

Newsletter:
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Yeovil & District Trades Union Council

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A campaigning publication for local trade unionists: *Anti-Cuts special edition.*



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Anger grows against the Con-Dem cuts

Leading economist Professor David Blanchflower CBE has condemned the government's savage assault on the welfare state as "the greatest error seen in our lifetime". This former member of the Bank of England's rate-setting committee says "There's no example in history where such a thing as this has ever worked. It generates double-dip recession."

On Somerset County Council two Tory councillors, Anthony Trollope-Bellew and Stephen Martin-Scott, have resigned from the council's decision-making Cabinet in protest against the cuts.

Federation of Small Businesses chairman John Walker said: "As our research shows, small firms are at tipping point and lack the confidence to take on the 500,000 people that will be made redundant as a result of these cuts." Dr John Philpot, Chief Economic Advisor to the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development, said that the total of job losses was more likely to be 750,000 by 2015 "if the coalition sticks to its longer-term spending plans".

James Browne, analyst for the respected Institute for Fiscal Studies, said "overall, families with children seem to be the biggest losers" while Carl Emmerson, Acting Director of the same Institute, said that the spending review was "regressive" potentially impacting on the "those in the bottom half of the income distribution more than the top half."

Baroness Eaton, Tory head of the Local Government Association, admits that the cuts will leave councils "with no option but to inevitably, though reluctantly, cut front-line services people rely on."

TUC General Secretary Brendan Barber said "Even when the effects of benefit changes are taken out of the equation, cuts to services surgically target the poorest households and leave the rich relatively untouched".

Taunton & West Somerset Trades Union Council

**Defend Public Services
Campaign Against Cuts in Public
Sector Services and Jobs**

**March and Rally
6th November 2010**

Assemble French Weir, Taunton
at 10.30 am -
March through Taunton 11am
All Welcome!



Taunton Trades Union Council is supported by the above trade unions
Contact TTUC Secretary: Nigel Behan, mobile 07833552340

Directions to the above march and rally:

From the A303 take the A356 to Taunton.
Pass under the M5 motorway (junction 25).
At roundabout take 1st exit. Keep left onto
A38/Toneway.
At roundabout, take 2nd exit onto Priory Ave.
At roundabout, take 2nd exit onto Priory Bridge
Rd.
Turn left onto A3038/Station Rd.

For parking at Belvedere Rd, take 2nd turning
on right and then 1st left. If you have SatNav
the postcode is TA1 1HE.

For parking at Wood Street go to end of
Station Rd (to traffic lights), turn left into Bridge
Street, take 1st turning (at traffic lights) on right.
Continue past Lidl's on left and take right into
Wood Street.

**This is not just for public sector workers
– the cuts affect everyone!**

“96,000 potholes”

Tory Councillor resigns from the Cabinet

THE councillor in charge of Somerset’s roads slapped in his resignation in protest when the county council highways cuts were announced.

Cllr Anthony Trollope-Bellew said declining road surfaces due to lack of investment would “contribute to deaths and serious injuries”. The authority plans to halve its highways budget over three years.

Mr Trollope-Bellew, who held the transport and environment portfolio, said: “I find this unacceptable.

“There will be a saving of £35million, but in three years’ time there will be a backlog of £203million – that’s an independently attested figure.

“There will be 96,000 extra potholes, and whether whoever is in control in three years’ time will be able to put the roads back to the state they are in now, I very much doubt.

“The effect will be felt for years to come.”

“I believe we need to borrow as the lesser of two evils. If we don’t, the road surface will contribute to deaths and serious injuries.”

Curiously, two other Tory Councillors left the Cabinet at the same time – immediately after the meeting at which the Cabinet made its key decisions on cuts. They are Cllr Stephen Martin-Scott (responsible for Strategy and Communications) and Cllr William Wallace, responsible for community safety. The Leader, Ken Maddock, said that cuts were needed even in the membership of the Cabinet.

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“NHS hospitals going private in shake-up” says the Western Daily Press.

“Healthcare in the West is at the forefront of a radical shake-up which could see new private companies take over community hospitals and control thousands of NHS workers” – so says the Western Daily Press (28 October). Who said “the NHS is safe in our hands”?

The Alternative to Cuts

The government says cuts in jobs, public services, pay and pensions are essential to pay for the national deficit. But we are in debt because the banking sector collapsed sparking a recession. Bailing out the banks cost £1.3 trillion, and the recession hit tax revenues and increased unemployment. People working to provide public services did not cause this crisis and we should not have to pay for it.

Every year, £70 billion is lost to the economy through tax evasion and a further £25 billion through avoidance. Much of this could be recovered if HM Revenue and Customs employed more staff and the legal loopholes were closed. But the government is cutting the number of tax staff every year. By just collecting the tax that is rightfully ours, including from the wealthy and big business, we could avoid public service cuts.

The proposed Robin Hood Tax on financial speculation could also raise \$400 billion globally.

Invest in public services

Contrary to claims that public spending is out of control, spending in the UK is among the lowest in Europe. We need investment in public services to help pull the economy out of recession.

Creating jobs would boost employment and tax revenue. We could invest in renewable energy, create a million ‘climate’ jobs, high speed rail links, and build new housing for the 1.8 million families on council house waiting lists.

It is true that not all government money is spent wisely. Millions could be saved on consultants and from the waste of holding 230 separate pay negotiations in the civil and public services. Stopping the replacement of Trident nuclear weapons would save £78 billion over 30 years.

(The above article was provided by the Public, Commercial and Services union).

We say – Make the bankers pay!

West Country will be hit hard by cuts

The government's public spending guillotine will fall hard and fast in south-west England, local trade unionists have warned.

Following measures to strip back departments' budgets outlined in Chancellor George Osborne's comprehensive spending review, South West TUC said that because the area already receives less government spending it will bear the brunt of the savage cuts.

It argues that the south-west currently receives 9 per cent less government spending than the national average and it faces extra challenges because of its elderly population, rural setting, lack of affordable housing, low incomes and the large number of people in part-time jobs.

And with a 28 per cent cut in local authority funding, thousands of public-sector jobs down the pan and massive cuts to welfare spending, South West TUC argues that it will be felt all the more harshly in the region.

Its chairman John Drake (FBU) said: "**The government's cuts programme is a political choice, not an economic necessity. It is a programme which will make the south-west a more unequal region and lead to high unemployment and weak growth.**

"We think the emphasis should be on fair tax and policies that promote growth. There are positive choices a government committed to fairness could make."

Bristol-based vice president of public-sector union PCS John McNally warned that the unnecessary cuts would devastate jobs, services and communities in the south-west. "**The real driver is not economics, but ideology," he said. "This government of millionaires sees this as a once-in-a-generation opportunity to dismantle public services and the welfare state in a programme that is intended to squeeze every last drop of profit out of them."**

He called for organisation across workplaces and communities in the south-west to oppose the cuts.

Senior organiser for GMB South West Stuart Fegan added: "This CSR is the biggest economic gamble with our future that we've ever seen.

"The south-west is particularly reliant on public-sector employment and we also have some of the most economically deprived areas which rely on services provided by the public sector.

"This CSR is ideologically driven and not by necessity. It doesn't appear to be a fair budget but will hit the poorest hardest. We are up for hard times ahead."

Cuts being actively considered by Somerset County Council (according to the Somerset County Gazette and other sources:

Cuts to adult care: people who fund their own care at home but have it arranged by the council will no longer receive it at a subsidised price. There will be no funding for the Care at Home scheme and anyone using the service will be expected to pay for their own care. Service users will be offered residence in a care home if doing so works out cheaper than caring for them at home.

Somerset County Council has cut all its funding for theatres across Somerset.

There will be cuts to youth services and to certain subsidies for school buses. The council is considering cuts to its Special Educational Needs service. Public Libraries are under threat of closure or reduction in opening hours.

There will be cuts to road safety and maintenance and to subsidies for public transport.

Closing recycling centres and/or reducing their opening hours. Reducing animal welfare services. Stopping responding to customer complaints (to Trading Standards Officers) about businesses. Reducing number of Community Support Officers.

Yeovil TUC meets every third Wednesday of the month @ the address below. All union members welcome (though only delegates may vote). Meetings start @ 19:30hrs. Is your branch affiliated? Contact us for an application form.

Want copies of this newsletter? What's going on in your workplace? Do have any comments? Please contact us:

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Open wide for public service destruction

By Neil Clark, writing in the Morning Star

July 6 2010 marked the 50th anniversary of the death of the great Welsh socialist Aneurin Bevan, the father of the NHS. Just six days after the anniversary, Tory Health Minister Andrew Lansley announced radical government plans which, if carried out, will mark the end of Bevan's great, humane creation in all but name.

The extent of the reforms, which allow all hospitals to leave public ownership as well as scrapping primary health care trusts and the revenue cap on private patients, shocked many political observers. They were a clear breach of Lansley's own pre-election pledge not to introduce any major structural reform of the NHS.

But those who appreciate that the "progressive" Con-Dem government bats for capital and not for the ordinary British people would not have been surprised in the least. In January, the Daily Telegraph revealed that Lansley, then shadow health secretary, had received £21,000 for the running of his private office from private equity tycoon John Nash, chairman of Care UK and several other health companies.

In company documents Nash, who also gave the Tories £60,000 in September 2009, enthused over "recent policy statements by the opposition Conservative Party in the UK which have substantially strengthened their commitment to more open market reform to allow new providers of NHS services and for greater freedom for patients to choose their GP and hospital provider."

For privateers like Nash the trouble with Labour was that after the fall of Tony Blair the "open market reform" of the NHS was proceeding too slowly.

Now Nash and his fellow private healthcare providers have got the fast-track "reforming" government they want. But for pro-privatisation politicians like Lansley there remains a problem.

Despite the relentless propaganda of neo-liberal think tanks and NHS-bashing columns by right-wing writers such as Janet Daley, Simon Heffer and Richard Littlejohn, the NHS remains an enormously popular institution. It's loved not just by socialists and social democrats, but by Conservative voters too. If the government announced that the NHS was to be privatised en bloc there'd be a huge public outcry. So Lansley needs to present his reforms as "liberating" the NHS and achieve privatisation through the backdoor.

The government is clearly using the destruction of NHS dentistry as its model.

From the 1990s onwards, private dental chains started buying up NHS practices and converting them to private-only practices. The value of private dentistry grew from £289m in 1994-95 to just under £2bn in 2001-2. And costs for treatments soared - on average private treatments are four times more expensive than those offered on the NHS.

Millions of Britons, unable to pay the higher costs and without an NHS practice in their area, simply stopped going to the dentist altogether. As a result tooth decay, mouth cancer and other oral diseases rose sharply.

As I highlighted in the New Statesman in 2005, "A predominantly private dental service inevitably means a two-tier service: good mouths and gleaming smiles for the rich; disease, tooth decay and emergency extraction dentistry for the rest."

What we are heading for if the coalition gets its way is a predominantly private health service. As in dentistry, that will mean a two-tier service - good health and prompt treatment for the rich, longer waiting times and a second-class service for the rest.

How Nye Bevan must be turning in his grave.

Kiss Goodbye to Public Services



- The internal market costs the NHS up to £20 billion a year.*
- Debt is currently around 70% of GDP, between 1920 and 1960 government debt was never less than 100% of GDP.*
- The Treasury predicts its cuts will lead to at least 500,000 public sector jobs losses and between 600,000 and 700,000 jobs in the private sector being lost by the end of this parliament.*

*www.unitetheunion.org/dontbreakbritain