

Socialist Equality Party public meetings in Britain

For a mass movement against austerity! For a workers' government on socialist policies!

15 November 2010

The Socialist Equality Party is convening a series of public meetings, as the basis for instigating a politically independent mass social movement against austerity.

The public spending cuts of £83 billion being imposed by the Conservative/Liberal Democrat government will devastate the lives of millions. At stake are the destruction of social provisions and the onset of mass unemployment, poverty and homelessness on a scale not seen since the 1930s.

The claim that austerity is the price to be paid for returning Britain to “prosperity” is a fraud. The cuts are a direct result of the £1.5 trillion bailout of the UK banks that was carried out in the aftermath of the 2008 global financial crash—the equivalent of Britain’s entire annual GDP. In the United States alone, the total cost of the bank bailouts and various stimulus programmes is projected to reach at least \$12 trillion, i.e., more than the total cost to every nation of waging the Second World War.

This massive subvention to the super-rich is now to be paid for by a deliberate policy of mass job losses, aimed at driving down wages and conditions while further opening up essential services to private profit. With unemployment expected to reach at least 4 million, welfare payments are being slashed and measures set in place to force the unemployed into compulsory, unpaid work. A reserve army of labour is being created that will depress the wages of every worker in Britain.

The SEP rejects all efforts to divide working people against one another—the public sector versus the private sector, students versus the elderly, “British” workers against “foreign” labour, the employed against the unemployed or any other lie being spewed out by the government and the media. It is an attack on the entire

working class that will have catastrophic consequences for generations to come.

The only section of society that is “ring-fenced” from this assault are those responsible for the economic crisis in the first place. While the ruling elite insist “there is no money” for hospitals, education, pensions and welfare benefits, the bankers and billionaires continue to reap massive financial rewards for their parasitic and essentially criminal activities, many in institutions now almost entirely dependent on state subsidies.

At the same time, trillions continue to be squandered on the occupation of Afghanistan and Iraq and the stage is being set for further bloody, imperialist wars of intervention—with bellicose threats being issued against Iran, Somalia and the Yemen. Meanwhile, the attack on democratic rights continues, with new measures proposed to outlaw strikes.

Capitalism has failed and threatens to drag the whole of humanity down with it. In every country throughout the world, workers and youth face similar attacks to those in Britain. In France, Greece, Portugal and elsewhere the initial expressions of a mass movement of opposition can be seen. But in attempting to mount this fight back, workers and young people face the same problem. Nowhere do working people have a political party that represents their class interests against big business and the global financial elite. Instead, parties across the official political spectrum are united in their insistence that cuts must be made, and working people must pay.

No one should allow themselves to be fooled by claims that Labour is in any way different to the Conservative and Liberal Democrats. Labour was deservedly thrown out of office in May, but not before

it had bailed out its super-rich backers and not before it had drawn up plans for many of the cuts now going through.

As for the trade unions, while criticising aspects of Tory/Lib Dem policy, they have sabotaged every strike and agreed to wage cuts, pay freezes and the undermining of their own members' pensions, while refusing to mount any significant national protest in opposition. They are instruments for the suppression of the class struggle, nothing more and nothing less.

It is necessary to face reality squarely. New organisations of struggle must be built. Rank-and-file committees in the workplaces and committees of action in the wider localities would bring together workers, youth, students, the unemployed and the elderly in a common struggle against the bankrupt profit system.

Such organisations must have as their goal the development of a mass political movement directed towards the bringing down of the coalition government and its replacement by a workers' government committed to socialist policies. The banks and major corporations must be placed under the democratic control of working people and their vast resources utilised to provide decent paying jobs, housing, education and health care for all.

This struggle is international in scope. War, austerity, unemployment, poverty, attacks on democratic rights, and environmental destruction are not British problems. They are world problems requiring global solutions. To defeat these attacks, the working class in Britain must wage its struggles in unison with those of its class brothers and sisters throughout Europe on the basis of a strategy for the unification of working people internationally.

This is the programme of the Socialist Equality Party. All those who wish to discuss these crucial issues are warmly invited to attend.

Manchester

Monday, December 6, 7:30 p.m.
Friends Meeting House
Meeting Room 1
6 Mount Street
M2 5NS

Sheffield

Wednesday, December 8, 7:00 p.m.
Main Hall
Old Sharrow Junior School

South View Road

London

Wednesday, December 8, 6:30 p.m.
London School of Economics
Clement House, Room D306
Aldwych, London
WC2A 2AE

Glasgow

Tuesday, January 18, 7 p.m.
Partick Burgh Hall, Room 1,
Burgh Hall Street
Glasgow



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Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact