Party (KKE).

The strike was against the Syriza government plans to implement more austerity demands of the EU, ECB (European Central Bank) and IMF (troika). Which demanded more austerity in order to obtain €5bn (£4bn) of overdue payments.

On 22 May cuts were voted through, meaning VAT increases, increased taxes for farmers and on homes, and the creation of a new super-fund for the privatization of transport, ports and public property. And will create an automatic means to cut salaries, pensions, social benefits and other spending if the fiscal goals of the state budget and memorandum are not achieved.

The EU hailed this a break-through. In October 2016 they will demand Greece goes deeper in debt.

Syriza promises

Syriza made many promises but turned their backs on the youth, the working class, the great majority of the people and socialism.

Those who believe 'left' Labour promises to fight the present European crises will offer a way out to socialism should study the evolution of Syriza who say they are defending people, while the police attack demonstrators with batons and tear gas.

The fight continues

Syriza's EU austerity agreement passed in the Greek parliament on 22 May. On 23 May transport workers staged a sit-in protest at the offices of STASY against the privatisation measures. On 26 May



port workers started a 48 hour strike to oppose the sell off of the two biggest public ports in the country. There were also strikes on the metro, tram, trolley buses and buses in Athens.

Alexis Tsipras argues that the reform of the pension system and other reforms are the only option but most of the Greek people reject this. His long list of unfulfilled promises include "the immediate recovery of the bonus", however, he accepted the "zero deficit clause" imposed by the troika.

A history of betrayal

January 25 marked one year since the Syriza parliamentary victory. That election result was an expression of a great victory of the workers and the Greek people over the traditional parties ND and PASOK, executors of the destruction of the country over the previous six years.

Tsipras quickly forgot why millions voted for Syriza. He forgot the struggles carried out by workers facing each measure, each memorandum and the 35 general strikes in which he participated.

Syriza generated great hopes and expectations. People believed in the campaign promises of Tsipras to "regain national dignity" and "face austerity plans". Many saw Syriza as "new" and "left" who would fight against Merkel and the Troika creditors.

The experience of the Greek people with the leftist government was rapid. Now it is known as the government

of "nothing left." Syriza prioritized "negotiation" with finance capital, and did not break with the euro and the Troika and accepted "debt rescheduling". Tsipras has betrayed the ongoing struggle of the Greek people of the past six years.

The IMF thinks that under present arrangements the debt to GDP ratio will rise from around 180% now to nearly 300% by 2060.

Tsipras said this year "... we can change Greece, we can change Europe. We can defeat those who until yesterday seemed invincible. We are taking the fight forward." But he craves support from the Eurogroup and the European Commission.

Continue and unify the struggles

The general strikes and mobilisations are extremely important steps in the political struggle against the austerity plans that Syriza wants to apply. The mobilisations are a forceful response of workers to continuous betrayals.

The process of resistance is essential because it concentrates and advances the discussion on the necessity of bringing together combative labour unions, social and leftist organizations for a national plan of struggle to give continuity to the resistance. The only way out for the workers and the Greek people is to rely on their own strength through independent action and to place no confidence in the government of Syriza and all those who seek to limit the struggle.

PCS fails test of supporting victimised union activist

JOHN PEARSON

Left Unity's Trade Union Commission has recognised an increase in cases of victimisation of trade union activists by employers. This has been especially marked in the public sector, with members of the Universities and College Union, the National Union of Teachers, the local government union UNISON and the Public and Commercial Services Union (PCS), being sacked by employers for their union activities.

This article looks at one such case within PCS, which exposed serious failings by the leadership of this union, which has the distinction of being the only British union whose National Executive Committee has a clear majority of members of two ostensibly revolutionary socialist groups, the Socialist Party (CWI) and the Socialist Workers Party.

PCS is best known as the civil servants' union. However, it has members in the private sector due to privatisation and outsourcing. This includes workers for the US transnational corporation, Hewlett-Packard, which, by means of acquiring the IT services company, Electronic Data Systems, gained lucrative contracts in the Department of Work and Pensions, Ministry of Justice and Ministry of Defence.

In May 2012, in a move to push up profit margins, HP 15,000 of job cuts were to take place in Europe, with a disproportionate amount expected in Britain where employment protection laws are weaker than in other countries on the continent.

PCS members in HP had to this point had no compulsory redundancies for three years. This was following a 2009 strike campaign which led to a Job Security Agreement, a pay rise and the extension of collective bargaining rights to 'second tier' workers who had been employed after privatisation had taken place.

However, in 2013 HP made some workers compulsorily redundant. It also embarked on a project to relocate in the UK to two 'strategic hubs' with higher paid, unionised staff being replaced by lower paid, non-union recruits. This was a very clear attempt to break the union as it forced through cost-cutting and restructuring measures.

Unfortunately for the workers concerned, these attacks were compounded by the actions of PCS officials.



Workers voted for industrial action in the form of discontinuous strikes and an overtime and on call ban. However, in April 2013 the union's HP Group Executive Committee – upon the insistence of the full-time official, CWI (Scotland) member, Alan Brown – decided to suspend this action. The reason stated was that time was needed to consider an offer from the employer before carrying on with industrial action.

While news reports often describe other unions engaging in 'make or break' talks right up to the onset of a strike, and the strike going ahead if any offer made isn't good enough, all too often just the presence of talks, or of any offer – regardless of its content – are enough for PCS to put everything on hold, in some cases even for months, demobilising members as well as frustrating effective action.

In this case, the fudge was compounded by the fact that the GEC refused to report details of an earlier offer they had rejected. The reason given was that doing so could make HP unhappy enough to not produce the second offer, ignoring the very fact that these offers come about due to industrial strength rather than the ability of the union to make the employer happy!

John Pearson resigned his position as Group President at this point, as this turn of events went against his election platform policy of full report back and accountability to the membership. He declared his intent to fight the GEC's betrayal from within the rank-and-file.

He was successful in this. It emerged that the offer included a measly (and subsequently imposed) 1.6 per cent pay award, as well as a flat refusal to guarantee no compulsory redundancies or end job cuts, off-shoring and the use of contractors. The rank-and-file of the union, through workplace meetings,

overwhelmingly rejected the offer from management and forced the GEC to reinstate action.

HP responded to this by moving against John. He was suspended and invited to attend a disciplinary hearing on two charges. The first was of 'breaching confidentiality,' because he distributed to members of his branch a spreadsheet received by PCS from HP in accordance with statutory redundancy consultation requirements containing details of the job pools from which 584 job cuts were to take place. The second was a failure to follow HP policy regarding press interviews because he had talked to the media in a PCS capacity about the ongoing industrial dispute!

These trumped-up charges were to lead to John's dismissal, though he continued to act as branch secretary in the North West while fighting for his job back. That is until PCS finally hung him out to dry.

PCS betrayal

HP had, unsurprisingly, rejected a written demand from the union's full time official for John's reinstatement. Following this, the union's legal department advised against pursuing an employment tribunal because a claim of dismissal for the automatically unfair reason of trade union activity had "no reasonable prospect of success". It took some time for John to establish the basis of this view, until finally a letter from PCS general secretary Mark Serwotka in January 2014, implied that the dismissal was justified since the document detailing the 584 job cuts was provided on a "negotiations in confidence" basis.

This revealed that PCS itself is wedded to the concept of negotiations in confidence. Such a state of affairs makes relations between union officials and bosses cosier, away from the pesky matter of accountability to members.

The officials can represent the union as a 'responsible' negotiating partner, able to police its membership and offer industrial peace. Where this collides with the collective interest of workers to fight rather than mediate what the bosses are imposing, then a militant rep whose loyalty is to the members rather than the bureaucracy becomes an annoyance rather than someone to defend.

John's union branch favoured combining the demand for his reinstatement with resolution of the ongoing dispute over pay and job cuts. Bizarrely, rather than provide support to this, the GEC insisted that industrial action for his reinstatement had to occur as a single issue. Therefore, even as a consultative ballot went on, the union's full time official informed John that the union was no longer seeking redress for his case and therefore he was no longer eligible to be a union member.

Mark Serwotka, a left talker beloved of the SP and SWP, backed up this decision, calling the situation 'regrettable' but offering nothing further. Meanwhile, even though action short of strike continued, demoralisation set in amongst the workers, compounded by the official attitude of the union. With John out of the way, officials declared their commitment to a 'dialogue' with HP as jobs continued to be slashed and in due course all industrial action was called off. The assistant secretary of John's branch and a senior branch caseworker were subsequently to join hundreds of union members who were selected for compulsory redundancy without any opposition from PCS.

In August 2014, John won a unanimous verdict of an Employment Tribunal of automatically unfair dismissal for trade union activity. Even then, Serwotka continued to refuse support. John had had to engage a private solicitor and, despite the verdict, he was left to pay the legal fees out of his pocket.

It is clear that John Pearson was singled out and victimised by Hewlett Packard for his role as a militant trade union representative. It is equally clear that PCS's resistance to this and other union busting efforts was piecemeal at best and that they have been willing to hang him out to dry for supporting a rank-and-file led approach and going against the official line.

To read more of John's struggle for justice see pcssupportyourmembers.wordpress.com/

Dilma Rousseff and Michel Temer tarred with the same brush

BERNARDO CERDEIRA (PSTU)

Michel Temer took over the presidency of the country in a mood of popular repudiation against the threat of anti-worker and anti-people policies and the appointment of ministers and alliances that are known to be corrupt and rightist politicians.

However, the sectors linked to the previous Dilma Rousseff's Workers Party government are trying to take advantage of the masses' distrust to sell the idea that Temer's government is the opposite of the old administration. According to this reasoning, Temer took over to enforce a tremendous step backwards in relation to the actions of the previous supposedly progressive government.

This campaign led by the Workers Party, the national trades union central CUT, and social organizations such as as MST or MTST, has two objectives: to support the idea there was an institutional coup of the right (which tries to cover up the failure and betrayal of WP governments) and at the same time, prepare a hypothetical return of Dilma to power 180 days after the impeachment trial by the Senate.

There is no doubt about one thing: Temer's is a totally reactionary government that intends to carry on a neoliberal agenda. To be successful he must attack workers and the people. From this point of view, the banner of "Out With Temer" is very fair, and all workers and social organizations should discuss how to support it.

But the political experience of most of the popular sectors in the past three years, since the demonstrations of June 2013 against public transport costs, contain important lessons that should not be forgotten. The most significant is the negative experience of the anti-working class policy of Dilma Rousseff's government and the WP. It is this very experience that should serve as a warning in order not to be deceived with the idea of a coup or a rupture between two supposedly opposed governments.

"Out With Temer and Come Back Dilma" or "General Elections"?

Rousseff and Temer governments are different, but their main Ministers are basically the same, and Temer's



policy is a continuation of previous policies. That's why saying "Out With Temer" is not enough, "Out With All Of Them" must be added. We must fight and overthrow the new reactionary government, but that does not mean reinstate the previous reactionary government. "Come Back Dilma" cannot be supported in any form.

The people have the right to choose a new Congress and a new president through elections, with new rules which should be held now! The only way to oppose the government's attacks is with a strong mobilization culminating in a general strike to defeat its austerity plans and remove them all from office.

But there is an obstacle to this: the leadership of the major trades union central in the country. CUT, CTB, and other workers organizations try to summon mobilizations against Temer and to demand the return of Dilma. If workers do not want Temer, much less do they want Dilma back. The failure of the general strike called by the Fearless People's Front (led by the PSOL and the MTST) and the Popular Brazil Front (led by the PT and the CUT) on the eve of the impeachment session at the Chamber of Deputies on 11 April, demonstrates this. They tried to perform a show of force against Dilma Rousseff's impeachment but the workers ignored them. No one wants go back.

Other union's leaderships such as Força Sindical support Temer and are negotiating pension reform with him.

We must strengthen the demand on the CUT, CTB and other leaderships to build, with CSP-Conlutas and others organisations like the Unit of Action Front, a general strike to bring down Temer and the Congress and call a general election. Similarly, to demand Força Sindical break with Temer and build this strike.

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Bill Hunter's Archives

'Left' Labour and opportunism



This is the second selection of Labour Review articles by Bill Hunter from the early 1980s showing the historic role of Labour 'lefts' over the post-war period. This contains an important analysis for today looking at 'left' Labour and the refusal to break with the right-wing. Here, Bill shows the record of Eric Heffer, who began as a union militant but had moved into the Labour bureaucracy by the 1960s. Original article, "From syndicalism to parliamentary cretinism: the case of Eric Heffer".

Along with Mr Anthony Wedgwood Benn, Eric Heffer is the most prominent leader of the 'left' in the Labour Party. The following outline political history of the Merseyside member of this duo is meant as a contribution to a political understanding of the nature of this leadership. The recorder of this history declares that, despite the amazing lack of principle therein, any resemblance to actual persons in the labour movement and their actions is absolutely authentic.

Eric Heffer appeared in Liverpool in the early 1950s. His subsequent course was determined by his refusal to subordinate himself to the revolutionary discipline necessary to lead the working class. In this period he called himself an 'independent Marxist' — i.e. independent of the revolutionary party and revolutionary discipline. He sought for theoretical justification in Rosa Luxemburg.

He was a joiner, well-known in the building trade in ship repair and with a reputation as a militant. For the greater part of the decade, together with a handful of other syndicalists and sectarian ultra-lefts, he was a member of the anti-parliamentarian group known as the Socialist Workers' Federation. They published a small paper called first *Revolt*, and then, later *Socialist Revolt*, 'The Strike is Mightier than the Vote' reads the main headline in *Revolt* issue number five. Already, in number two, Eric S. Heffer had written the leading article entitled 'Workers Power: which way forward?'

"The question which unites the overwhelming majority in the Labour Party" [he wrote] "including Attlee, Bevan and the Trotskyists is that socialism will come through parliamentary action. The Labour Party is above all else a parliamentary party and the divisions and wards are nothing but cogs in the electoral machine."



Eric Heffer was a union militant in the 1950s, he joined Labour, became a Labour councillor and in 1960 he worked to end the unofficial seaman's

[Heffer mentions Trotskyists because at this time Bill and other Trotskyists were in the Labour Party (he was expelled in 1954) because of the possibilities for building a group of Trotskyists with workers and also using a Labour Party newspaper *Socialist Outlook* to build in the working class that openly criticise the Labour leadership (see *Life Long Apprenticeship* by Bill Hunter. Editors)]

At this time, a few short years before he became one himself, he waxed sarcastic about parliamentarians. "Undoubtedly, these parliamentarians are suffering from the delusion that parliament expresses the mythical 'will of the people'" he declared, and at the end of his article he firmly stated: 'the time has come to stop worshipping the state organs of the capitalist class. We must think and act as revolutionaries. The situation demands it.'

But thinking and acting as revolutionaries did not mean building the necessary revolutionary organisation. Later, in the *Socialist Revolt* dated October-December 1956 we find Eric S. Heffer attempting to answer the question 'What kind of Party?' His article told us: "The myth inherent in Bolshevik organisation was developed to a high degree by Trotsky and used with great ability by Stalin...Trotsky's crimes were not that he was an 'imperialist agent',

(that is nonsense) but that he helped to develop the weapons that Stalin used." The final sentence in the article reads: 'In rejecting the centralised party we do not reject revolutionary Marxism but in fact apply it to British conditions and according to British working class traditions.'

To this picture of Heffer it must be added that in these months when Stalinism was in deep crisis and the Trotskyist movement was winning the Liverpool leadership of what was then a strong Young Communist League, Heffer was heard to declare: "When I'm accused of it now, I don't deny I'm a Trotskyist." The Trotskyists, however, denied it quite emphatically and definitely.

At the same time as denouncing the Labour Party in sectarian articles, Heffer was keeping the door open. He was under the strong pull of social democracy. Eventually, at the end of the 1950s he became a Labour councillor. Marxists have truly declared that a sectarian is but someone frightened by his own opportunism.

In 1960 Heffer proved his worth to the establishment and to the reformist bureaucracy. In the seamen's strike of that year, together with Simon Mahon, the right wing Catholic MP for Bootle, he worked to end this unofficial struggle.

(to be continued in future issues)