



Wake Up

www.workersliberty.org • wakeup.bulletin@gmail.com

AFTER THE GREEK ELECTION: ONLY EUROPEAN SOLIDARITY WILL DEFEAT AUSTERITY

The election of Syriza in the Greek election of 2015 has given hope to those fighting austerity across Europe. Can the new Greek Government stand firm against EU pressure and help build a European wide fight against austerity?

A columnist in the Financial Times has advised the Greek government to stand firm, use imaginative financial techniques to get round blackmail from the EU leaders, and to stop payments on debt to bodies like the ECB.

Wolfgang Münchau wrote: "My advice to [Greek finance minister] Yanis Varoufakis, would be to ignore the exasperated looks and veiled threats and stand firm. He is a member of the first government in the eurozone with a democratic mandate to stand up to an utterly dysfunctional policy regime that has proved economically illiterate and politically unsustainable.

The Greek government, he wrote, "should stick with their position not to accept a continuation of the existing financial support programme." In so doing they would no longer be bound by "self-defeating policy targets such as the contractual requirement to run a primary budget surplus of 3 per cent of gross domestic product. For a country with mass unemployment, such a target is insane. It would, of course, be better for this nonsense to stop while Greece remains in the euro zone. But the most important thing is that it has to stop. The "most sensible" evasive option for the Greek government, wrote Münchau, is the introduction of a kind of parallel currency consisting of government-backed IOUs. He cites other conservative economists as recommending this option.

"Once this system is in place", notes Münchau, "you can default on the official European creditors. What can they do? They cannot eject you from the eurozone. They have no legal means to do so. They cannot kick you out of the EU either".

Münchau concludes that Greece should seek to avoid an exit from the euro zone. But: "The worse-case scenario would be for the Greek government to blink first, and accept defeat... If Syriza were to be co-opted into the policy consensus, the only political party left to oppose these policies would be Golden Dawn, a neo-Nazi party".

"Serious negotiations with the new Greek government must get under way, without any... Europe must not persist in pursuing, at the expense of the Greek population, a policy that has been decisively rejected by the majority of Greek voters. "The political upheaval in Greece must be turned into an opportunity to establish a democratic and social Europe!"

WAKEFIELD COUNCIL - £38 MILLION MORE IN CUTS. WE NEED TO FIGHT FOR OUR JOBS AND SERVICES!

The budget is due to be passed for 2015/16 on 3rd of March. Further massive cuts and a continuation of The Government led austerity agenda will continue Up to 1500 jobs could be lost, over £30m will be cut to adult social services, £5 million will be cut from children's services with plans to reduce the level of maintenance in parks and open spaces. 1000 jobs have already been lost since 2011.

Council Leader Peter Box stated that 'What we are seeing, in my opinion, is a sustained attack on local authorities from this government' and "Our funding has been cut so severely that the decisions we have to make now will have an impact on people's lives... Changes will be widespread from how often we can cut the grass in our parks to changes in services for children and adults."

Wake Up agrees with Cllr Box on his first point but ask why are the choosing to pass on Tory cuts? It is still the Labour Council's decision to pass a budget that will inflict misery on the people who live in the district including the 1000 plus workers whose jobs, pay and conditions are at risk. The council should set a needs budget to protect services and jobs.

Councils are asset rich and Wakefield should continue to borrow whilst joining up with other Labour Councils, public sector unions and Labour MPs to reject 'austerity lite' and fight to protect and extend the services we need.

**£2M FROM PROPERTY &
BUILDING SERVICES**

**£20M FROM ADULT
SERVICES**

**£98K FROM RISE IN
BULKY ITEM
COLLECTION
CHARGES**

**£2.5M
FROM EARLY YEARS
SERVICES**

**£200K FROM
WOOLLEY HALL
CLOSURE**

**£125K
FROM
PARKS &
OPEN
SPACES**

**£383K
FROM ENDING SPORT
DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES**

VULNERABLE ADULTS ON THE MOVE?

Queens House is due to close and staff and services will be transferred to Wakefield One.

This announcement was not cascaded to staff through line managers with Unison reps present where staff would be able to ask questions but by an email from Chief Executive Joanne Roney where she stated that the closure would make savings of £60k a year as the council would end its lease on the building.

The move could well have a negative impact on the services provided and could lead to job losses. Queens House employs its own cleaning, security and reception staff. Should the move take place these roles would no longer be required at Wakefield One..

Potentially vulnerable and stigmatised service users would have to access homelessness assistance in a public location and be forced to discuss very sensitive and personal information in a more open setting.

There has been no proper consultation., again demonstrating the complete contempt and disregard that Senior Officers have for the staff who work on the frontline, it is vital that Unison and workers fight any potential job losses or changes to conditions.

NO TO PRIVATISATION - KEEP OUR SERVICES IN HOUSE

Wakefield Council is currently tendering out Premises Support (Building Services) to the private sector. this change will lead to a significant reduction in workers terms and conditions and severe job losses. Three companies have now been short-listed Carillion, Cofely and Inter-serve.

Cllr Stokes said *"I am very pleased with the quality submissions received."* **Wake Up** is not! Staff within the department have commented that they are worried about the potential for job losses and the lack of consultation regarding the proposed privatisation.

We need to recruit these members to Unison and wage a fight for the service against an attack on terms and conditions.

The workers here provide an essential role, they provide support and carry out maintenance and building work at all council sites including Schools, Residential Homes and Council Offices.

All three of the shortlisted companies have a reputation for exploiting low paid workers wherever they organise. We need to step up the fight to keep our services away from the private sector vultures.

WAKEFIELD MINUS ONE

It is always nice to get out of the cold once you're the office, but if you work on the 1st floor on Wakefield One you might as well stay outside when the wind picks up!

Wake Up has been told workers on the 1st floor have to wear coats, gloves and even blankets at their desks. The Council's 'flagship building,' may provide a one stop shop for residents which is a good thing, but it is clearly letting workers down.

Despite numerous appeals to managers and facilities the problem continues everytime the wind picks up. Closing a set of doors does not equal a comfortable working environment. Whilst it may not be unsafe its demoralising, distracting and no one should have to put up with it!

Union representation on the Building User Group now gives us more of a chance to make our case but whilst it will start to heat up we can't wait till next winter before a permanent solution is found.

SAVE OUR CHILDREN'S CENTRES

The Council is going ahead with the proposed closure of centres across the district. Parents families and staff are rightly angry.

The centres provide essential support to children and families. The centralisation of centres is meant to reduce cost. This will lead to children and families having to travel far further to access these services with the most vulnerable and poorest faced with increased travel costs.

Many children could now be put at greater levels of risk as this much needed support is removed.

Pressure from parents has already seen several centres saved. We need to maintain the campaign!

SUPPORT THE SOCIALIST CAMPAIGN FOR A LABOUR VICTORY. SIGN THE STATEMENT

The Socialist Campaign for a Labour Victory is campaigning to elect a Labour government in May 2015. We don't want to "hold our noses" and just vote Labour as a lesser evil. We want to combine campaigning for a Labour government with clear working-class demands, to boost working-class confidence, and strengthen and transform our labour movement so it is fit to fight.

Check out the website for the full statement, updated news, blogs and proposals for campaigning **socialistcampaignforalabourvictory.wordpress.com**

Add your or your organisation's name to this statement:
socialistcampaign@gmail.com

UNISON AGM

The branch held its AGM on 26 February unfortunately we did not reach quoracy so we ran through the agenda without ratification. The branch continues to recruit members but we must ensure we are building a branch prepared to fight.

No motions were submitted in time and there was very little discussion of the way forward following the sell out on pay and the massive attacks we will face following the cuts budget on 3rd March.

We need to build a healthy democratic organisation, with more people involved, become stewards and fight for our rights. If you aren't in Unison JOIN!

What is Wake Up?

Wake Up is a rank-and-file socialist bulletin, published at least monthly, written by Council workers, for Council workers. It is published by the socialist group Workers' Liberty, but is produced with the help of submissions and stories from supporters. For more information or to find out how you can help or submit a story email

wakeup.bulletin@gmail.com