

The Birmingham Worker



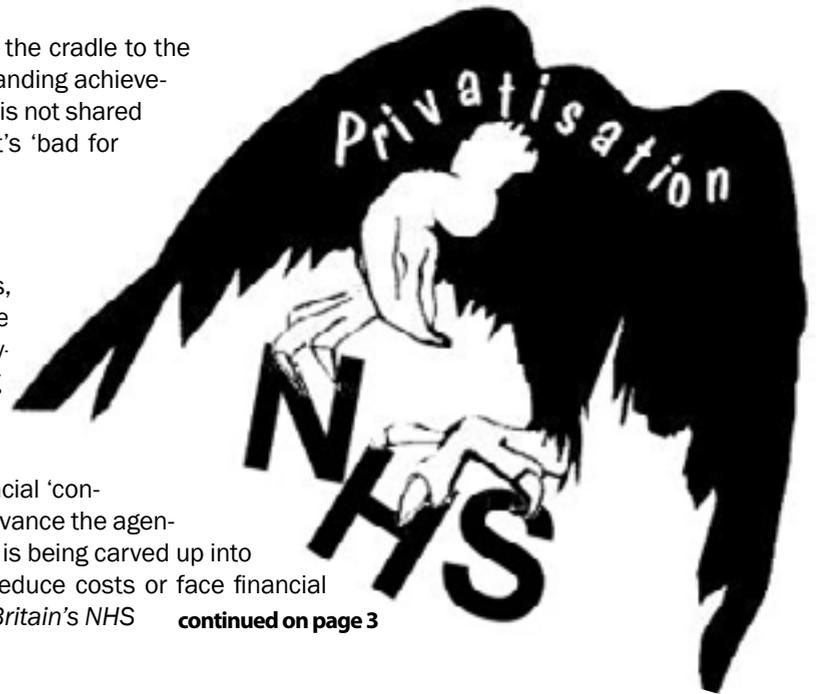
Save Our NHS From Capitalist Greed!

Britain's National Health Service provides excellent care to all, from the cradle to the grave, free at the point of use, regardless of ability to pay. This outstanding achievement is lauded and appreciated by workers, but our love for the NHS is not shared by our rulers, because, by denying opportunities for profit-taking, it's 'bad for business'.

Engineering a crisis

Following decades of sustained attack by successive governments, cracks in the system are now showing. The Health and Social Care Act 2011 aimed to finally dismember the NHS by removing the government's statutory responsibility to provide care, and by compelling small groups of fund-holding GPs (Clinical Commissioning Groups) to seek bids from private companies.

Nationally-planned provision has been jettisoned. CCGs rely on financial 'consultants' to plan service provision – and these firms unashamedly advance the agenda of private health and the insurance industry. Meanwhile, the NHS is being carved up into isolated business units (foundation trusts) that are compelled to reduce costs or face financial penalties. Yet, despite all the cuts they've made, *every single one of Britain's NHS* **continued on page 3**



ROBBERY!

The idle rich, the billionaire barons of finance capital who avoid paying taxes and even pay less tax than YOU, make huge profits "playing the markets" in the City of London whilst workers in Birmingham suffer humiliating levels of **UNEMPLOYMENT.**

The pay gap between the bosses of Britain's biggest companies and their employees has **TRIPLED**, with the average FTSE 100 boss in 2013 getting total pay **143** times **MORE** than that of the average worker employed by their firms. Workers at companies like BHS know only too well that there is no "trickle down" of wealth under capitalism - quite the opposite!

The number of unemployed in **Birmingham** is rising. It is officially 12% in Ladywood, 10% in Hodge Hill and 9% in Sparkbrook whilst the true figure is likely to be higher.

Whilst these **CAPITALISTS** are making a criminal amount of profit and avoiding paying tax, they lobby the government to force the unemployed to work for **FREE** in their shops and factories! It is being called "workfare" but it is far from fair - it is slave labour, work without dignity and it is a stain on our society.

SOCIALISM puts people before profit. **SOCIALISM** will abolish unemployment and guarantee everyone work.

Child Poverty in Birmingham young victims of the "free" market

The capitalist economic crisis punishes the working class and working class children hardest. The Birmingham Mail has reported that levels of poverty in Birmingham are higher than nearly every other British city with a catastrophic impact upon children.

100,000 children in our city live in poverty, a higher percentage than any other British city, except Manchester. A total of 37 per cent of Birmingham's children live in poverty. In inner-city areas, the situation is far worse - 47 per cent live in poverty. In inner-city Ladywood, Hockley, Aston and Nechells the figure is highest. It is especially troubling as Birmingham is a young city with almost half its 1.1 million residents aged under 30.

Birmingham's parents earn less; one in five workers in Birmingham

earn less than the Living Wage of £8.25 per hour. Our city is overwhelmingly working class and has a proud history of innovation and industry. Fat cat financiers and capitalists care only about maximising their profits, and since the economic crisis began billions of pounds in capital have been sent abroad to open sweat shops in Asia and Africa, when the money left, so did the jobs.

Immigration not to blame, workers haven't come here and taken all the jobs - in actual fact **CAPITALISTS** moved their cash, their factories and jobs to countries where they could make more profit; India, Bangladesh, eastern Europe and elsewhere. Workers of all countries must unite to kill off their common enemy - monopoly capitalism.

The figures here are based upon work carried out by the Childrens Society. Further info is available on their website <http://www.childrensociety.org.uk/>

As the rich get richer..

Our society is a capitalist society. A tiny number of people own all the wealth, while the rest of us have to work for them to make ends meet. In capitalist society, it's okay for the rich to rob the poor – to give us bad wages and poor housing, to take away our education and benefits – but it's illegal for the poor to take from the rich.

There are two main classes in capitalist society: the working class and the ruling class. The working-class have to find a job in order to have a life. If we don't get into education or work we don't have a future. We don't have houses we can rent to other people, we don't own factories or shops, and we can't invest our millions on the stock exchange in London like the wealthy sons and daughters of the rich.

It doesn't matter what Alan Sugar says on The Apprentice, it's not possible for us to become multimillionaires – we just don't have those opportunities. Our 'choice' is more likely to be between a life of poverty and a life of crime. But there is an alternative to this system; there is a change we can make. **The change we need to make is called socialism.**

Not only is the capitalist system inherently unfair, it has a catastrophic flaw built into it: economic crisis. Capitalism runs on profits – essentially, nothing gets made or done unless someone can make a profit out of it. So here's the problem: the only way to keep making profits is to sell more and more goods to the masses, but the best way to keep production costs down is to employ fewer people on lower wages.

It doesn't take a genius to see that if people's wages are reduced and the numbers employed go down, there will be fewer people who are actually able to buy the stuff that the capitalists are trying to sell. And since capitalism went global, we now have a global economy, so the crisis isn't just here, it's everywhere. Vast masses of people are being pushed out of work because they can't afford to buy all the stuff they made and the capitalists are trying to sell back to them!

This leads to a vicious downward spiral, where people aren't buying enough goods, so capitalists go out of business, leading to more job losses and fewer people able to buy – which leads to more job losses, and so on. In this crazy situation, food and essential goods of all kinds sit uselessly in warehouses or are destroyed, while the people who need them starve and go without.

Celebrate the achievements of socialism

Under the guidance offered by the teachings of Marx, Lenin and their disciples, socialism liberated fully one third of the world's territory in the 20th century.

We believe that these teachings, and the experiences of a quarter of humanity who have known the benefit of living in socialist socie-

ties free from capitalist exploitation and oppression, hold the key to achieving a secure, meaningful, cultured and productive life for all.

We support socialist countries, both those that are newly emerging and those that were able to weather the counter-revolutionary tide of 1989.

Educate ourselves and our fellow workers

No movement in human history, despite all temporary reverses, has known such rapid gains and successes as those of the communist (third) international, and brought to so much of humanity such a peaceful, secure, cultured and enlightened existence.

The lies and slanders that surround our most glorious achievements are a deliberate attempt on the part of the capitalist ruling class to demoralise workers and keep them ignorant and enslaved. The ruling classes and their governments are terrified of workers acquiring this knowledge, for they fear it will lead to mass revolutionary action, the only weapon capable of bringing an end to their tiny clique's tyrannical orgy of destruction and self-enrichment.

Oppose all attempts to make workers pay for the capitalist crisis

This includes all attempts to destroy the remnants of the social wage (social services like the NHS, council housing, free state education, pensions and care for the elderly, library facilities, etc) through cuts on the one hand, and accelerating privatisation on the other.

Only a socialist society can guarantee social justice and prevent gains such as these from being stolen back from future generations. As long as capitalism exists, such gains as the workers achieve will only ever be temporary, taken back whenever the needs of the bankers (finance capitalists) require it, and workers are too disorganised to stop them.

Divide and Rule

It's obvious that the capitalist system isn't in the interests of the vast majority of people, so how has it survived for so long?

On top of having a huge state machinery of coercion – police, courts, prisons etc – to keep people in line, the capitalists also control the media. From school textbooks to BBC and Sky news to the Sun and the Guardian, their ideas are pushed onto us every day: a way of looking at the world that teaches us that this system is inevitable and logical, and that cuts and wars are necessary to defend 'our way of life', as opposed to protecting their profit margins.

One of the biggest lies we are told is that the problems we face – lack of jobs, cuts in public services, no access to education or housing and so on – are caused by immigrants putting a 'strain' on Britain's resources. But long before there were large numbers of immigrants in Britain there was mass unemployment and

capitalist crisis!

Labour's slogan "British Jobs for British Workers" and UKIP's broken promises to fund the NHS with Brexit pretend to be addressing workers' problems, but by reinforcing the lies about immigration being the root cause of those problems, what they actually do is help the capitalists stay in power and keep the working class divided and weak.

Communists are opposed to colonial wars

It seems that the ruling class gets all the benefits from war, while workers get nothing but injury or death. Films, TV and games glorify war and make it seem exciting, but the reality is different.

When you join the army you don't get to learn a skill or do any of the really exciting stuff like fly a helicopter – that's too important for the likes of us. All those cushy jobs go to the rich kids like Prince William, who are automatically put in charge. They're the 'officers' whilst we (the 'squaddies') are expected just to take orders and do all the fighting – and dying.

They make us fight our foreign working-class brothers and sisters so that they and their ruling circles can plunder and steal all the wealth and natural resources (like oil) of the countries we attack. But why should we do their dirty work for them? Why should we steal and plunder other people's wealth? If the rich want to steal the oil, let the prime minister and the bankers send their children to get killed while we stay here and look after our own interests.

In fact, if you think about it, we have more in common with the working-class youth of foreign countries than we do with the rich youth in Britain. When our foreign brothers resist imperialism they are teaching us by example. We need to unite with our class brothers regardless of their nationality in order to defeat our common enemy – the ruling class – and build a happy, prosperous and cultured existence, free from endless poverty and war. That future society is called Socialism, it is the lower phase of the classless society that shall come to pass on earth, the Communist future of all mankind.



Save Our NHS! continued from front page

Trusts is now in financial deficit.

Britain's overall spending on health (8.5 per cent of national income) is well behind that of other developed countries. Payouts to pharmaceutical companies, equipment suppliers and PFI loan sharks far outstrip any 'increases' in funding. Less widely trumpeted by politicians are the £30bn 'Nicholson Challenge' cuts presently being applied – which are *on top* of the £20bn cuts already made in NHS budgets since 2010.

Widespread pay restraint and pay freezes threaten to make working in the NHS economically untenable. Bursaries allowing working-class nurses and midwives to train are to be scrapped, and junior doctors are threatened with unworkable hours and a 30 percent pay cut. This has led to the first strike action by British doctors in 40 years.

Despite the negative spin from the then Prime Minister David Cameron, Health Secretary Jeremy Hunt and the rest of their government, doctors received overwhelming support for this action, taken under the slogans 'Not Fair, Not Safe' and 'Save Our NHS!' The health secretary's call for 'seven-day working' is widely understood to be a fraud. The NHS is *already* a 24/7 service. Hunt's proposal – calling for more work for less pay by the same or fewer staff – is really a *cut* masquerading as 'service improvement'.

Capitalist v socialist medicine

MP Andrew Bridgen's denouncing of the NHS as 'Stalinist' (ie, people-centred) contains a grain of truth. *The NHS was in fact modelled on Soviet medicine*, since capitalism has no interest in caring for *all* workers. The model of *capitalist* medicine being enthusiastically pursued by our rulers is the US model: entirely privately-owned, it's the most expensive and inefficient in the world, costing \$6,719 per person per year while leaving 50+ million Americans uninsured and many millions more underinsured. For most of the capitalist world's inhabitants, repaying national debt to financiers is the top spending priority, and poverty and sickness are the natural lot of the working poor.

The *socialist* alternative can be seen today

in countries like Cuba, where publicly-owned, universal health care is delivered for just \$362 per person per year, and achieves population health statistics that rival and even surpass those of developed countries. The difference? *At no point in the Cuban system is there anybody who is driving up costs by making a profit.*

The Labour party claims credit for creating the NHS; in fact, it was part of the post-war consensus – a 'welfare' concession made by British capitalism due to the relative strength of the working class in 1945, when the Red Army and Soviet socialism had vanquished the most aggressive imperialist states and the soviet system had proved its superiority by providing rising living standards while workers elsewhere were enduring the miseries of the great depression.

With the USSR's collapse, however, capitalists no longer feel compelled to make concessions to British workers, who seldom now even dream of revolution.

How can we save our NHS?

We must demand:

1. The immediate scrapping of all PFI debt.
2. The scrapping of the 'internal market'. It is pushing privatisation, not 'efficiency'.
3. The scrapping of Foundation Trusts, CCGs etc, which act as businesses first and health providers second.
4. The reintroduction of integrated health planning, commissioning and provision on a national and regional level by the NHS.
5. An end to the private provision of health care. It doesn't 'add choice' or 'increase overall health funding'; it adds cost, and ultimately deprives the poor of health care.
6. An end to pay freezes and 'restraint' and to the push towards tearing up national employment contracts and frameworks.
7. The nationalisation of all drug and medical technology companies. It has long been the case that while public debt is social, profitable enterprises are in 'private' hands.

Save our NHS!

Poem: "Men of England" BY PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

Men of England, wherefore plough
For the lords who lay ye low?
Wherefore weave with toil and care
The rich robes your tyrants wear?

Wherefore feed and clothe and save
From the cradle to the grave
Those ungrateful drones who would
Drain your sweat—nay, drink your blood?

Wherefore, Bees of England, forge
Many a weapon, chain, and scourge,
That these stingless drones may spoil
The forced produce of your toil?

Have ye leisure, comfort, calm,
Shelter, food, love's gentle balm?
Or what is it ye buy so dear
With your pain and with your fear?

The seed ye sow, another reaps;
The wealth ye find, another keeps;
The robes ye weave, another wears;
The arms ye forge, another bears.

Sow seed—but let no tyrant reap:
Find wealth—let no imposter heap:
Weave robes—let not the idle wear:
Forge arms—in your defence to bear.

Shrink to your cellars, holes, and cells—
In hall ye deck another dwells.
Why shake the chains ye wrought? Ye see
The steel ye tempered glance on ye.

With plough and spade and hoe and loom
Trace your grave and build your tomb
And weave your winding-sheet—till fair
England be your Sepulchre.

Red Youth

Young workers, students and unemployed youth are urged to arm themselves with the theory of scientific socialism. The Youth members of the CPGB-ML publish news and activities regularly here:
www.redyouth.org

Birmingham City Council cuts hurt workers and public

The Labour-led Council continues to make plans for millions of pounds in cuts to public services, and the terms and conditions of employees. Overall:

£90 million in cuts - disastrous for the public and Council workers

Average bills up £46 - bad news for all the cities residents

Attacks on working hours, holiday and sick pay for workers - bad news for employees and their families, thousands of whom live and work in Birmingham

£3million in "efficiencies" in refuse collection - good news for the rats but catastrophic for a town overrun with vermin and in desperate need for increased spending on refuse and better pay and conditions for the bin men themselves.

All these cuts are blamed upon central government, and whilst Tory austerity needs fighting, so too do those who implement it locally. We must challenge the myth that Labour offers any alternative to Tory austerity. Just ask Council staff, you will find plenty of them at the Jobcentre, to tell you how Labour have slashed a workforce of 20,000 in half and plan to further reduce it to a meagre 7,000 by 2018.

Weekly Marxist-Leninist Study

The CPGB-ML currently run three discussion groups every week in Birmingham, on Mondays, Wednesdays and Thursdays, all from 7 - 9pm.

Classes, study circles, talks, lectures and debates are regularly organised in Birmingham and the West Midlands. If you'd like to be put on the mailing list to be kept up to date on these events email birmingham@cpgb-ml.org or fill in and return the slip at the bottom of this page or alternatively text "ML info" to 07756 766215 for more information.

Monthly advice for the unemployed

12-2pm

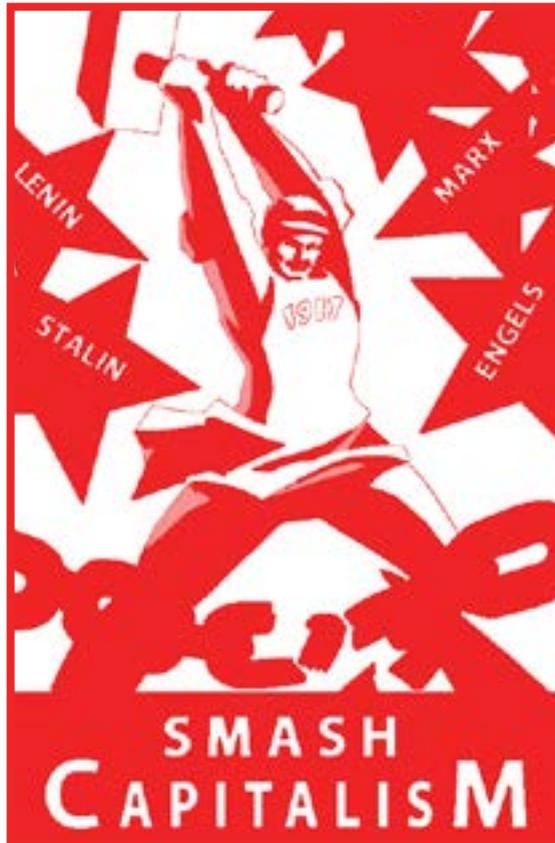
The Birmingham Claimants Union meets the first Thursday of every month at 274 Moseley Rd, Highgate, Birmingham, B12 OBS.

This is a place for the unemployed to get help and advice from fellow claimants. Anything from sanctions, workfare, council tax benefit charge and the bedroom tax and any worries you have while signing on.

Proletarian TV

Educational videos: news, working class history, philosophy, class politics, art, music and culture are all available at Proletarian TV, the official YouTube site for the CPGB-ML

www.youtube.com/user/ProletarianCPGBML



Read Online

For more articles, analysis, news, proletarian culture, leaflets and information about the CPGB-ML visit www.cpgb-ml.org

The "Internationale"

Song of the International Working Class

Arise ye workers from your slumbers
Arise ye prisoners of want
For reason in revolt now thunders
And at last ends the age of cant.
Now away with all your superstitions
Servile masses arise, arise
We'll change henceforth the old conditions
And spurn the dust to win the prize.

Refrain:

So comrades, come rally
And the last fight let us face
The Internationale unites the human race.

No more deluded by reaction
On tyrants only we'll make war
The soldiers too will take strike action
They'll break ranks and fight no more
And if those cannibals keep trying
To sacrifice us to their pride
They soon shall hear the bullets flying
We'll shoot the generals on our own side.

(Refrain)

No saviour from on high delivers
No faith have we in prince or peer
Our own right hand the chains must shiver

Chains of hatred, greed and fear
E'er the thieves will out with their booty

And to all give a happier lot.
Each at the forge must do their duty
And we'll strike while the iron is hot.

(Refrain)

About the CPGB-ML

An understanding of society (theory) and a way of uniting to change it (organisation) are the two things that we need to make a socialist revolution. Ordinary people in Britain have everything to gain by getting involved in this process sooner rather than later. This world isn't working for us and we deserve better!

Not only do we need to campaign against the bad conditions and lack of prospects for working-class people in Britain today, but

we need to work for a completely different type of society – one where people's needs decide everything.

So many problems face this world: environmental catastrophe, poverty, disease, racism and war. They'll never be solved while capitalism remains, but they could all be sorted if society was set up for the benefit of the majority rather than the private gain of a few billionaires.

Our party is different because we consist-

ently apply Marxist science to all areas of our work, and we're not scared to tell it how it is. We refuse to be intimidated by the barrage of lying propaganda that fills Britain's mainstream media. It is the capitalists' job to try to stop us from building a socialist society; it is our job to do it anyway!

Challenge your ideas – challenge their propaganda – seek the truth – serve the people – change the world!

Contact the CPGB-ML to find out more.

return this form to :: 274 Moseley Road, Birmingham, B12 OBS

Get in touch with local activists, find out more about the party and join the struggle!
Send us this form or email birmingham@cpgb-ml.org and we'll contact you:

Name _____ Phone _____

Address _____

Email _____