

# the Socialist

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## Britain 1911-1914

Lessons of the  
'Great Unrest'  
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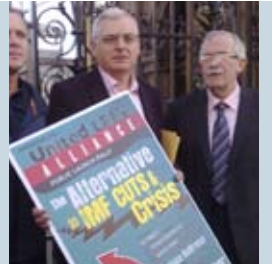
## Egyptian revolution

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# JOIN THE FIGHTBACK AGAINST CUTS!



photo Paul Mattsson

**M**ANY THINK of the Con-Dems as bullies - inflicting the horrendous pain of cuts on millions of us - especially the most vulnerable, the young and the poor.

Sarah Sachs-Eldridge

Well, the Independent has reported on a civil service survey that confirms this. The group of workers who have complained most about bullying are the drivers who have to "chauffeur ministers and senior civil servants hither and thither"!

But bullies can be stopped! At the end of 2010 students and young people showed how to stand up to them - and won some concessions. Their movement inspired working class people across the country.

In every single area groups of workers and communities are fighting their corner. In the Forest of Dean and other areas, for example,

the demonstrations and campaigning are already having an effect. Caroline Spelman, the environment secretary, has announced a delay to the planned sell-off of the forests. According to the Sunday Times she "plans to go ahead once the political furore and public protests have died down".

Unfortunately for Spelman, Cameron & Co, the 'furore' is not about to die down. In fact it is about to get a whole lot more insistent.

Saturday 19 February will see more local demonstrations across the country. Saturday 5 March will see demonstrations in Cardiff against the conferences of the Tories and Lib Dems and in London to Labour's local government conference.

162,718 and counting... That's the latest figure from the GMB union on the number of jobs under threat in councils and authorities across Britain. While claiming tens of thousands in allowances Labour councillors wring their hands and

shed crocodile tears over the cuts, blaming Westminster and saying there is nothing they can do. But it's not true.

If councils were to stop acting as collaborators with the Tory axe wielders and instead stood up to fight, they would discover there are a thousand ways to defy the cuts. A 250-strong meeting of the Hackney Unison public sector union voted overwhelmingly for Labour councils to set 'needs budgets', budgets that do not include any cuts in jobs and services.

Councillors say that following the example of Poplar in the 1920s or of Liverpool in the 1980s (which won £60 million off Thatcher to build houses, schools and nurseries) would lead to legal action against them. This is no longer the case.

However, as socialists in Liverpool did, anti-cuts councillors must build mass support to defend their stand. Unlike most councils today, they would then be extremely popular.

By using their reserves and borrowing powers to avoid making cuts, councils can gain time to build a mass movement in their support. Labour leader Ed Miliband could give a lead by promising that an incoming Labour government would write off all local authority debts incurred from avoiding cuts. But so far he has not gone beyond criticising the "pace of cuts".

The trades union congress (TUC) has estimated that a quarter of a million will take to the streets of London on 26 March to express their anger at the cuts in jobs and public services. This must be linked to the preparation for a one-day public sector general strike as a step towards a mass trade union-led movement to defeat the cuts and the government.

Around 20 years ago Margaret Thatcher pushed the hated poll tax through parliament. But when 18 million people got organised and refused to pay it the tax was scrapped. The 'Iron Lady' was reduced to iron

filings. Just like her, this bullies' government can be brought down.

See page 4, 5 and 11 for more on fighting the cuts.

## Demonstrate on Saturday 5 March

### London

March to Labour's local government conference to demand Labour councils stand up to the Con-Dems Assemble at 11am, Geraldine Mary Harmsworth Park, Southwark, London SE11

### Cardiff

Protest at the Tory and Lib Dem conferences in Cardiff 11am City Hall, Cathays Park, Cardiff for protest march to Wales TUC rally



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