



National Conference 5 December 2015

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Agenda

10:30am – 12pm: Session 1

Resisting Austerity & the Trade Union Bill

Speakers include:

Christine Blower (National Union of Teachers), Dave Ward (Communication Workers Union), Dr Yannis Gourtsoyannis (BMA Junior Doctors Committee), Penny Hicks (Manchester People's Assembly)

12pm – 1pm: Session 2

How deep can they cut? Impact of cuts

Speakers include:

Michael Burke (Economist), Roger Lewis (Disabled People Against Cuts), Phyll Opoku-Gyimah (PCS), Murad Qureshi AM

1pm - 2pm - Lunch

2pm – 4pm: Session 3

Next Steps, Other Motions & Finance Report

4pm – 4:30pm: Session 4

Alternatives to Austerity

Speakers include:

John McDonnell MP (Shadow Chancellor), Natalie Bennett (Green Party), Francesca Martinez (Comedian & Activist), Dr Rory Hicks (Junior Doctors Campaign, Manchester)

4:30pm – 6pm: FINAL RALLY

Don't Bomb Syria (hosted by Stop the War Coalition)

Speakers to be confirmed (at time of print) & will be announced at conference

SESSION 1
Resisting Austerity & the Trade Union Bill

Motions on: Defending our Education

Motions in this section from:

- 1) National Union of Teachers
- 2) Student Assembly Against Austerity
- 3) Anti-Academies Alliance

1) National Union of Teachers

Conference notes that:

1. The Coalition Government cut post-16 funding by 14% in real terms and the Conservative Government plans substantial further cuts.
2. Abolition of the Education Maintenance Allowance has reduced access to post-16 education for disadvantaged students.
3. The austerity programme and paucity of high-quality apprenticeships have led to devastating levels of youth unemployment, reaching 20 per cent.
4. More than three-quarters of sixth form colleges have had to drop courses or increase class sizes, while FE colleges have seen the closure of many courses such as adult education and ESOL.
5. The Government's "area-based reviews" of post-16 education provision will increase the pressure for merger on FE and sixth form colleges.
6. Lucy Powell has publicly stated that the Labour Party expects that 4 in 10 FE and sixth form colleges could close.
7. FE and sixth form colleges have to pay VAT on goods and services, while schools and academies are not liable for these costs.

Conference believes that:

Cuts to post-16 funding and forcing FE and sixth form colleges into merger or closure will be bad for young people and the economy.

Sixth form colleges are an important section of the post-16 sector, they provide high quality education and excellent outcomes whilst educating proportionately more disadvantaged pupils than the maintained school sector.

Conference resolves to:

- a) Call on the Government to restore the funding for post-16 education to pre-austerity levels and to support sixth form colleges in maintaining their separate status.
- b) Call on the Government to reimburse FE and sixth form colleges for the cost of VAT.
- c) Support the campaign of the National Union of Teachers, working with other trade unions and other organisations, to restore post-16 funding and save sixth form colleges and agrees to support any industrial or campaigning activity that the unions organise.

2) Student Assembly Against Austerity

Student Assembly Against Austerity National Committee

Student Assembly Against Austerity motion for the People's Assembly Against Austerity National Conference November 2015

This Conference believes:

1. We have seen the trebling of tuition fees, massive education cuts and the increasing privatisation of education. Britain is now one of the most expensive places in the world to study with students graduating with an average of £40,000 worth of debt.
2. The Tory government is now deepening its attacks on students and education. They are scraping maintenance grants which will put millions of the poorest students in an extra £10,000 worth of debt.
3. The Tories are also bringing forward a Higher Education Green Paper which, in the words of Jeremy Corbyn seeks to make "university education even more exclusive and even less affordable for the future." This Green Paper proposes to allow the "best" universities to increase tuition fees, invite more private providers into our universities and attack the ability of students' unions to function.
4. Students are facing a cost of living crisis as a result of the government's broad austerity offensive. Low wages, rising rents, food prices, travel, energy bills and deteriorating public services are all driving this crisis.

This conference resolves:

1. Support the Student Assembly Against Austerity's national week of action to 'Save Our Grants and Defend Education' taking place from Monday 8 February – Sunday 14 February.
2. To support the Student Assembly Against Austerity's campaigns to:
 - a) End all cuts to education and public services & for fair pay and conditions for all staff
 - b) Demand free education with the abolition of tuition fees and student debt
 - c) Oppose the government's Higher Education which seeks to deepen the marketization of our education system
 - d) Stop the racist scapegoating agenda – no to the Prevent agenda which victimises Muslim students
 - e) Defend our NHS – no to the Junior Doctors Contract, stop scrapping bursaries for student nurses
 - f) Demand the government invest in education not war
 - g) Take on the bigotry, inequality and discrimination that comes with the austerity offensive
 - h) Demand an end to climate chaos – green jobs now
 - l) Call for a liberated and democratic curriculum

3) Anti-Academies Alliance

Conference notes that:

1. Austerity and privatisation are undermining our schools and colleges. Already Sixth form colleges are facing draconian cuts with similar to follow across the school system. Privatisation through academy status is breaking up a coherent and progressive education system.
2. The market in education is failing. Sponsored academies – the Tories' favourite and only 'tool of school improvement' are the least effective type of school when it comes to raising attainment. In almost every area of school life – from the curriculum, through pedagogy and assessment to wider issues such as 'British Values' and Prevent – the Tories and their neo-liberal ideology are failing. The recent decision to expand grammar schools illustrates that the Tories have no interest in social justice.
3. From nursery to university; from SEND (Special Education Needs and Disability) to Further and Adult education and even in outlying areas such as prison education, privatisation is not only failing to deliver a better education, it is destroying vital services, crushing hopes and driving society backwards to a Victorian style society where high quality education is a privilege not a right.
4. That Further and Adult education is under severe attack. The adult education budget has been cut by 39% since 2010. This has resulted in cuts of 1 million student places and 1,000s of jobs. The government 'area reviews' are a thinly disguised rationalisation offensive that will lead to hundreds of colleges disappearing.
5. There is a mass movement, including amongst parents and teachers, which is hostile to neo-liberal austerity and privatisation.
6. Jeremy Corbyn is the first Labour leader in a generation who openly and actively supports comprehensive, progressive and democratic education.

Conference welcomes

1. The work of education unions and campaign groups such as the Anti Academies Alliance in opposing the Tories agenda in education. It applauds attempts to develop a unified national campaign for education.
2. Jeremy Corbyn's idea of a National Education Service. A 'cradle to grave' education system would be a genuinely liberating move. It offers a rational and coherent approach and it openly challenges the 'business is best' culture that has undermined the delivery of public services.

Conference agrees

1. To help develop a united campaign across society to improve the funding and quality of education, in particular the further development of the comprehensive system.
2. To work with the full range of stakeholders, campaigning groups, trade unions and other social movements towards creating a National Education Service.

3. It agrees to participate in a National Convention on Education in order to help develop a National Education Service.

Motions on: Hands off our NHS

Motions in this section from:

- 1) Cambridge People's Assembly
- 2) Drewesbury Keep Our NHS Public

1) Cambridge People's Assembly

The People's Assembly believes:

An attack on the NHS is an attack on the working class and is inherently linked with the Tory government austerity agenda.

Money spent on Trident and on bombing Syria and elsewhere could be spent on the NHS.

There is a serious funding crisis in the NHS which demands an immediate emergency financial injection to cope with a looming winter crisis that could see services close as they reach 'Major Incident' level and lives placed at risk as a result.

The NHS funding crisis is ideologically driven. The NHS is not safe in Tory hands. They plan to break-up the NHS and hand it over to the private sector.

The People's Assembly notes:

Addenbrooke's Hospital in Cambridge, as part of Cambridge University Hospitals NHS Trust, is one of the world's leading hospitals as a centre of clinical excellence, research and innovation.

The trust has been placed in 'Special Measures' following a damning CQC report highlighting staff shortages and a financial deficit of £64 million.

The financial situation has been so severe that there was a ban on departments ordering paper used to send letters to patients, make referrals and for other clinical needs. In order to make savings, ice was banned from patients water jugs.

Despite the poor overall CQC rating of 'Inadequate', the staff were rated as 'Outstanding'.

This situation is echoed across the country with 15 Trusts in 'Special Measures' and an estimated 80% of NHS Trusts set to post a deficit for the financial year

Monitor are predicting that English NHS Trusts will end the year with a £2.2 billion deficit with 156 of 239 recording a deficit. This is unprecedented.

The incredible result of the Junior Doctors ballot for industrial action with 98% voting in favour on a 75% turnout.

The People's Assembly resolves:

To work with the Junior Doctors and mobilise support for any industrial action and their campaign over imposed contractual changes

To support serious initiatives to unite healthworkers and NHS campaigners

To support the TUC and health unions campaign for a fully funded NHS.

To call a demonstration in December 2015 highlighting the 'winter crisis' and calling for a fully funded NHS, immediate emergency funding, uniting with Junior Dr's, healthworkers and NHS campaigners to send a strong message to the Tories.

To continue to make the links between war and bombing of Syria, the replacement of Trident and the NHS funding crisis.

To commission a guide to successful campaigning drawing on the successes and experiences of Cambridgeshire NHS activists and others.

2) Dewesbury Keep Our NHS Public

Support for the NHS Bill to reinstate a publicly funded, publicly provided and accountable NHS

This conference notes that the NHS is becoming increasingly fragmented, costly, and inequitable and the state no longer takes responsibility for the nation's health.

We need our health services to be comprehensive, transparent, equitable and affordable. The only way all these goals can be attained is through full public ownership.

On 1 July 2015, 12 MPs from five political parties including Jeremy Corbyn and Caroline Lucas tabled the National Health Service Bill in the House of Commons, based on the second version of the NHS Reinstatement Bill. The NHS Bill is scheduled for its second reading on 11 March 2016

We note that the NHS Bill sets out the way to fully restore the NHS as an accountable public service by reversing 25 years of marketisation in the NHS, by abolishing the purchaser-provider split, ending contracting and re-establishing public bodies and public services accountable to local communities. It gives direction for the integration of health with social care and it removes the NHS from EU competition law.

The Bill already has widespread backing from campaigners and political parties. However, we also note that Labour has yet to commit to the bill.

This conference commits the People's Assembly to support the NHS Bill, both locally and nationally. The People's Assembly, in collaboration with other pro-NHS campaigns and groups, shall call a national day of action before 11 March 2016 in support of the bill and against further privatisation of the NHS. We call on local People's Assembly groups to apply pressure to their local MPs to back the bill and to spread the word in their local area.

SESSION 2
How deep can they cut? Impact of cuts

Motions on: Local Authorities & Councils

Motions in this section from:

- 1) Southampton People's Assembly
- 2) Cardiff People's Assembly
- 3) Coventry People's Assembly

1) Southampton People's Assembly

Conference notes that :

Local Authorities are fast approaching a crisis point in their efforts to provide essential public services. There have already been drastic cuts in social care, libraries and mental health support. Further reductions in Government funding will result in many statutory services becoming undeliverable.

No single Council has the ability to stand alone in opposition to continual cuts in government spending.

The election of Jeremy Corbyn and the creation of Momentum, however, provide a fresh opportunity to bring Labour-led (and other) Authorities together and to unite them as part of a wider popular resistance against Government austerity.

Building such a "coalition of the willing" will strengthen our Movement and so paralyse the Conservative Government's cuts agenda.

Accordingly, Conference resolves that :

The National Conference of the People's Assembly accepts the task of convening a national meeting of Local Authorities in the new year with the aim of creating joint platforms from which Councils can stand together to defend our public services.

Conference calls upon those local/regional Assemblies organised within Labour controlled Authority areas to canvass both the Councils and the public sector unions for their support for such a meeting. Labour controlled Authorities provide an obvious focus for progress. Participation, however, of other Local Authorities, which can be persuaded to support the meeting, should be welcomed.

2) Cardiff People's Assembly

"No Cuts" Campaign Against Council Cuts

Conference notes

1. People's Assembly opposes all cuts. Five more years of council cuts is unsustainable.
2. Council cuts derive from the Tory government's austerity policies of making us pay for the financial crisis not of our making.
3. People, especially younger people, across the UK are under financial pressure from benefit cuts and falling real wages. In these circumstances they increasingly rely on the collective provision of council and other services, only to find that they are being withdrawn whilst at the same time experiencing increased payments for less provision.
4. Council cuts are transmitted down from the UK Tory government by a combination of withdrawal of finance and requirement to set a legal budget.
5. Councillors, lacking politics and confidence to challenge this political and bureaucratic process, buckle under and pass 'their problem' as they see it, on to us.
6. Historical examples of councils defying central government: Poplar 1921, Clay Cross & Bedwas and Machen 1972, Rate Capping Rebellion of 80s with 26 Labour councils pledging to defy government with Liverpool and Lambeth going furthest.
7. Recently examples of Northern Ireland Assembly and House of Lords prepared to risk a constitutional crisis over implementation of Tory welfare reform and tax credits.
8. A small number of Labour & Green councillors have voted for no cuts.

Conference calls for

People's Assembly to launch a national campaign for councils to refuse to set cuts budgets this year and instead set 'needs' budgets based upon estimating what is actually needed to adequately maintain services and campaigning for the government to provide it.

Conference therefore resolves to

1. Publicise and develop arguments around 'needs budgets' to aid activists
2. Prepare model motions calling upon councils to set no cuts budgets for use by local anti-cuts groups, trade union branches etc
3. Give a platform to, and amplify voice of councillors who vote against all cuts
- 4 In all council areas an electronic petition could be drawn up demanding councillors vote against all cuts, raising directly the issues that we face and the responsibility our elected representatives have to fight back.
5. Rectify lack of material on PA website supporting local campaigners around council cuts, especially around the political arguments (ie. responding to 'cuts have to be made', 'we have no choice', 'what would you cut instead')
6. Organise a national meeting for councillors, trade unionists and anti-austerity campaigners to explore how councils can resist.
7. Compile and share information on examples of council 'best practice' in resisting austerity such as using reserves, no bedroom tax eviction policies, pledges of non-cooperation with the Trade Union Bill, Manchester Council opening up empty buildings to homeless etc.

3) Coventry and Warwickshire People's Assembly

'This meeting notes that many local authorities have appeared to have brought into the Government's proposals to unify authorities and create so called city regions. These moves have taken place without any effective consultation and involvement of the people living in these areas. Government is also keen to impose elected mayors on these new city regions - often when most recent votes have resoundingly defeated the proposition.

Councils have stated that they see this as a good move as they will get more power over government spending which is currently spent by Government Departments. This move in itself will lead to a reduction in Government expenditure as service responsibility will be transferred from Central to local states. But it is the case that the proposal by Government is designed solely to cover up for the massive cuts in Local Government expenditure and the consequent cuts in services. Services will also be run by appointed boards - removing accountability from local authorities and directly elected councillors.

The People's Assembly agrees that given the lack of consultation, accountability and it being a clear means by Government to further cut public spending overall the People's Assembly should oppose such developments and lend support to local groups and trade unions who do so.'

Motions on: Disability & Mental Health

Motions in this section from:

- 1) Newcastle People's Assembly
- 2) Black Country People's Assembly
- 3) Barnet Alliance for Public Services

1) Newcastle People's Assembly

Austerity and Mental Health

This People's Assembly conference recognises that austerity policies not only affect people economically, but have led to increased instances of mental illness, including higher levels of anxiety and clinical depression, and in severe cases attempts at suicide. Those already suffering from mental illness are particularly vulnerable.

At the same time, while demand for mental health services has gone up, support facilities have been cut, and sufferers are more likely to be sanctioned following Work Capability Assessments than to receive benefits.

Conference resolves that the People's Assembly should give more prominence in campaigns to the link between mental illness and austerity policies. We welcome the formation of Psychologists Against Austerity and will seek to involve a close working relationship with them.

2) Black Country People's Assembly

NOTHING ABOUT US, WITHOUT US

Conference notes that:

1. The 3 October 2010 saw the first mass protest against the austerity cuts outside the Tory conference. It was led by disabled people under the name of The Disabled Peoples' Protest. Five years on nearly all the gains disabled people have made over the last thirty years are being taken away by successive Governments. Disabled people are not only having their rights removed, many risk increased poverty and the loss of independence. We should not ignore or play down the stark reality that many disabled people could be forced into residential care against their wishes because of inadequate support and high cost.

2. Disabled people and their organisations such as Disabled People Against the Cuts have been at the forefront of the major anti-austerity campaigns. Despite this fact many disabled campaigners feel marginalised within or excluded from meetings and events organised at local, regional and national events.

3. Too often disabled people are facing disabling barriers in the form of inaccessible venues and platforms; inadequate information and often inaccessible formats; non-disabled led organisations making decisions which impact upon disabled people with little or no consultation and there remains a tendency to ignore leading disability campaigners when lists of speakers are compiled.

4. Disabled campaigners are critical of how they are subjected to portrayals which impose negative stereotyping and cite the use of language which patronises, demeans or misrepresents disabled people and their issues.

5. The decision by disabled activists to initiate a new project called, Operation Invisible designed to challenge non-inclusive practices which deny disabled people the right to participation in political and social life thus rendering them invisible.

Conference recognises the need to:

1. Ensure disabled people and their organisations are supported at a local, regional and national level to fully participate in events.

2. Assist where necessary at local and regional levels, organisations needing to know more about ensuring inclusive practice.

3. Review how PA involves and consults disabled people's organisations in terms of national events to ensure maximum participation by disabled people is achieved.

4. Work with disabled people to address any physical, organisational and attitudinal barriers they may encounter working with PA affiliated campaigns.

3) Barnet Alliance for Public Services

“The People’s Assembly demands that national government and local authorities recognise the severe hardship cuts to benefits and to services provided to the disabled, ill and infirm of all ages is causing to vulnerable people in the United Kingdom, which in some cases has led to their death, and that they ensure that they meet the financial, health and social care needs of these vulnerable people. The People’s Assembly further demands an end to zero hours contracts and poor pay for care workers

The People’s Assembly asks that the Labour Party campaign against cuts in services and benefits and for better conditions of employment for care workers and urges trade unions to show solidarity with care workers by supporting any industrial action they take.

It is not acceptable to cut benefits, decimate social care and health services and erode terms and conditions of service of those who are employed to look after and support these vulnerable people.”

SESSION 3 Next Steps

Motions on: Tackling the Housing Crisis

Motions in this section from:

- 1) South London People's Assembly
- 2) Defend Council Housing
- 3) Hackney People's Assembly

1) South London People's Assembly

This People's Assembly notes:

1. 1. The country is in a deep housing crisis. Millions are stuck in over-priced and insecure accommodation with no prospect of ever having a home of their own. Homelessness is rising.
- 1.2. The numbers living in private rented accommodation where they have few protections is rising relentlessly and we are heading towards a situation similar to that before the birth of the Welfare State.
- 1.3. The Housing and Planning Act passing through parliament aims practically at the end of social housing in Britain as significant provider of housing. Plans to force the sell off of housing association and council housing will get the sector. The act is complex though and will be difficult to implement. It faces numerous challenges.

This People's Assembly further notes:

- 2.1. Housing is moving up the political agenda. It is one of the most pressing issues today.
- 2.2. The success of the March For Homes in London in January in raising the profile of the issue, putting a series of demands that comprehensively address the housing crisis and aiding the growth of the housing movement.
- 2.3. The success of the March for Homes in bringing together across generations and across housing types.

This People's Assembly resolves that:

- 3.1. The national People's Assembly will call a National March For Homes in 2016.
- 3.2. The national People's Assembly will approach other national organisations and those relevant to discuss this and to involve the broadest possible forces.
- 3.3. A National March For Homes should put a broad range of demands to comprehensively address the housing crisis.

3.4. That a National March For Homes should aim to speed the development of a nationwide movement for housing.

2) Defend Council Housing

The Housing & Planning Bill 2015 will intensify the housing crisis. We support urgent action to defeat the Bill's proposals, and for policies to meet the urgent and growing housing need across Britain.

Britain already pays the highest-ever proportion of our income for housing. Evictions are at record levels; 4.5 million are on waiting lists, and a whole generation is trapped in insecure and exorbitant private renting.

The Housing Bill would reduce the number of genuinely affordable homes, and encourage even more property speculation by:

- * Extending Right to Buy to housing association (HA) tenants will be paid for by selling off 'high value' council homes on the open market, with no guarantee homes sold will be replaced.
- * Forcing Council and housing association tenants with a family income over £30,000 (£40,000 in London) to pay market rents, driving many from their homes and destroying mixed communities, with Government taking the extra money to 'pay off the deficit'.
- * On new sites, developers can increase profits by providing publicly subsidised 'Starter Homes' for a few instead of homes for rent.
- * Travellers will have even less chance of a site or mooring; waiting lists will get longer.
- * nothing but token words to help millions suffering the unaffordable rents, constant threat of eviction and sub-standard conditions of private renting.

The Peoples Assembly supports:

Active resistance from tenants, trade unions and councillors which can make many of the Bill's proposals unworkable.

Linking with MPs, local councils and housing associations in local and national protests

Joining with resistance to the Bedroom Tax and benefit cuts, estate sell-offs and evictions, demolition and privatisation

Demands for increased regulation of private renting, secure tenancies and rent controls for private tenants

An alternative housing strategy of investment in existing and new council and other homes to meet need, not greed. Thousands of acres of publicly owned land could be used to build a new generation of energy-efficient council homes, cutting rents, and creating job and training opportunities.

A national March for Homes in spring 2016.

3) Hackney People's Assembly

This conference notes:

only 53% of the target of 7,920 homes at social and the unaffordable 'affordable' rents were delivered in 2013/14i and that the target is in any case inadequate
this failure to build the homes that are needed at rents that people can afford is repeated across the country and over many years
the Housing Bill with Right to Buy 2 and Pay to Stay will sabotage existing homes at social and affordable rents and future investment in them.

This conference calls for:

outright opposition to the Housing Bill
an end to privatisation of public land and use of public land for private house building
central Government housing grants to local authorities to build council housing
empty homes to be brought back into use
measures to prevent the rich commandeering housing for investment rather than to live in rent controls
secure tenancies
investment in construction training to alleviate skills shortages and so high standard, ultra-low energy sustainable homes are delivered
a halt to Labour Councils selling off/transferring council housing

Conference calls on the People's Assembly to organise

a national housing conference
and a London housing conference
prior to the Spring elections in the UK to develop these policies and to bring together and mobilise housing and other campaigners in active resistance to this Government's housing policies

Motions on: Welfare not Warfare

1) Campaign For Nuclear Disarmament

1) Campaign For Nuclear Disarmament

This conference deplores the government's intention to spend over £100 billion on a replacement for the Trident nuclear weapons system. At a time when the government is implementing devastating public spending cuts, negatively affecting jobs, health, education and many other essentials to life, such wasteful and unnecessary spending on weapons of mass destruction adds insult to injury, for the people of this country who are being expected to foot the bill through their taxes.

This conference notes:

that a decision is likely to be taken in parliament this year on whether or not to replace the Trident nuclear weapons system;
the anti-Trident position of Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn and the enormous mandate that he received for this policy through the massive majority he received in the leadership vote;
the popular majority against Trident replacement in the country as a whole;
the view of significant military figures that Trident is militarily useless and should be scrapped.

This conference welcomes:

Jeremy Corbyn's commitment to defence diversification and a Defence Diversification Agency to achieve a just transition for skilled workers in the nuclear weapons sector to other high skilled industrial work;
the Labour Party defence review which will review party policy on Trident.
This conference reaffirms PAAA policy against Trident replacement and agrees:
to mobilise for the Stop Trident demo on Saturday 27th February, called by CND and widely supported across civil society, and to call local mobilising meetings to that end across the country.

Motions on: Refugees Welcome Here

Motions in this section from:

- 1) Swindon People's Assembly
- 2) Sheffield People's Assembly

1) Swindon People's Assembly

Conference notes:

that more and more refugees are risking and losing their lives attempting to get to safety. They are living in terrible conditions and need co-ordinated assistance.

Conference believes:

that many people are unhappy about this situation and consider our government's approach to be ineffective and inhumane. We believe that people are being misinformed of the true facts of this crisis.

Conference resolves:

To hold a national day of action to show solidarity with the refugees and Muslims in our communities who are feeling threatened. To share the true facts about the situation.

2) Sheffield People's Assembly

In defence of migrants and refugees, and against racism

Assembly notes:

1. The refusal of the British government to accept more than 20,000 refugees over four years, despite the appalling suffering that refugees face.
2. The call for anti-racist demonstrations on 19 March in London, Cardiff and Glasgow, initiated by Stand Up to Racism.

Assembly believes

1. That the bosses, bankers and the politicians that support them are to blame for the problems in society—not refugees and migrants.
2. That immigration has immensely enriched British society and that refugees and migrants should be welcomed, not shunned or demonised.
3. That it is a refreshing change to see Corbyn and McDonnell defending refugees and we urge them to continue with this attitude and to adopt the People's Assembly policies as set out here.

Assembly resolves:

1. To oppose all attempts to blame refugees and migrants for the crisis in the NHS, low pay, bad housing, the lack of good jobs or any of the other problems we face.
2. To welcome refugees and immigrants here, and to call on the government to open the borders to refugees and migrants from Calais and elsewhere.
3. To fully support the 19 March demonstrations and to email all PA supporters calling for their attendance.

4. To oppose the Prevent programme and the Counter-Extremism Bill that increase Islamophobia and threaten us all.
5. To send this motion to Jeremy Corbyn to make clear the People's Assembly's position.

Motions on: No to TTIP

Motions in this section from:

- 1) War on Want
- 2) Barnet TUC

1) War on Want

Stop TTIP, Stop CETA!

Conference notes:

1. The People's Assembly adopted policy, at its 2014 conference, to resist the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) being negotiated in secret between the EU and US government, as a frontal assault against democracy, society and the environment.
2. Local assemblies have organised many events over the past year to raise awareness of the dangers of TTIP, together with local trades councils and other activists under the banner of the NoTTIP coalition.
3. The unprecedented international campaign against TTIP has forced the EU and US government to abandon their original schedule of concluding the TTIP negotiations by the end of 2015.
4. The new deadline for concluding the TTIP negotiations is the end of Barack Obama's presidency in 2016, making the coming year of crucial importance in the fight against TTIP.
5. The coming year will also see the start of the ratification process for the parallel EU-Canada trade deal, the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA), which threatens to introduce many of the most harmful elements of TTIP by the back door.

Conference believes:

1. TTIP is a direct threat to working people, with official estimates calculating that at least one million people will lose their jobs as a direct result of the deal.
2. TTIP is a direct threat to the environment, with its planned increase in fossil fuel exports leading to irreversible climate change.
3. TTIP and CETA are a direct threat to democracy, giving US and Canadian corporations a unique power to sue the UK and other European countries for any loss of profits caused by the introduction of new social or environmental legislation.

Conference resolves:

1. To intensify mobilisation over the coming year at local, regional and national levels against TTIP, CETA and all other such free trade deals which favour the interests of transnational capital over the needs of people and planet.
2. To take part in days of action against TTIP and CETA, and to join the call for a radically new approach to international trade that supports the needs of working people and the environment, including in the fight against climate change.
3. To join with trade unions, campaigns groups and

local activists working together under the NoTTIP campaign banner to put pressure on MEPs not to ratify CETA when it comes before the European Parliament.

2) Barnet TUC

Motion to promote TTIP-free zones across London

TTIP is a massive assault on democracy at all levels, including locally, where there are a number of particular deficiencies.

Although local authorities will be bound by the commitments made secretly on our behalf, there has been no impact assessment on the effects on local authorities. Neither have any local authorities, or bodies representing them, been consulted, nor have they been allowed to scrutinise any negotiating documents. Especially alarming from this point of view is the part of TTIP called the Investor State Dispute Settlement. This would allow corporation to sue a Government because of any decision by that government, or a local authority if they think that that action would curtail the profits they estimate to make. This would make any taking back in-house of outsourced services all but impossible. With central government financially responsible for any ISDS cases in relation to actions of local authorities, local democracy is likely to be severely curtailed.

We, the delegates to the London Peoples' Assembly request this meeting to pass a motion urging all member bodies to actively campaign to make all London Boroughs TTIP & CETA-free zones. Local groups should raise petitions and bring motions to local and regional legislative bodies to get them to defy this secretive and menacing deal.

This is a real opportunity to redress the fact that TTIP has been largely ignored in the British media, and to raise awareness of TTIP and CETA (CETA, or Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement, is the Canadian equivalent of TTIP) among the public.

Motions such as this have already been passed. We could be joining up with:

19 other UK local authorities including Conservative run North Somerset

64 local authorities in Spain

480 localities in France

300 localities in Germany, including our own Barnet's twin town, Siegen Wittgenstein.

And in America, Miami when the last round of TTIP talks were held there.

Motions on: EU Referendum

Motions in this section from:

1) Doncaster People's Assembly

1) Doncaster Peoples Assembly

The IN-Out referendum on EU membership will be conducted as a debate between contending Neoliberal groups, led by businessmen and business-backed politicians. The debate will be about markets, profits and immigration.

Both parties are anti-trade union. Both parties will use immigration as a bargaining chip to gain

working class votes. Both parties support continued austerity, market deregulation and free trade agreements. All to the detriment of workers across Europe whose rights are being undermined and destroyed.

The Left, the trade unions and campaigning groups which make up the Peoples Assembly, are divided in their voting preferences. Therefore the Peoples Assembly cannot campaign for either option (In or Out).

There is a very real danger that whichever option is eventually voted for, workers' rights and organisation will be marginalised.

We resolve that the Peoples Assembly should:

Become an active participant in the debate by producing literature; organising and attending debates; and developing a speakers list to warn of the dangers inherent in both positions (In or Out) to the Labour movement. This includes the reduction of our rights to strike, protest and organise.

Work with our constituent bodies to counter the racist myths inherent in both camps.

Encourage trade unions and the TUC to actively promote workers' rights across the continent, by developing solidarity actions including Europe-wide MAY Day demonstrations and celebrations, which raise the need for solidarity in the face of increased competition for markets.

Motions on: Next steps for the People's Assembly

1) Composite Motion. *Incorporating motions from: Peoples Assembly National Committee, York Peoples Assembly, Manchester Peoples Assembly, Merseyside Peoples Assembly, Birmingham Peoples Assembly*

2) Communist Party of Britain

COMPOSITE – NEXT STEPS

Incorporating motions from: Peoples Assembly National Committee, York Peoples Assembly, Manchester Peoples Assembly, Merseyside Peoples Assembly, Birmingham Peoples Assembly

CONFERENCE NOTES:

The Conservative Party gained a slim majority of just 12 seats at the general election in May with less than 24% of the total electorate's vote. The government remains committed to a vicious austerity programme with more than half of planned cuts to public spending still to come.

Immediately after the election there was a huge public reaction in opposition to the new government. Over a 250,000 people were mobilised for the People's Assembly national demonstration on 20 June and the '*Take Back Manchester*' week of action saw the biggest demonstration in the City in decades.

Jeremy Corbyn, one of the founding members of the People's Assembly, has been elected as

leader of the opposition on an anti-austerity platform and with a massive majority of the votes.

CONFERENCE BELIEVES:

Austerity has failed the majority of people and will have disastrous results if it continues. No cut in public spending should be accepted. Local government will be a crucial area for anti-austerity campaigning as it will take the biggest hit of the cuts, reducing councils to just about providing only statutory services and increasing the divide between the richer and poorer local authorities. The election of Jeremy Corbyn was an expression of the growing unpopularity of austerity and the mass mobilisations over the last few years.

That, for our movement to be effective on a national scale, we need groups in every community, however large or small., that our movement will be stronger if the most successful groups support newer or struggling groups. That rural poverty is a growing problem, exacerbated by lack of organisation for resistance on the ground and that where there is a gap in our opposition, the Far Right will fester.

That People's Assemblies are successful when they are shaped by a wide and diverse spread of parties, passions, gender, ethnicity and age, and united in the fight against austerity. Therefore, all affiliates commit to working together to avoid internal conflict and promote a united campaign against austerity.

Campaigning, organising and fighting local cuts and austerity measures in our communities, workplaces and on our streets has never been more important. In developing and embracing diverse forms of protest, broad, inspiring and inclusive actions that mobilise and take the fight against austerity into our communities where it's being orchestrated.

The Conservatives are weak and public opposition is growing. Even those who may have voted for the Conservatives are now facing austerity, as we saw around the proposed cuts to Tax Credits, and public opinion is shifting against the government.

The government is attempting to squash opposition with new legislation like the Trade Union Bill that will make it easier for employers to exploit and make it more difficult to organise in our workplaces and take effective strike action.

A mass movement has the potential to create a political crisis that forces the government to change direction or forces them out of office.

CONFERENCE RESOLVES:

To continue to strengthen community organisation; to bring existing local anti-cuts groups towards the People's Assembly; to set up new local People's Assembly groups in towns and cities across the country that represent every section of the community; to encourage the establishment of regional teams and assemblies to meet regularly and coordinate regional campaigns/activities.

To assist in promoting and organising a national organising event to share good practice and experiences across our movement.

To work closer with the Trade Unions, both on a national level and branch level; to work

with the TUC on a national day of action(s) against austerity, anti-union laws and racism; to strengthen organisation and confidence to take action in workplaces, mobilise support for any group of workers taking strike action, and support any unions which defy the new anti-union laws.

To organise a major national demonstration against austerity in the first half of 2016 and to take the fight to the Tory's when they meet in Birmingham later in 2016.

To approach appropriate Trade Unions to explore the production of a short film aimed at young people addressing how they can get active in their communities, politics, the Peoples Assembly movement and the defence of services essential to them.

To support and initiate action in defence of the staff and services of the NHS alongside existing health campaigns, to campaign against the growing housing crisis and against further privatisation.

To oppose any attempt to scapegoat migrants, refugees and minority groups for the problems caused by austerity.

To continue to liaise with those fighting austerity internationally and particularly across Europe.

2) Communist Party of Britain

"PA AGM Conference agrees that the continuing Austerity offensive demands a campaigning response in favour of positive policies based on the needs of the overwhelming majority of the people, not the greed of the tiny minority, the ruling class of capitalist Britain.

The People's Assembly therefore welcomes the new edition of our People's Manifesto and calls on all PA affiliates and local Assemblies to use it extensively in their campaigning work with their own members and communities."

People's Assembly Finance Report

1 December 2015

Finance

Table 1 below outlines the monthly income we have received during 2015 to October. Regular reports are given to the management committee. The total income is £151,416, of which £25,588 was from monthly recurring donations from individuals and £123,538 from one-off donations and other sources of income such as ticket sales.

Recurring income fluctuates month by month, however it is showing an increase of about £400 per month from the start of the year.

	One off	Recurring total	Total
2015			
January	£8,849.70	£2,379.73	£11,229.43
February	£3,576.82	£2,289.94	£8,156.70
March	£10,139.38	£2,368.25	£12,507.63
April	£2,565.18	£2,469.60	£5,034.78
May	£13,682.90	£1,853.48	£15,536.38
June	£22,199.99	£2,713.20	£24,913.19
July	£23,675.35	£3,151.33	£26,826.68
August	£5,834.43	£2,643.00	£8,477.43
September	£5,091.21	£2,938.56	£8,029.77
October	£27,922.72	£2,781.38	£30,704.10
Total	£123,537.68	£25,588.47	£151,416.09

Income 2015

Table 2 outlines the monthly expenditure under broad headings. We now pay above the living wage and where requested we pay through PAYE or self-employment. Expenses vary and are general travel expenses to speaking events. Some speakers cover this expenditure themselves or through their organisations. Campaign expenditure refers to booking halls, stages, publicity, and website and takes up the majority of expenditure.

	wages	expenses	campaign events	Total
2015				
January	£ 4,163.25	£ 90.00	£ 4,140.27	£ 8,393.52
February	£ 4,163.25	£ 2,253.28	£ 145.18	£ 6,561.71
March	£ 4,547.55	£ 1,244.65	£ 1,342.11	£ 7,134.31
April	£ 4,182.53	£ 795.52	£ 530.99	£ 5,509.04
May	£ 4,539.19	£ 392.66	£ 2,417.96	£ 7,349.81
June	£ 4,656.35	£ 554.51	£ 12,007.27	£ 17,218.13
July	£ 5,897.88	£ 140.08	£ 20,930.17	£ 26,968.13
August	£ 5,068.58	£ 555.37	£ 2,413.55	£ 8,037.50
September	£ 4,748.33	£ 913.16	£ 6,932.50	£ 12,593.99
October	£ 5,518.33	£ 752.16	£ 23,596.80	£ 29,867.29
Total	£ 47,485.24	£ 7,691.39	£ 74,456.80	£ 129,633.43

We have £14,600 in our deposit account. At the end of October 2015 the balance in our accounts was £17,929. Staffing costs were higher in July as we were in the process of handing over contracts. Staffing costs are now averaging at around £5,000 per month.

Staffing

We employ three staff doing campaign, communication and administrative duties. Our staff have led the organising brilliant events throughout the year, including the demonstration on 20 June and the week of events in Manchester in October. We have extended contracts to the end of the year. We strongly feel that we need to develop our on-line presence and need more resources to assist us with this in 2016.

Finance appeal

The PA has effectively united the campaigns against austerity. It has a unique position in that it attracts supporters from across the left spectrum and has hosted some of the most popular meetings and events seen on the left for decades. We have tens of thousands of supporters, less than 700 who make regular contributions to the PA.

We are good at raising money for events, and over 80% of our income has come through one off donations and ticket sales for events. Only 20% comes through regular donations. However, nearly 40% of our outgoings are fixed regular costs like staff. This leaves us extremely vulnerable to shortfalls in campaign funds, which could lead rapidly to a financial problem. It also means that planning the further development of the PA is very difficult.

We need more of the supporters of the People's Assembly to set up regular payments. We will be launching a new financial appeal and strongly urge supporters to become regular contributors as this is vital in the next phase of the campaign against austerity.

Finance and structure

Attached is a paper agreed by the Assembly in the summer of 2014, which agreed a way of implementing the motions that were agreed by the PA conference in 2014.

The structure of the PA was agreed by the conference in 2014 and by *The Assembly*.

Individuals register as Supporters of the PA.

Organisations register as affiliates of the PA.

The PA encourages the establishment of local PAs. All local PAs should seek to include local branches or organisations of the affiliates of the PA.

The Assembly is made up of representatives of local PAs and affiliates. The purpose of *The Assembly* is; determine priorities of the PA, to promote the development of local PAs, to receive a financial report.

Affiliates are members of a Steering Group. The Steering Group nominates a management committee and officers, with are endorsed by the PA.

The management committee implements the priorities of the PA, manage the day to day finances of the PA.

The names of the members of the management committee are attached.

Nick McCarthy

Treasurer and staffing sub-committee

Motion on Finance

Motion from Manchester People's Assembly

That 5% of national income is placed in a solidarity fund to support legal fees incurred for activists at People's Assembly events

People's Assembly conference 2014

Finance debate

The finance debate at the conference passed a motion (2.1), an amendment 2.2 was remitted by the moving branch, and amendment 2.3 was passed (all attached). The motions and amendments are not entirely consistent or contradictory. The key issues are:

- Whether there should be a paid membership scheme,
- Whether local groups should contribute towards the national People's Assembly for web and email services etc.,
- Whether individual should contribute to the national People's Assembly and the national organisation give 30% back to local groups,
- Whether individuals should contribute to local groups who would then pass on funds to the national organisation on the basis of a fully costed request,
- How much should national affiliates be asked to pay.

Membership

The first issue is in relation to individual paid "membership". The lead motion suggested a £1 monthly membership fee. A point was made that "members" of the People's Assembly are general members of other organisations. The People's Assembly is an umbrella organisation the question is whether it is right to ask people to "join" or merely support. There are no "benefits" from membership – such as voting rights which are denied to those who are not "members".

Therefore, one solution is to refer to those who support the People's Assembly as "Supporters". We would seek a regular donation from supporters. However, in line with both motions 2.1 and 2.3, no-one should be excluded from being a "supporter" because they do not make a regular donation. Current we have over 30,000 supporters, but less than 200 make a regular donation. If we intend to become a national mass movement we need to maintain our supporters list, but turn as many as possible into individual supporters.

Recommendation: We do not implement a paid membership scheme, but a "supporters" scheme and seek a minimum contribution of £1 per month from all supporters, although no-one who does not contribute will be excluded.

Local groups contributing to national assembly

Motion 2.1 asked for a £5 monthly contribution to the national People's Assembly. This was to pay for the web services, bulk email and a contribution towards database administration. If 80 groups contributed £5 per month that would contribute £400 per month to the national organisation, which would cover the costs of the web services and bulk email (£120 per month) and contribute £280 per month to database management. This is 1 day's work per week on the living wage. The motion also talked about the provision of campaign materials and social media assistance.

A strong argument was made that some local groups cannot afford this contribution.

Central to this debate is that there are insufficient funds either at national or local level, which is setting up competition for funds which do not exist.

There is a very strong organisational imperative for all national and local groups to use the same database. This enables the People's Assembly to operate effectively at national and local level. The nation-builder website is cutting edge database driven campaigning technology and, if used effectively will enable the Assembly to grow as both a grass roots and national organisation.

Use of the national database even at a contribution of £5 per month is significantly cheaper than setting up anything other than a very basic website, hosting and email package. However, it is recognised that any changes can only be done voluntarily.

If individual groups have contracts with web-services and email that cost more than £5 per month, it would be extremely useful if they ended those arrangements and used the national web-services and email contract and made a £5 monthly contribution to national assembly. If groups have no arrangements in place for database, web-services and email then they should consider using the national assembly and make whatever contribution they can afford.

However, if groups wish to continue with their current arrangements then that is their decision.

Recommendation: To ask all groups to review their database, web, hosting, and bulk email arrangements and consider switching to the national package.

National v local

The main contradictions in the motion relate on one hand to whether individuals should be encouraged to contribute to the national or local groups, and on the other whether the national organisation should make payments to local assemblies or local assemblies make payments to the national assembly.

One of the motions makes reference to unions being the primary funders of the national organisation and members funding the local groups. While this may seem a neat solution, there are real dangers in setting up two different funding streams. Essentially two separate organisations are created, with the unions running the national organisation and individuals running local organisation. It also ignores that local union branches often have significant funds. Affiliation of local union branches and trades councils is an important, source of funding for local groups.

To develop a coherent national organisation, it is important that both national and local organisations have funding from both individual and organisational donations.

Distributing central funds regularly to local groups is a complex administrative task. This is to be avoided if at all possible. That is not to say that the national union cannot support local activities financially if there are funds available. Currently we can do this on an ad hoc basis. In the fullness of time it may be possible to set aside some funds to support local activities.

The conclusion of this is that both the national and local assemblies will continue to seek contributions from organisations and individuals. Maximising funds at all levels is a priority as unless we have rising funds we will not be able to grow as an organisation. Fund-raising activities are always an important method of seeking additional funds. A key principle should be that local and national organisations seek to ensure that the funds are allocated to build the organisation and support the programme of action.

Recommendation: That national and local assemblies continue to seek funding from individuals and organisations, and that this issue is kept under review.

National affiliates

Motion 2.1 should have read “National signatory organisations should pay an affiliation fee of at least £100 per year”. However, this is also following the principles that larger organisations should pay more and no organisation should be excluded because it cannot pay. The Assembly might also want to consider whether “affiliates” should be replaced by “supporter organisations” so that there is consistency of the relationship with the assemblies between individuals and organisations.

Recommendation: That national supporter organisations should pay an affiliation fee of at least £100 per year.

Motions from the 2014 conference

2.1. Finance Main Motion: Peoples Assembly Finance

Delegation name: Signatories

Conference notes:

1. That all People's Assembly funding has been raised through donations.

Conference believes:

1. As an organisation based on action rather than words, that The People's Assembly needs to raise the maximum level of funds to support its programme of campaign activity.

But, as an organisation committed to fighting austerity,

2. that the People's Assembly also needs to ensure that no individual or organisation is excluded on the basis of affordability.

Conference resolves:

1. Individual membership should be a minimum of £1 per month for the waged and free for the unwaged.
2. For local groups to contribute a minimum of £5 per month to enable the national office to assist with local organisation to include:
 - a. Access to local databases
 - b. Designated self-managed area on website for local group
 - c. Assistance with speakers and generic flyer design where possible
 - d. Publicising local group info on Facebook, Twitter and other social media outlets
3. National signatory organisations should pay an affiliation fee of at least £50 (£100) per year.

2.2. Amendment to Main Finance Motion: National Finance to fund 30% of Local Groups

Delegation name: Brighton People's Assembly:

Conference notes:

1. that many local People's Assembly groups have no source of funding other than the voluntary contributions of individual activists.

Conference believes:

1. that it is important to establish a financial structure which strengthens the link between local People's Assembly groups and the national office; and
2. that national office and local groups should not find themselves competing for financial support from the same people

Conference resolves:

1. that 30% of all individual donations and membership fees paid to the national People's Assembly should be remitted to the local group closest to where the donor lives; and
2. that individual members of the national organisation should be encouraged to get involved in their local group.

2.3. Amendment to Main Finance Motion: Voluntary funding and paid locally

Delegation name: West Yorkshire People's Assembly against Austerity

Conference notes:

1. funding is needed for both the national organisation and local groups to function and to run their campaigns

Conference believes:

1. the People's Assembly should be a network of individuals and organisations with no barriers to participation, enabling people to participate for as long or short a time as they wish with no differentiation of status
2. a paid membership scheme will exclude some people
3. bureaucracy should be kept to a minimum and both central and local spend should be transparent and accountable to local members

Conference resolves:

1. union contribution should be sought as a priority both nationally and locally
2. individual members will be encouraged to set up voluntary standing orders in favour of the local organisation local branches may distribute funds to the national organisation in response to requests for funding which are accompanied by a budget and costing.

Committee Members

Allison Roache - Unison

Aaron Keily – Stand Up to Racism

Alex Kenny - NUT

Andy Bain – Morning Star

Bronwen Handyside – Keep our NHS Public

Dave Ward - CWU

Clare Solomon – Coalition of Resistance

Fiona Edwards – Student Assembly

Fred LePlat – Socialist Resistance

John Hillary – War on Want

John Rees - Counterfire

Lindsey German – Stop the War Coalition

Michael Burke - Economist

Murad Qureshi AM

Nick McCarthy - PCS

Owen Jones

Paul Mackney – Greece Solidarity Campaign

Phyll Opoku-Gyimah - PCS

Pilgrim Tucker – Unite Community

Rachel Newton – People's Charter

Rob Griffiths – Communist Party

Romayne Phoenix – Green Party

Sam Fairbairn – Coalition of Resistance

Shelly Asquith - NUS

Steve Sweeny – Morning Star

Steve Turner - Unite

Zita Holborne - BARAC