Eurozone chaos deepens. Unite the fightback!

Greece

Italy

UK

A WORKERS’ UNITED EUROPE

See page 5

Strike on 30 November: see page 11
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 dictates the means of production. Society is shaped by the capitalists’ relentless drive to increase their wealth. Capitalism causes poverty, unemployment, the belittling 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 end to bosses and managers’ privileges.

We fight for the labour movement to break with “social partnership” and assert working-class interests militantly. We stand for:

- Independence 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 and bisexual people. Black and white workers’ unity against racism.
- Open borders.
- Global solidarity against global capitalism — 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 socialist 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!

020 7394 8923 solidarity@workersliberty.org

20e Tower Workshops, Ryle Road, London, SE1 3DG.

US inequality rises

America dock workers have taken militant unofficial action in a battle with port operator EGT Development over union busting.

The company recently opened a $200 million grain terminal in Longview, Washington, which it sought to run with non-union labour despite a contract requirement to do so. Following initial protests by the International Longshore Workers’ Union (ILWU), EGT signed a recognition agreement with a different union. Every other West Coast grain terminal is staffed by ILWU members, making EGT’s actions a direct attack on the union which ILWU activists say is merely a precursor to EGT going non-union altogether.

On Thursday 8 September, workers stormed the Longview terminal and sabotaged the transport of scalp grain supplies, leading to a violent confrontation with police who used clubs and pepper spray on the workers and made 19 arrests.

The battle has been ongoing since July and has seen workers at several ports take wildcat action, including sit-downs on railroad tracks to block train movements. No scalp grain has moved since July and ILWU members have continued to protest despite a court restraining order intended to keep them away from Longview.

There were bolstered by flying pickets from Seattle, which helped dockers get their jobs to travel to Longview in order to support the action.

• More from Labor Notes at tinyurl.com/usadockers

Dockers block scalp trains

Israel’s protesters eject racists

Veteran Israeli socialist Richard Keller spoke to Solidarity.

Many people in the Israeli protest movement, including many key organisers, are left-wing on the Palestinian issue. But the movement as a whole is very far from uniting the whole of society around peace in the occupied territories, because it is divided along class lines.

There is, however, one side of the protest which is more hopeful.

The occupation is a major limiting factor, but in terms of Israeli politics it is very, very significant.

The real leader of the Israeli Labour Party will be decided on Wednesday 21 September. In the first round, it was almost a tie between Shelly Yachmovich and Amir Peretz. Both are broadly social democratic, but if I was going to make a choice I would prefer Peretz as he is more open about the question of peace. Yachmovich seems to think the left has too much to do with the Palestinians, and that it destroys the unity of the movement.

On the other hand, Peretz was previously Labour Party leader and he blew the immense hope he had generated by joining Olmert’s neo-liberal government as defence minister and overseeing the brutal occupation of the lower classes.

There is also an ethnic element in the election, since Peretz is a Moroccan Jew from a working-class background, and very open and proud about this.

Last week there were no big demonstrations, but there was a “round table” mobilisation with thousands of people all over the country sitting down to discuss.

The government feels under pressure. The commission it set up is about to report, and it is likely to propose some concessions though nowhere near what the movement has demanded.

One sign of the impact of the movement is the debate over Israel’s PA. The Minister of Defence has vigorously opposed any reduction in military spending, and said that new spending should come from higher taxes on the rich and businesses.

The Minister of Finance has opposed this on the familiar grounds that it will lead to an exodus of millionaires and the collapse of the economy.

There is no longer an automatic acceptance of a free market economy. What changes are happening, and eventually we will win, however, remains to be seen.

ABBAS

There will be big Palestinian demonstrations on Friday, to coincide with Abu Mazen’s [Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas] speech at the UN.

The Palestinian Authority wants big rallies in all the cities, but wants these to stay in the city centres, and go nowhere near confronting the IDF or the set. Whether they will do that remains to be seen.

The Minister of Finance has opposed this on the familiar grounds that it will lead to an exodus of millionaires and the collapse of the economy.

There will be big protests on the ground and in a demonstration.

Many civil society organisations in Palestine are not taking a position either way, which I think reflect a general unhappiness but not having a clear alternative.

Regardless of what happens at the UN, it is a symbol of the Palestinian leadership’s newfound willingness to confront the US. Over the years it has become more and more obvious that the US is not an honest broker, that Israel is always in the room, and that it is not neutral.

We should look at the precedent of the Second Intifada [the Palestinian uprising which began in 2000]. Essentially it was brutally repelled by the Israeli military.

Palestinians tried to hold non-violent protests, but when the IDF reacted with violence, the situation spiraled out of control.

This time the PA is very keen to avoid violence — and the IDF says it is too. They have perfected their use of tear gas, foul-smelling water that can be used on protesters, so that it can be thrown back at the police.

I think there’s probably an element of truth in the claim that Israel wants to avoid violence, but that doesn’t mean they won’t use violence in the event.

Palestinian activists are quite divided over the UN bid. It was realised it would mean the realisation of the UN bid — which it will — status at the UN will not change the facts on the ground and is a distraction.

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Labour: fight the cuts!

Katy Clark, Labour MP for North Ayrshire and Arran, spoke to Solidar-
ity at the run-up to the Labour Party conference, which opens in Liver-
pool on 25 September.

The Labour Party has had 70,000 new mem-
ers since May 2010, and this takes individuals quite a
long time to get through the structures and gain
influence, especially in today’s Labour Party.

I know a number of people who joined the Labour Party last year in a
surge of enthusiasm, but it’s quite difficult for
new members to become delegates to confer-
ce. In fact, I suspect new members haven’t re-
ally got that involved.

The danger is that the surge of enthusiasm
dissipates. The Labour Party is always been very
good in welcoming new members. Often they
find bureaucratic obsta-
cles and a lack of political discussion.

It varies tremendously, of course. If you’re
lucky and you meet some good people first off, then it
works out well. If you’re not, luck is missing, and
you are alienated and active.

The Labour Party has got to give some rev-
olutionary anger about the
government. The Labour Party is
always been very important. It’s the
process where people aren’t listening to, then
there’s a lot of anger about that.

Delegates and Labour Party members have got to
make their voices heard, and not be
bounced into things with-
out discussion. A lot more
discussion is needed, for
example, about the pro-
posal to abolish Local
Government Committees.

The rule changes pro-
posed in Scotland are
quite dramatic.

I would hope that the
detailed constitutional changes are put out for
further debate, rather
than being forced through at short notice.

The most important thing
about the rule changes is not the
detail of them, but how they’re
being forced through, or
may be forced through.

Some of the proposed
rule changes may be posi-
tive, but they won’t be
what determines the po-
itical outcome.

That, in the end, is
to those who hold
leadership positions.

• More on Labour con-
ference:

- bit.ly/30jum

The greed
for profit

By Dave Kirk

The four workers killed at Gleision Colliery in the Swansea Valley worked at a small “drift” mine, one of very few left in Wales, where it appeared blasting at the mine caused catastrophic flooding and a roof fall, trapping those working nearest the coal face.

Most of us thought this kind of story was in the British past. It is not, and it is one of our jobs as socialists and trade union-
ists to remind people of the toll of injuries and death in workplaces today. 171 workers died in workplace accidents in the period from May 2010 to April 2011. The figure was up on the previous year.

On average, every hour of every day someone in Britain dies of “occupa-
tional”-related cancer.

Most of these deaths go unreported by all but the local press. We prefer stories about health and safety “gone mad”.

The government has set out to attack health and safety regulations. David Cameron’s party went after “health and safety culture” as one of the causes of the riots over the summer.

Lord Young’s report recom-
mented reducing im-
positions by the Health and Safety
Executive, so a commission to look at re-
ducing regulation on busi-
ness. This commission is
due to report soon.

The attack on legal aid will severely hamper workers’ attempts to seek legal redress for their bosses’ negligence and indiffer-
ence.

Profit has always been more important to the capital-
ism system than the lives and
well-being of workers.

The history of our move-
ment, from the struggle for the 10 hour Act and then for an eight hour day in the
nineteenth century is also the
history of the fight for the right to work which was being maimed, killed or
having our long-term health destroyed.

We must make the unions and the Labour Party fight to defend
those victories and to ex-
tend them. That is the way to ensure the ob-
scenity of work is avoidably due to profit actually becomes history.

Set up strike committees for 30 November

By Ira Berkovic

Unions have set 30 No-
Vember as the date for
another one-day strike
against pension cuts.

The teaching unions
NUT, ATL, and UCU, and
the civil service union PCS,
have still-valid mandates
for action from ballots ear-
lier this year.

Unions such as Unison,
CMB, the Fire Brigade,
Union, and teachers’ union
NASUWT are now ballot-
ing. It is important that the
ballots be for discontinuing action (rather than for a sin-
gle day’s strike), and ac-
tivists should demand that union members date for a
further strike note rather
than waiting until after the
November action.

Workers must also start
putting in place structures through which grassroots
union members can take
control of the dispute and provide a counterweight to
any attempts by the likes of
union leader Dave Prentis
to slow down, derail or sell
out the campaign.

VOTE

Local strike committees of all unions balloting for action in November
should be set up imme-
diately to discuss plans for the
day.

This should include or-
ganising effective picketing
and political assemblies
(rather than mere rallies
with a litany of bureaucratic
speeches), where strikers can
discuss and vote on strategies for the dispute.

Shop stewards should build workplace meetings at every level possible to
keep union members in-
formed, involved and confi-
dent about walking out on
30 November.

While defending existing pension rights must be the immediate aim of the
strikes, strike committees and strikers’ assemblies should also begin to discuss
and formulate a positive programme for our own
radical reform to win fair
pensions for all, including
private-sector workers, peo-
ple dependent on the state
pension, and new public-
sector workers, who are
worst off because of deals
made by the unions in 2005-
7.

Strike strategies must be
developed that can apply
maximum pressure to gov-
ernment and public sector
employers, including
rolling and selective action
and actions-short-of-strikes
(such as work-to-rules) in
between strikes. Unions
should organise strike levies and hardship funds
to support action by strate-
gically-selected groups of
workers.

Union members must
also insist that their leaders
demand a return to the
board-negotiations on the
pensions reform rather than
negotiating on each
scheme (local government, health, civil service)
separately within a fixed
overall framework of in-
creases in retirement age,
higher employee contri-
butions, worse accrual rates, and
slower inflation-up-
gradation of pensions (CPI
rather than RPI) with
draws scheme-by-scheme nego-
tiations push unions to
beg for concessions for
some groups of members at
the expense of others, and
make the unions suscepti-
ble to divide-and-rule tac-
tics from government.

If the Coalition offers some con-
cessions to workers in one
scheme, it may be hard to
mobilise those workers to
continue striking against
cuts to someone else’s pen-
sion.

The November strike
must be seen as just one
flashpoint in an ongoing
battle that continues until
14 2011.

If the details and strategy of a wider pro-
gramme of action are not
considered until after 30
November, the government
will easily be able to ride
out a campaign of incita-
tional, disconnected single
days of strikes. Public sec-
tors must link up with
campaigns in private-
sector companies, such as
the Fujitsu IT workers’
battle and the fight against
job losses at the boring
train manufacturing plant
in Derby.

The government have
planned their assault on our
class with military precision
and are on a war-footing against organised labour.

We must respond in kind.

By building workplace
meetings and rank-and-
file strike committees to
put pressure on union
leaders to live up to their
fighting rhetoric and to
situate 30 November within a sustained cam-
paign of action, we can
go on to discuss.

TUC discusses
fightback

Maria Exall, TUC General Council, reports on the 2011 TUC congress on
the pensions package.

See: bit.ly/0zjum

NEWS
Civil servants: can’t live with them, can’t live without them

Press Watch
By Pat Murphy

The conventional wisdom in journalism is that short snappy headlines work best. That bias is particularly pronounced in this job of combining reporting and strident comment in memorable headlines has become an special art form. Think “Gotcha” or “Up Yours Delors”. Sometimes, however, this bias collapses under the weight and volume of prejudice it is expected to carry. So it was with the Sunday Express on 18 September.

Sunday is the day for salacious stories of promiscuous footballers and soap stars, drunken royals or, occasionally, corrupt politicians. Express readers may, therefore, have found the following headline difficult to digest:

**"White-collar thieves: 93,000 civil servants were given off work for drunken sports day hours after voting for a mass strike."**

The story was exemplar of all that the Express-world thinks is wrong with modern Britain and that must have pushed aside any doubts about the clumsy indulgence of the article’s heading. The Express usually likes to shout at browsing shoppers so that even those who fail to pay for their money are at least aware of the current public enemy number one and their latest crime. Here that could not be done in less than 25 words.

First you have civil servants — that’s bureaucrats, pen-pushers, generals of the civil wars. Express readers clearly needed reminding that this pathetic breed is paid for by tax-payers. But what have the pen-pushers been up to?

It turns out that they were allocated a day away from their normal duties to attend an event at Loughborough University at which they took part in various sports and activities. It was one of those team-building exercises as beloved of modern management as they are dined by most workers.

It isn’t made clear by the Express but almost certainly the workers had no choice but to attend. But the Express says “civil servants were given extra paid holiday to attend an alcohol-fuelled sports event just hours after their unions voted for a mass strike”. A working day when you are told to be away from your normal duties becomes “an extra paid holiday”. And as it is a residential event at a college with a bar it is “alcohol-fuelled”.

Most bizarrely of all according to the Express it is a particular insult to the rest of us (taxpayers) as it took place after a completely unconnected event — the decision to make public sector unions to take strike action to defend their pensions.

A close reading of the story suggests that the paper had invested so much time and effort into “uncovering” it that they just had to run it very prominently and make of it as much outrage as they could. They had at least six blown-up pictures of civil servants in various states of fancy dress (house, Marilyn Monroe, a nun) or sporting prowess (a shot-putter, a runner). They clearly had a reporter as well as a photographer at the entire event as the timetable of events and conversations were relayed to us in tedious detail. And no activity, however exceptional and normal, is an activity that would not be made to look more important and bizarre in the eyes of the observer. The music was “dazzling”, damaged men “gushing” and when they sang it was “uproariously”. All in all it appears to have been a couple of days which did the country great damage.

Or did it? The Express can’t seem to make its mind up. They seem to say that these people would have been better off at work doing their normal job. Much was made of the notoriety of BHS for allowing “hundreds of thousands of people” to have “lost track of 100,000 asylum seekers over the last five years” and Revenue and Customs staff who have a “huge backlog of 18 million unresolved income tax cases”.

In the same article a different conclusion is hinted at. One (predictably) anonymous civil servant is quoted as saying “with all the new civil servants off work you would imagine the country would grind to a halt but it hasn’t, so some might say why do we need them?”

So are civil servants a huge waste of money, a vast government-run job creation scheme funded out of the hard-earned wages of the poor old taxpayer? Or are they vital public servants who keep our society running smoothly? Do we want more of them working longer? Would we not notice if they weren’t there? The Express, despite its almost most religious certainty on most issues, can’t make its mind up in the end.

They can be certain of only two things; civil servants are not serious workers and the Labour Party — Labourite Paul Field and Alan Sugar, and strikes are a very bad thing. Even if the work done by the strikers is a waste of time, Israeli law affords differences in privileges for Jewish and non-Jewish citizens of the state — in matters of access to land, family unification and acquisition of citizenship. Israel’s nationality law prevents Palestinian citizens of Israel who are married to Palestinians from the occupied territories from living together in Israel. Israel defines itself to be the state of the Jewish people, rather than the state of its actual citizens (one-fifth of whom are Palestinian Arabs).

**Socialism means freedom**

Dave Osler’s column in Solidarity 216 discussed whether Marxism is in favour of "liberty" as it has been expressed in the bourgeois-political discourse of "rights". I agree with Dave’s conclusion that we are, as Marx put it, "beyond" and "freer".

The excrement heaped on socialism by decades of Stalinism buried the fundamental idea that socialism was about liberation and freedom, the working class winning for itself more time, more liberty and a sense. The crude equation of socialism merely with nationalised property or a government planning to fund this fundamentally libertarian core of socialist politics.

As the government and the state heap ever more responsibilities onto working people and throw an increasing number of them into jail, mass unemployment is a growing problem. TheRoyal Morar, London

**Rail union leader speaks up for Israeli links**

At this year's Trades Union Congress (12-14 September in London), an amendment on the Israel/Palestine conflict from the Public and Commercial Services Union (PCS) called for TUC affiliates to “review their bilateral relations with all Israeli organisations”.

Alex Goldfarb, PCS vice-chair on transport and maritime and Transport workers’ union (RMT), spoke against the amendment, arguing that British unions should strengthen, not weaken, their relations with workers’ organisations in Israel. Gordon said:

“My union has welcomed the Workers’ Advice Centre (Ma’an) to our conference in previous years. We’ve supported class-struggle that is going on now in workers in Israel against their bosses. We supported struggles by Jewish Israeli workers, by Palestinian workers and by Arab-Israeli workers who are fighting for peace and workers’ rights. We are concerned about the implication of a review of bilateral relations with all Israeli organisations. Our view is that we should be supporting the Israeli peace movement, and we should be supporting the Israeli trade union movement where it stands up for Palestinian national rights. That is the best route to peace in the Middle East.”

The PCS’s motion is part of a growing trend in the British labour movement that sees all Israelis and Israeli organisations, including the mainstream Israeli unions, as irredeemably implicated in the crimes of the Israeli state. While it is true that the main Israeli union federation, the Histadrut, has long been supportive of the Israeli occupation of Palestine and, until the 1950s, promoted Zionist imperialism, it is an organisation which remains founded on the explicit rejection of policies that essentially subjugate and reduce the rights of the Palestinian population. The union is opposed to the Histadrut mean dismissing the 650,000 Israeli workers and for 100,000 asylum seekers over the last five years” and Rev."The Left"...
The measures that would resolve the crisis in the interests of the working class and at the expense of the wealthy, and not the other way round, are: expropriation of Europe’s banks and high finance, and their conversion into a Europe-wide public service for banking, mortgages, and pensions, under democratic control; taking over of the south European debt “gap” by EU and eurozone institutions; a tax on speculative speculation on property across Europe; establishment of social and welfare minima across Europe, levelling up to the best levels achieved in different countries.

Unite the labour movements of Europe in a battle for a workers’ united Europe!
University staff under attack

By Lucy Clement

As the full implications of the government’s plans for universities become clear, university staff are gearing up for a national fight over pensions, and local disputes over job cuts.

In the pre-92 universities, members of the Universities and Colleges Union (UCU) have voted for both strikes (38% in favour) and action short (77% in favour) in a row over cuts to pension provision. From 1 October their existing final salary scheme will be closed to new members and replaced by a much inferior career average scheme; members of the old scheme will see contributions rise and benefits fall. Post-92 staff, covered by the ‘Teachers’ Pension Scheme, have a five ballot for action to continue.

The increase in pension contributions will more than swallow up the miserly £150 flat-rate pay rise offered this year. (As we go to press, the result of the consultative ballot on that offer is about to be announced.) Whether the White Paper plans can be stopped is closely related to the outcome of the current UCU dispute over pensions. If university staff put up a serious fight there, that will make a real difference to the prospects of defunding the White Paper proposals.

One of the implications of the White Paper is a serious threat to national pay bargaining. For some time it has been allowed to fray around the edges: different institutions start employees at higher or lower points on the scale, and professors have never been covered anyway. The White Paper — with its two-tier system of “AAB” and “£7,5k” institutions — will only make that worse.

The White Paper plans can be stopped is closely related to the outcome of the current UCU dispute over pensions. If university staff put up a serious fight there, that will make a real difference to the prospects of defunding the White Paper proposals.

The full fall-out of the White Paper reforms is, as yet, hard to predict. It seems likely that as well as the obvious impact on teaching, there will be university mergers and take-overs, increased outsourcing of “back-office” functions, and more collaboration between institutions. The White Paper says nothing about postgraduate study or research; there is great uncertainty about what will happen in those fields.

The bottom line is that a greater role for markets in the university system will inevitably mean less job security, a diversion of resources away from teaching and into management, and a model of education where opportunities for study are determined by what is “financially viable” rather than by intellectual curiosity.

Ed Maltby examines the government’s Higher Education White Paper

According to the White Paper, private firms will be given degree-awarding powers, allowing them to teach and award higher-education degrees at Further Education colleges.

The market will be opened to allow multinational corpora- tions to take over UK universities or set up their own institutions.

In general it will be easier for a wider range of types of organisa- tion to gain degree-awarding powers. This promises to create a large market in cheap arts and humanities degrees (around £5,000 a year) taught by Edexcel at FE colleges.

Next stop down that road: universities like the so-called Harvard University in the USA, run by McDonald’s. (The US original cannot yet quite award degrees, but it has got its course certificates accepted by other colleges for degree purposes.)

Private universities, such as the University of Buckingham, will be helped by the Student Loans Scheme being extended to their students.

CREATION OF A MARKET

The overall goal of the government is the extension of market forces in education. In this sense it is coherent with the general policy of the last few governments.

The government aims to limit the fees charged by universi- ties and to allow private providers to compete.

The government will limit the number of applicants that a university can recruit if it charges too much. The government will allow private providers to compete.

Universities that can’t recruit sufficient AAB students in addi- tion to their basic quota will need to dip into the “lower-scoring applicants’ pool”. To qualify to recruit more sub-AAB students than their basic allocation, these universities will have to charge £7,500 fees or lower.

Top-tier universities will have more trouble recruiting enough AAB students at £9,000 fees.

Bottom-tier universities will have to lower their fees in order to be able to recruit more students from the lower pool, and so to cut costs, drive down wages, cut unprofitable courses, and focus on a particular market niche: the quality of educa- tion, teaching resources and contact time will suffer.

Mid-range universities will attempt to invest their way into the elite group. In an attempt to attract AAB students, they will undertake large “prestige” investments, hire star lecturers, construct impressive buildings, launch marketing campaigns and so on. We can expect a leap forward in the marketisation of universities.

The government will manufacture penury in education, forcing “lower pool” universities to charge no more than £7,500 per year per student, while removing central govern- ment teaching grants for all the arts and humanities by 2015. This will almost certainly force some universities to close, es- pecially in London, as the funding plans have no London weighting.

The White Paper indicates that there will be no government support to bail-out failing colleges. Bankruptcy may mean ei- ther shutting down the institution or having it bought out.

Universities will probably also lose access to more and more parts of their operations. The selling off of student accommoda- tion, already widespread, is likely to continue, and that model will be applied to other services too.

The government’s proposals include making it easier for universities to change their corporate structures to a “legal form of their choosing”.

“Changing to a charitable company limited by guarantee could be a first step for public universities to move towards becoming for-profit companies.” [researchresearch.com]

Universities have tax benefits from their current legal status as charities, but the new market regime may create new incen-
DEBT AND STUDENT LOANS

In accounting terms, the government can say it has made a big saving by shifting the burden of higher education funding from central grants and onto student fees covered by loans.

However, the volume of credit that the government will extend to students via the Student Loans Company (SLC) is set to increase dramatically. Loans to cover tuition fees will triple; and student loans will be extended to cover part-time students and students attending private institutions not previously covered by the SLC.

The credit burden for the government is made worse by the fact that student debt cannot be recovered in the same way or at the same pace as commercial debt. There is a limit on the rate of interest it can charge — although the government plans to change this — and it expects to recover only 70p out of every £1 it lends.

The Government predicts the debt will reach £190 billion by 2041 — roughly the same size as the current welfare budget.

Government plans to minimise the level of debt include:

- Encouraging HE institutions to offer fee waivers instead of bursaries to poorer students. Instead of having a bursary to support themselves through their studies, these students will owe less money to the government, but take on a greater level of private, commercial debt for living expenses.
- Giving itself the option of changing the level of interest it charges on student debt. The government has inserted a clause into the 2011 Education Bill, likely to be voted on in October, which will allow it to re-set the level of interest on student debt by administrative decree and without consulting Parliament. The end objective is probably to reorganise student debt so that the prospective stream of repayments becomes good enough to be sold to a bank.

We should respond: “Free education — tax the rich!” Education should be funded centrally, through progressive taxation. We should demand a living grant for all students. We should also oppose attempts to change the interest rate on the debt and to replace bursaries with fee waivers.

STRUGGLE AND DEMANDS

The intensification of marketisation will mean attacks on the rights of workers. Universities will try to systematically screw more profit out of their staff. This means shifting the burden of teaching onto low-paid postgraduates on insecure contracts.

South Bank University and Imperial College have already dropped out of the national pay-bargaining scheme. As the sector becomes more divided and diverse this scheme is likely to come under greater attack.

Universities will start cutting courses which are seen as unprofitable, and staff who are too strappy or surplus to the new market requirements will be sacked.

Students should link up with campus trade unions and start a campaign in advance against the market-style chaos that will accompany the scramble of universities to position themselves for the market.

University managements will start investing money in ludicrous building and marketing programmes and other bells and whistles and threatening the institution with ruin if the gamble doesn’t pay off.

Students’ Unions and activist groups should read through their universities’ financial reports and scrutinise the minutes of Board of Governors meetings to keep an eye out for such developments. The detail of university finances will become highly political. For example, an increased debt-to-income ratio is a warning sign that the university may be considering radical reforms such as becoming publicly limited in order to attract cash and investment fast. Activists will have to read such documents as the UCU’s “Insider’s Guide to University Finance” in order to learn how to anticipate management’s plans.

Students should oppose market-oriented advertising splurges and prestige projects, instead demanding that teaching, research, resources, staff pay and student care are seen to before all other considerations.

There will likely be a proliferation of local struggles, on a range of issues linked to the overall White Paper marketisation drive. It is necessary for these struggles to be linked up into a national political drive to force the government to withdraw the White Paper. Otherwise the gains and victories of these local campaigns will be limited.

The national, democratic political co-ordination offered by the National Campaign Against Fees and Cuts is important for local student activist groups and student unions.

- NCAFC: http://anticuts.com/
### Scottish students occupy

About 100 students from across Scotland occupied an Edinburgh University lecture theatre over the weekend of 16-17 September. Before ending their occupation, they agreed to disrupt management at Scottish universities with an ongoing campaign of rolling 36 hour occupations across Scotland.

Edinburgh is one of two institutions set to fix fees at the maximum advised rate in the UK for students from England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Robin Parker, NUS Scotland President in supporting the occupation said, “It’s absolutely no surprise that Edinburgh University students are incredibly angry about their university’s decision to cash in on English, Welsh and Northern Irish students. We stand shoulder to shoulder with those opposing £3,000 fees for students from the rest of the UK.”

Because the University tried to block food from entering the occupation, supplies, including a large donation of curry from the Edinburgh Central Mosque, had to be hoisted into the building with ropes.

Naomi Renton, a University of Edinburgh second year Linguistics student said, “We aim as much as possible to disrupt management.

### Partial victory in ESOL fight

By an ESOL teacher

A funding guidance document published on the Skills Funding Agency website in August quietly revealed a u-turn on cuts to ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) classes.

The government has (belatedly) backtrackerd on proposed changes to funding eligibility, which would have seen as many as 70% of current ESOL students unable to access classes.

This is a victory that we should celebrate and communicate to our students, colleagues and supporters who have been campaigning hard since the start of the year through Action for ESOL.

We must also acknowledge that this is not a full victory. In July colleges made pre-emptive cuts and teachers lost jobs. Some teachers are being re-employed, but on worse contracts, and others can’t get their jobs back because they took voluntary redundancy. Provision and some jobs have been lost and there are industrial lessons we need to learn from this.

Furthermore the situation at the start of term is chaotic. The change has led to an increase in admin as new courses are created, putting increased pressure on administrative staff.

A full picture of enrolment is yet to emerge but there are many colleges where numbers are down. There may be created, putting increased pressure on administrative staff.

A full picture of enrolment is yet to emerge but there are many colleges where numbers are down. There may be many students who do not know about the u-turn and don’t think they are entitled to any funding. Other colleges, who scrapped ESOL and created functional skills courses, are unable to change this, meaning that students are not able to get the English language lessons they need and teachers will be working doubly hard to try and squeeze some English teaching into courses designed to do something else.

Finally, the victory is only guaranteed for one year. There is no long term commitment to the provision of English classes for migrants, so we’re ready to continue campaigning.

The Action for ESOL campaign held a well attended national meeting on Saturday 16 September. There were interesting political and pedagogical discussions, a manifesto for ESOL was collectively drafted and working groups set up. We’re not starting again at the beginning of our fight for free and improved ESOL provision for all, and better working conditions for teachers.

As the whole of education faces further attack the ESOL campaigners seek to be part of the broader fight for free education.

Action for ESOL

### Resist state clampdown

By Padraig O’Brien

Three supporters of the National Campaign Against Fees and Cuts (NCAFC) were arrested on 19 September following a banner-drop at Liberal Democrat conference in Birmingham.

In a move plainly intended to intimidate anti-cuts protestors, the three were charged with a minor road traffic offense (causing danger to road traffic users — although the prosecution admitted that no damage or injury resulted from the three’s actions).

Two were bailed, on condition that they stay away central Birmingham until their trial, and a third has been remanded in custody until 26 September, when a second hearing will decide whether or not he will be bailed until his trial in late October.

The student and workers’ movements must protest against the imprisonment of an activist for peacefully hanging a banner.

Claire Lister, a witness, said “The banner drop was very peaceful and no disruption or danger was caused to motorists. When the police arrived at the bridge the men left immediately and went willingly into custody.”

Michael Chessum, of the NCAFC and National Union of Students National Executive Committee, said, “It is appalling that students taking part in peaceful protest are being victimised in this way. It is ludicrous that anyone would be remanded in custody for a minor traffic charge. Whether it’s kettling, intimidation, or tactical charges — it is becoming increasingly difficult for students and young people to say that they have a meaningful right to protest.”

The treatment of the NCAFC supporters is consistent with a worrying turn towards more hardline treatment by the courts.

Sentences handed down by magistrates to those convicted of offences during the August riots were often twice as long as those convicted of similar offences in 2010. Crown court sentences averaged 18 months, as opposed to under a year for similar crimes last year.

The statistics, which come from the Ministry of Justice, also show that a higher proportion of those convicted of riot offences had no previous history within the criminal justice system than did those convicted for similar offences in 2010, casting doubt over justice secretary Ken Clarke’s claim that the riots were the work of “existing criminals on the rampage.” An investigation by the Financial Times this month found that over 33% of those arrested in relation to rioting in London lived in the poorest fifth of the city.

Students and other activists should pay attention to this trend and step up campaigns against police and legal crackdowns.
In 1936 Oswald Mosley’s British Union of Fascists turned its attention to East London, and there built the only truly mass base fascism ever built in Britain. The East End branches of the BUF became, by spring 1936, the centre of BUF activity. Why? What was it about East London that focused BUF attention? The Jews of the East End provided the fascists with a unique target. East End Jews were concentrated in small areas: in 1929, 43 percent of the national Jewish population were concentrated in Stepney and Mile End. Anti-Jewish agitation, loud or muted, active or latent, had existed in the East End since the time of the first large Jewish settlements.

It was against this background that, in September 1936, Mosley announced that the BUF would march through the East End on 4 October. It was to be the biggest show of fascist strength ever in the strongest area. It could have developed into a program.

On 4 October, the thousands strong Blackshirt march was to begin in Royal Mint Street, pass along through Gardiners Corner (now the top of Whitechapel Road) and on to four separate street meetings in Shoreditch, Limehouse, Bow and Bermondsey Green. It never even got going! The march was stopped dead. As many as a quarter of a million people, East Londoners and anti-fascists, barred the way to the Blackshirt thugs. An army of furniture, paving stones and a lorry. Tramdrivers abandoned their vehicles in the middle of the road. The Metropolitan Police Commissioner, Sir Philip Game, had drafted in a third of the London police. East End 6,000 policemen, the whole of the mounted division, and had a primitive helicopter, a gyroscope, flying overhead.

Despite these forces, which made numerous charges at the anti-fascist crowd, breaking many heads, no thoroughway for the fascists could be cut.

DIVERSION

The Police Commissioner then proposed a diversion through the dock area around Wapping, and along Cable Street. There a virtual war was fought between the police and the defenders of the anti-fascist barricades. British, Irish and some Somali dockers fought the Blackshirts tooth and nail. The best that could be done was to construct furniture, paving stones and a lorry.

Pretending to retreat, the anti-fascists lured the police forwards, and took up positions behind secondary barricades while from the upstairs tenements on either side of the street other anti-fascists threw bricks, stones, bottles, marbles for horses’ hooves, and boiling water down on the bewildered police.

While the outnumbered and powerless fascist heroes waited in vain for a path to be cleared for them, the police faced chaos. Rare in British street battles, stray pedestrians were taken prisoner by the barricaders. For those moments the rule of the British state in East London was suspended. At about 5pm, after a three-hour battle, the Commissioner said to Sir Oswald Mosley that he would not longer be held responsible for the safety of the fascists. Speaking as one knight to another, he said: “If you go ahead sir, it will be a shambles!” The beaten police cancelled the fascist march, and sent them off to the fiasco’s embankment. They did not exist.

Cable Street coincided with the siege of Madrid during the Spanish Civil War. The anti-fascists, overwhelmingly working class, gave the slogan “No Pasaran” (“They Shall Not Pass”) all over East London, linking Mosley’s march with Franco’s rebellion in Spain. They took the workers of Madrid as their model and inspiration.

A Stalinist myth surrounds the Communist Party’s role in the battle of Cable Street. The CP had a grand anti-fascist reputation, but an increasingly spurious one.

Up to 1934 the CP had been in the throes of the Stalinist policy known as the “third period”, when, so they said, revolutions were just about to happen everywhere. This was revolutionary capitulation in Germany led the CP to try to play into Hitler’s hands, but it had meant that the British CP was willing to throw itself physically into fighting fascism, perceived as the last-ditch defenders of a dying capitalism.

By 1936 this view had changed dramatically. Stalin was pursuing a policy of creating a “democratic anti-fascist front” of the USSR with the capitalist powers France and Britain against the German Nazis; the British CP, like CPs everywhere, was now advocating a Popular Front. This meant allying with non-working-class organisations opposed to German fascism, and in Britain by the late 1930s this would include “progressive forces”. The British CP was trying to gain respectability, appealing mainstream politicians in the hope of allying with them. As a result, the CP did not always oppose Mosley militantly, because they feared that continued militancy would make it impossible to ally with “respectable” politicians.

By 1936 they were shying away from physical confrontations. Abandoning class politics, they more and more attempted to compete with the fascists as British nationalists, and even as protectors of religious freedom against “compulsory idolatry” in Germany. They were loudest in denouncing blanket police bans on the fascists, and counterposed campaigning for bans to organising on the streets. That was their initial approach to what became the battle of Cable Street.

L O S T C O N T R O L

The CP only threw their considerable weight behind the East End anti-fascist mobilisation when it was clear three days before that they had lost control of their own local members and sympathisers, who would follow the independent Labour Party’s call on workers to block the route of the fascist march.

At first they told workers not to oppose the fascists in the East End, and instructed CP members to go to the Embankment and then Trafalgar Square instead. Joe Jacobs, a local CP branch secretary who later broke with the party, was instructed by his superiors four days before the fascist march not to get involved and instead to build for a demonstration, miles away in Trafalgar Square, in support of the Spanish Republic against the Spanish fascists.

His instructions were clear: “Keep order, no excuse for the Government to say we, like the BUF, are hooligans. If Mosley decides to march, let him. Our biggest trouble tonight will be to keep order and discipline.”

In his posthumously published autobiography, Jacobs explains the reason for the eventual change of line very clearly: “The pressure from the people of Stepney, who went ahead with their own efforts to oppose Mosley, left no doubt in our minds that the CP would be finished in Stepney if this was allowed to go through as planned by our London leaders.”

The Labour Party and the trade union movement were against the fascists, but they also opposed direct action — physical force — to stop their activities. Like the Liberals, they instructed people to rely on the police to prevent disorder. But unlike the establishment the labour movement feared destruction at the hands of the Nazis, not just discrimination. Even those who opposed direct action helped arouse the working class. The Labour Party and TUC research department published many pamphlets and leaflets which compared the BUF to Italian and German Fascism. In this climate, the militant “actionist” opponents of fascism gained support for physical opposition, even from normally non-militant Labour Party and trade union members. The Independent Labour Party, not the CP, was the most consistently confrontational anti-fascist force in the East End and beyond.

The ILP had been one of the early constituent organisations of the Labour Party. It had split from the Labour Party in 1932, moving to the left. By 1936, the ILP, though it was still a hybrid political formation, in which bits of reformism, pacifism, and revolutionary socialism were confusingly mixed, was much nearer to being a communist party in the old sense of the word than the official “Communist Party”...
When workers stopped the fascists

Continued from page 9

was. Some of its members were Trotskyists. The ILP broke up fascist meetings by way of massing opposition, heckling and fighting. They barred fascist processes, organised pickets, and defended Jewish areas - particularly in the East End - from attack.

Intransigence and betrayal in the General Strike

Tim Thomas continues a series of articles on the British Film Institute’s Ken Loach retrospective with a review of Days of Hope, his TV series looking at class struggle in early 20th century Britain.

Jim Allen, author of the reprehensible play Perdition, wrote the script for this 4-part TV production. Allen’s interests, intensely focused on the class struggle, are about intransigence and betrayal in real historical circumstances - here, the history of working-class organisation from the General Strike to the Shaposhnikovs, and their link and widening circles of friends, acquaintances, colleagues and lieutors. Soldiers, workers, women and students had to fight at least two centuries. All copies, drafts, notes and materials were taken from him.

Grossman was born in the Ukraine in 1905 to a family of well-off assimilated Jews. He studied chemistry at Moscow State University and worked as a mining safety inspector and as a chemistry teacher in the industrial region of the Donbas. His first novel was set here. Twice Grossman’s writing would be nominated for the Stalin Prize, to be vetoed both times. Grossman, the Soviet leader suggested, had Menshevik sympathies.

Neither Party member nor out-and-out dissident, Grossman’s early novels and short-stories are said to be convenient Socialist Realist. I think his experience of total war war had given Grossman a writer’s vision of the reality of the life of his times and in presenting words in what he found. Seventy years ago this month, Leningrad was besieged by Hitler’s forces. Kiev had fallen, and the Ukrainian Jews were being massacred, Grossman’s mother among them. Turned down for a commissar’s commission he wrote a column for the Red Star, the Red Army newspaper. He spent over a thousand days at the front-line, moving as it moved from Lenningrad to Moscow to Stalino. Physically exhausted, and lucky, Grossman talked with everyone he could. He noted the sight of young faces, the texture, taste, and smell. The usual smell of the front-line, he wrote, is a cross between a morgue and a blacksmith’s. He noted incompetence, desertion and collaboration, as well as extraordinary valour and tenacity. He wrote about the eradication of the ‘Jewish’ character of the Ukrainians. Telling Treblinka - first in any language, was spiked by Red Star, but published in Yiddish and quoted at the Nuremberg Trials. On the day Berlin capitulated, Grossman stood among the detritus in Hitler’s office in the Reich Chancellery.

Life and death follows the fortunes of an extended family.

The life and fate of October 1917

On Sunday 18 September BBC Radio 4 began a week-long dramatisation of Soviet writer Vasily Grossman’s Life and Fate, set during the battle of Stalin - grad. Grossman wrote his panoramic text in the 1950s and presented his publication during Khurshchev’s cultural thaw in 1960.

He was told by the Politburo his novel was so dangerous that it could not be published for at least two centuries. All copies, drafts, notes and materials were taken from him.

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Jim Allen, author of the reprehensible play Perdition, wrote the script for this 4-part TV production. Allen’s interests, intensely focused on the class struggle, are about intransigence and betrayal in real historical circumstances - here, the history of working-class organisation from the General Strike to the Shaposhnikovs, and their link and widening circles of friends, acquaintances, colleagues and lieutors. Soldiers, workers, women and students had to fight at least two centuries. All copies, drafts, notes and materials were taken from him.

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Five of the eight construction contractors threatening to withdraw from the union-negotiated agreement governing worker pay and conditions have issued the Unison union with legal notices of their intention to introduce new contracts from 7 December. The move by the contractors, who include industry giants Balfour Beatty, represents a significant raising of the stakes in what could become a major construction industry dispute. Previous to the union’s awareness, it had intimated that they would wait until March 2012 before withdrawing from collective agreements. Workers have upped the pace of their campaign considerably. A 150-strong demonstration locked the entrance to the prestigious Olympic stadium site in London on Wednesday 14 September, and workers elsewhere in the UK, including at Balfour Beatty’s Papework Mill site in Manchester, also demonstrated. Further actions are planned at the Farrington Crossrail site in London for 6:30am on Wednesday 23 September and Manchester’s BBC Media City at the same time. The rank-and-file paper Site Worker, which has been integral to the coordination of the union’s work, has emphasised the desperate need for action by workers working on sites operated by the 14 Site Worker’s Alan Keys said “the 8 have declared war, and 5 of them are going for a route by issuing the 7 De- cember deadline notices. Rank-and-file workers on these sites must be supported by downing tools and walking off sites. Electricians and pipe-fit- ters at the Balfour Beauty- operated Grangemouth site took wildcat strike action on the morning of Wednes- day 21 September and ac- tivists are now calling for construction unions to bal- lot for and organise official- strike actions. Keys said: “Unite needs to put under pressure to negotiate a proper deal for us. A bal- lot for strike action of all electricians, pipe-fitters and others would make that more likely.” Site Worker is calling on Unite members to ballot national organiser Stuart Fegans said: “We can’t afford to sit back and wait or it will be too late and we will be on £10.30 an hour [the current across-the- board rate is £16.25/hour]. Workers forese the issue and spread these actions across the country.” Keys called for “block- ades [and] occupations until an agreement has been reached.”

Doncaster, Birmingham, Shropshire

Workers at Doncaster, Birmingom, Shropshire and Barnet unions councils will strike on 22 and 23 September as local government bosses seek to impose further cuts.

Doncstation Unison secre- tary Jim Board said the council wanted a “blood bath.” “The average mid- grade worker would lose £3,000 — while being ex- pected to work for longer hours. Someoone would have to strike for a month for it to cost them anything like that.” The council’s plans also include imposing changes which striking workers felt would cause “serious damage to the council’s reputation.” Workers with strikes at ex- tremely short notice, just a day after the council’s announcement of its latest cull of cuts, strike will demand “long-term efforts to buy back the council’s reputation.” “We’ve got days to get out and push for maximum participation.” We’re confi- dent we can do that. And we’re going to continue making the links with the national campaign over pensions”, said Board.

Birmingham city council workers will also strike against a “nightmare contract” that could see low-wage workers earning less than £15,000 lose more than £1,000. Other staff members stand to lose up to £6,000 from their annual salary. “Unions need to campaign to change the council’s decision to force through changes to hours and working conditions.”

According to Unison secretary Caroline Johnson, “we have to be more determined in what we do again. And we do not want to have to be taken for granted.”

The Doncstation and Birmingham strikes are part of a coordinated action across the country as part of the national council’s campaign against a swingeing pay cut. It is the council that has put the cuts.”

The social workers’ action is supported by Unis on members and the Social Care Action Network.

Rank-and-file workerson Southampton construction have also upped the pace of their campaign.

By Vicki Morris
Barnet Unison held a successful dispute against out- sourcing on 13 September.

They balloted 313 mem- bers in the services first for privatisation as part of the “One Barnet Pro- gramme” which will see the bulk of council services de- livered by private sector companies. Most current council employees could be transferred to private sector employment.

The strike was due to last half a day from 1pm, but Tory-run Barnet council locked out the striking workers from the morning, making it a day’s strike and dockers’ day. As they tied up work, they got taken in the service, due to strike — parking, planning and regulatory services, revenues and ben-

Barnet workers defy bullying

Barnet Unison wins re-recognition

By Padraig O’Brien
Public sector workers’ unions have won re- recognition at Plymouth City Council after bosses unilaterally broke off talks with the union fol- lowing its refusal to sign a new agreement covering pay and conditions.

After the union’s legal team advised them that ac- cepting the new terms would complicate their role relating to equal pay legisla- tion, because of the way in which workers were affected, Plymouth Unison found itself frozen out of fur- ther negotiations and thrown out of their branch offices. GMB and Unite, the other two unions organis- ing at the council, sub- sequently withdrew from the agreement and a new council’s Unison’s recognition was launched.

Afer a series of meetings, lunchtime rallies and other protests, including a mem- bers’ meeting which voted in principle to move to indus- trial action if re-recog- nition was not secured, the council caved on Wednes- day 14 September and agreed to re-recognition.

They also agreed to make changes to the terms of the new contracts and, following a Union branch meeting, the agreement was signed by all three unions.

Claiming and con- fusion over the deal itself, council bosses are claiming that the changes pertain only to the implementation date of pay cuts, while union sources have intimated that the scale of the cuts themselves had been redacted.

While the successful camp- aign to win re-recognition for Unison is undoubtedly a victory, council workers are now facing worse terms and conditions. GMB or- ganiser Stuart Fegans said “this agreement will have a significant financial impact on members and we will continue to work hard with the council to mitigate that impact as far as possible.”

Unison branch secre- tary Darren Turner com- mented: “We have had lots of support, cuts, and will continue to fight wher- ever they are planned.”

By Stewart Ward
Social care workers at Southampton council voted Tuesday 6 October to take further strike action on Thursday 6 October as workers’ war against the Tory council’s pay cuts ap- proaches its fifth month.

Other groups of workers will meet to discuss joining October’s strike.

Since June, workers across council departments have been involved in a bat- tle with the council as it seeks to im- pose across-the-board pay cuts of between 2 and 3.5%. The workers’ unions, Unite and Unison, have made a creative and ambitious dispute, employing stra- tegic tactics designed to max- imise impact and pressure on council bosses while re- ducing the financial burden on members. Strike tactics have been formulated and de- signed upon the members’ meetings rather than due to proposals from above by un- accountable union officials.

Some on the left have criticised the union for fail- ing to mobilise its members across the council for one “big bang” day of all-out strike action, but the dispute’s longevity and the workers’ clear determination to continue fighting are a testament to the useful- ness of rolling and selective worker action in terms of keeping workers mobilised over a long period of time.

When not striking, unions have kept up pres- sure with actions short of strike, and some 2,400 workers are continuing a work-to-rule, ongoing since last November.

The sustained action has already forced council bosses to delay the negotiat- ing table for the first time in over a month. Unions said “some progress” had been made in talks which re- sumed on Tuesday 13 Sep- tember. According to Unison, bosses have agreed to look at shifting the bur- den of pay cuts onto em- ployees and reducing the impact for lower-paid staff.

The social workers’ vote for further strikes gives unions extra pres- sure to apply to ongoing negotiations.

• More info: soton-unison-office.org.uk
By Ira Berkovic

The declaration by the Trade Union Congress next November will be the next “day of action” in the campaign against government pension cuts is enormously positive and must now be a key focus of working-class people. It is an opportunity to demonstrate to a generation move as a visible social force that workers have real power to act in our own interests.

It is also positive and important that senior union officials are talking up the need for sustained action. On 20 July, Unite regional organiser Ian Woodland, whose members at Southampton city council are due to enter a fifth month of battle against Tory cuts, told Solidarity: “We want the wider movement to observe and learn from our experience. It’s very clear to us that the one day strike is no more.”

It appears the pressure of experience may have told trade unionists that 2011 pensions strike was a return of the public service union Unison. Dave Prentis was full of bombast about levels industrial action exceeding the 1984-5 miners’ strike. Then he kept Unison out of the 30 June strike, and, until recently, was signalling to Unison members that any ballots were unlikely before the end of the year. Local activists and committees should start organising now for 30 November and after, not waiting for the leaders.

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By Rebecca Galbraith

What is Pre-Departure Accommodation? It’s a detention centre. The 2.5m palisade fence with electronic gates surrounding the site and the 24-hour security leaves you in no doubt that this is a prison. A prison for migrants. Cassar’s detention centre gives lie to the Government’s claim that children won’t be detained. It’s run by G4S and Barnardo’s and opened this month.

Who benefits from the centre? The landowner who rents the land to the UKBA.

G4S, the security firm responsible for the death of Jimmy Mubenga, whose chief executive, Nick Buckles, is paid almost £3,000 a day. And Barnardo’s, Britain’s biggest children’s charity.

Barnardo’s have given a veneer of “responsibility” to the project, by agreeing to provide “key welfare, safeguarding and support services for families”. No doubt receiving a healthy sum from the government for this service.

According to Helen Crawley of the Migrant Rights Network, the Government has effectively created spaces for up to 4,445 children to be detained every year in Cassar’s Detention Centre. The Pre-departure Accommodation will not be the only place where children will be detained. The family unit at Tinsley House immigration removal centre is currently undergoing a £1 million refurbishment in order to accommodate 38 beds and up to eight families.

Activists from No Borders and No One Is Illegal thought it was important to mark this disgraceful occasion by taking a trip into deepest Sussex to protest against the “moral outrage” (Clegg’s words) and “scandal” (Cameron’s words) of child detention the week the centre opened.

Child detention is inhumane. As is all detention, along with the racist immigration controls which divide us and profit the bosses. These controls have not existed forever and are there to enforce the power of the ruling class.

The border regime should be opposed, resisted and punched through by every working-class activist and trade unionist. Papers or no papers, we’re all human.