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Editorial of the Socialist issue 1000

Desperate divisions in Tories - Corbyn and unions must act

Bitterly divided, chaos ridden, vulnerable to potential rupture: these are all descriptions that could, in many respects, be accurately applied to both the Conservative and Labour parliamentary parties today. Recent weeks in politics have been marked by wrangling, rebellion, manoeuvring and muttering. Chatter about splits and realignments, as well as the possibility of a snap general election, is in the air.

On one side of parliament, the Tory crisis continues to escalate. Each new commons debate or Lords vote serves to heighten the turmoil. Theresa May is perilously close to falling off her tight rope. Both the party's warring factions threaten to push her fatally off balance. The only thing staying their hands is fear that a general election would deliver a Corbyn-led government - a development they worry might further awaken the appetite of working class people for fundamental, socialist change.

Meanwhile, Labour's Blairite fifth column remains resolute in its determination to undermine Corbyn and protect the interests of Britain's capitalist class. The rebellion by 75 MPs (the majority of Labour's back benchers) in support of the so-called 'Norway Model' marked a significant moment in the ongoing battle between Labour's 'two parties in one'.

Gushing sentiments exchanged between MPs supposedly on opposite sides of the political divide, hint at what a potential parliamentary realignment might look like. To give one example, on 12 June, the arch-Blairite MP Wes Streeting wrote of one of the most prominent Tory remainers on twitter: "I don't care what anyone says, Anna Soubry is made of steel. Powerful speech in defence of parliament and democracy."

Now Chris Leslie, a former Labour shadow chancellor, has published his own 'centrist manifesto'. While claiming that this is 'not about a new party', the stated aim of fleshing-out a political platform for the so-called 'centre ground', attempting to go beyond the issue of Brexit, hints strongly that he and others are giving serious consideration to the prospect of a Blairite breakaway or broader realignment. Nonetheless, should a split materialise it is unlikely to clear out all the Blairites. The fight to transform the Labour Party into a workers' party would remain.

Government defeat

But if recent events have been tumultuous, the period we are entering threatens to be even more so. On 18 June, the government suffered a heavy defeat in the House of Lords over Dominic Grieve's 'meaningful vote' amendment to the EU withdrawal bill. The amendment calls for parliament to be given the final say on any Brexit deal, a position which the so-called 'hard Brexiteers' are desperate to avoid. Following the Lords defeat, May now faces the task of trying to avoid a further, more significant, loss in the Commons.

Responding, in part, to mass pressure on the question of the future of the NHS and eager to grab a few positive headlines, May announced an (in reality paltry) increase in spending on the health service (see front page). But even this has been the subject of a Brexit row. Government ministers have openly disputed May's claim to be able to fund the spending with money saved as a result of EU withdrawal - the 'Brexit dividend'.

Veiled threats are very much a thing of the past where the Tory party is concerned. Now, MPs announce that they are considering bringing down May's administration live on television. On 17 June, Grieve openly stated that rebels could "collapse the government". The prime minister's attempts to diffuse the situation over his 'meaningful vote' amendment by putting forward a supposed compromise wording, which would have made any parliamentary vote over a Brexit deal effectively non-binding backfired, paving the way for her defeat in the lords.

But it is not just the Tory remain-backers making threats. David Davis, May's Brexit secretary, is now reported to have threatened to resign on five separate occasions. A walkout by the supporters of a 'hard Brexit' from May's cabinet, including Boris Johnson and David Davis, could trigger the collapse of the government and a possible general election. Even if May is able to cobble together a deal between warring factions and avert an immediate defeat in parliament, further headaches will follow closely behind.

Among the issues still dogging the government is the thorny question of the Irish border. May's attempt at a sticking plaster - the so-called 'backstop arrangement', in which the status quo essentially remains in place pending an undefined 'new customs arrangement' - is fraught with contradictions and remains the subject of bitter disagreement. Hostilities could be further heightened as the question of the role of the European Court of Justice - which EU negotiators are demanding is given continued jurisdiction so long as the backstop arrangement remains in place - comes to the fore.

Indeed, there is little prospect that the crisis in the Tory party will ease. On the contrary, it is set to intensify further, potentially to the point of a government collapse. Yet where is the leadership of the trade union and labour movement against the backdrop of all this turmoil? 8 June marked one year since the last general election and the huge surge behind Corbyn's anti-austerity manifesto. May's weak, divided government has been able to stumble on only in the absence of mass action being organised to kick the Tories out. The trade union movement has the opportunity to deal a crushing blow to the Tory government. The Trade Union Congress should act now to build mass action against the government, including the coordination of strikes.

At the same time, Corbyn's blows against the government have been dampened by the Labour leadership's continued, futile attempt to maintain unity with the party's pro-capitalist wing. While Corbyn and McDonnell have experienced sustained attack from the Blairites over the last 12 months, barely a shot has been fired in return.

Recent events revealed more sharply than ever what's really at stake in Labour's civil war. The 75 MPs backing the 'Norway Model' - which would mean signing up to a package of neoliberal rules and regulations in return for access to the European Economic Area - were placing their loyalty to the interests of the capitalist class first and foremost. The love-in between the Blairite right and pro-remain elements on the Conservative benches has demonstrated that the label 'red Tories' is no exaggeration.

The potential for a snap general election gives renewed urgency to the task of taking on the Blairites. Any Jeremy Corbyn-led government would face ferocious attack from the capitalist class, who will fight determinedly to protect their interests. But, should a snap election be called, a Corbyn victory is far from guaranteed.

Among the possible pitfalls is the potential that the Blairites continue to muddy the water on the question of Brexit, leaving working class people confused and potentially suspicious as to what the party really stands for. The role of right-wing Kier Starmer as shadow Brexit secretary has already served to significantly muffle the position put by Corbyn on the negotiations - in defence of working class people and opposing privatisation demanded by the EU.

Socialist approach to EU

The Socialist Party has been consistent in calling for a class-based, socialist approach to the EU. For us, the question is not 'hard or soft Brexit', but Brexit in whose class interests? We call for Corbyn to adopt a socialist, internationalist approach to the negotiations, which has as its 'red lines': tearing up the EU bosses' club rules and demanding workers' rights; an end to all neoliberal regulations that demand austerity and privatisation; removing the barriers to policies such as nationalisation; stopping the 'race to the bottom' in wages and conditions created by the posted workers' directive and other rules; guaranteed rights for all EU workers living in the UK; and an anti-racist, pro-refugee rights position.

If Corbyn were to adopt such a stand and articulate it clearly and directly, not allowing the likes of Kier Starmer to confuse, dilute and subvert the message, then, along with clear socialist policies, it could lay the basis for winning mass support among working class people.

Indeed this approach should be applied more broadly. In a recent interview on Radio 4, John McDonnell was at pains to reassure big business that they have nothing to fear from a Corbyn-led government. He explained how he had put his cards on the table with the boss of HSBC bank when they met recently: "let me be clear, we are not going to nationalise the banks" he reported saying. But nationalising the banks is exactly the type of measure that will be necessary to prevent the kind of sabotage a Corbyn government would be likely to face from the capitalist establishment if it threatens their profits.

Rather than spending their time reassuring mega-rich business leaders, Corbyn and McDonnell should instead be preparing working class people to fight to defend their anti-austerity stand and go further. Ultimately to meet the demands and aspirations of working class people, that means being prepared to carry through the socialist transformation of society.

Tory cash boost not enough - save our NHS

Tessa Warrington, East Midlands Socialist Party

Theresa May has announced an NHS budget increase of 3-4%, amounting to a cash boost of up to £6 billion a year.

The Tory government is on the brink due to splits over Brexit - so May is preparing the ground for another general election. But her promise is not nearly enough to solve the crisis in our NHS.

The front page headline on issue 1 of the Socialist, back in February 1997, was "Stop the health rip-off." In a month of anniversaries, not only are we marking the 1000th issue of the Socialist - but on 5 July the 70th birthday of the NHS. This year the NHS even gets a gift!

The scrapping of the eight-year policy limiting NHS funding increases to just 1% is a big shift. It reveals the enormous pressure building from below from tireless grassroots campaigns - and the dangerous position May and her infighting party of the super-rich find themselves in.

The deterioration of the NHS is widespread and well-known. Chronic understaffing will leave a gap of 115,000 in the workforce by 2027, according to NHS training coordinator Health Education England.

The latest 'winter crisis' led to the temporary cancellation of all non-urgent operations. Hospitals have overspent by millions a year as providing services proves incompatible with balancing the books.

However, the NHS has been the battleground where a number of important campaigns have fought and won.

The Glenfield children's heart unit in Leicester, Chatsworth neurorehabilitation ward in Mansfield, and Huddersfield Royal Infirmary A&E in Yorkshire. All threatened with closure, all remain open today - due to mass campaigns where the Socialist Party and Socialist newspaper played a leading role.

The Tories are worried not just about losing an election - but of the potential for workers to grow in confidence that they can fight back and demand more.

The current plans for coordinated strike action across the NHS in West Yorkshire, where estates and facilities staff are fighting outsourcing, are exactly the sort of thing the Tories fear and hope to head off with this pledge.

But much, much more investment than this is needed make the NHS fit for purpose. And only taking the whole health sector into public ownership under democratic workers' control and management - including the big drugs companies - will make that investment effective.

We know any concession from capitalist politicians is temporary. And we know they will try to make the working class pay for it with cuts elsewhere.

So Jeremy Corbyn must prepare for a general election too. He could start by pointing all this out and calling for the socialist policies needed to save our NHS - and to achieve an internationalist, pro-worker Brexit.

He should also call publicly for a mass turnout on the 30 June NHS demo in London, to turn it into a 'Tories out' march and make it the launchpad to build for coordinated strikes. Millions would respond to a serious strategy to boot the Tories out of office once and for all.

- National march for the NHS - 70th anniversary - Saturday 30 June, assemble 12pm at Portland Place, London W1A 1AA
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Five reasons to walk out on 13 July

Number 3:

No to Trump's climate change chaos

Roan James, Sheffield Socialist Students

Donald Trump's decision to withdraw from the non-binding Paris climate change agreement was not only a major defeat for even this weak attempt at tackling global warming, but also an example of his continuation of protectionist and isolationist policies.

Despite only being voluntary and with a lack of enforcement on the terms, Trump's approach shows disdain for the aim of a real and sustainable approach to tackling rising global temperatures.

Trump's decision to withdraw from the Paris agreement was not only influenced by key far-right Republican Party cabinet members - who have benefited from oil company's large donations - but also intended as a warning shot to other major industrial capitalist countries, mainly China.

Trump's plan of an industrial renaissance is designed to undermine China's production power and is further proof of a continuing capitalist competition. This can also be seen through Trump's developing trade war on steel.

Withdrawing from the Paris agreement not only allows Trump to re-fire the coal furnaces, which would solidify part of his core vote, but also show that he will act in the interests of US capitalism, no matter the consequences, to attempt to reassert economic dominance.

During Trump's time as president it is clear that he has allied himself with the fossil fuel industry. It has been revealed that over \$107 million was donated towards Trump's inauguration, with companies like BP and ExxonMobil putting forward six figure sums.

But most significantly a contribution of \$250,000 was made by Kelly Warren, CEO of Energy Transfer Partners - the company in charge of building the Dakota oil pipeline. It shows the corruption of Trump's government, as the last stage of building the Dakota pipeline was given the green light despite regular oil leakages that pose a significant threat of contaminating water sources.

His continuation of such policies shows that he has little care in maintaining the environment for future generations. This is also the narrative of his economic strategy, he is interested in quick fixes rather than long-term solutions.

But economic protectionism can have disastrous consequences. Trump's policies will unravel and it could be the starting pistol for a new economic crisis.

Capitalism is willing to exploit every natural resource to squeeze the out the last drops of profit. We must have public democratic ownership of the large fossil fuel companies and socialist planning to minimise the

effect of climate change.

- See Socialist Students' ["walk-out against Trump" event on Facebook](#)
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Universal Credit delivers claimant misery and will cost more than it saves

Fight for liveable benefits, real support and decent jobs

Karen Seymour, Mansfield Socialist Party

The government's flagship welfare reform, Universal Credit, has been well and truly savaged by the National Audit Office. It says the £1.9 billion scheme is a disaster for claimants, and will end up costing far more than it saves!

Rolling six working-age benefits into one, Universal Credit was sold as a way of making the system fairer. Its real aims are to slash spending on welfare, and to 'punish' those seen as not doing enough to find employment.

Evidence is mounting that Universal Credit causes real hardship through delays to payments, cuts to support, evictions and an even more inhumane sanctions regime, which will now pressure part-time workers to find more hours!

The National Audit Office says the government is never likely to know whether its aim of getting 200,000 more people into work will be realised.

In my view, as a welfare rights adviser, Universal Credit is deliberately designed to wear people down. Depression cases will rise even further among claimants as they desperately try to free themselves from a system dubbed the 'lobster pot'.

One claimant told the BBC: "It drove me to depression as I had never needed anything like that in the past. I felt helpless and worthless. It would appear to me that Universal Credit is designed to be very difficult and give people as little as possible."

The National Audit Office thinks there have been too many changes to job centres and working practices for Universal Credit to be scrapped. Rubbish! Stop it immediately, and replace with a system of liveable benefits and proper support to find employment, without compulsion.

Labour must call for this instead of bemoaning how bad the system is. There must also be an end to the persecution and demonisation of welfare claimants, who are victims of a capitalist regime only interested in looking after the 1%.

The Socialist Party fights to replace Universal Credit with liveable benefits, proper support to find work without compulsion and decent jobs with an immediate £10 an hour minimum wage.

Refugee suicide scandal - fight for jobs, homes and services for all

Isai Priya, Refugee Rights campaign

Recent reports show there is an increase in the number of suicides among refugees in the UK. The latest additions to that number are three teenage refugees from Eritrea who have taken their own lives in London.

They arrived from the migrant camp in Calais.

Asylum-seeking children and young people are among the most vulnerable in our society. Even at their young age they experience the trauma of war, persecution and poverty as well as dangerous life-risking journeys to get to safety.

This has again been highlighted by the rescue ships carrying refugees which were passed from pillar to post by European governments before finally being allowed to dock in Spain.

As a result some experience post-traumatic stress disorder and suffer from mental distress and depression. Cuts to vital services such as mental health services and education mean that they are left in isolation and continue to suffer silently.

Destitution

Earlier this year, the Red Cross warned that a lack of government aid for asylum seekers and a sudden cut-off in support is pushing a growing number of vulnerable people into destitution. There has also been a 20% increase in the number of refugees and asylum seekers living in food poverty.

Refugees are hit by austerity just like the wider working class, as well as being treated as criminals by the Tory government's policies including the racist 'hostile environment' immigration system of Britain.

The Socialist Party has previously written about the oppressive conditions refugees experience in detention centres. But in the US we are now seeing something even more shocking.

Donald Trump's 'zero-tolerance' policy has seen thousands of refugee children, including toddlers, separated from their parents at the Mexico-US border and held in wire mesh cages. Over a six-week period at least 2,000 children have been separated from their parents. Rightly there has been an uproar and condemnation against this. Ordinary people are sickened by these images.

The Refugee Rights campaign is fighting for the rights of refugees. It's linking the plight and struggle of refugees with working class struggle in Britain. We are demanding immediate access to mental health support and more investment into our vital services - jobs, homes and services for everyone.

Them & Us

Macron China crisis

French president Emmanuel Macron is doing his bit to assist budget cuts and economic belt-tightening... by buying a new set of plates for £44,000 according the Journal du Dimanche. The real price could be nearly ten times that according 'Le Canard enchaîné' who make it - over £438,000. The extravagant purchase of over 1,000 plates comes at the same time as huge austerity measures being implemented or planned by Macron and his government. And the news comes after a video emerged of Macron saying "crazy amounts of cash" were being spent on welfare benefits. He should eat his words - he has enough plates to do so.

School toilet trouble...

A primary school in Theresa May's own constituency is begging parents to buy toilet roll and other essentials because it is so strapped for cash.

The 420-pupil school in Maidenhead, Berkshire, sent a desperate email to parents with a link to an Amazon 'wish list' including pens, pencils - and most shamefully of all, toilet roll, as Tory cuts leave the school unable to afford the very basics.

One parent at the school said: "If the school is begging for toilet paper then it makes you wonder what's next?"

...super-rich bathroom opulence

While the country's school bathrooms struggle to provide toilet paper, the bathrooms of the super-rich have been revealed to include golden taps.

One billionaire requested that Evian water flows out of the shower and bath as it's "better for the skin and hair", apparently. Mark Lawson, head of high value estates at the 'The Buying Solution', told the Telegraph he knows of one house with five pools - one indoor, one outdoor, and the rest on the terraces of three of the bedrooms.

And as for the golden taps, a pair of 24-carat gold and black hand-painted Murano glass taps come as standard in one Sloane Square apartment on sale for just £6.95 million.

What We Saw

Elon Musk, the capitalist and engineer behind Tesla and SpaceX, has claimed he is a socialist - unlike Karl Marx who is apparently a capitalist. Because he "wrote a book about it."

Musk has come in for criticism after he announced the slashing of thousands of jobs to increase his firm's profits. At the same time, he has received \$4.9 billion in state funding towards his projects. He attacked socialists on Twitter who criticised him, by claiming that most socialists (presumably those who disagree with him) are wrong and not really socialists, including socialist thinker and revolutionary Karl Marx.

The book Musk referred to is called 'Capital', a valuable and influential book for socialists which analyses and criticises capitalism. He could learn a thing or two by reading it, including about capitalists like himself!

Seattle council repeals Amazon Tax

Only days after [passing a tax on Amazon](#) and big business in Seattle, corporate politicians repealed the ordinance.

Socialists always emphasise that while we must fight to tax the rich, this will always be fiercely resisted and ultimately reversed unless we also have a socialist struggle to change society to place ownership of these companies under the democratic control of workers.

We publish an edited version of the council chamber speech by Seattle City Councilmember Kshama Sawant. Kshama is a member of Socialist Alternative (co-thinkers of the Socialist Party in the US).

The Seattle Times reports that nearly 23,000 working families in Seattle are extremely rent burdened - they pay more than half their income on rent. Rent is skyrocketing.

The median home price is over three quarters of a million dollars. Women In Black report that this year at least 53 people have died because they did not have shelter.

The Democratic Party establishment has presided over this crisis.

The only solution to the affordable housing crisis is for the city to build social housing which is publicly owned, permanently affordable housing. To raise revenues go to those who have not paid their fair share - big business.

The people's budget struggle last year brought 400 people to the public hearing who spoke with one voice: "City council, do your job! Tax big business so that we can begin to address the affordable housing crisis."

That night we engaged in peaceful civil disobedience in an overnight occupation of city hall.

Because of our courage, determination, strategies and political clarity we came to that unanimous vote on 14 May.

Now less than a month after that unanimous vote, these council members are going to overturn that hard won victory.

All around the country there is overwhelming support for making the tax structure more progressive and making big business and the rich pay their fair share. Right after we passed our tax the mayor of Mountain View, California said, "shouldn't we have a Google Tax in the cities in the Bay Area?"

There has been a tsunami of propaganda from big business - lies, distortion, and misinformation. It has had a temporary effect on the public opinion.

To quote Tim Harris, "any progressive measure you talk about, you will find big business opposing it."

This onslaught came at us when we began building the 15 Now campaign for a \$15 an hour minimum wage. What if the 15 Now movement had said, "big business is opposing us, they're spreading lies, they're impacting public opinion! Let's fold our tent and go home!"

What did we do instead? We built a powerful grassroots movement.

We engaged in a citywide door-knocking campaign. We had neighbourhood meetings. We had rallies, protests, marches, and we changed public opinion to the point that the vast majority of Seattle and the nation supports \$15 an hour.

We not only won 15 here. We have now won 15 in many other cities.

This is a cowardly betrayal of the needs of working people. Boeing made the same kinds of threats Amazon and other big businesses are making today.

Boeing did that decade after decade. And the legislature caved to them.

The logic was always, you can't fight big business. If they threaten to take away jobs, then accept whatever they want.

Boeing executives got everything that they wanted. And they took the jobs away anyway.

Stop any random person on the street and ask them, "do you think Amazon pays its fair share?" And they will tell you no.

Ask them, "do you think we need affordable housing?" They will say yes.

"Do you think big business should be taxed for that?" They will say yes.

The lesson here is we cannot put our faith on politicians who are not willing to stand fight with us and that is why our movements needs our own independently elected candidates who are willing and able to really fight against big business.

1000 issues of the Socialist: A vital weapon standing in proud traditions

To mark the 1000th issue of the Socialist, which was launched in 1997, we interviewed Peter Taaffe, Socialist Party general secretary and former editor of Militant, the predecessor of the Socialist. Below is an edited version of the interview.

A newspaper is something that's always been important to revolutionary socialist parties isn't it?

Yes, it's been a vital political weapon. You really don't have an effective voice unless you have a newspaper that can convey the views of the party day-in and day-out. The paper carries different types of articles.

One of the founders of Russian Marxism, Plekhanov, spoke about agitation, propaganda and theory. Agitation is taking one idea to a broad mass. Propaganda is taking the case against capitalism, the case for socialism, to a more developed layer of the working class.

And theory, which is what we deal with in our journal Socialism Today and in some of the articles in the Socialist as well, is dealing with the processes developing in society, in the labour movement and so on. The paper has many tasks, in other words.

If you did not have a newspaper you would be invisible as far as the majority of the working class is concerned. That was particularly the case when we first started with Militant. But even today, the paper is vital in making sure the full scope of the views of the Socialist Party are reflected and carried to our members on a weekly basis, but also to a broader layer of young people, of workers, of people that we want to reach.

Our members sell the paper in the organisations of the labour movement, on the streets, on demonstrations and so on. And if you did not have a newspaper, you would not be able to reach those people, you would not be able to change their outlook and to win them to the ideas that you're putting forward.

So a newspaper is very important. For the ruling class newspapers are crucial in their attempt to mould public opinion. They actually boast that they can determine the mood of the population, which is an exaggeration.

Crucially, in periods of high tension, periods of revolutionary eruptions, they do not have that influence. At those times the mass of the people move beyond the norms of capitalist society. That's when a newspaper of the labour movement comes into its own.

How did Militant first come about?

From very humble beginnings! It began with an idea. It began with a handful of people. We had a basis in Merseyside - where I come from - in south Wales, we had people in London, and we had comrades in Nottingham.

We were mostly young. Our vista was very broad and for the long term. We were enthusiastic, we would brook no obstacles.

I was in Liverpool at that stage. We had a very strong basis in the Labour Party Young Socialists (LPYS). There were 20 to 25 branches of the LPYS on Merseyside alone. We developed our position by arguing in the Merseyside LPYS federation. We actually controlled two branches. But over a period of two years we won over a majority.

Then it was decided that I move to London to be the editor of the paper. The first issue of Militant was published in October 1964 - it kind of coalesced with the Labour government of Harold Wilson. It was very meagre - but we were very proud of it!

Militant started as an eight-page paper and then we had to retreat within six issues to a four-page paper because we didn't have huge resources. Everything we collected we used on the production of the newspaper and - theoretically - to pay my wages.

And we built up the position over time - I'm talking here of years - into an organisation of 8,000 members in the 1980s with a very powerful paper that had huge influence. At one stage we had a headquarters and over

350 full or part-time workers on the paper, on our industrial work, on our youth work, etc. This was a source of envy to our opponents and we were attacked by right-wing Labour.

We first concentrated on young people in the LPYS and we carried material from our own comrades but also took up the ideas of our opponents. We collaborated with the Labour left, we had a close collaboration with Tony Benn, with people who supported the Tribune newspaper. We criticised them, but not in a sectarian manner. We weren't hesitant about raising what our ideas were and our differences with them.

We organised debates and discussions in the LPYS branch meetings and at the national conferences of the LPYS.

There were basic tasks to be a supporter of the Militant. You had to write for the paper, even if it was a small report on some incident in the LPYS or in a factory. And you had to sell the paper - at that stage it was mostly sold in the LPYS, in the Labour Party and factories, not like it is today where it's mostly sold on the streets and in workplaces.

At one stage we produced two newspapers - a national weekly and the Mersey Militant, which was produced weekly and sold in the Liverpool labour movement. The paper was the central thread, the organiser of our activity, the outline of our ideas, the educator of our supporters and also of those who read the paper.

There was a pride in our newspaper because the members who were selling it wrote for the newspaper as they do today, collected money for the newspaper in the pennies, in the pounds, in the shillings - all of that contributed to the building up of our paper.

And we were very proud of it, and our history. We had no big business backers, we got no subventions from the trade union bureaucracy, we got no money from Russia as we were accused - why would Stalinists give to Trotskyists?

What role did Militant play in struggle?

It played a crucial role. It was a guide to action for the readers of the paper and for those who played a role in building the labour movement and building our political influence.

You don't produce a paper for the sake of it but to intervene in the class struggle, which takes many different forms. We were lucky to live through one of the most tumultuous periods in working class history.

There were day-to-day struggles taking place in the factories. There were the events of 1968. In France 10 million workers occupied the factories, the greatest general strike in history, and reached out for the power. This had a huge effect internationally. For the first time workers were saying to us 'it looks as though the working class are going to take the power'.

We also intervened that year in the events in Czechoslovakia. We marched down Park Lane in London leading an LPYS demonstration selling the paper, giving our analysis of what was happening in Czechoslovakia. We did the same thing in relation to the Portuguese revolution of 1974, when the Times newspaper said capitalism was dead, because 70% of industry was taken over. But this revolution was not completed and capitalism made a comeback.

But the key issues for the development of our paper in Britain were the questions of what happened in Liverpool between 1983 and 1987 and of the movement against the Poll Tax.

Supporters of Militant were the backbone of the struggle in Liverpool. At each stage our newspaper charted that struggle and our role.

On the council we put forward a needs budget. We convinced the Liverpool labour movement of this. Only eleven councillors supported Militant but our ideas were adopted and taken up by the labour movement as a whole and by the district Labour Party.

The council set a needs budget. Thatcher was forced to retreat because she was fighting on two fronts at that time: against the miners and Liverpool. She was forced to give concessions to Liverpool. But once the miners'

strike was defeated because of the role of the TUC, she came after Liverpool.

Thatcher demanded that Kinnock, then Labour leader, carry through expulsions of Militant, and he obliged. They thought that by cutting off the head, which was the Militant editorial board, the body would die. That didn't happen.

We went onto victories in the Poll Tax struggle. We had some illusions to begin with in winning the trade unions and the Labour Party to our position. But in Scotland we saw the way that the trade unions and Labour Party leadership abandoned the field of struggle. But we organised a million people in Scotland not to pay the Poll Tax.

I was once selling the paper at Walthamstow tube station in east London: "Buy the Militant, it gives an analysis of the Poll Tax, we're going to defeat the Poll Tax." But a worker said: "Listen mate, how can you defeat the Poll Tax and defeat Thatcher? She defeated Galtieri in Argentina and the miners. What are you going to do against that?" I said: "Do you know a million people are not paying the Poll Tax in Scotland?" He didn't.

That was the propaganda of the deed. It meant that when the Poll Tax was implemented a year later throughout Britain, all hell broke loose. We had unprecedented mass meetings. We defeated the Poll Tax and Thatcher - the Iron Lady was reduced to iron filings, she was forced to retire and the rest is history.

We were able to lead that mass movement and Militant established itself as the most successful Trotskyist organisation in finding an echo among the working class.

Then of course we had the collapse of Stalinism, which created a new situation. There was a capitalist counterrevolution in Russia and eastern Europe. That was used for an enormous international campaign against the ideology of socialism and in favour of capitalism. This has been a cloud hanging over the labour movement to one extent or another since.

But we kept our nerve, we analysed the situation, we were still engaged in struggle, and we armed the working class for the future battles to come.

In 1997, Militant became the Socialist - why did we change our name at that point?

There was a big debate in our ranks. Not everybody agreed with the decision. We're a democratic party, we had a full discussion. It went to our national congress and we took a vote in favour of changing the name.

The basic reason was because the word 'militant', when we first named our newspaper, was identified with the more advanced layer of the working class and industrial struggle. It's still used in that sense today as well, but it's now muddled up and confused by the press with 'militant right-wing Islamic fundamentalists'.

People often judge you, from a distance at least, by your banner, and we thought that if we changed our name to Socialist Party and the Socialist newspaper, that would be more in tune with what we were trying to say at that stage.

We were trying to rehabilitate the ideas of socialism that had suffered a heavy blow by the collapse of Stalinism. The propaganda of the bourgeois did have some effect on sections of the working class. It had a bigger effect on the tops of the labour movement. Blair led a capitalist counterrevolution against the socialist aspirations of the Labour Party. And that was taken up internationally.

Social democracy in its classical form is finished; it cannot exist as a viable stable form today. The world economic crisis of 2007-08 undermined it. In the enormous growth of inequality that exists in capitalist society at the present time, you couldn't find a greater confirmation of Marx, Engels, Lenin or Trotsky. Socialism is now back on the agenda of young people, workers and the labour movement.

Is that why, despite it being difficult around the time we launched the Socialist, we put such efforts into maintaining a newspaper?

Yes. I was interviewed in that period on Newsnight by Jeremy Paxman. He saw us as a kind of historical curiosity more than anything else.

He said, "Why do you do it Mr Taaffe? Why do you carry on?" I said, "Because capitalism will not solve the problems of working people and socialism will return. We're confident in that."

He asked: "Aren't you dissuaded by what's happened in the Soviet Union and the swing towards the right in the Labour Party?" I replied: "No because we believe that's a temporary phase. Ten or 20 years in the life of a man or a woman is a long time, but ten years in the life of a society is a minute. " We said it will break.

And that break did occur. We've had many twists and turns in the situation, but the major indicator is towards the inevitable radicalisation in society, particularly reflected in the new generation.

When we founded Militant in 1964 it was objectively a paradise compared to the situation that faces young people today, with foodbanks, terrible poverty and people sleeping on the streets, and moreover no prospect of alleviating that situation on the basis of capitalism.

So people will be looking for answers. We have to be there to give them answers politically. We have to then provide a route to begin to change the situation.

A renaissance of the trade unions is taking place today. It might be on a very basic level to begin with - we want a living wage, we want a job, we want the prospect of tomorrow being better than today, we want to have a future for young people.

Above all, the people who've got the greatest stake in change and socialism is the new generation. They might not be completely aware of that, but they're kicking against the system. Loaded down with as much debt as Chinese peasants had in the past, and they'll never pay off these loans, and extortionate rents.

At every twist and turn they come up against capitalism in one form or another. That's the first stage. The next stage will be fighting in their school or workplace. And then realising that there has to be a general solution to the problems of society.

That's where we come in. What is the instrument for creating this new society? It has to be a party - a democratic and socialist party, with internal democracy and discussion in order to politically re-arm this new generation for the struggles to come.

That's what the Socialist newspaper and our party is all about. It's a weekly at the moment. However, it will become a more frequent paper, maybe twice weekly - the perspective that we had in 1964. It will have more pages. And eventually we'll have to have a daily, which will cater for the multitude of struggles that will break out.

That has to complement other forms of mass media that are an important feature of the struggle today too.

How is the Socialist different?

In the July/August edition of Socialism Today, Sarah Wrack, editor of the Socialist, looks at the Socialist at issue 1000. She asks if it's correct that the main publication of the Socialist Party remains our weekly printed newspaper. How is the Socialist changing in response to new technology? What is the role of a revolutionary socialist paper in the era of Corbynism? Below is an extract.

The printed press is in crisis. Local and regional papers were hit hardest first. Some closed. Many more have carried out extreme cost-cutting, leaving their one or two remaining journalists producing, as former editor of the Daily Mirror Roy Greenslade put it, "something that looks like a paper, but the content lacks any real value".

The Independent pitched itself as forward thinking and modern for moving to an online-only format. The New Day,

a venture by Trinity Mirror supposedly designed to attract social media-savvy non-newspaper readers to buy a printed publication, lasted only two months.

But at the same time as the New Day was going under, the Socialist was six months into a very successful sales campaign. Because we are not the same as the capitalist printed press.

We are not a faceless company trying to convince people to pick up a newspaper from the shop shelf. Our sales are active. We are on the street campaigning, talking to people about socialist ideas for the anti-austerity movement and why they need to read and support the Socialist.

Most of our 'customers' are people we intervene alongside in the trade unions, on university campuses and in community campaigns. They see our sellers in action as some of the best fighters in those movements and identify the Socialist as a tool that guides them in that role.

We're different to the establishment papers because our content is different. Our articles are written by workers and young people themselves - reporting from the coal face to answer the lies of the capitalist class.

The establishment newspapers instead promote those lies. Why? Because their CEOs and shareholders are the capitalists. Five billionaire men own 80% of printed newspapers in the UK, as well as a host of other media. The very role of those papers is to defend the interests of the capitalist system. Alongside the fake news scandals, outrageous episodes of front-page racism and attacks on workers and their unions, no wonder swathes of ordinary people have turned their backs.

But the main direct cause of the crisis for the capitalist papers is not actually a fall in sales but in advertising.

The group that owns the Daily Mail, Mail on Sunday and the Metro reported a 13% decline in print ad revenue in six months of 2016. In the US, following a 'steady decline' of 5-8% a year from 2010 to 2015, one study showed a massive 31.5% fall in national print advertising in 2016 alone. While online ad revenue is increasing, it still makes up a much smaller proportion of the publishers' incomes.

The Guardian, which suffered an £11 million fall in advertising revenue in 2016, has turned to asking readers to become 'members' and pay a regular donation to compensate for this loss. Its editor-in-chief wrote that this was necessary because "the business model for journalism is failing".

In other words, it is a recognition that support for the message of the paper is a stronger basis to go forward on. This, of course, has always been the Socialist's approach.

The only advertising the Socialist accepts is from groups of working class people who value what we do and want to support us. For example, in this year's May Day greetings campaign we raised £7,530 from trade union branches, campaigns and local Socialist Party groups.

Beyond that we are funded entirely by sales and donations from people who want to read what we're saying and support the idea of working class people and socialists having our own independent media.

Greetings from readers of the Socialist

Reading the Socialist every week gives you a real dose of optimism. Despite the attacks on workers in this country and across the world, the Socialist offers hope and shows that where we organise, we can win.

Jane Nellist, national executive, National Education Union NUT section (personal capacity)

The Socialist regularly reports on the issues facing retail workers - but unlike other papers, it says what needs to happen to win the fightback. I would like to thank the Socialist for supporting my successful campaign to become president of Usdaw, and look forward to the paper continuing to report on the issues facing our members.

Amy Murphy, president, Usdaw retail workers' union (personal capacity)

During our 19 days of strike action, the Socialist paper reported, explained, ran interviews with strikers, and consistently supported and sustained the picket lines and public meetings. The paper was invaluable in developing the increasingly socialist conclusions being drawn by those involved in struggle against the privatisation of education.

Louise Cuffaro, school teacher and secretary, National Education Union, Newham branch (personal capacity)

Happy 1000th issue to the Socialist. Always pleased to be associated with those fighting, as we do in the RMT, for a "socialist order of society"

Sean Hoyle, president, RMT union

The Socialist paper featured our fight endlessly throughout our 90 days of strike action in 2014 and spread our defiance to a larger audience. And it is safe to say the input, advice and solidarity shown was and will remain an integral part of finding 'kindred spirits' who will remain lifelong friends.

What it instilled in me is a sense that we can achieve anything if we stand up in the face of the despicable Tory austerity agenda. Congratulations on your 1000th edition. Long may you continue!

Roger Hutt, chair, Doncaster Care UK strike committee

In a world of 'alternative facts', reading the Socialist helps make sense of the world around us and gives confidence that a socialist alternative really is possible. The paper always places the struggle of working people in its historical and international context. Its analysis is a guide to action and essential reading for all workers.

The Socialist shatters the myth that there is no alternative to the power of a tiny capitalist elite. The case for socialism is as powerful as ever, and for anyone looking for an alternative to capitalist crisis and accelerating climate change I strongly recommend reading the Socialist.

Chris Baugh, assistant general secretary, PCS union (personal capacity)

If you have to take strike action for 87 days then know this: help is out there. Our friends from the Socialist Party and Socialist newspaper stood shoulder to shoulder with us throughout six months. Never failing to offer support on protests, demos, leafleting, online and in print to raise awareness of our cause. Helping to bolster our fighting fund that guaranteed the solidarity that won the day in this battle. #Together #Solidarity

Colin Pitt, Unite union rep, Mears housing maintenance workers, Manchester

I really look forward to reading a copy of the Socialist as I can be sure to be reading the truth and not the tripe you get from the daily rags - and that is if you are told of the problems in the first place. The amount of news that is missed completely astounds me. I also appreciate the world news concerning the struggles of workers everywhere. Long may the Socialist go on providing.

Barbara Cotton, secretary, Middleton Park Labour Party, Leeds Central CLP

The Socialist is an invaluable resource for all trade unionists and socialists. It provides not only the broad perspective across the country but internationally as well. While I may not agree with every position in the paper, I really value the debate and the scrutiny it provides, and I really look forward to each edition. I will always read it.

Andy Stankard, chair, Hull City Unison union branch (personal capacity)

The Socialist is my lifeline. It is the only paper to cut through the lies of the Tories and Blairites, and the cynicism of the right-wing trade union leaders. I read it cover to cover every week and it gives me the strength to keep on fighting for a decent society.

Chas Berry, national executive, Napo union (personal capacity)

The Socialist plays a crucial role in providing a platform for socialists and militants in the unions to put forward their analysis of the situation in the labour movement. At a time when workers are facing enormous challenges, and the tops of the unions are failing to lead, the Socialist provides crucial analysis of our collective struggles. All serious trade unionists should subscribe!

Sam Morecoft, anti-casualisation officer, Sheffield University and College Union

The reasons we like the Socialist are: it's a proper newspaper that cuts to the chase and is an easy read for all age groups. It is a no-frills paper that doesn't have the same bias as the mainstream media. It is written by ordinary people, and the news reported we can relate to, and some of it is local. The articles often spark discussions between us.

Dee Millhouse, physiotherapist, and Alison Beaumont, nurse, Chatsworth ward, Mansfield Community Hospital

The Socialist is essential for keeping up with the current events of our movement, as well as encouraging active discussion on these issues whilst campaigning!

Joshua Swann, sixth-form student and Labour Party member, Harrogate

I remember reading Militant (forerunner of the Socialist) in the '80s. I'd read other left-wing papers, but the Militant was different. They weren't just talking about history, they were making it! Other papers told me what was happening - Militant was telling me how I could get involved and make a difference. Dave Nellist, Tony Mulhearn and others: ordinary working class people changing history. I learned from the paper - fight to change things.

Mark Robertson, striker and Unite union rep, Tyneside Safety Glass

When Birmingham City Council took it upon themselves to try and lower the pay of our 'grade three' bin workers, it was nice to know that we weren't entirely alone. The Socialist Party and Socialist paper took it upon themselves to help support us, playing an integral role in keeping up morale, canvassing the local area, and generally being supportive throughout the ups and downs. It is from the time offered by party members that I was able to better understand the party and rightly decide that it is the party for me. Thank you, comrades.

Ken Savage, Birmingham bin striker

Thanks to the Socialist paper, the underhanded, colluding, job-robbing tactics of Scumbarts [union-busting haulier Stobart] and Tesco were exposed during the strike of 2012. They breeched 'Tupe' law and went on to be serial abusers of the regulations under the noses of the government and unions.

Trevor Cheetham, secretary, Doncaster Tesco drivers Unite union branch

The Socialist is the only paper telling the truth about what's happening to the NHS. By giving a voice to health workers and reporting on successful campaigns against NHS cuts, this paper inspires and empowers us.

Beth Webster, nurse

The Socialist played a major role when we found ourselves taking part in 90 days' strike action when our NHS service was privatised. Not only did they report on it, but actively engaged in campaigning, promoting, raising funds for us, and accompanied us on our travels up and down the country as we fought attacks on our terms and conditions and to save our NHS. They were good friends of the 90-days Care UK strikers, and I'm so thankful and appreciative for all they did and continue to do to help others in similar situations.

Theresa Rollinson, Care UK striker

Congratulations to the Socialist - its reporting and analysis of events in Britain and internationally has provided activists in the labour movement with an unparalleled source of information and guidance.

Keith Morrell, anti-cuts councillor, Southampton

During the strike in 2015 we were struggling. The Socialist Party visited our picket line and consequently raised the profile of the dispute via the paper. The resulting amazing support we got gave us the strength to overcome everything that was being thrown at us and ultimately secure a successful outcome to the dispute.

Mick Joyce, senior Unite union rep, Kone lift engineers

The Socialist newspaper continues to play an indispensable role at Whipps Cross Hospital. The guidance, commentary and analysis around the numerous campaigns and strikes - not to mention the vital role of raising solidarity including money for striking low-paid workers at Whipps - have earned the paper a solid reputation among militant, class-conscious workers.

Len Hockey, secretary, Unite union Barts Health branch

I find the Socialist very informative. It is a refreshing change to read a paper that reports the workers' struggles from a worker's point of view.

Kev Dudding, Hull GMB union activist

Warm greetings to the Socialist's readership. The Orgreave Truth and Justice Campaign would like to thank you all for your continued support. You have spread news of our campaign far and wide. It's always great to see your activists on our actions. No justice, no peace!

Joe Rollin, founding member, Orgreave Truth and Justice Campaign

Many thanks to the Socialist for the supportive coverage of the Sheffield trees dispute. Unlike many other sections of the left, the Socialist recognised that the fight to save Sheffield's street trees is part of the overall struggle against privatisation and austerity. Solidarity.

Mark James, secretary, Unite Community South Yorkshire union branch

The 1000th edition of the Socialist (formerly Militant) marks a huge step forward in the development of a paper which has consistently provided workers with a rich source of analysis of political, economic and industrial phenomena. In addition, it provides a guide to action informed by a Marxist understanding of the nature of the class struggle. This was clearly demonstrated during the 1980s campaign of Liverpool's socialist city council, in which supporters of the Militant newspaper played a decisive role in securing a famous victory over the Thatcher government, and carried out the most radical programme of social change in the history of local government.

Tony Mulhearn, socialist Liverpool councillor 1983-87

In the Arab Spring the capitalists shut down social media to stop workers and young people organising. Well in 1990 we had no internet, Facebook or social media, but we had the weekly Militant (forerunner of the Socialist). That paper and its up-to-date advice and analysis played the critical role in building and maintaining mass non-payment of Thatcher's poll tax - a battle that millions joined and won.

Steve Nally, secretary, All-Britain Anti-Poll Tax Federation

The working class struggle needs every ounce of energy and every person who identifies with it to pull in one direction. That united effort is what brings us all together, no matter the cause, no matter the union or the party. The support we received from the Socialist Party and your press was priceless in our struggle in the Veolia recycling disputes in Sheffield. United we stand, divided we will always fall.

Peter Davies, senior officer, GMB union Yorkshire

Campaigners against tree felling in Sheffield have appreciated the Socialist's coverage of our fight. It has been an antidote to the mainstream media by reporting from the side of our campaign, not the council and big business.

Calvin Payne, Sheffield trees campaigner

The Socialist helped campaign against my sacking in 2005 and publicised our great little victory. The paper always covers London bus workers' actions against brutal bosses. Let's turn more fighting trade unionists into conscious revolutionaries!

Andy Beadle, retired bus driver and Unite union rep

The Socialist distils the news that affects working people and its clear analysis always points the way forward. A political compass in turbulent times - here's to the next 1,000 issues!

Dave Nellist, former Labour MP and chair, Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition

I always read the Socialist for analysis and information that you simply don't find anywhere else. But it is also very useful as a trade unionist for publicising disputes and getting support and ideas about how to win.

Paul Kershaw, chair, Unite housing workers' union branch LE/1111

I always read the Socialist to see the various strikes and campaigns going on around the country. The capitalist media is silent about many struggles, like the McDonald's young workers' strikes, to give the impression we are not fighting back against austerity. I sell papers to my Unison members to show that we are not alone in the struggle and so that we can give solidarity. Also I show international articles, as well as political arguments like the case against the EU, to give an alternative point of view to the right-wing Unison leadership.

April Ashley, national executive, Unison union (personal capacity)

I'm sometimes asked: why produce a paper when everything is also available online? It's simple. People still need to see us on the street, and we need something for them to take away and think about.

Jim Atkinson, Swansea Socialist Party

The Socialist has been indispensable in the Hands Off Huddersfield Royal Infirmary campaign. It is the only paper which has consistently publicised and promoted our successful campaign, despite the wide media coverage we get. Thanks to the whole editorial team for their great support.

Mike Forster, chair, Hands Off HRI (personal capacity)

Not all of us who sell the Socialist are the outgoing type. Some days the last thing we want to do is talk to the public. But that has to be overcome by determination to spread socialist ideas!

Just last week I was preparing myself to campaign against the Trump visit by leafleting a college, feeling apprehensive about campaigning on new territory. Re-visiting the article 'Stop war, fight Trump, walk out' from issue 997 was the shot in the arm I needed, and that wasn't the first time!

Josh Asker, Southampton Socialist Party

The campaign against the closure of our community hospitals here in Devon has been long and bitter. Socialist Party members have played their part. The Socialist is our public face - we use it to explain the issues on stalls, marches and demonstrations. It links us to other struggles against cuts and privatisation in the NHS. It helps us educate, agitate and organise, using its contents to show that there are victories to be had against this Tory government. Without the Socialist to explain the overall picture of this anti-worker government, there would be nothing to distinguish socialists from the right-wing media.

Sean Brogan, Exeter Socialist Party

The Socialist always gives me info on struggles taking place, while the establishment media ignores and distorts the truth. If you want the truth, and want to change the world - read the Socialist!

Judy Griffiths, secretary, Coventry Communication Workers Union (personal capacity)

As a community activist I really welcome each new issue of the Socialist, for its inspiring news reports from campaign frontlines across England and Wales - stories of tenants fighting the privatisation of social housing have been especially inspiring, and the coverage of Grenfell has been the best in any paper.

I actually look first to the international reports, to follow the struggle of working people, especially those of women and youth, around the world. Where else can I go to find the truth behind the lies of the capitalist press and the bias of the BBC?

Kate Jones, chair, Unite Community Swansea union branch (personal capacity)

I read the Socialist as it covers a wide range of topics and current events and provides views covering news, arts, books and open opinions - and fights for the working class.

Sue, hostess, Chatsworth ward, Mansfield Community Hospital

Essential reading for every comrade, find out what's happening and where you can support.

Michelle Goodman, Torbay and South Devon Socialist Party

I find the Socialist newspaper very interesting. Finding out what people are about and what hard work goes into events. It covers a wide range of subjects and varied opinions.

Karen, hostess, Chatsworth ward, Mansfield Community Hospital

The Socialist is an unrivalled source of news and analysis for activists struggling for a better world. Its international coverage is second to none. Forward to a daily Socialist!

Mike Whale, chair, Hull Trade Union Council

How do we produce the Socialist?

Planning

The editorial team, consisting of five fulltime workers for the Socialist Party based at our national office in east London, meets four times a week. We discuss what the priorities are, taking into account what's in the news, what big events are covered by this paper, what events happened last week that we should get reports of, what the big questions being discussed by workers and young people are, and what other articles we have been sent or offered. Sometimes we might have to change the plan mid-production because of the pressure of events, and may have to hold some articles until a future issue or put them on our website only. We also have meetings to review each issue and discuss what we could do better, look further ahead at feature planning, and to decide our front page headline together.

Commissioning

Each page editor contacts members around the country, at our national office, or in our sister parties internationally to write the articles needed. It's also really helpful for branches to arrange articles on local issues and to let us know about people who are willing to write for the paper. We'll offer some guidance on the type of article we're looking for, a word length (we aim to keep each page to 8-900 words) and a deadline (usually by the Wednesday before publication for feature or comment material and first thing Monday or Tuesday morning for news or reports from weekend events).

Don't be daunted by the task, even if you haven't done something like this before. We believe that working class and young people are the best experts on the topics we cover in the Socialist. Other Socialist Party members in your area are likely to be very willing to advise you and if you're not sure about anything, the editors are always happy to offer assistance. You can contact us by emailing editors@socialistparty.org.uk or calling 020 8988 8777 and asking to speak to an editor.

Writing

The most important work is done by our members and supporters around the country. We want you all to be 'journalists' for the Socialist - and think that anyone can do it. If you struggle with writing, we can even speak to you on the phone and type up what you say for you. You provide us with the insight into what's going on in campaigns and workplaces near you, into the mood among working class people, and the effects of austerity and capitalism.

Editing

Our job is to help you produce the best article you can, but the editors will always try as much as possible to maintain the article as you've written it. We want the paper to reflect working class voices in all their variation. We often have to cut words for length, we make changes for 'house-style' - to make sure there's a consistency to spelling and grammar throughout the paper - and may make changes or additions for clarification. We aim wherever possible to send the edit back to you in enough time for you to be able to check you are happy, although deadlines can make this difficult. Once the page editors have an edit they are happy with, it's looked over by the editor of the paper who may make small further changes. The editorial team works closely with the executive committee of the Socialist Party and others at the national centre to check the content of articles when necessary.

Laying out

Once there's an agreed edit of a page, it can be laid out. All of our editors can use the layout software. We try to have plenty of space for nice big photos and to pull out interesting facts, figures or quotes to be highlighted around the page. It really helps if you send us good quality photos with reports - most modern phone photos are fine, just be sure to send us the full-size file. If you have lots of photos to send, you can upload them to our FTP server, get in touch for details of how to do this. Try to get photos close enough to see faces, smiling if possible, and always from the front rather than backs of people's heads! Often if you ask at a meeting or protest, people will be happy to pose for a photo for you, which can often come out better.

Finishing

The laid out pages are given to two proof-readers who look for any mistakes that have been missed or crept in during layout. Once they've compared notes and everything's been corrected, the editor looks at the pages together to have a final check of headlines, dates and the overall look, and gives final approval. The files are then uploaded to our printers, Trinity Mirror.

Distributing

The physical papers are delivered first thing Wednesday morning to our print-shop, also in east London. There our circulation and printing teams package the bundles to be sent to Socialist Party branches, as well as the smaller packs for individuals to sell and for subscribers.

At the same time we're also getting the paper ready for online distribution. Two of the editors upload the content of the paper to our website and add appropriate links and photos. Our website editor then checks the

homepage of the website and moves things around to make sure the most important articles are highlighted. Once everything's live on the website, we share the image of the front page of the Socialist to our Facebook page and schedule other key articles to be shared over the following few days.

DWP surrenders to union pressure - now vote Yes to smash pay cap for everyone

Dave Semple, PCS DWP group assistant secretary (personal capacity)

On 14 June senior managers in the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) caved in to the PCS civil servants' union's [demands that they pay the contractual 'employee deal' pay rise](#) on time in July.

This retreat came one week after DWP had made the announcement that it would be delaying the pay rise for all staff 'HEO' grade and below. The official excuse given was that DWP had not received treasury remit guidance, though several senior managers also tried to blame the continuing negotiations with the union.

In reality, the employer demonstrated just how out of touch it is with staff. The employee deal, negotiated by PCS in 2016, saw all staff who opted in break the 1% pay cap, with some 'AA' to 'HEO' grade members receiving pay rises of over 20% across four years.

At the time, with the pay cap extending across the entire public sector, the deal was a significant offer for those members in DWP and was overwhelmingly accepted in a members' ballot to address the long standing lack of pay progression in the department.

For the employer to delay paying what they owed even by a month was absolutely unacceptable and members reacted vociferously. Within hours, well attended car park meetings were held across the country. PCS members showed their displeasure on the staff intranet and in calls with senior managers. This shows what can be done when union members are organised and prepared to fight.

Pay cap

This question of pay is absolutely crucial. The public sector pay cap has been abolished for the vast majority of the public sector. NHS staff, council workers and prison officers have all received offers of a pay rise over 1%. This is progress, though far from what could have been achieved if the largest public sector trade unions had adopted a united, campaigning approach to busting the cap.

The UK civil service is one of the last areas where this hasn't happened. The government has insisted on maintaining the 1% cap for 2018-19 and has insisted that any pay rises be paid for within existing budgets.

Now the government is trying to force civil servants to accept job losses and office closures as a trade for any pay rise above the cap. With real wages down by as much as 20% since 2010 and more than 100,000 jobs already gone, this is not acceptable.

The employee deal addressed the progression issues in DWP pay for significant numbers of AA-HEO grade staff. But it is clear to our members that we cannot afford the cost of living rises to wipe this out.

We also need to address the pay for everyone including members who have opted out, those who were already on or near the max of the pay scales, those not on DWP terms and conditions and all members 'SEO' grade and above. All our members need a 5% pay rise with inflation running at 3% and we will fight for extra resources from the Treasury to fully fund 5% for all.

This pressure on wages, where surveys show civil servants relying on food banks at the end of the month, was why PCS annual delegate conference voted overwhelmingly to move to a statutory strike ballot on pay. Union members decisively showed their rejection of the pay cap in a consultative ballot last autumn, which saw 99%

say the government should bust the cap. The government continues to delay and so the next step is to prepare for industrial action.

The Socialist Party, acutely aware of the anti-union laws and the new threshold that requires over 50% of all union members to vote in order for a ballot to be a legal mandate for action, calls on all PCS reps and members to do everything to build turnout and [get a massive Yes vote in the ballot](#).

The ballot runs from 18 June to 23 July.

Rolls-Royce: fight all job cuts!

Steve Score, East Midlands Socialist Party secretary

The [job losses announced at engineering giant Rolls-Royce](#) are a massive blow to Derby. Like everywhere else, full-time, secure jobs have long been disappearing leaving largely insecure, low-paid work in their place.

Rolls-Royce has now confirmed 4,600 job losses, 3,000 in the UK with most from its 14,000 Derby workforce.

Bosses are saying most of those are "middle management and back office positions", although some are design engineers. But it's not top bosses who are losing their jobs - these are workers with families.

It will have a devastating effect on the economy in Derby, already hit by the loss of thousands of jobs over the last few years, including 5,500 from Rolls-Royce.

This isn't because the company is making a loss, it's because it wants to make even more profit by restructuring. It has recently reported a pre-tax profit of £4.9 billion. Most of this is described by Chief Executive Warren East as an "accounting measure", but the underlying profits were still £1.1 billion.

Even when they reported an "accounting" loss the year before, East got a £916,000 bonus to top his pay up to £2.1 million for the year!

Unite is seeking guaranteed no compulsory redundancies after a deal struck last year to protect 7,000 engineering jobs.

Some union officials, repeated by Derby South Labour MP Margaret Beckett, are using the phrase that Rolls-Royce shouldn't "cut too deep and too fast." But this implies acceptance of some jobs going.

All job losses must be fought - we cannot allow the bosses to divide us. If they get rid of this group of workers, they will come for others in the future. Any action must therefore include the whole workforce.

The unions must act now! Immediate meetings of the entire workforce should be organised to discuss how to fight the proposed losses.

When Bombardier was under threat in 2010 the unions organised a march of thousands through Derby. This should happen again as it will raise the confidence of workers to take further action if the company does not back down.

A march would be the start and would also bring the whole community together and raise the confidence to fight all cuts in Derby. Not just at Rolls-Royce.

Unions and the Labour leadership should demand the renationalisation of Rolls-Royce - as was done under a Tory government in 1971. But this time it should be with compensation only the basis of proven need as part of a plan to keep it permanently publicly owned and democratically controlled.

Instead of consultants paid huge amounts to come in and decide on restructuring, the people who really know how to make the business more efficient are the workers themselves. But this raises the need for democratic

workers control and management, and requires public ownership to achieve it.

- No job losses
 - Unions should call mass meetings to discuss action by the whole workforce in defence of jobs
 - For a mass community march for jobs led by the unions
 - Nationalise Rolls-Royce to save jobs
-

GMB union: NHS reps reject Tory pay offer

GMB NHS rep

NHS and ambulance service reps in the GMB union from across the UK met on 15 June. This was held in response to GMB members rejecting the governments' NHS pay offer.

87% of our members across the NHS and ambulance service voted to reject the deal. Reps explained how hard they worked to set up face-to-face meetings with members and fully explain the finer points of the pay offer to them.

They explained to members that performance-related pay was to be introduced into the NHS for the first time and about the attacks on unsocial hours payments. Where we met with members and balloted them on the spot the rate of rejections was highest.

In spite of limitations in resources and pressure on facility time GMB managed to hold meetings with our members across the health services in the UK. Members told us that they are fed up of being underpaid and overworked and that they are concerned that the NHS is being run into the ground. Reps also reported that members from other unions are equally angry about the pay offer.

Reps and members from other health unions were supportive of the GMB position on rejecting this rotten and divisive pay offer.

The overwhelming response GMB has had from our members has been heard loud and clear and we are not giving up on the fight to demand fair pay for NHS staff.

We know that driving down pay is just one in a whole series of attacks on the NHS and that the threat of privatisation and transfer into so-called 'wholly-owned subsidiaries' is looming large. A fightback on pay would strengthen our position in defeating these other attacks.

As reported in last week's Socialist, GMB was the only health union to vote against the deal. See ['Health unions accept divisive NHS pay deal - but fightback could have won much more'](#).

McStrikers and young workers take centre stage at bakers' union 2018 conference

Richard, Hatfield Socialist Party and Watford McDonald's BFAWU member

The 100th annual conference of the Bakers, Food and Allied Workers Union (BFAWU) was held in Southport from 10-14 June.

The opening day saw McStriker Lauren McCourt awarded the young members award for her [brilliant work organising the McStrike](#) in Manchester by Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn. The conference also elected Lauren onto the executive council as youth representative.

Myself and another Socialist Party member (who joined the Socialist Party during the McStrike in Watford) met Corbyn at our hotel as well and he thanked us for participating in the strike and told supporters around him: "It's not me, it's all of you who will make change."

A sentiment I endorse. Indeed if a Corbyn-led Labour government is to come to power and implement any of its popular manifesto pledges then we must organise in the workplaces and on the streets to kick out the Tories.

Corbyn must actively support these struggles and the labour movement must then play an active role in organising to support Corbyn while in power.

Precarious

The conference was addressed by a number of young workers in precarious employment. Hearing about young workers mobilising in their workplaces and fighting back against poverty pay and for better conditions alongside the McStrikers was inspiring and shows that the McStrike is beginning to spread to other fast food outlets.

A rally was also held against the Sun newspaper. The Sun is a toxic paper for working class people and the labour movement, from its disgusting reporting around Hillsborough through to the McStrike today, the Sun has proved time and again to be a paper of lies.

The conference unanimously passed a motion banning the paper from any bakers' union meetings and the annual conference.

45 copies of the Socialist paper were sold at the conference.

Northern Rail strike reaches 21 days of action to save guards

Elaine Brunskill, Northern Socialist Party

Northern Rail workers in transport union RMT took their 21st day of strike action on 19 June. Train bosses want to implement 'driver-only operation' (DOO) - removing the safety-critical role of guards.

One of the pickets explained: "We're taking three days of action this week. Our members are wanting to up the ante. Already the Northern franchise has been on the back foot with the disarray with the timetable fiasco - whole routes have had to be withdrawn.

"This has led to questions being asked in parliament - so Northern are already under pressure. Unfortunately, [the leadership of drivers' union] Aslef have done an underhand deal, behind the scenes, which has saved Chris Grayling's job."

"On the DOO dispute the various rail companies are at different stages. Mersey Rail and South Western are in talks with [conciliation service] Acas. Greater Anglia have come to a deal which retains the guard. The only franchise where no progress is being made is Northern.

"The RMT is calling for tri-party talks between themselves, Northern and the Department for Transport. The company haven't met with the RMT for over six months now!

"The RMT have managed to negotiate deals in Wales, Scotland and potentially Greater Anglia. So why haven't we managed to get a deal with Northern?

"It's because they are determined in their attempt to bring in DOO, which would mean half a million trains a year across the north would be running with no onboard staff, which would threaten passenger safety.

"We are getting increasing support from Labour MPs. However, Labour councillors on the Transport for the North board need to understand the concerns of the travelling public, who are overwhelmingly supporting the RMT.

"Our members are determined to win. Keep the guards on the trains!"

Miners demand end to pensions robbery

Over a hundred former miners lobbied parliament on 6 June, demanding the government stops its decades-long looting of their pension fund.

Billions of pounds are involved. The government milks the fund and doesn't pay out to the miners while waiting for them to die off.

In commenting on the event on Facebook, frustrated workers spoke many truths - including about the lack of action by Labour MPs...

Miner 1: "The miners went through enough with the closure of the pits and the following years of chronic respiratory diseases. Communities and family ruined for generations. Now this. It is so tragic it makes me want to cry with anger."

Miner 2: "Imagine how much angrier you would feel if it was your pension cash [they were] were stealing. My Coal Board pension would be roughly twice what it is now if these Tory vermin hadn't been helping themselves to it.

"We're subsidising their City chums and corporate masters so as they can carry on tax dodging. Richard Branson and Sir Philip Green send their thanks."

Miner 3: "Don't forget... the Labour Party had a chance to put it right. Those MPs who were over the road the other day [when we were lobbying] and had a chance to come over and meet us. They are just as bad as the Tories. They are letting their class down."

Miner 2: "Nothing but a bunch of careerists posing as Labour MPs. Tory Blair's 'New Labour' were just a Tory second eleven - all those MPs who aren't prepared to stand by and defend their class should be... replaced with people who will."

Miner 4: "It was maddening enough to find out the Tories and top-level management of British Coal had planned, schemed, connived and put into place all this. But then Blair and Brown from Labour just carried on doing the same. Makes me so mad."

Miner 2: "That'll be New Labour though. A sort of Tory-lite."

Yorks NHS workers fight outsourcing

Mick Griffiths, Wakefield and Pontefract Socialist Party

Mid Yorkshire Unison members and public supporters lobbied a Mid Yorkshire NHS Trust board meeting held on 14 June. [A strike will proceed if the trust does not back down from its plan](#) to transfer estates and facilities workers out of the NHS.

Demonstrators were invited inside the trust headquarters to address the board. Some of the board members seemed surprised that staff strongly supported striking against back door privatisation. Despite assurances that staff's views would be seriously considered, the board is using 'commercial confidentiality' as an excuse to make decisions in secret.

Union members are determined to resist being removed from the NHS. The strike will take place if the trust does not drop this 'proposal'.

Unite agrees NSSF affiliation - come to the NSSF conference!

Unite the Union has agreed to affiliate to the National Shop Stewards Network (NSSF). The NSSF already had affiliations from a number of Unite branches.

This means that ten national unions now officially support the NSSF alongside many union branches and trades councils. Unite general secretary Len McCluskey addressed the NSSF rally at TUC congress last September and assistant general secretary Howard Beckett will be speaking at the NSSF annual conference on 7 July.

The affiliation originated from a motion moved by a London bus driver, Moe, at Unite's last policy conference. The NSSF has supported the many strikes and disputes by Unite and will continue to work alongside Unite in building solidarity for the union and its members.

The 2018 NSSF annual conference is from 11am-4.30pm on Saturday 7 July in Conway Hall, 25 Red Lion Square, London WC1R 4RL.

Confirmed speakers include: Howard Beckett, Unite assistant general secretary; Amy Murphy, Usdaw president; Chris Baugh, PCS assistant general secretary; Sean Hoyle, RMT president; Ian Hodson, BFAWU president; Joe Simpson, POA deputy general secretary; Linda Taaffe, NSSF national secretary and Rob Williams, NSSF national chair.

The attendance fee is £6 and it is open to all trade union and anti-cuts campaigners.

Tamil Solidarity Day: intense, lively, thought-provoking

Isai Priya, Tamil Solidarity

On 16 June in central London Socialist Party members took part in Solidarity Day 2018 - an annual event organised by Tamil Solidarity.

The success of the event has shown once again the growing support of the Tamil Solidarity (TS) campaign for the unique approach it has taken amongst the Tamil diaspora organisations. The intense, lively and thought-provoking event lay down a strong foundation to build a movement for the rights of the Tamil-speaking people.

It began with a debate with the other Tamil Diaspora organisation on 'What way forward?' This session was chaired by Nadesan Balenthiran, joint national coordinator for TS, with speakers from Tamil Solidarity, Tamil Coordinating Committee (TCC) and Transnational Government of Tamil Eelam (TGTE), the latter two speaking in a personal capacity.

TU Senan introduced the discussion outlining some key points relating to political strategy of TS. Since 2009 TS has argued the need to link the Tamil struggle with our natural allies - other oppressed community, youth and the working class. TS has also in a number of occasions outlined the failure of the United Nations as a means of delivering justice - as it is an institution that operates in the interest of big business and oppressive nations.

Sathya Rajan reported on the recent struggles and movements that have taken place in Tamil Nadu and the importance of linking up that struggle with our own. She highlighted those involved or leading these movements are looking for a political lead.

She was followed by Satha Kanasan from TCC and Manivannan from TGTE. The political differences between TS and the other Tamil organisations were sharply revealed during the debate that followed. There were also time for some questions and contribution from the floor.

Lawanya Chantra, TS national coordinating committee (NCC) and Refugee Rights committee member chaired the second part of the event. This session brought out the essence of Tamil Solidarity..

This session included speakers Hugo Pierre from Unison's national executive council and Austin Harney, national executive committee and international committee of PCS - unions both affiliated to TS.

Chris Baugh, assistant general secretary of the PCS sent his greetings and solidarity - read out by Lawanya.

Other rally speakers included Claire Laker-Mansfield, a Socialist Party organiser involved in Youth Fight for Jobs. She referenced the Donald Trump visit on 13 July and appealed to the audience to join the walkouts and mass protests against Trump.

Mathan Nathan, TS NCC and Refugee Rights committee member, spoke passionately about the plight of the refugees and the asylum seekers in Britain. He concluded by emphasising the need to build a united struggle to fight for jobs, homes and services for everyone.

He also mentioned the Windrush scandal and how that exposed the racist immigration policies of the current right wing government.

Manny Thain, TS NCC and campaign organiser, concluded the rally and outlined the work of TS and showed how TS is successfully building the struggle.

Tamil Solidarity doesn't shy away from public debates and organises numerous discussions to politically arm our members. TS proudly orientates towards the working class.

TS is a small but growing campaign that punches above its weight and links up the struggles against oppression at each opportunity. Solidarity Day is, and will continue to be, an important event in our calendar.

Grenfell disaster: one year on, still no prosecutions, still no adequate housing...

Helen Pattison, youth and student organiser, London Socialist Party

A silent sea of people wearing green marched through the streets of Kensington and Chelsea on 14 June.

Green has become synonymous with the disaster at Grenfell and the residents' continued fight for justice.

This march was to mark the one-year anniversary of the fire. Around 5,000 people from across London gathered in the shadow of the tower to pay their respects.

These silent marches have been a monthly occurrence in west London and firefighters have been present each time.

This was followed on Saturday 16 June by a demonstration in central London, outside Downing Street. Hundreds of campaigners - including Fire Brigades Union members - rallied to condemn the litany of neoliberal cost-cutting policies which contributed to the Grenfell incident.

Socialist Party placards on the Saturday protest read: "A year too long, Take over empty homes" - a reference to the 1,600 or so empty private properties that exist in Kensington and Chelsea while one in four Grenfell Tower residents are still not permanently housed.

Jeremy Corbyn originally raised the need to requisition empty homes so families could be housed, which the Socialist Party supported. But this has not happened.

Other placards said: "Jail the killer profiteers" and "Organise for safe housing for all" to highlight the disgusting cost-cutting cladding which enabled the fire to spread and still remains on over 100 buildings nationally.

Residents should not have to live in fear their homes are unsafe. We deserve safe homes for all.

West London Socialist Party public meeting on Grenfell

Thursday 21 June 7.30pm

Paddington Development Trust (note change of venue)

122 Great Western Studios, 61 Alfred Road, W2 5EU

Tube: Westbourne Park

Organisers' school - an opportunity to educate and discuss

On 10 and 17 June Socialist Party branch organisers' schools were held in Leeds and Cardiff. Sofia Wiking of Leicester West Socialist Party reports on the Leeds event.

"The Tories are only able to stagger on until they're not." Hannah Sell, Socialist Party deputy general secretary, opened the national branch organisers' meeting. The opening session in Cardiff was introduced by Socialist Party general secretary Peter Taaffe.

The political scene could change at any time. We should be prepared for another snap general election within this year.

Over 50 people attended, with 73 in Cardiff the following week. Some were current branch organisers but many were newer members wanting to take on more responsibility within their branches.

Throughout the day, there were discussions on topics such as 'how to intervene in and lead a local campaign' and 'the role of the revolutionary party today'. Events like this are giving branch organisers an opportunity to educate themselves and discuss with one another.

It is important to sometimes step back from the day-to-day activities of campaigns we are involved in to have a look at the bigger picture, and improve our understanding of the fundamentals of what our party believes in.

With this new understanding we should then go back to these campaigns reinforced in our understanding of what needs to be done, and how to take things forward.

It is essential to have schools like this in order to build our party both in numbers, but particularly in strength, by making sure our members are preparing themselves to be ready to lead when mass struggle breaks out.

Ask your regional Socialist Party organiser for details of the next meeting in this series.

Leeds: Disability campaigners force council to retreat

Iain Dalton, Leeds Socialist Party

Parents involved in the Disability Empowerment Action Links (Deal) group have pushed Leeds City Council into 'pausing' its plans to cut special education needs transport to over-16s.

The council will now delay them for a year, as well as guaranteeing that those using the service from this September will be able to continue until the completion of their studies.

This is the second time this year the council has had to u-turn on proposals made by its children's and education services brief. It follows a u-turn on plans to build a 'free school' academy on Fearnville playing fields, with the opposition campaign spearheaded by local Socialist Party members.

Like Fearnville Fields, this u-turn is due to the persistent campaigning efforts of parents and their supporters, particularly those in Unite Community.

While relieved, the Deal campaigners are aware this is a reprieve, not a final victory. Already, along with Unite Community, they have been making links with other parents.

Leeds city councillors should back these demands, but also seek to link up with parents, trade unions and other councils across the country in a mass campaign to force the Tory government to concede the money necessary to maintain and improve this and other services.

Wrenford centre: Stop heartless Tory cuts

Sarah Welch, Portsmouth Socialist Party

Heartless Tory-run West Sussex county council is proposing to close the much-needed Wrenford Centre in Chichester.

Wrenford is a purpose-built centre for people with learning difficulties. My 19-year-old son Matthew uses the centre and it's absolutely fantastic, with amazing facilities.

The council says that the users can instead go to two other day centres - but these are for people with dementia and don't have the same specialist facilities.

Some Wrenford centre users are in their 40s or 50s and have been going to the centre, which opened in 1972, for 20 years or more. Many of them have no relatives to advocate for them.

The council is trying to rush this decision through in July and carry out the closure in April 2019.

We're completely devastated by the plans. But we've started a campaign to stop them.

Support us through our Facebook page at [facebook.com/dontcutusout](https://www.facebook.com/dontcutusout) and email protests to amandajupp@westsussex.gov.uk.

Knowsley council pushed back on cuts and privatisation

Merseyside Socialist Party reporters

The right-wing Labour group in Knowsley council, Merseyside, has been forced into a climbdown on two important measures.

It was their intention to sell off 10% of the public park areas in the borough for housebuilding, and to transfer the adult social care services to an arms-length company initially set up by neighbouring Sefton council, but to be joined also by Halton council; all three being Labour councils!

Both of these measures were opposed by Unison and the other affected unions.

The proposal to sell off parkland also provoked a campaign of public protest, and resulted in Labour losing two council seats in the May elections, one to the Green Party, and one to an independent who specifically campaigned on the parks issue.

The proposal to outsource adult social care was correctly seen by staff as an initial step that would ultimately lead to full privatisation, and on worse terms and conditions.

In Halton, Unison's objections to the transfer proposal resulted in the council pulling out of the scheme at an early stage, whereas Knowsley initially carried on.

Unison initiated a campaign of vigorously lobbying councillors, called a well-attended public meeting in order to involve parents and carers of users of adult social care services, and were joined by the other unions in this.

They also organised a consultative ballot of adult social care members, and on the basis of a 68% turnout, received a 97% vote for strike action!

Faced with such determined opposition, the council backed down, but the political question of the continued right-wing nature of Labour local government in the party's urban heartlands illustrated here, despite the Corbyn leadership, remains unresolved.

Orgreave - no justice, no peace

Joe Diviney and Chris McAndrew, OTJC and Sheffield Socialist Party

On the outskirts of Sheffield on Saturday 16 June, around 300 people assembled under the banners of the Orgreave Truth and Justice Campaign (OTJC); insisting that the government hold a full public inquiry into the events at Orgreave 34 years ago, when miners striking to protect their jobs and communities were beaten up, locked up and fitted up.

On a route circling the new-build housing estate of Waverley (built over the scene of the crime), our procession, which included Orgreave veterans, lined up behind Unite's brass band.

We began by marching through the same terraced street where mounted policemen rode down people attempting to escape an ambush planned by the state during the 1984-85 miners' strike.

Orgreave

On 18 June 1984, at a mass picket outside the Orgreave coking plant near Sheffield, thousands of unsuspecting miners were confronted by thousands of well-prepared policemen. Tooled up with truncheons and riot shields, Maggie's uniformed masters of thuggery chased miners through summer fields, indiscriminately clobbering anyone within their reach.

95 were arrested on trumped-up charges of unlawful assembly and riot. The BBC reversed the order of events in its news footage to corroborate the police cover-up, that violent miners launched an unprovoked attack.

However, the trial collapsed in 1985 because the police's 'evidence' was so obviously fabricated that even the British judiciary weren't fooled. Wrongs remained un-righted over decades of denials. But in 2012 South Yorkshire police referred themselves to the Independent Police Complaints Commission.

Since then the Orgreave Truth and Justice Campaign's demand for a full public inquiry has reverberated round the meeting halls of the labour movement, becoming one of Jeremy Corbyn's manifesto commitments for the 2017 general election.

Obstacles

During the intervening years the OTJC has been busily working its way through Conservative home secretaries. Before Theresa May became better-known as an omnishambles prime minister without a parliamentary majority, as home secretary May proclaimed that the "principal obstacle" to rectifying historical injustices, like Hillsborough, was not "the passage of time" but the fact that "due process was obstructed".

On Halloween 2016, May's successor Amber Rudd tried her utmost to prove conclusively that obstruction was indeed the greatest barrier to justice, by making her ghoulish announcement that an inquiry into the truth about Orgreave was unwarranted because "there were no deaths".

Unsurprisingly, nobody's been deterred by this embarrassingly transparent effort to patch-up a three-decade old establishment stitch-up. It's an open question whether Rudd even read the OTJC's legal submission; but Rudd's claim that she "didn't see" the leaked Windrush memo hints that paperwork isn't exactly her strongpoint.

If Rudd's replacement Sajid Javid happened to be labouring under the misapprehension that the OTJC would conveniently go away, Saturday 16 June's defiant demonstration was a shot across the bows that'll deprive him of his delusions.

Orgreave is a Conservative Party conspiracy whose days are definitely numbered. Earlier this month the Scottish Parliament announced an independent review into the policing of the miners' strike. Following suit, the Welsh Assembly has also decided to write to the home secretary requesting an independent review.

The long-awaited full public inquiry into the events at Orgreave is fixed firmly within our sights.

Film: The Young Karl Marx (2017)

Inspirational account of young Marx's political battles

Séamus Smyth, Birmingham South East Socialist Party

Director Raoul Peck takes us on a voyage through the life of 'The Young Karl Marx'. At first a follower of the idealist philosopher Hegel, he becomes fed up with just interpreting the world - and by the end is writing the Communist Manifesto.

Yet again, Peck has delivered an amazing contribution to the world of cinema. From 'Profit and Nothing But' in 2001 to 'I Am Not Your Negro' in 2016, he brings a refreshing approach to class struggle.

We see a passionate Marx (August Diehl) going through enraging exile, and meeting his collaborator Friedrich Engels. He finds love in his wife Jenny (Vicky Krieps), who continuously supports her husband in his struggle against the exploitation of the working class and the capitalist system.

A detailed screenplay by Pascal Bonitzer explores the era's philosophical changes. It shows how ideas develop and find expression through a changing social and economic environment.

Marx and Engels challenge the utopian socialist leadership of the 'League of the Just' and we see its transformation into the scientific socialist 'Communist League', with an amazing performance from Stefan Konarske as Engels.

Marx criticises Pierre-Joseph Proudhon's anarchist ideas which oppose political action, contained in 'The Philosophy of Poverty', with a response titled 'The Poverty of Philosophy'.

He then takes on fellow Communist League leader August Willich, in an intense argument against acts of terrorism as a method of socialist struggle, following the failure of the revolutions of 1848.

The film shows the severe poverty Marx lived in, and how it helped to drive him to fight for change in society. The same principles Marx held call out to us today: for socialism to overthrow capitalism in a workers' revolution.

Be the viewer socialist or not, this film is a masterpiece in its own right. It will inflame and inspire anyone - in particular those most passionate about the brutality of capitalism, and who want to fight for socialist change.

Theatre: Marx in Soho

Rousing, funny take on Marxism - from the man himself

Bridget Taylor, Manchester Socialist Party

For socialists, a one-man show about Karl Marx might not suggest a night of revelations. But seeing Bob Weick performing Howard Zinn's play 'Marx in Soho' in Manchester on 9 June showed this was a misconception.

Marx has accidentally been returned to Soho, New York - rather than Soho, London, where he requested to go - because of an administrative error in Heaven.

In conversation with the audience, he takes us through some of the events of his life. His exile to London, his daughter Eleanor's precocity (she used to smoke cigars and drink wine), through to writing Capital - and his wife's low opinion of it.

Throughout we are reminded of Marx the person, with his real human relationships. This is the prism through which aspects of his thought are drawn out.

He describes actually wrestling on the floor with Mikhail Bakunin, an anarchist contemporary of his, because of their differences in opinion over the 'dictatorship of the proletariat' - a democratic workers' state that can defend against capitalist restoration.

Marx argues this is a necessary stage in the destruction of both capitalism and the state itself. This is a central difference between Marxists and anarchists, and the point is made here in a memorable way.

Marx's famous statement that he is "not a Marxist" is another key lesson - some would-be followers had turned his ideas into crude dogmas. Marxism is a tool for changing the world, and should be seen not as a theory to be endlessly argued over in the abstract, but a set of ideas to be fully worked out in practice through class struggle.

This seems to be the main message: that Marx should not be idolised - he was a human being with human foibles - but neither should we let his personal circumstances detract from the importance of his thought.

He talks at length about suffering from painful boils on his backside. Some mainstream historians, through cod psychoanalysis, like to suggest this was the root cause of Marx's revolutionary fervour. Anything other

than acknowledge it was his experience of the capitalist system.

The play ends with Marx on his soap box, making a rousing speech about the importance of uniting workers across national borders. This struck a chord with the recent rise in refugees and the need to counteract divisive nationalism fostered by demagogues like Trump.

The last words point to this ongoing relevance: "Jesus couldn't make it - but Marx did."

- International tour dates at marxinsoho.org
-

The Socialist inbox

Do you have something to say?

Send your news, views and criticism in not more than 150 words to Socialist Postbox, PO Box 24697, London E11 1YD, phone 020 8988 8771 or email editors@socialistparty.org.uk.

We reserve the right to shorten and edit letters. Don't forget to give your name, address and phone number. Confidentiality will be respected if requested.

Views of letter writers do not necessarily match those of the Socialist Party.

Blairites attack firefighters

Will you make sure to inform me when any Labour councillors announce that future councillors will be on less money, and have to undertake duties which current councillors do not, as they are trying to do to firefighters?

Pete McNally, Welland, Worcestershire

'Intergenerational fairness'

In the opinion of the National Pensioners Convention (Gloucester, Avon and Somerset region), the recent Resolution Foundation report on "intergenerational fairness" seems to hold 'rich' pensioners responsible for the problems faced by young people.

This is the same dangerous nonsense which the government has been peddling in order to avoid responsibility for the damage its austerity policies are causing in all sections of society. The Resolution Foundation is chaired by Tory ex-minister David Willetts, so this is hardly surprising - but it's disturbing to see that the Trade Union Congress has also put its name to the report.

The report rightly points to the escalating crises of social care, housing and insecure employment. But these problems exist across generations, and will not be solved by pitting one age group against another.

The report calls for working pensioners to pay additional National Insurance to fund the crisis in social care, and for a grant of £10,000 for every 25-year-old to help them with housing.

Promising 25-year-olds a bung of £10,000 to solve their housing problems is a vote-buying gimmick. It is the lack of social and affordable housing, unfettered private rents and property prices, and low-paid and insecure employment which currently put house purchase out of the reach of most young people.

Claude Mickleson, Lydney, Gloucestershire

Trump's economics

A recent feature in the Economist (26 May) discussed the US economy under Trump. Noticeably, the article started by confirming our analysis of the economy in the post-economic crash period:

"Comparing 2009-17 with an average of the past half-century, post-tax profits were 31% higher as a share of GDP. But they were spent on share buybacks and cosy market-consolidating mergers rather than investment, which was 4% lower as a share of GDP than its 50-year average. Pay was 10% lower."

Trump claims he will respond to this situation and "make America great again" by restoring the position of US industry, particularly through boosting investments. But the tax breaks he has introduced for the rich and corporations are mostly being used in the same way as pro-business incentives under Obama: to pile on the profits even further.

But the article does go on to point out that business investment in the first quarter of 2018 rose by 7% compared to 2017, and 19% for big firms. But almost 50% of this is accounted by the top five US tech firms, which have generally been cash-rich - Amazon, Alphabet (Google), Apple, Intel, and Microsoft.

Trump's policies, including his recent tariff threats on steel and aluminium, won't create a renaissance of industrial jobs, but at best a tech and automation boom that will mean any new industrial capacity is largely automated.

American workers looking for decent jobs need instead to join the growing \$15-an-hour minimum wage movement - which our US co-thinkers Socialist Alternative have been at the forefront of - and the struggle to build a mass socialist force that can fight for the democratic public ownership of the economy needed to guarantee jobs for all.

Iain Dalton, Leeds

Waterworks and pensions

Fed up of getting ripped off by the privatised utilities? No wonder 83% of us support nationalisation of water. But please spare a thought for the workers at United Utilities who are also getting ripped off by absentee shareholders greedy to increase their profits at the expense of workers' pensions.

These workers, who are out in all weathers, are currently having to strike or work to rule simply to defend their agreed pension scheme. A company attack on the 'defined benefit' scheme would see some workers losing thousands of pounds a year in retirement while wealthy shareholders see their dividends rise even more.

The inevitable company attempt to plead poverty is laughable - only in November they announced a 13% half-yearly increase in profits to £342 million.

The outcome of this battle will affect us all, because it is part of a generalised assault on workers' pensions by big business - which will leave the next generation more dependent on the tax-funded state pension, set to be the worst in the developed world.

The OECD warns that a typical retired worker in Britain will receive a state pension and other benefits worth only about 29% of their previous wage, compared to an average of 63% elsewhere. Only with a decent private pension will this come up to 60% - still below average.

Companies and politicians have used rising life expectancy as an excuse to justify their attacks on pensions and increase of the retirement age to 68. But this has now peaked and is going into reverse for some social groups due to austerity and attacks on the NHS and social care.

Professor Dorling warns that if the trend continues, people in the UK will have the lowest life expectancy in Europe, with a larger proportion dying before, or soon after, receiving a pension.

One thing is for sure. Without these workers supplying us with clean drinking water and safely taking away our sewage, our life expectancy would be decades lower. So let's all give them our support and their unions our solidarity.

Brent Kennedy, Carlisle Trade Union Council, chair

University gender inequality

During my time in the further education sector I was never consciously aware of my gender, I worked hard and my career progressed. I had of course read about gender inequality in education but I had not experienced this first-hand. I knew about the glass ceiling but had never hit it.

My experience changed significantly when I became a member of staff at a university. Suddenly I became aware of the fact that I wasn't being treated the same as my male counterparts. Perhaps naively I expected to move on with my career based on merit and hard work as had been my experience to date.

The University and College Union 2017 report 'The Gender Pay Gap in Higher Education' found that although women outnumber men at early career points such as research assistants, researchers and lecturers, there is a clear and continuous decline in the proportion of women as seniority increases.

Only 39% of women reach the position of senior lecturer, principal lecturer, reader or principal research fellow. Less than one-quarter of professors are women. 80% of vice-chancellors are male.

As I write this I am the only woman on an all-male management team. I have to shout louder to be heard. I have to fight against a system that does not provide an even platform for women.

This is what has driven me to set up a university women's network at my place of work, independent of the university but recognised by the university as a staff network. The aim of the network is to promote the activities, stories and successes of women; create a forum for women to discuss and share experiences of working in higher education; and coordinate developmental activities.

The network will be launched at an event on 26 June. Already we have 40 women from across the university signed up to attend and I suspect a lot more will join us. Together we have the strength and capacity to fight a system that works against us every day of our working lives.

A Welsh higher education worker

Audio version of this document

[To hear an audio version of this document click here.](#)

What the Socialist Party stands for

The Socialist Party fights for socialism – a democratic society run for the needs of all and not the profits of a few. We also oppose every cut, fighting in our day-to-day campaigning for every possible improvement for working class people.

The organised working class has the potential power to stop the cuts and transform society.

As capitalism dominates the globe, the struggle for genuine socialism must be international.

The Socialist Party is part of the Committee for a Workers' International (CWI), a socialist international that organises in over 40 countries.

Our demands include:

Public services

- No to ALL cuts in jobs, public services and benefits. Defend our pensions.
- No to privatisation and the Private Finance Initiative (PFI). Renationalise all privatised utilities and services, with compensation paid only on the basis of proven need.
- Fully fund all services and run them under accountable, democratic committees that include representatives of service workers and users.
- Free, publicly run, good quality education, available to all at any age. Abolish university tuition fees now and introduce a living grant. No to academies and 'free schools'!
- A socialist NHS to provide for everyone's health needs - free at the point of use and under democratic control. Kick out private contractors!
- Keep council housing publicly owned. For a massive building programme of publicly owned housing, on an environmentally sustainable basis, to provide good quality homes with low rents.

Work and income

- Trade union struggle to increase the minimum wage to £10 an hour without exemptions as an immediate step towards a real living wage. For an annual increase in the minimum wage linked to average earnings.
- All workers, including part-timers, temps, casual and migrant workers to have trade union rates of pay, employment protection, and sickness and holiday rights from day one of employment.
- An immediate 50% increase in the state retirement pension, as a step towards a living pension.
- Reject 'workfare'. For the right to decent benefits, education, training, or a job, without compulsion.
- Scrap the anti-trade union laws! For fighting trade unions, democratically controlled by their members. Full-time union officials to be regularly elected and receive no more than a worker's wage. Support the National Shop Stewards Network.
- A maximum 35-hour week with no loss of pay.

Environment

- Major research and investment into replacing fossil fuels with renewable energy and into ending the problems of early obsolescence and unrecycled waste.
- Public ownership of the energy generating industries. No to nuclear power. No to Trident.
- A democratically planned, low-fare, publicly-owned transport system, as part of an overall plan against environmental pollution.

Rights

- Oppose discrimination on the grounds of race, gender, disability, sexuality, age, and all other forms of prejudice.
- Repeal all laws that trample over civil liberties. For the right to protest! End police harassment.
- Defend abortion rights. For a woman's right to choose when and whether to have children.
- For the right to asylum. No to racist immigration laws.
- For the right to vote at 16.

Mass workers' party

- For a mass workers' party drawing together workers, young people and activists from workplace, community, environmental, anti-racist and anti-cuts campaigns, to provide a fighting, political alternative to the pro-big business parties.
- Fight for Labour to be transformed into such a party: deselect the Blairites!

Socialism and internationalism

- No to imperialist wars and occupations.
- Tax the super-rich! For a socialist government to take into public ownership the top 150 companies and the banking system that dominate the British economy, and run them under democratic working-class control and management. Compensation to be paid only on the basis of proven need.
- A democratic socialist plan of production based on the interests of the overwhelming majority of people, and in a way that safeguards the environment.
- No to the bosses' neoliberal European Union and single market. For a socialist Europe and a socialist world!

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