

“Budget for growth” – proof ConDem government can be forced to back down!

UK Chancellor George Osborne delivered a budget on 23 March, announcing small measures to boost growth, mainly helping big business – including a 2% cut in corporation tax in April (encouraging them to locate in the UK competing with other countries) and 21 “enterprise zones” (if they locate in some parts of the UK competing with others).

What is remarkable is that Osborne predicted borrowing of £29 billion in 2015/16, the year after the end of the parliament. Previously they had said they would eliminate the deficit by the next election. Public sector workers facing redundancy or a two (or possibly three) year pay freeze and attacks on pensions can make them back down on those too!

26 March – create a Tahrir Square in London Occupy Hyde Park / Trafalgar Square after demo



The demonstration on Saturday 26 March, organised by the Trades Union Congress should be the springboard to a mass movement against the ConDem coalition government’s cuts.

Inspired by the pro-democracy activists in Egypt and elsewhere in the Arab world, thousands of activists in Britain have indicated on the internet that they will keep protesting in London for at least 24 hours after the demonstration ends in Hyde Park. Some plan to stay on there; others to go to one of the points of a Pentacle at 5pm, particularly Trafalgar Square. Camp out in London or stay up all night, partying and discussing the way forward!

Coordinated strike action (perhaps starting with a one-day public sector general strike escalating to all-out action) will be needed to defeat the cuts, bring the government down and hopefully carry out a revolution leading to a democratic socialist society.

For more information about direct action on 26 March, go to www.resist26.org or www.battleofbritainmarch26.org.

Join the struggle for Very Democratic Socialism

The Facebook group at tinyurl.com/VDemSoc is intended to discuss and work towards a very democratic form of socialism – in which the government is elected by proportional representation, there is workers' control of industry and there is an element of “direct democracy” (whereby everyone in society can discuss and vote on important issues, perhaps by referenda initiated by a petition signed by some proportion/quantity of the electorate like in Switzerland).

Members of the group are free to make suggestions concerning how such a future society would work, including the form of PR and what to do when the government comes into conflict with workers’ committees – called “dual power” by Marxists (we advocate a permanent form of dual power plus direct democracy or “permanent triple power”).

Advocating a very democratic form of socialism is important to be popular enough to win majority support (essential for a successful revolution) and to avoid a counter-revolution if the masses regard society as undemocratic afterwards.

Alternative Vote referendum – how should we vote?

There is a referendum on 5 May on adopting the alternative vote (AV) electoral system in the UK. AV is not a system of proportional representation. AV retains single-member constituencies from the current first-past-the-post (FPTP) system but changes the marking of ballots to ‘1, 2, 3’ and so on in order of preference. If no candidate gets 50 per cent of first preferences, the second preferences of the candidate with the fewest votes are added to the other candidates’ totals. This process continues until one candidate has more than 50 per cent of the vote.

In a post on the Facebook group (see above section), Anna Chen pointed out “the weakest candidates get their second preferences to count more heavily than everyone else’s.” She also argued “AV encourages consolidation of coalitions into two blocs and in the UK is more likely to lead to permanent centre-right coalitions unless the Labour Party and the Greens do a deal.” In reply, Zack Murrell-Dowson argued that parties “will have to appeal to more voters, not just a few floating voters in a few floating constituencies. It will also mean that people can vote for what they believe in rather than voting against who they don’t want in.” He also argued “Imagine that I support the Green Party. Under the present system, in my local constituency voting the Green Party would be a wasted vote as a very small minority of people vote for them, so I am not going to vote for them. If I did, and it is a close race between the Labour and the Conservative Party, by not voting for Labour, I would be helping the Conservative Party.”

Should we call for a YES or NO vote in the AV referendum? Should we spoil our ballot papers, perhaps by writing “PR” on them? Or should we avoid taking a position and leave it up to everyone’s free will. Join the debate on Facebook!