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# NHS: underfunded, under attack

## Kick out the privatisers

## Make the super-rich pay

Caroline Vincent, Leicester East Socialist Party

Surprise, surprise. Theresa May's so-called birthday pre-sent to the NHS - an extra £20 billion a year by 2023 - isn't quite the generous gesture that it seems.

In fact, it's hopelessly inadequate. So much so, that hot on the heels of this promise comes the announcement that 17 procedures currently available on the NHS now face the axe.

These "unnecessary procedures" include tonsillectomies, grommets for glue ear and treatments to ease pain. To reduce spending by £200 million, patients will be told that they have a responsibility to the NHS not to request 'useless' treatment! These procedures may have been deemed futile by NHS bosses on a cost-cutting mission, but they are treatments that improve lives.

May's pledge of a 3.4% increase in funding is insufficient. According to the National Audit Office it will only keep the health service limping along in its current, intolerably overstretched state. Far greater financial support is needed for the service to recuperate.

Local council leaders have slammed May's 'gift' as meaningless, as it is unaccompanied by an offer of extra money for social care, where there will be a funding gap of at least £2 billion by 2020. Underfunded council services, particularly public health and adult social care, directly impact on hospitals. Not only does it make it harder to keep patients from being admitted in the first place, it also makes it difficult to return home.

5 July marks the birthday of the NHS, and it's also my dad's. This year he'll be spending it at the Bristol Royal Infirmary. This isn't because he needs to be in hospital, rather it's due to lack of provision for him to receive palliative care in the community at the moment. Although he's receiving excellent, compassionate care at the BRI, he would be much happier at home with his family.

There is no doubt that both the health service and social care are in dire need of far more money in order to function, and to meet the needs of an ageing population. But the Tories' increased investment is insufficient and increasing our taxes to pay for it while the super-rich and big corporations avoid paying taxes is unjust and unacceptable.

Nationalisation of health services, including 'big pharma', alongside the banks and mega-corporations - under democratic workers' control and management - would release more than enough resources for an expanded NHS to give high quality treatment and care to all who need it.

- Feature: NHS at 70 - a fight for our lives!

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## NHS at 70: a fight for our lives!

Nick Chaffey, Socialist Party Southern regional secretary

The NHS is 70. Over the decades it has saved the lives of millions, eased our pain and seen dramatic advances in heart transplants, cancer care and IVF, for example. All provided free at the point of need, funded from general taxation. A huge social gain for the working class.

But 70 years on, the NHS faces a fight for its survival, battered by more than a decade of austerity and privatisation. Every effort must be made to protect and enhance the NHS on a permanent basis. As we build that fightback we must arm ourselves with the lessons of how the NHS was won and how it can be protected on a permanent basis.

On Thursday 5 July 1948, Aneurin Bevan, Minister for Health in Labour's first ever majority government, founded the NHS. This was no gift by liberal capitalists but the result of mass struggles of the working class over the preceding decades and of the election victory of Labour in 1945, at its roots then a mass party of the working class.

The election of the Labour government and its reform programme was a reflection of the enormous class anger built up since World War One, the blows of a prolonged period of economic crisis, the industrial struggles of the 1920s - including the revolutionary general strike in 1926 - the experiences of the economic crash of the 1930s, and the return to the horror of war in 1939. None of this had delivered Lloyd George's famous post-war promise in 1918 of building a "land fit for heroes".

It was a period without healthcare and without welfare benefits. Families were subjected to the persecution of the "Means Test", at a time during the great depression of the 1930s when unemployment in some industrial areas reached 70%.

In 1915 145,000 children under four died. Diseases of poverty - tuberculosis and rickets - stalked working class communities. Campaigners for better maternity care 'The Workers' Birth Control Group' had the slogan: "It's four times more dangerous to bear a child than to go down a mine."

This was also a time of revolution which saw the rise of the working class and the growth of the Labour Party, against the background of the Russian Revolution of 1917 which inspired the working class in Britain and internationally to the vision of a new socialist world.

In 1918 the Labour Party adopted into its constitution its socialist Clause 4: "To secure for the workers by hand or by brain the full fruits of their industry and the most equitable distribution thereof that may be possible upon the basis of the common ownership of the means of production, distribution and exchange, and the best obtainable system of popular administration and control of each industry or service."

While the leadership of the Labour Party continued to see their goal as working for reforms within the framework of capitalism, the mass ranks of the trade unions were looking towards the revolutionary change witnessed in Russia.

Left-wing doctors within the Socialist Medical Association drew up detailed plans for a socialised health service, and in 1934 a motion at Labour Party conference was passed calling for a national health service.

In 1942 the Beveridge report was produced and outlined: "A health service providing full preventative and curative treatment to every kind of citizen... without an economic barrier at any point... is the ideal plan." Sections of the ruling class, including Winston Churchill, were firmly opposed to reforms as unaffordable. Others recognised the mood among the working class. Tory MP Quintin Hogg, later a cabinet minister, warned in the 1943 parliamentary debate on Beveridge's report: "If you do not give the people social reform, they are going to give you social revolution."

World War Two revealed that the capitalist economic crisis that drove the imperialist powers into the bloodbath of World War One, had not been resolved. Out of these devastating wars and the experience of fascism, Europe faced a revolutionary wave threatening capitalist power. Revolt was brewing across Europe and in Britain too.

## **A difficult birth**

After the sacrifices of the war, the working class was determined not to return to these pre-war conditions. Despite expectations that the war-hero Churchill would be re-elected, he was swept away by a Labour landslide in 1945. As Labour MPs gathered in parliament, this radical mood was reflected in their singing of the famous socialist anthem the Red Flag.

Despite the colossal nature of the reform, it was not an easy birth for the NHS and from the very outset it was constantly under attack. Those who gained most from private healthcare were opposed to the NHS from the start. Consultants in the BMA doctors' association threatened a strike and Bevan conceded that GPs would retain the freedom to run their practices as small businesses: "I stuffed their mouths with gold." From the outset the running of the NHS was left in the hands of senior managers and consultants, with no democratic control by healthworkers through their trade unions or the local community.

Alongside the founding of the NHS, council housing was built, welfare benefits were introduced, and coal, oil, gas, electricity, transport, the Bank of England and later iron and steel were nationalised. The capitalists fearful for the survival of their system were forced to make concessions from above to prevent revolution from below.

This represented a huge advance for the working class. But while these gains were enthusiastically welcomed, Labour left the economic reins of power - the banks, industrial monopolies and big corporations - in the hands of the capitalists. There was no attempt to implement the outlines of Clause 4 and a socialist economy.

Despite the NHS becoming an established fact, supported by Tory governments as well as Labour, health inequality continued during the post-war boom, reflecting the class inequalities that remained. But as the power of workers and the organised trade union movement pushed up wages, improved housing and built the NHS, life expectancy increased, diseases of poverty fell, child mortality decreased. It showed what was possible to transform the lives of the mass of the working class.

As the post-war boom came to end, it was the Thatcher government that sought to protect the profits of big business by attacking the gains of the working class and turning back the clock of history. Health authorities were abolished and the NHS Community Care Act set up NHS Trusts and an internal market system within the NHS.

These attacks met with resistance from healthworkers, despite the weakness of the right-wing trade union leadership. In 1988 the Tory government was forced to water down some of their plans to attack the NHS when nurses and other health workers took strike action, which was backed by action by miners, shipbuilders and other industrial workers.

At the time, the Socialist's predecessor, Militant, called for a one-day general strike rather than just the demonstration and 'day of action' which the trade union leaders called for. In spite of the lack of leadership, there was a 100,000-strong demonstration through London on 5 March 1988, where workers showed their support for the health workers and the NHS.

Thatcher's rule was marked by struggles of the working class in defence of jobs - struggles that potentially could have won with more determined leadership from the trade unions and the Labour Party. The year-long miners' strike, while defeated, demonstrated the heroic willingness of workers to struggle. Victories were scored in Liverpool with Militant supporters leading the city council to win government funding for its house building programme. And Thatcher's reign was brought to an end by the Militant-led Anti-Poll Tax Federation army of up to 18 million non-payers.

While the Tories were finally ousted in 1997, Labour under Tony Blair was now an openly pre-capitalist party, having ditched Clause 4 in 1995, expelled socialists and attacked the influence of the trade unions.

By sticking to Tory spending limits in 1997, Blair's government starved the NHS of cash. It also pursued policies of privatising the NHS by rapidly expanding extortionate Private Finance Initiative (PFI) contracts through health trusts. It also maintained the Tory anti-union laws to hamstring workers fighting back.

While Blair's chancellor Gordon Brown famously boasted of ending the capitalist cycle of boom and bust, the Socialist Party consistently warned of the looming economic crisis and the tasks facing the working class to defend its interests and build support for socialism.

When that crisis broke in 2007-08 the banks were bailed out by New Labour, not in the interests of the working class to carry through socialist policies but to protect the profits of capitalism.

The Tory governments since 2010 have accelerated the process of cuts and privatisation that has seen the worst winter crisis in 2017, with thousands of cancelled operations. Tories bemoan the impossible demands placed on the NHS, the limited funds available, all to prepare the public for acceptance of charges and further privatisation.

Searching for profits, public services are a tempting source of guarantees. Now hidden behind the NHS logo are the big corporations like Virgin Care, Care UK - vultures profiting from healthcare. Drug companies eat huge portions of the NHS budget. What if these contracts were scrapped? What if the PFI contracts were ripped up? What if Big Pharma were nationalised?

## **Socialist policies**

It is clear that the NHS is not now what it began as. Its survival is in peril. The central conclusion to be drawn from the last 70 years is that any gains won from the capitalists will be taken back over time if the capitalist system is not abolished and replaced by socialism. That is, a system of democratic planning where the 'commanding heights' - the biggest banks and monopolies that dominate the economy - are taken into public ownership.

Struggles continue across the country to defend the NHS, and successes have been won. The Socialist Party has played a leading role in saving Leicester's Glenfield Heart Centre and the Huddersfield Royal Infirmary. Alongside the strikes of junior doctors and Barts Trust ancillary workers, this shows what is possible.

In the battle ahead, we must mobilise to defend every job, every ward, every bed from cuts. But we must also link that struggle to the idea of changing society - not just to save the NHS on a permanent basis but to deliver an economy that meets the needs of the working class. That means decent jobs, a living wage, benefits and pensions, affordable housing and free education.

Corbyn's general election manifesto in 2017 reflected these goals, and the vote reflected the desire for change. But that potential, if it is to be realised, has to become an active mass movement of millions of working people, of healthworkers and patients, a mass workers' party. Mobilised on demonstrations, strikes and picket lines, a spirit of solidarity and confidence can grow in the possibilities of change.

Any such party should be built around a democratic labour and trade union movement, in a federal structure that embraces all socialists - including the Socialist Party - and the central role of the trade unions. Meetings should be able to discuss and decide on policies, programme and strategy. On this basis support can be won for the ideas of a new socialist society.

This means a decisive battle to introduce mandatory reselection to remove the Blairite pro-capitalist fifth column and ensure socialist candidates stand with Corbyn.

A socialist government would tear up the PFI contracts and nationalise the pharmaceutical industry. Compensation would be paid only on the basis of proven need.

This measure alone would release funds for rebuilding the NHS. A socialist society would also mean the nationalisation of the banking system and other major sections of the economy. Real democratic controls could be introduced with elected committees of health workers, trade unions, community representatives, and representatives of local and national government.

As in the 1940s, the capitalists once again fear for the survival of their system as an anti-capitalist mood grows in society. Our task this time is to ensure a decisive socialist victory.

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# **Thousands march against NHS cuts and privatisation**

Thousands of NHS campaigners and workers marched through central London in defence of our health service on 30 June. Carrying Socialist Party NHS SOS placards, local campaign banners and others, they chanted 'save our NHS!'

The most lively and biggest contingents were the Save Our NHS Leicestershire campaign - built out of the successful fight to save Glenfield Heart Unit led by Socialist Party members - a group of striking NHS workers fighting privatisation in Wigan, and the Refugee Rights campaign which demands free healthcare for all.

Mike Forster, Socialist Party member and chair of another successful NHS campaign at the Huddersfield Royal Infirmary hospital, spoke at the opening rally.

He said: "The reason Jeremy Hunt has stepped in to stop the closure is due to the pressure our mass campaign has exerted. Mass pressure will win the fight to save our health service. Private Finance Initiatives (PFI) are strangling the NHS and our campaign says it's time to kick out all the privatisers!"

Jeremy Corbyn also attacked privatisation saying: "Think it through, you and I pay our taxes because we want a health service for everybody, I don't pay my taxes for someone to rip off the public and squirrel the profits away."

Corbyn needs to be clear that Labour would end all PFI deals and other privatisations - which means fighting to build a mass movement to get the Tories out and clearing out the pro-privatisation Blairites from the Labour Party.

More speeches greeted marchers at the end on Whitehall. NHS worker after NHS worker outlined the problems facing the health service.

One former NHS mental health nurse and Socialist Party member Helen O'Connor, speaking on behalf of the GMB union, outlined how NHS workers can fight back - by striking against the pay cap. GMB is the only health union to reject the current NHS pay offer and is balloting for action.

The celebratory mood for the 70th anniversary of the NHS and the obvious care for the service was enthralling to see. However, the demo was only a fraction of what it could have been - in terms of size and impact.

Even on the day of the demonstration Socialist Party members met countless people passing through central London who said they would have participated if they had known in advance.

As we pointed out in last week's editorial, the TUC, which officially backed the demonstration, didn't even have the event on its website. None of the eleven unions that backed it had done enough to mobilise and spread the word to their members.

And the political message from the demonstration was not sufficiently clear or bold. The speeches were dominated by cheering for the NHS and recounting personal stories rather than putting forward a plan for action.

Without such a strategy, the huge anger and determination to fight for the NHS by both health workers and working class people in general - which was so clear on the march - could dissipate.

- See '[After the 30 June NHS demo - prepare for a mass movement](#)'

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## Welsh Labour NHS hypocrisy at Tredegar rally

121 copies of the Socialist was sold on the march and rally in Tredegar (Aneurin Bevan's hometown), south Wales on 1 July to commemorate the founding of the NHS. 1,000 people rallied to hear speeches from leading Welsh Labour politicians.

The speakers denounced Tory attacks on the NHS in England but unsurprisingly glossed over the cuts to NHS provision in Wales. "After listening to them you would think they were talking about a different country", was the comment of one marcher.

Labour health minister Vaughan Gething was heckled by a person at the rally: "You try walking 20 miles to visit someone in hospital on a Sunday", a reference to Welsh Labour's health cuts and lack of transport.

Unfortunately Jeremy Corbyn also extolled the NHS in Wales. This will not help him win the support of workers in Wales who are angry at health cuts and A&E closures.

**Dave Reid, Socialist Party Wales**

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## **Editorial of the Socialist, issue 1002**

# **NSSN conference 2018: we can rebuild a fighting trade union movement**

This year's conference of the National Shop Stewards Network (NSSN - conference details below) takes place at a pivotal time for the trade union movement. Recent figures show that union membership and strikes are at historically low levels.

The effect on workers is disastrous. We have witnessed the growth of precarious employment through temporary contracts, agency working and increasingly the most parasitic of all, the gig economy. No wonder that wage inequality between bosses and workers is at pre-war levels.

The drop in days lost in strike action is partially explained by the introduction last year of the Tory (anti) Trade Union Act. Its undemocratic voting thresholds mean that the unions are the only organisation in society where a simple majority no longer suffices. There would barely be an elected councillor if they had to abide by the same rules!

Many union leaders will argue that this means that national strike action is now impossible as at least 50% of union members have to vote. However, they bear the responsibility for not mobilising the full strength of the union movement to defeat the act before it became law. Not one national demonstration was organised by the Trade Union Congress (TUC), merely an indoor rally where not every seat was booked, showing their lack of confidence and seriousness.

A serious struggle should have been launched, linking the need to fight this new anti-union law with the Tory austerity offensive that has seen up to a million public sector jobs lost, the NHS and education in crisis and a lost decade for workers' incomes. A mass movement of demonstrations and actions were entirely possible that would have made it impossible for a divided and crisis-ridden Tory government to impose the new law.

The NSSN was initiated in 2006 by the RMT transport union and its late general secretary Bob Crow. He saw the need for a rank-and-file union organisation to be the 'hot breath on the back of the neck of the union leaders.'

Over the last 12 years, the NSSN has been able to act as a lever on the union leaders, especially during the public sector pensions struggle of 2011, which culminated in the 2 million-strong strike that November (N30). It shook the government.

But when the action was cut short by the TUC and the likes of Unison's Dave Prentis, the Tories were able to unload their brutal cuts. The NSSN had campaigned for mass co-ordinated strike action and N30 was effectively a public sector general strike. The NSSN then worked alongside PCS Left Unity when it called a conference of the union left of over 500 activists and reps in early 2012 to attempt to retrieve the strikes.

The movement of 2011 was kicked off by the mammoth 26 March TUC demonstration of 750,000 workers. In May this year, perhaps less than 30,000 took part in the TUC 'new deal for workers' march.

But this is in no way because of a decrease in workers' anger or frustration over the last seven years - quite the opposite! At its rally at TUC congress last September, the NSSN called on the TUC and the unions to call a demonstration on the theme of breaking the Tory pay cap, which had the potential to be massive and could then have opened the way to strike action across the public sector.

Instead, the union leaders called it six months too late, when most of the different public sector pay claims had been settled separately and the mood dissipated. Nonetheless, the fact that the Tories have lifted the 1% pay cap in the NHS and local government, while still below inflation, is a sign of their weakness and their fear of the angry mood that is building up. They found £4.2 billion for the NHS pay deal alone, showing just a glimpse of what could be won if real pressure was applied. This is reflected in a number of bitter disputes that have been breaking out, often on a localised scale. The RMT has been taking strike action for over two years against driver-only operation, for example.

## **Escalate strike action**

Interestingly, while the number of days lost to strikes has declined, there appears to be a move away from periodic one-day stoppages towards more sustained action. This is in part due to an unintended consequence of one section of the Trade Union Act in timing out disputes after six months, so encouraging workers to escalate the action quicker. It is also because workers have come to understand that this type of action has not been enough to build action and win victories.

This was a major factor in the UCU pensions strikes, when members took 14 days of action in a month and forced back the employers, rebelling against the union's leadership who wanted to agree a resolution. That dispute, along with the Communication Workers Union in Royal Mail, disproved the theory that national strike ballots couldn't be won.

NSSN conference will meet in the middle of PCS's national strike ballot on pay as the Tories look to maintain the pay ceiling in the civil service. The whole of the union movement must get behind PCS, which has long been a target for the Tories because of its role in building the N30 strike. The NSSN will stand shoulder to shoulder with PCS in winning their ballot with sufficient turnout and then for the action that will be needed to win their pay claim. Such a victory over the Tories could give many other workers the confidence that it's possible to fight and win.

The potential for rebuilding the trade unions is enormous. There have been significant struggles over the last few years by workers who are in traditionally trade union-organised workplaces, but also new, younger groups of workers organising action. From junior doctors to Deliveroo drivers, these disputes show that mass, national, coordinated action is inherent in the current situation. If a leadership up to the task can be built, such action can bring down the weak and divided Tories.

- National Shop Stewards Conference annual conference, Saturday 7 July, 11am-3pm, Conway Hall, 25 Red Lion Square, London, WC1R 4RL

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# **Socialism 2018: a weekend of discussion and debate on socialist ideas to change the world**

10-11 November, central London. These are some of the issues we want to grapple with at Socialism 2018:

## **Austerity**

is destroying lives, driving down our living conditions while the rich get richer. The Tories aim to continue it forever.

Can we get rid of the Tory government? Can councils actually set a no-cuts budget? Do they have any power to resist?

## Trump

is hated - but how can he be stopped? What will be the consequences of Trump's America First policy? Will we go from trade war to military war? Will he cause a new world economic crisis?

## Corbyn

was raised to the Labour leadership by people hungry for an end to austerity. And yet every step he takes is blocked by the right wing in the Labour Party. Can the Labour Party be transformed into a party of the working class?

## Racism

must be countered whenever it emerges. But how? What kind of organisation is the Football Lads Alliance? How can they be stopped? Why did Malcolm X come to the conclusion that you can't have capitalism without racism?

## Brexit

has split the Tories down the middle. Does the EU single market act as an obstacle to implementing socialist policies? Is a socialist Brexit possible? What will Brexit mean for Northern Ireland? Can the EU ever act in workers' interests?

## Marxism

says that philosophers have interpreted the world - but the point is to change it! 200 years after the birth of Karl Marx does Marxism still help us in the fight for socialism?

## Trade unions

have over six million members but what can they do to defend workers in the gig economy, zero-hour contract workers in retail and hospitality, refugees? What is their role in Austerity Britain? Is there a crisis of leadership?

## Women

are rising up across the world against sexism. But how can liberation from oppression be won? How does the fight for trans rights connect? Can we build a movement to fight for all?

- [20% off tickets now socialism2018.net](http://socialism2018.net)

## Keynote speakers will include

- Peter Taaffe, Socialist Party general secretary and former editor of Militant
- Hannah Sell, Socialist Party deputy general secretary and author of Socialism in the 21st Century
- Kshama Sawant, Socialist councillor in Seattle in the US, a leader in the first victory for a \$15 an hour minimum wage, now fighting to tax Amazon
- ...as well as trade union leaders, anti-cuts campaigners and more

# Issue 1000 extra 1,000 sales target smashed!

Inspired by reaching the milestone of [1,000 issues of the Socialist](#), sellers across England and Wales have responded magnificently by smashing through the 1,000 extra sales target for issue 1000.

Helped by the beautiful summer weather, as well as the clear socialist policies to defend and improve the NHS, branch after branch of the Socialist Party has seen increased sales helped by new and different activities.

Top of the sales chart is Swansea and West Wales branch which sold 245 copies, more than doubling their initial target of 100, with Waltham Forest branch in east London coming second with 154. Southampton branch sold 107 from all their campaign stalls.

For several of our members this was their first activity. One member in Cardiff East branch, inspired by their success in selling eleven at their local hospital, now wants to do a weekly stall there.

Many areas report that their stalls during this week-long campaign have been some of their best ever, such as the stall at the Monument in Newcastle.

Mansfield members sold 38 including ten on the Chatsworth ward at Mansfield community hospital, which was recently saved from closure by a campaign led by Socialist Party members.

Our members in Gloucester on their tour of Gloucestershire sold 30 and in West Cheshire our members sold 17 on their campaign stall - an increase on their usual campaign activity.

Every sale that our members have carried out has ensured that we got a tremendous response to our 1000th issue.

Can your branch continue this excellent work by holding one or two extra stalls every week?

**Chris Newby, the Socialist sales organiser**

## Stoke

Stoke had a brilliant response to the 1000th issue of our paper, starting with four pre-ordered from an estate sale the week before.

On 23 June we had a protest against NHS cuts. We had a stall out for three hours which sold 50 copies of the Socialist.

We had another stall out on Tuesday and sold another 30. We were determined to sell 100 over the week so we also had stalls on 25 June selling another 17, taking us to 101 in total as well as raising £46.51 for the fighting fund.

**Andy Bentley**

## Swansea and West Wales

Swansea and West Wales branch on 21 June planned in detail our 1000th issue campaign with a target of 100 papers, £100 fighting fund and five join cards filled in.

Our meeting on 28 June was euphoric at smashing our targets after a week of determined campaigning on the NHS every day by over a dozen members we celebrated with a victory cake decorated with a red flag.

We did campaign stalls and station sales in Swansea, Llanelli, Port Talbot and Neath each day as well as a car boot sale.

Our final tally was 230 paper sales, £424 fighting fund and four join cards filled in. Phew!

Alec Thraves

## East London

During a station paper sale one woman said she'd never read our paper before and was interested to find out what we were about and see what she thought. Just goes to show, first of all, the importance of the paper as a vehicle for our ideas but also of persevering, as comrades have done with issue 1000 sales!

Mary Finch

- See ['Thousands snap up issue 1000 of the Socialist'](#) for more great sales reports

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## Spycops inquiry - dancing to the police's tune

Lois Austin, Socialist Party and Youth against Racism in Europe core participant at the undercover policing inquiry

Despite being [established three years ago](#) with a proposal to finish in 2018, the undercover policing inquiry - to which I am a core participant - is now scheduled to finish in 2023.

The inquiry is still in its preliminary stages. We are now on our third home secretary and second inquiry chair.

The initial promise that inquiry would operate on a "presumption of openness" has been rapidly reeled in by the new chair, John Mitting.

His appointment was greeted by all of us with concern, but those concerns have turned to anger.

He has proved to be generally accepting of all submissions from the Metropolitan Police in relation to their officers requiring absolute anonymity.

The fact that the spycops were trained to lie and are trained to tell a false story seems to have passed Mitting by.

Such was the anger that in March 2018, Socialist Party members Hannah Sell, Dave Nellist and I, alongside [hundreds of other core participants, walked out of the inquiry in protest.](#)

The walkout was at the lack of disclosure being provided to us. And the way the judge is dancing to the tune of the police by continuing to grant anonymity to officers.

How can we play any role in the inquiry at this stage when we don't even know the many cover names that these officers used to infiltrate campaigns, trade unions and political parties? The inquiry has just released its provisional 'strategic review.' This document outlines its future direction. It effectively advises how it will operate, take evidence and deal with disclosure.

Scandalously, the chair reports that he can continue with the inquiry without the input and evidence of core participants like myself, trade unionists who were blacklisted, women deceived into relationships and family justice campaigns who were spied on as they grieved for their loved ones.

Mitting says: "The absence of evidence from significant non-state witnesses would of course be regrettable...but it would not undermine the purpose of the inquiry."

In reality this inquiry would not have happened without the work of the many activists, trade unionists and socialists who exposed the role of undercover political policing.

Now Mitting appears to be working on behalf of the capitalist establishment to ensure that the inquiry acts to cover-up the reality of political policing, both in the past and today.

Socialists are campaigning to make the inquiry as effective as we can. We call upon the cover names of these officers to be released in full. How else can current core participants play an effective role in the inquiry?

Photographs of each officer from the period they were deployed should be provided to allow those to identify the officer and provide details of their operations.

Upwards of 1,000 groups have been spied on since 1968 - those group names should be released.

In addition, we call for a panel of experts to sit with Mitting. That should include representatives of trade unions and anti-racist and anti-sexist campaigns.

- 50 Years of Resistance: Conference & Exhibition. Hosted by Cops (Campaign Opposing Police Surveillance). Sunday 8 July, 10am - 4pm, Conway Hall, 25 Red Lion Square, London, WC1R 4RL

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## **5 reasons to walk out on 13 July - number four:**

# **No to sexism! No to Trump!**

**Keishia Taylor, North London Socialist Party**

On 13 July, Theresa May is rolling out the red carpet for sexist, racist, billionaire Trump. Join young people all over the country walking out of schools and colleges to protest Trump and the Tories.

Trump has boasted about grabbing women, regularly makes horrendous sexist remarks and has defended sexual abusers, emboldening sexists everywhere.

May calls herself a feminist, but by welcoming him with open arms she is endorsing his disgusting sexist behaviour.

Trump and the Tories stand up for the rich and 1% - their policies attack the worst off while doing favours for big business and their cronies.

Women are disproportionately hit by cuts, the housing crisis and attacks on the NHS, and tend to have more precarious and lower paid jobs.

The capitalist system promotes backwards ideas about women and benefits from us doing domestic work for free while taking away our rights and support.

We must challenge the politics of the super-rich where a tiny elite prioritise profit over the lives of ordinary people.

Instead we can fight for a socialist society where the resources are publicly owned and democratically controlled by working class people, not hoarded by billionaires.

Only by getting rid of capitalism can we end sexism, macho culture and rigid gender roles.

Everyone who is against sexism should demonstrate against Trump and the Tories. We can show them that we will not tolerate sexism, racism, discrimination and the rule of the 1%.

We need to show solidarity with the mass demonstrations and walkouts against sexism and gun violence in the US. Recent victories of youth and women's movements in Ireland, Argentina and the Spanish state show that these methods work!

Help us build a mass movement of women, workers and all the oppressed against sexist, racist, billionaire Trump and his Tory partners in crime. Join us to fight for a socialist society based on solidarity and equality!

- See the Socialist Students Facebook event, '[Walk-out against Trump](#)', for more details
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## **Social care funding crisis: no to an age levy - make the super-rich pay**

**Bea Gardner, Southampton Socialist Party**

89% of local councils are calling for a new tax to pay for the cost of adult social care, according to the Local Government Association. Proposals include introducing an age-related care levy, fuelling the divisive myth that the care crisis is the fault of older people.

The Local Government Association found also that over 96% of councils believe there is a major funding problem in social care. Yet English councils plan to squeeze an additional £700 million out of social care budgets in the next year, according to the Association of Directors of Adult Social Services.

The Socialist Party would support increased taxation for the super-rich and big business. But a new tax on working and middle class people based on age will not solve the problem.

The working class already contributes to the cost of public services, including social care, through existing taxation - as well as actually running them, for decreasing wages. Yet the government has consistently cut the amount of our money it is willing to give to councils, schools and the NHS, rather than big business.

Social care is primarily funded by local authorities. The government has cut council funding by nearly half since 2010. Most of us have already seen a 6% rise in our council tax this year alone as councils try to pass the cost onto us rather than fighting for the necessary funds from central government.

We all know how [desperately needed a funding solution is for social care](#) and the NHS. But it can't be found through ordinary people chipping in even more to pay for it.

Central government has the capacity to pay for social care. The money already exists to provide quality services for all. Britain is the fifth richest country in the world - but that wealth is in the hands of big business and the capitalist class.

Labour councils should set no-cuts budgets with their reserves and borrowing powers, as part of using their position to build a campaign - to win back government funding, to secure the public services we all need for the future.

Corbyn should kick-start this process by promising to underwrite all debt councils incur fighting austerity when he takes office. The trade unions can play a role too, organising workers in social care to help them fight cuts to jobs, pay and conditions.

And just like in the NHS, as well as much more funding, we need to kick out the private profiteers who have sucked the sector dry.

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## **Tories pledge three-year private tenancies: fight for rent caps and council homes**

**Keishia Taylor, private rental tenant, North London Socialist Party**

Under pressure, the Tories have promised to introduce three-year minimum tenancies. But we need real security, rent caps and a mass building programme of council housing.

Just last year, then housing minister Gavin Barwell denounced the idea. But with the Tories on the brink of collapse over Brexit and a possible election approaching, they are trying to appease victims of the housing crisis.

But this will not deflect our anger at unprecedented homelessness, rocketing rents, social cleansing projects and over-inflated house prices.

80% of the 4.5 million households in the private rented sector have six or 12-month contracts, so this legislation could benefit a huge number of people. But the private rented sector is still littered with poor-quality and even dangerous homes - if you can afford the exorbitant rents to begin with!

In 12 years of renting, I've had 16 different addresses and been evicted twice by greedy landlords. The upheaval, possibility of eviction and finding somewhere affordable at short notice is a constant worry. Loss of a private rented tenancy is the most common reason for becoming homeless, according to Shelter.

Three-year minimum tenancies would be welcome, but this must include real protection from eviction and the option to leave earlier - without being penalised. The private sector should return to full security of tenure, abolished under Thatcher - as should social and council housing.

## **Rent**

And we need rent control: democratically decided rent caps, not just restrictions on rent increases as Labour has proposed. And landlords must be forced to provide the highest standards of safety and quality, good treatment of tenants and returning deposits.

This must be accompanied by building the millions of council homes needed to replace sold-off council houses and loosen the death grip of private landlords.

Landlords have complained about the new proposals hurting their income. The big landlords have had enough off us already.

But many are small landlords who own a rental property to subsidise their meagre pensions, for example. Guaranteeing a living state pension for all is also essential.

We need to organise to kick out the Tories, and push Corbyn to adopt more of the radical measures like those above that have slipped away under the pressure of the Blairites.

Housing cannot be left in the hands of billionaire developers, big landlords and their Tory friends. We need democratic tenants' control over housing that is safe, secure, affordable and good quality.

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# **EU lets 200 refugees drown in three days**

## **Fight for jobs, homes and services for all**

**Tessa Warrington, Leicester West Socialist Party**

In the first three days of this month, 200 refugees have drowned in the Mediterranean. This brings the total for 2018 so far to over 1,000, according to the UN.

More than 34,000 migrants and refugees have died in the attempt to reach Europe since 1997, according to Dutch NGO United for Intercultural Action. In reality the figure is likely much higher.

In response, the EU set up a €2 billion fund in 2014 to have African governments prevent people leaving for Fortress Europe. By 2017, all that had changed was that migrant deaths off the north coast of Africa had doubled, while deaths on European soil had halved.

Despite this, at the recent EU migration summit in Brussels, leaders agreed to expand the exportation of the problem to North Africa by building mass migrant 'processing facilities' - in effect, prison camps.

Capitalist leaders throw responsibility around like a hot potato with the goal of massaging the figures and protecting political interests. This is exacerbating the fracturing of relations within the bosses' EU.

German chancellor Angela Merkel described the summit as "make or break" for the EU. She risked losing her parliamentary majority as the right-wing leader of her Bavarian sister party, the CSU, threatened to walk out over immigration policy.

Freshly elected Italian prime minister Giuseppe Conte, a right-wing populist, threatened to veto the whole summit unless he gained concessions against immigration. Humanitarian rescue ships have already been prevented from docking in Italy by the new government.

## Racist

These policies solve nothing. They only amount to systematic racist attacks on migrants and refugees. Theresa May's "[hostile environment](#)" which led to the [Windrush scandal](#) proved this. Now the Home Office has admitted mistakenly detaining 850 people, including Windrush citizens - 63 of who it deported 'in error'.

Isn't it a coincidence that none of the migrants languishing in detention centres or dying in the Mediterranean have been super-wealthy members of the elite? The working class and poor suffer the most from the catastrophe created by imperialism in the Middle East and beyond.

In Britain, the Refugee Rights Campaign organises refugees to fight for their rights. Closing detention centres, for the right to work, for a £10 an hour minimum wage - and importantly, the right to join a trade union and fight alongside other workers against the exploitation of the bosses.

The Socialist Party fights for jobs, homes and services for all: those already here as well as those forced to flee war and poverty.

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# British state complicit in torture and rendition: put Blair and Straw in the dock!

Chris Newby, Hackney Socialist Party

British spy agencies colluded with the US state in the torture and 'rendition' programme during the Iraq war. This revelation by parliament's Intelligence and Security Committee [should come as no surprise to readers of the Socialist](#).

What is surprising is that the report has seen the light of day. A clue is perhaps that the committee chairman is Dominic Grieve - one of the Tory Remainer rebels opposing Theresa May on Brexit.

The report details that UK intelligence services participated in 'interviewing' between 2,000 and 3,000 US detainees after 2002 held in Iraq, Afghanistan or Guantanamo Bay.

They also planned or agreed to a rendition operation - transporting detainees to locations without protections against torture - in 28 cases. MI6 and MI5 offered to help fund a rendition operation three times.

And in 198 cases British agencies received information from interrogations where they knew detainees had been mistreated. This includes the torture of UK resident Binyam Mohamed who was held and tortured in

Morocco, Afghanistan and Guantanamo Bay - and eventually released without trial or charge.

Incredibly, Jack Straw, responsible for MI6 as the Blairite foreign secretary at the time, claims the release of this report is the first he knew about these events! Yet the report states Straw signed off at least once on the payments for the costs of the plane used for rendition.

Both the Blairites and Tories are up to their necks in responsibility for this scandal. Theresa May blocked the Intelligence and Security Committee from interviewing members of MI6. This represents yet another crisis for this unstable Tory government, and a shot across the bows for those Blairites constantly attacking Corbyn.

## **Brutal**

While this inquiry has thrown some light on the murky and brutal workings of the British state, we can be under no illusion that we will get a full picture of the state's involvement in the torture and rendition of people during the war.

The Labour Party call for an independent judicial inquiry will also not provide a full picture of what happened. The judiciary is not independent of capitalist interests. Just look at the mess of the judicial inquiries into child abuse scandals, Grenfell and undercover policing.

Ultimately we may never find out all of what happened - but the only process which could get us close is a genuinely independent, democratic workers' inquiry, based on the trade unions.

Blair and Straw should be in the dock for these crimes. The Tories and Blairites must go - along with the whole rotten capitalist system which demands war for profit, and the unaccountable, repressive state which defends it.

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## **Them & us**

### **Profits for the bosses... slanders for firefighters**

Overwhelmed firefighters who gave their all to save lives at Grenfell Tower have spoken at the public inquiry. Their testimony is devastating.

Selfless firefighters hanging from windows, desperate to counter the unexpected flames running up the cladding. Exhausted firefighters with hoses left impotent - the block's 'dry riser' water pipe was insufficient for its height. Horrified firefighters unable to evacuate residents, even once they realised it was necessary, due to lack of resources, and the only stairwell choked with thick poison smoke.

Some sections of the right-wing press have tried to deflect anger at the capitalist establishment onto firefighters. This is slander.

It makes you feel sick, it makes you shake, that firefighters are bullied for their heroism while [the executives, company owners and capitalist politicians who caused the inferno walk free](#).

Four senior Grenfell managers earned £650,794 combined in 2015-16, according to the property management's accounts. That's as much as 20 firefighters or two fire engines.

Cladding maker Arconic made earnings before deductions of \$1.8 billion in 2017. Grenfell's official body count is 72.

Jail the corporate killers. Reverse all cuts and privatisation. Justice for Grenfell - safety for all.

### **Workers need 27% raises... super-rich double wealth**

Families in Britain with only one breadwinner need a 27% increase in wages to keep up with the cost of living, says the Joseph Rowntree Foundation. Between 2009 and 2015 alone, Britain's richest 1,000 doubled their wealth, according to the Sunday Times Rich List.

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## What we saw

The NHS crisis is no joke. Over-stretched A&Es are like circuses. This worker signing a petition with Swansea Socialist Party isn't clowning around. He knows only a socialist programme can save NHS workers juggling patient care with intolerable cuts.

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## #AmazonTax shows need for socialist fighters

**In the US, the biggest capitalist economy in the world, 40 million people - one-third of them children - live in poverty. One person in eight depends on food stamps. Over half of Americans want to see taxes on the rich raised.**

**But last December Trump cut corporate taxes by \$1.5tn. This is a further attack on the US's threadbare public services, already cut to the bone.**

**KSHAMA SAWANT, who writes here, is a member of Socialist Alternative, the Socialist Party's co-thinkers in the US and an elected councilmember in Seattle, the only non-Democrat in the council. She was a leader of the recent campaign for a city tax on big business to start to address the housing crisis.**

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The betrayal of this campaign by the Democrats exposed their inability to offer any alternative to Trump.

Right-wing Democrats in the council acted as the spokespeople for big business. But left Democrats, who had supported the tax but are not prepared to challenge the capitalist system, also betrayed the workers and homeless in the city by capitulating to Amazon's threats rather than preparing to mobilise mass opposition.

Seattle now has the third worst homelessness crisis in the nation. 53 people have died on the streets this year, while the number of homeless public [state] school students rose 22% in a year. Seattle is also home to the world's richest billionaire, Amazon boss Jeff Bezos.

On 14 May, [Seattle City Council passed a historic tax on Amazon and other big corporations](#) to fund permanently-affordable, publicly-owned housing, under the leadership of Socialist Alternative along with the Democratic Socialists of America and others.

The \$48 million annual tax on the biggest 3% of corporations in Seattle was the end result of a powerful campaign by housing activists and socialists over nine months.

Although substantially reduced under big business pressure and Amazon's threat to take away jobs (with right-wing Democrat councilmembers representing them in the council chamber), this was a major victory and inspiring example for workers around the country.

### Democrat betrayal

But on 12 June [seven Seattle City councilmembers voted to repeal the tax](#), capitulating to big business pressure.

Seattle's housing crisis has been decades in the making, presided over by a Democratic establishment which has worked hand-in-glove with big developers.

But their market-led model will never work, because developers build to maximise profits, which means high-end units, not affordable housing.

Our movement calls for the building of permanently affordable, publicly owned housing, not only to address homelessness, but as a step toward a massive expansion of social housing to begin to provide working people with a real alternative to the broken private housing market.

Washington has the most regressive tax system in the country, which also results from years of Democratic Party capitulation to big business and Republican leaders.

Our movement's victory on the Amazon Tax stood out as a shining counterexample to decades of corporate tax cuts and attacks on public services, which is no small part of why it received such enormous national (and also international) attention, including the support of Senator Bernie Sanders.

## **Capitalist resistance**

Some Democrat city councilmembers explained their reasons for capitulating on the Amazon Tax as regrettable but necessary because the so-called 'No Tax on Jobs' campaign had "unlimited resources" and that defending the tax was "not a winnable battle at this time." But who said this fight was going to be easy?

It was predictable that big business would launch a referendum effort to overturn the tax - they also attempted this during the \$15 minimum wage struggle.

Some left Democrat councilmembers and community leaders seemed to believe opposition could be neutralised by making drastic concessions - like cutting the original demand of \$150 million by half - rather than defeating big business by building a fighting movement.

Socialist Alternative was already preparing the launch of a massive defence campaign to defeat the referendum, and was in active discussions with other groups to do just that.

We have no guarantees that if we fight we will win in any given instance. But the most discouraging and damaging thing of all is to accept defeat without even putting up a fight.

## **Socialist ideas needed**

In the struggle for any serious reform, we should plan for determined big business opposition and setbacks along the way, because the interests of working people and the billionaire class are fundamentally at odds under capitalism.

Which is why I'm a socialist. Rather than giving in to corporate extortion, we should take big corporations like Amazon into democratic public ownership and workers should run them instead.

Was the referendum fight unwinnable? We warned that Amazon and big business would fight us. This tax might be miniscule in the scheme of corporate profits but it is the fear of what it could unleash if successful - a mass movement of working class people gaining confidence to fight for more spreading across the nation as the fight for \$15 has - that motivates them.

Millions of workers around the country had already been inspired by our example, and efforts were springing up elsewhere.

In spite of the repeal, the Google Tax being discussed in Silicon Valley is still going ahead onto the ballot this November.

We need to recognise that this capitulation by the Democrats has given encouragement to big business as well as the right populist groups that have sprung up recently in Seattle.

One consultant to the dishonest and anti-poor No Tax on Jobs confirmed this perspective when he told The Atlantic: "What do we want? A new city council."

Next year will see the most polarised Seattle City Council election in many years, whether we like it or not, but we should be clear that we can't back down from this fight either.

The result of capitulation by working people and the left is not peace, but further growth of the right and corporate politics.

The Democrats' capitulation makes things clearer than ever: standing up to big business will require building a political alternative.

The progressive and socialist groups who have led Seattle's housing justice movement should unite for the 2019 elections to run independent left candidates against the four corporate-backed Seattle City Councilmembers who led the council opposition to the tax.

## **Build a movement**

At the same time, the disappointing spectacle of left Democrats also bowing to Amazon's pressure shows that, to hold candidates accountable, we need to organise a new left alliance, completely independent of corporate cash and the Democratic Party, which has again failed to be a reliable voice for working people.

Fundamentally we will need to be ready to challenge big business by building a mass movement around a socialist programme.

The Amazon Tax was the opposite of a tax on jobs or working people. Socialist Alternative called for a tax exclusively on big business and argued against taxing small businesses.

The Amazon Tax would have created hundreds or thousands of jobs, injecting \$50 million annually into construction and social services, with many other jobs being created in the economic ripple effects.

Would big business have cut wages or jobs to make workers pay for the modest Amazon Tax? First of all this tax was a drop in the ocean to Amazon, Starbucks and the rest, and they'd already saved far more money through Trump's corporate tax cuts last year than the tax would have cost them.

Also, Amazon is here because there is a large pool of highly skilled workers in Seattle, which they have used to their advantage to become the second wealthiest corporation in the world.

They'll move jobs if and when it suits their bottom line, independent of modest taxes like this one.

But we should be clear that any given threat could be carried through by big business under capitalism.

Amazon could have halted its tower construction and taken those 7,000 jobs away, even though it would have cost them a huge sum of money, in order to make an example of Seattle.

Of course, in the end they resumed construction - most such threats are empty threats.

The Boeing example shows that capitulation is no solution. When Boeing threatened to take jobs to other states we called for nationalisation of the factory under democratic workers' control and management.

I said: "The only response we can have if Boeing executives do not agree to keep the plant here is for the machinists to say the machines are here, the workers are here, we will do the job, we don't need the executives.

"The executives don't do the work, the machinists do... We can re-tool the machines to produce mass transit like buses, instead of destructive, you know, war machines."

Instead two of the biggest corporate handouts in US history were given by Washington State to Boeing executives, but they've moved the jobs anyway. That's why it is a losing strategy to capitulate to corporate bullying.

An enormous amount of confusion about the Amazon Tax was spread in the corporate media. Among the many outright lies, signature gatherers said the tax was on employees not employers.

Their campaign succeeded in creating temporary confusion, as shown by a 13 May poll, with 54% of people surveyed opposing the tax.

## Prepare for struggle

But there is broad general support for taxing big business and the rich in the US. Is Seattle somehow less progressive than the rest of the country on this issue? I don't think so.

What we've seen is a mass corporate misinformation campaign, which needed to be answered at the doors and on the streets by a grassroots movement.

We must use the coming months to prepare the launch of a broad progressive alliance to fight for affordable housing and replace the pro-capitalist politicians in Seattle City Hall.

We're not conceding anything on the Amazon Tax - we continue to demand the promised 'Plan B' for affordable housing and homelessness services.

In this fall's Seattle budget, we'll be campaigning not only for a big business tax but also more broadly for a genuine 'People's Budget.' The fight starts now.

- New article on [socialistalternative.org](http://socialistalternative.org) on New York Democrat primary shock: [Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez stuns the establishment - now build a mass movement for socialist change](#)
- Kshama will be a speaker at Socialism 2018

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# Obrador's crushing victory gives hope to Mexico's poor

Mexico's presidential election on 1 July saw the left anti-establishment candidate Andrés Manuel López Obrador or 'Amlo', of his newly founded Movement for National Regeneration (Morena), top the poll with 54%, crushing his establishment opponents.

A parliamentary majority was also won by Morena, along with five of the nine governorships contested, including Mexico City.

Obrador's victory has rattled Mexico's capitalist ruling class and unnerved western governments by raising expectations that Mexico's working class and poor will benefit from a redistribution of wealth and power.

He has pledged to halve his presidential salary and the salaries of senior government officials, introduce a universal pension, give wider access to universities, better public healthcare, and other reforms. However, his campaign team includes leading bankers.

Obrador has changed political colours over the years, starting out on the right but then moving left. 23 years ago Obrador organised a mass non-payment campaign against rip-off electricity charges in the poor southern state of Tabasco.

He was a former mayor of Mexico City and had contested presidential elections twice before. When electoral fraud robbed him of victory in the 2006 elections, a mass movement of workers, peasants and youth opened up revolutionary possibilities in Mexico.

In this election it was not only voters in Mexico's poorest states that backed Obrador. He also won support among middle class voters who are fed up with decades of widespread government corruption and

incompetence by the establishment parties - PRI and PAN. Obrador has pledged to root out what he calls the "mafia of power".

Moreover, the current president Enrique Peña Nieto of the PRI has failed to deal with the widespread violence perpetrated between the drugs and people-smuggling gangs and the equally violent state forces.

Some 32,000 people have been murdered this year - double that of 2014. And prior to elections over 130 politicians, including 48 candidates, were assassinated.

- [See socialistworld.net](http://socialistworld.net) for a statement by [Izquierda Revolucionaria](#), [CWI Mexico](#)

## 'CAS nunca mas': stop mass lay-offs and precarious contracts in Peru!

João Félix, Cardiff West Socialist Party

Workers in Peru are suffering an appalling attack by the neoliberal government. CAS workers - workers hired under a precarious 'Service Administration Contract' (Contrato de Servicios Administrativos, CAS) - are being laid off in large numbers by the government headed by new president Martin Vizcarra.

He has been helped by the infamous right-wing 'Fujimorista' party - nicknamed after Alberto Fujimori, the former president who had to leave the country under accusations of corruption and brutal attacks and killings of working class people, political activists and trade unionists.

The CAS targets workers in the education system, EsSalud (the Peruvian national health service) and other public sector workplaces.

It means that these workers are hired on temporary contracts (sometimes for only three months), without access to career progression, bonuses, overtime, holiday pay, workers compensation, etc.

They are paid significantly less than workers integrated into the public sector - sometimes only half the pay for the same job.

For example, a doctor hired under the CAS for EsSalude of the Health ministry receives around Sol1,500-1,700a month (£345-390), while a doctor hired under a permanent contract earns around Sol3,000 (£690).

More than 275,000 public sector workers have been hired under this contract, representing almost a quarter of the workforce.

The fact that their contracts have not been renewed - which, in practice, means they have been fired - is a clear attack on the working class, and a pushback by the right wing government on the earlier victories won by these workers.

The government claims that there is not enough money in the public coffers at the same time as ex-presidents and congressmen are under scrutiny and investigation for corruption and misuse of public funds!

After intense mobilisations by CAS workers, especially in EsSalude and in schools, Congress was forced to concede.

It passed a law eliminating CAS contracts and integrating workers into the public sector. However, this was negated by the neoliberal government with massive lay-offs of CAS workers.

But the working class has responded. Teachers under the CAS regime called a nationwide strike on 28 June, and a rank-and-file movement in EsSalude, called 'CAS nunca mas' (CAS never again), is organising against the arbitrary lay-offs and precarious contracts and for an increase in the EsSalude budget.

- No to massive layoffs. Safe contracts to CAS workers. Integrate them into the public sector
- Stop the casualisation and underfunding of public services
- Stop the attacks on the Peruvian workers!

## Show workers' solidarity - direct protests to:

- President of Peru- Martin Vizcarra- [acessolnf@presidencia.gob.pe](mailto:acessolnf@presidencia.gob.pe)
  - Ministerio de La Salud del Peru- [webmaster@minsa.gob.pe](mailto:webmaster@minsa.gob.pe)
  - Ministerio de Educacion del Peru- [webmaster@minedu.gob.pe](mailto:webmaster@minedu.gob.pe)
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## US unions facing new challenge after Supreme Court ruling

The recent decision of the US Supreme Court to uphold Donald Trump's discriminatory travel ban on travellers from five majority Muslim countries highlighted the court's now majority socially conservative, right-wing bias.

This came about because the Republicans had blocked an Obama nominee to a vacant seat and a Trump-approved judge was installed instead.

Another less publicised attack on democratic rights was the Supreme Court's decision to rule in favour of an Illinois government employee backed by front organisations supported by alt-right super-rich 'libertarians'.

Mark Janus, the Illinois employee at the centre of the case, did not originate the law suit. Instead, it started with billionaire venture capitalist and Illinois governor, Bruce Rauner.

The judgement ended the practice, enshrined in law since 1977, which allows trade unions to seek "fair fees" from non-union members who benefit from union collective bargaining agreements.

The 1977 ruling exempted non-union workers from contributing to unions' expressly political funds. But the Supreme Court in Janus v the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees has now ruled that, because the appellant was a government employee, any deductions are deemed 'political'.

The intention of the groups that brought the case is to cripple union finances by allowing any public-sector employee to freeload on the backs on union members.

Union density is higher in the public sector compared to the private sector and so it will potentially weaken the unions in fighting to defend members.

Many states had already implemented such anti-union practices but now it has effectively become federal law.

However, such obstacles can be overcome as the successful illegal strike action by rank-and-file teachers in West Virginia showed earlier this year (see 'West Virginia teachers' strike victory' at [socialistparty.org.uk](http://socialistparty.org.uk)), which forced major concessions over pay.

The teachers actually raised over \$320,000 online for the strike fund, illustrating that wider solidarity action is possible.

- [See socialistalternative.org for background analysis](http://socialistalternative.org)
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## Probation service: 'You are not a priority'

**Probation service hostel worker**

Call to police: "We need urgent assistance, a resident is outside, being extremely abusive and banging on the windows." Is anyone being physically attacked? "Not yet." Then you are not a priority.

No police arrive, despite this resident being recalled to prison for his abusive behaviour that morning.

Previously, all staff would need to do would be to pull their personal alarms and the police would be there in two minutes. Now an agency rings back and asks if the police are really required to attend.

A violent offender fails to return to hostel for curfew. Procedures mean we must verify if the resident is in hospital or has been arrested before he can be recalled to prison for missing his curfew.

We stay on the phone for ages but neither the police nor the NHS are answering. They are stretched to the limit too.

Probation hostels have several roles, rehabilitation of offenders and protecting the public are the main ones.

We work with some of the most violent criminals. Yet our pay has not gone up since 2008. Its £10.30 an hour plus shift allowances. I believe I could earn more working in a supermarket.

In addition, since the rest of the probation service was privatised, we have lost allowances. Before then, if we worked a nightshift on a bank holiday, we would be paid the nightshift allowance and the bank holiday allowance. Now we only get one of those allowances.

The hostels were not an attractive proposition for privatisation but it is widely believed by staff that recent changes were made in preparation for it. They don't make sense otherwise.

Long-standing, experienced staff (and trust me, you need experience in this job) have been transferred to other roles. New members of staff are paid less.

They have totally inadequate training, done on the cheap, before they are considered 'trained' to know what to do in a variety of scenarios where staff or the public might be at risk.

There are two hostel workers at night. We need to rely on each other for our own safety.

Yet one member of staff each night is supplied by an agency, Sodexo, appointed sometimes on the strength of a telephone interview.

Shift patterns have changed without seemingly any thought to the impact on working practices. Staff morale is low.

We have previously been very proud of the service we provide to offenders in helping them in their transition from prison.

And to the public in monitoring resident behaviour and being alert to signs that they may be likely to reoffend.

The deterioration in the service, working conditions and pay have been brought about with barely a whimper from the unions concerned (Unison and Napo).

But the anger is simmering and palpable. We fear that it is only a matter of time before something goes badly wrong.

**We need:**

- Unions that will fight for their members and against privatisation
- A fully funded, well-resourced public sector
- Democratic accountability of the police and judicial system

# Treasury imposes civil service pay limit - vote Yes to strike action

Marion Lloyd, PCS national executive committee member and Left Unity chair (personal capacity)

On 22 May the [PCS civil servants' union conference voted for a statutory pay strike ballot](#) of members covered by Treasury pay restrictions - the pay cap.

Seemingly in response to this strike threat the Treasury offered to talk to the unions about the pay instruction it was issuing for 2018-19.

Now, a month after the conference decision and various talks with the unions, the Treasury has put out its 'civil service pay guidance' for 2018-19. Disappointingly, but perhaps unsurprisingly, the pay cap is still firmly in place.

To quote from the 'guidance': "This year government departments will be able to make average pay awards within the new range of 1-1.5%".

Rather unhelpfully the Treasury say some individuals can be paid more than this limit but only if others are paid less.

The message this sends to PCS members is clear. [Only by voting Yes in the ballot \(closes 23 July\) for strike action will the Treasury take notice.](#)

The PCS 2018 pay claim for a fully funded 5% (£1,200 a year) and a return to centralised bargaining is a modest one.

In local government and health, limited concessions above the pay cap have been made. PCS members employed by the Scottish government have secured a 4% pay deal and PCS members in Highways England have accepted a 3-10% pay deal against a background of huge recruitment difficulties caused by the government's attacks on public service pay.

With inflation over 3% in May 2018 the Treasury pay limit for 2018-19 is, in effect, a further cut in the real wage levels of PCS members. This comes on top of a decade of pay restrictions and a real terms cut in pay.

No matter which way it's looked at, the Treasury pay guidance is a pay cap and another year of pay misery. It's unacceptable and is a clear message to PCS members: [vote Yes in the strike ballot.](#)

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## Building confidence to win a pay rise

Massive efforts have been put in across South Yorkshire to raise the profile of the PCS pay campaign among the 6,000 civil servants in the region.

The focus is on delivering the 50% turnout for the ballot to be deemed legal.

Pay day protests have been organised outside government offices and thousands of leaflets have been issued with the big offices being leafleted weekly. As well as leafleting there have been sticker day campaigns to promote discussions between members in the offices, with members encouraged to take stickers and ask others to wear them. Weekly leafleting is being planned throughout the ballot period with a realisation and confidence the unprecedented 50% turnout will be achieved if we keep campaigning, and we keep asking members: have you voted in the postal ballot?

Sheffield PCS town committee member

# Bin workers take strike action after talks with Kirklees council collapse

**Matt Hirst, Huddersfield Socialist Party**

In an [ongoing dispute from the end of last year](#), Kirklees bin workers are now taking strike action from 3-9 July. This comes after talks between local government trade union Unison and Kirklees council have collapsed, after a lack of control of senior staff by the council.

Industrial action was avoided in June pending the results of an investigation into bullying and racism, going back to November. During that time the operations manager at the centre of the claims was told to work from another site.

However this manager failed to respect this request and continually went to the main Vine Street facility that services Huddersfield, attempting to intimidate staff, according to Unison officials.

This culminated in a lead shop steward being told that he should be working on trade union business full time and should no longer complete the round he has done for the last 20 years.

This was quickly seen for what it was, an attempt to remove a steward from work colleagues and to distance workers from their trade union representation. The lead steward promptly refused, leading to management ordering him to go home!

The final straw came as last-ditch efforts were put into a meeting between Unison officials and Kirklees council management at conciliation service Acas.

When the Unison officials were entering the meeting room, who should be outside but the operations manager at the centre of the bullying claims!

This clear attempt at further intimidation of union officials showed the lack of respect that Kirklees Labour-run council has for workers and union officials.

Pickets were strong and lively as the bin workers have a history of being militant, initially taking wildcat strike action to get the investigations into the bullying and racism claims started.

Huddersfield Socialist Party members are going down on a daily basis to show solidarity with the workers and one of the lead stewards from Unison will speak at our branch meeting on Thursday 5 July from 7.15pm at the Irish Centre on Fitzwilliam Street, Huddersfield.

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# Victory for London's young workers in privatiser's non-payment of 'living wage' scandal

Unite the Union has won a victory in its campaign to make London leisure services privatiser Greenwich Leisure Limited (GLL) pay the London Living Wage to those aged 18 to 20.

Unite announced on 28 June that Tower Hamlets council had brought forward an agreement with GLL to pay the living wage from September, with pay backdated to April 2018.

Unite regional officer Onay Kasab said: "We regard this as a significant victory in our campaign to achieve living wage pay justice for young people employed in London."

"Now that Tower Hamlets has made this announcement, we will be focusing our energies on those London Living Wage accredited councils with GLL contracts - Camden, Croydon, Ealing, Lambeth, and Waltham Forest - where GLL is still not paying the living wage to young people."

Local councils are meant to insist that organisations with outsourcing contracts, such as GLL, should pay the voluntary London Living Wage (currently £10.20 an hour). But Unite said that only those aged 18 to 20 working on GLL contracts in Greenwich, Hackney and Islington - and now Tower Hamlets - are receiving the full amount.

Onay Kasab added: "We believe that up to 1,000 young people in London have been 'short changed' by GLL over the London Living Wage - and we will not cease our fight until pay justice has been achieved for young people working for GLL in one of the world's most expensive cities."

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## Socialist Party members have big impact as Unite conference kicks off

### Socialist Party members in Unite the Union

Socialist Party members have had a big impact during the first two days of Unite the Union's policy conference in Brighton.

At [the last policy conference in 2016](#), Unite met in the aftermath of the Brexit vote and in the middle of the attempted Blairite coup against Jeremy Corbyn in the Labour Party. These issues are still a big factor.

The executive committee statement on the European Union was passed and rightly defeated motions explicitly calling for a second referendum. This superseded a motion moved by Socialist Party member Kevin Parslow from LE/1228 branch which called for a socialist Brexit in the interests of workers.

Kevin, who two years ago moved the successful motion calling for mandatory reselection of MPs in Labour, this time also moved an amendment by LE/1228 branch, to the motion on renationalisation. Unite policy is now to call for no compensation for fat cats but only given on the basis of proven need, which is a big step forward in Unite's policy on public ownership. In this debate London bus worker Joanne Harris moved a resolution calling for public ownership of buses.

On 2 July conference passed a motion on [the Football Lads Alliance, the rise of the far-right and the 'free Tommy Robinson' campaign](#). A composite motion was passed which included an emergency motion put forward by Socialist Party members in LE/1228 branch calling on Unite and other unions to place themselves at the centre of organising against the far-right and to use the authority of the trade unions to mobilise and challenge far-right ideology.

Speaking in the debate Neil Moore from Northern Ireland made the point that, while it's correct to work with anti-racist campaigns, it is trade unions which must give the lead.

As we got to press Unite conference also passed a motion to support the Refugee Rights campaign and encourage branches to affiliate.

- See next week's issue for a full report

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## Yorkshire NSSF meeting starts coordinating struggles

The first National Shop Stewards Network (NSSN) meeting in Harrogate took place on 27 June, bringing together local trade unionists in dispute against the effects of austerity.

Johnathan Leng, from Harrogate College University and College Union (UCU), opened the discussion about their recent dispute over cuts at the college. UCU members had taken three days of strike action to fight these attacks.

Adrian O'Malley, Unison service group executive member for Yorkshire and secretary of Mid Yorkshire Unison branch, speaking in a personal capacity, outlined [the battle against the formation of 'wholly owned subsidiaries'](#) - a step towards privatisation - in a number of hospital trusts across Yorkshire. Adrian's branch was one of four which recently [organised a coordinated ballot for strike action](#). Mid Yorkshire Unison recorded a 58% turnout with a thumping majority for strike action, the looming threat of which has forced their trust to offer potentially significant concessions.

The local RMT rep gave his apologies - he had been due to speak about the [dispute over the introduction of driver-only operation by Northern Rail](#).

A lively discussion was had, including the need for more communication between trade union branches and activists in the town. One suggestion was for people to subscribe to the NSSN's weekly bulletin which contains news of trade union campaigns and disputes across the country. You can subscribe at [shopstewards.net](http://shopstewards.net).

**Iain Dalton, Socialist Party North Yorkshire organiser**

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## Swansea postal workers strike to defend colleague

Postal workers in Swansea will start balloting for strike action on 4 July in support of fellow Communication Workers' Union (CWU) member Martin Henwood (Rodders), who has been sacked by Royal Mail after being accused of not following their 'door-to-door' (unaddressed mail) delivery procedure.

Rodders has worked for Royal Mail for 32 years and has no previous disciplinary record. His sacking has caused uproar among the workforce who have witnessed management's increasingly bullying approach over the past few years.

Unless he is reinstated the CWU is confident of a massive Yes vote for future strike action.

**Alec Thraves, Swansea Socialist Party**

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Workers at a Royal Mail delivery office in Ferndale, south Wales, downed tools in an unofficial strike on 26-27 June after a dispute with management. The CWU members walked out after problems with a manager came to a head. Around 30 people stopped work, demanding the manager be removed or a formal investigation launched. The postal workers returned to work following an agreement between the CWU and management had been reached.

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## New publication: Workers' control and workers' management

This new book by Ted Mooney, leader of the 1960 apprentices' strike - in which 100,000 young workers took part - and member of Merseyside Socialist Party, will be available at the National Shop Stewards Network conference on 7 July, or from Left Books.

# 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](mailto: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.

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### Featured letter: austerity in schools

## "I can't give you a new book, we don't have enough"

**Bethany Morgan Smith, school student, Leicester West Socialist Party**

At my school, students and teachers are desperate for resources. We barely have enough pens and glue sticks so we have to take turns to use three glue sticks that have already been overused.

In history, I asked for a new exercise book because I ran out of pages and the teacher said "I can't give you a new book, we don't have enough."

Our form teacher gets messages saying 'don't print so much because we can't afford the ink', yet printing is needed for pupils and teachers.

This has all happened since my school became a privatised 'academy'. I often hear the teachers talking about it to each other.

When I was in a drama performance we had to ask the crowd for funding. Teachers are having to pay for props and printing.

Education is in dire need of funding and support. Kids also need resourcing. This upsets me because education is a very important part of my life and others' lives. It helps us towards a brighter future.

But the Tory government is cutting schools to shreds and being selfish and keeping the money to themselves instead of giving it to public services that we pay taxes for.

We deserve better. These services belong to the working class. The working class needs as good quality education as the richest people.

Very rich people have a brighter future because they can afford tutoring but the working class can't.

I liked [the Socialist's article about 'Prevent' training](#). At my school, there is a poster on the wall (pictured).

I don't think being anticapitalist is extremism. Also my teacher said that 'communism' will never work - but capitalism isn't working for me and my mum.

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## Capitalist authoritarianism rising

Capitalist states are writing laws and upping funds to clamp down on dissent in countries around the globe.

The Economist reports almost nine-tenths of US cities over 50,000 citizens now have paramilitary 'Swat' police squads.

This is four times more than in the 1980s. And the ACLU has found the value of military equipment owned by US police forces has soared from \$1 million in 1990 to \$450 million five years ago.

Turkey's neoliberal president [Erdogan awarded himself sweeping new executive powers](#) in a highly questionable referendum last year.

Sources in Malta report the island's gangster-capitalist Labour Party has plans for anti-democratic constitutional changes should it win the required two-thirds majority next election.

The supposedly 'liberal' European Union, which itself has no meaningful democratic structures, has acted to shore up the Spanish state's [Francoist repression of the Catalan liberation movement](#).

China has spent more on domestic security than the military every year since 2010 - and more than doubled the spend on both in that time, according to its Ministry of Finance.

In France, neoliberal poster boy Emmanuel Macron hand-picked every deputy elected to the national assembly for his party, according to the Washington Post. The president's proposed parliamentary 'reforms' would hand more powers to his own office while cutting the number of elected representatives.

He should be wary. The repressive regime of one of his predecessors, Charles de Gaulle, stored up huge resentment - a major cause of the [May 1968 revolutionary general strike](#).

Britain, of course, already has some of the most restrictive anti-union and 'anti-terror' laws. And in 2014, Boris Johnson, mayor of London at the time, [bought three potentially lethal water cannon](#) for the Metropolitan Police - although public outcry meant he never got to use them.

Meanwhile, 'anti-radicalisation' schemes like Prevent target anticapitalists as well as terrorists (see featured letter above).

The capitalists are tooling up because they know their deadlocked profit system can only breed more anger. The working class can only rely on its own strength - not the bosses or their state.

**Art Clements, Manor Park, east London**

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## Audio version of this document

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

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## 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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## Audio version of this document

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<http://www.socialistparty.org.uk/articles/27609>