

[Socialist Party](#) | [Print](#)

# Worldwide walkout at Google against sexual harassment

Google worker, San Francisco Bay area, US

The #MeToo movement hit the tech world as hundreds, possibly thousands, of Google employees, led by women, organised an historic walkout from work on 1 November at 11.10am.

Spurred on by a 25 October New York Times article highlighting that Google "systematically allowed senior executives accused of sexual misconduct to leave the company with massive severance packages," employees began organising an action to let Google executives know that this behaviour will not be tolerated.

And to demand structural changes to end discrimination and harassment of women workers.

## Organisation

Employees started organising on 29 October. By 31 October, 1,500 had joined an email group to discuss demands and organise the walkout. Flyers for the action have been posted at offices across the country and even internationally.

While posting flyers around one office, co-workers who had never spoken to each other before began talking, organising to help divide the work and get as many posters up as quickly as possible.

Employees began excitedly messaging each other about the developments, spreading the news and encouraging each other to join the walkout on 1 November. By noon, it was the only topic of conversation.

Workers began changing their social media profile pictures to support the walkout and discussing how to continue fighting for the demands afterwards. One employee changed the default desktop background for thousands of machines across the company to include a message about the walkout. Another posted it to the front page of the corporate intranet for the entire company to see.

All of this was done without 'asking permission' or checking with management. There clearly is an underlying mood to fight back, and to organise independently of management. This event has provided an outlet for that energy. Local leaders stepped up to organise the walkout at 31 offices around the globe and more joined all the time. Zurich, Toronto, Sydney, London, Dublin, Munich, Tokyo are just some of the international offices which participated. In the US, walkouts were held across the nation in New York City, San Francisco, Chicago, Mountain View, Los Angeles, Seattle, Pittsburgh, and many more.

The employees have come together around a set of demands that will be presented to Google executives. They are demanding an end to forced arbitration on complaints, a transparent process for reporting sexual misconduct, the right for every employee to bring a third party representative of their choosing when filing a harassment claim, and for management to release pay data broken down by gender and ethnicity.

Not only are Google workers taking aim at sexual harassment in the workplace, but they're pointing toward equal pay for equal work and an end to the gender, and racial, pay gap.

Google workers are following McDonald's workers who walked out in ten cities on 18 September to force the company to seriously address sexual harassment in the workplace.

## Movement

We are witnessing some of the first concrete steps toward workplace self-organisation among tech employees. The tech billionaires will want to put an end to this incredible movement by throwing some crumbs its way,

but the critical issue is for Google's workers to remain organised and united around common demands.

This movement has already begun to widen its scope, and has from the beginning attempted to unite Google employees and contractors. For Google workers to succeed, we need to form a permanent trade union organisation, independent of management, to democratically shape this developing movement.

---

## **Pittsburgh Synagogue shootings: Unite to fight anti-Semitism and far right**

**Pittsburgh Socialist Alternative (CWI USA)**

On Saturday morning, 27 October, a man shouting antisemitic slogans opened fire at the Tree of Life Synagogue in the historically Jewish Squirrel Hill neighbourhood of Pittsburgh. Eleven people were killed during the morning shabbat service and during a bris - a ceremony welcoming a baby to the Jewish community.

This horrific shooting is part of an unmistakable, steady rise in the expression of open antisemitism, xenophobia, and white supremacist ideology in the United States, albeit by a small minority.

This trend has accelerated since 2016 and the election of Donald Trump, and is linked to an increasing number of hate crimes against religious minorities, LGBT+ people, people of colour, women and immigrants, as well as activists and other targets.

Despite being snubbed by a mourning family and told by his own Republican party leaders and the mayor not to attend, Trump displayed his usual contempt and visited Pittsburgh three days later. He was greeted by sustained jeers from a large number of protesters.

Trump's response to this recent hate crime in Pittsburgh has been to blame the victims, to argue that arming your place of worship to the teeth leads to "far better" results.

However, terrorist acts such as this are enabled and encouraged by the attacks on working and oppressed people by Trump and by his far-right supporters. They are a logical extension of the antisemitism, white supremacy, and other hateful ideologies perpetuated by the ruling class for centuries to pit ordinary people against each other.

The corporate media and the right wing are seeking to paint the left as the source of antisemitism. Trump insider Kellyanne Conway blamed "anti-religious sentiment" for the Pittsburgh attack. Activists who oppose the Israeli government's oppression of Palestinians are given the label of antisemitic.

However the Pittsburgh shooting shows that antisemitism comes overwhelmingly from the right wing. Trump bears responsibility for enabling it.

It is not antisemitic to oppose the policies of the Israeli government and we reject those claims, as well as the fraudulent attacks on Jeremy Corbyn, the leader of the British Labour Party.

Historically, it is the working class and socialists who have fought antisemitism and fascism.

While many of us may be shocked to see the diseased ways of thinking of the past century flare up again today, this kind of rot in our world is present because of the same decaying social system that gave rise to the horrors of the 20th century, including two world wars, fascism and the Holocaust.

Capitalism rests on a foundation of genocide and oppression, and feeds on racism, sexism, and xenophobia, to divide and disenfranchise us, while delivering prosperity to a wealthy minority.

To crush antisemitism and white supremacy, we must not only defeat the dangerous ideology of the far right, but also dismantle the system which gave rise to it.

While Trump pursues a pro-corporate agenda designed to further enrich the big-business elite, he distracts from it by sowing division and stoking fears along the lines of race, immigration, and religion.

This right-wing populism is a feature of politics in many countries, as big business continues with brutal attacks on workers' rights and funding for social services - even as the vast majority of the benefits of 'recovery' since 2008 has gone to the richest 1%.

Trump's recent embrace of his "nationalist" label is incredibly telling. His victory in 2016, which was based in part on fomenting open racism, xenophobia, and misogyny, clearly emboldened the most despicable elements of the far right.

This culminated in the white nationalist mobilisation in Charlottesville, Virginia, in August 2017, which resulted in the death of anti-fascist Heather Heyer. The far right was delivered a serious blow by the protests at Charlottesville and after, showing that mass movements are effective against their hate.

## **Alternative**

We cannot limit our resistance to the ballot box; we cannot rely on the corporate-dominated two-party system to stand up for all working and oppressed people.

The Republican Party enables antisemitism, racism, homophobia, and xenophobia when not outright stoking it. Meanwhile the Democratic Party offers little resistance to the right's vicious agenda. In fact, its failed 'centrist', establishment politics of the past several decades have been the soil in which right-wing extremism has taken root.

There is a growing mood to fight back against racism, sexism, and homophobia. Recent struggles, like the McDonald's workers' strike against sexual harassment and the millions, led by high school students, who walked out against gun violence this year, show that more and more people want to fight through collective action.

## **Mass movement**

The solidarity vigil held in Pittsburgh following the massacre brought out 2,000 people. It was called for and led by high school students in the neighbourhood who felt it was important to act immediately.

As socialists we are hugely encouraged by this, and fully believe that a mass movement of people standing against the rise of bigotry and far-right violence can win.

The most effective way to fight the far right is not through isolated actions or street fighting, but through mass mobilisations against them.

The response in Boston to the Charlottesville murder - a demonstration of over 40,000 that shut down and drowned out an alt-right "free speech" rally - pushed the far right back into internet forums.

Trade unions and anti-racist organisations have a critical role to play in mobilising the broadest forces possible against the far right and their hate-filled agenda. The same mobilisations are needed to fight back against Trump.

As society continues to polarise amid a deepening social and political crisis, we must build mass movements of working and oppressed people. We must unite in the streets, on campuses, and in our workplaces against racism, sexism, xenophobia and antisemitism.

The Muslim community of Pittsburgh has already set a powerful example of solidarity through fundraising for Tree of Life and offering support and protection to the congregation going forward.

Socialist Alternative stands in solidarity with the Tree of Life congregation and the Jewish community. We must do everything in our power to shut down this system that encourages white-supremacist violence.

- [Full article on Socialistworld.net](http://www.socialistworld.net)
- 

# Mexico: The movement of 68 and the massacre of Tlatelolco

Carla Torres Beltrán and Rafael Belman, Izquierda Revolucionaria (CWI in Mexico)

The movement that developed from July to December 1968 was undoubtedly one of the most intense and revolutionary chapters in the history of class struggle in Mexico. Its repercussions extended during the following decades to all areas of public life, and marked the consciousness of an entire generation.

The Mexico of the 1960s benefited from the booming world capitalist economy. The effects on society were remarkable: the population grew at annual rates of 3.4%, pushing a large urban development. Public investment in infrastructure and housing projects increased and boosted job creation. The ruling class breathed in an atmosphere of confidence, publicly symbolized at the opening of the 1968 Olympic Games.

However, behind the showcase events, workers, the poor campesinos (agricultural workers and small farmers), and the youth endured tough exploitation and political repression.

In the 1960s, the situation for millions of peasants was desperate. Agrarian reform was paralysed by the ruling Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) governments which succeeded Cárdenas (a populist president whose political movement succumbed to capitalist control after World War Two). There was renewed concentration of property in the hands of the landowners and giant imperialist agri-companies.

A growing number of campesinos became radicalised and took action with a crucial ally: the teachers. Thousands of teachers from rural areas fanned the flames of the guerrilla struggle in Mexico.

The government repressed protests in the countryside and the city - making independent political organisation impossible and decapitating the movements and organisations. It also maintained the subjugation of the masses through the official corporatist organisations and "charras" (yellow corporate unions).

By 1968, social inequality had increased considerably. The richest 10% of families accounted for half of the national income.

In part due to the needs of developing capitalism for skilled labour, and in part as a way to silence social discontent, the different PRI governments allowed children of working families to access higher education.

The number of students enrolled in the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM), the National Polytechnic Institute (IPN) and the state universities increased exponentially. The university in Mexico acquired a distinctive feature: it became a 'mass' university. But the labour market was unable to absorb this mass of graduating students.

Thousands of the children of workers and peasants went to study. They trained professionally and technically but they also resumed a long tradition of organisation and struggle against social injustice and government repression.

The youth movement that broke out in Mexico City and throughout the country did not fall like a bolt from the sky. In a way, it was the resurgence of the revolutionary consciousness of an entire people.

The international context was also deeply inspiring for Mexican youth: the Cuban Revolution, the assassination of Che Guevara, the French general strike of May 1968, mobilisations against the Vietnam War,

the Latin American guerrilla movement, the Black Panthers in the US, and the assassination of Martin Luther King, all provided inspiration.

These movements came together to light up the great explosion of 1968.

It began in July, with a police intervention to 'calm down' a youthful brawl in the centre of Mexico City. The police burst into schools looking for the alleged perpetrators, hitting and shooting, and making indiscriminate arrests. A few days later the student response materialised in a protest march.

It took place on 26 July - reluctantly called by the National Federation of Technical Students (FNET). It had a relatively small number of demonstrators, but coincided with a march commemorating the 1953 assault by Castro on the Moncada barracks in Cuba, promoted by different organisations of the left including the Mexican Communist Party.

Activists from the left marched with young people who were attending a demonstration for the first time, and who came mainly from the National Polytechnic Institute. To the surprise of many, the march was brutally broken up by the police in the city centre. Anyone under 20 who was in the vicinity was persecuted and beaten, including students from UNAM.

The official excuse used to justify the repression was that young 'foreign communists' were trying to organise uprisings with the purpose of getting publicity and destabilising the country just before the start of the Olympic Games.

The police action had very important side effects. It provoked the complete rejection by students of the official student organisation FNET which, until then, had been controlled by the PRI. The students demanded its dissolution and that of other far-right formations. The far right, together with the academic authorities and the police, had been encouraging and financing the 'porriles' - shock groups - which specialised in attacking left-wing youth in schools and sowing terror.

On 29 July, the movement showed its muscle: strikes began and barricades filled the city centre. The government responded harshly. On 30 July, the roar of a bazooka awakened the strikers besieged in the Prepa 1 secondary school. At least 1,000 people were detained and some killed.

The anger unleashed meant the pressure of the movement was felt at the highest levels. The rector of UNAM, Barros Sierra, declared a day of mourning. The student strike spread like wildfire.

The next day - 31 July - a raging demonstration of more than 80,000 students took over the city centre. Sierra led the march. But, despite his attempts at reassurance, the mood was combative.

The demonstrations continued. On 5 August, a massive march, promoted by students of the polytechnic, took over the historic centre. On 8 August, the Coalition of Teachers for Democratic Freedoms was set up. Most importantly, a National Strike Committee (CNH), initially composed of student representatives from all the schools of the UNAM and the IPN, was established.

The movement was growing. The most popular traditions of the workers' movement were resumed. Information 'brigades' were set up to counter the lies of the press, which belonged entirely to the regime.

The need for an indefinite student strike arose, which quickly spread to all the schools of the IPN and the UNAM. The brigades became pickets that encouraged the strike, and soon the schools became centres of discussion and organisation in the battle against the regime.

The strike itself became a school. It transformed consciousness quickly: talking about what was happening in the world became normal. Young women also placed their aspirations at the centre of the discussion. Along with demands for democratic rights, they called for the right to access the contraceptive pill. Sexism was actively and consciously combated.

At this point, the movement had a clear main objective: democracy. But the democracy that the youth demanded - with social justice and without repression - was incompatible with the Mexican state and the PRI regime. The struggle for democratic liberties became inseparable from a broader struggle to transform society.

The strength of the student movement was increasing and found a great ally in the workers' movement. On 27 August, half a million people joined a march. This caused panic in the ranks of the government. It was no longer just the young people "causing chaos". Workers and the oppressed took up the cause of youth.

Backing for the students grew. On 28 August, doctors and oil workers organised a strike in solidarity with the student movement. Many other unions and workers expressed support.

But there was a need to unify the struggle of youth throughout the country and to firmly and decisively link it with the working class. The government control of the trade union movement was very powerful, and it posed a serious obstacle.

On 1 September, the presidential report was delivered. President Ordaz argued that the movement was a 'communist plot' against Mexico. The implied objective was to cause the Olympic Games to flop. His speech fuelled outrage.

The regime's decision to deepen the repression became clear on 10 September, when the Senate approved the use of the army. But threats and intimidation did not stop the movement.

On 13 September, the famous "march of silence" was called. More than 300,000 young people paraded silently. The march was a new setback for Ordaz.

Five days later, with the poems of León Felipe rumbling through the loudspeakers of Ciudad Universitaria (University District - CU), 10,000 army personnel were deployed to take control of the district. They arrested over 600 students and teachers. The objective was to dismantle and behead the movement.

A new wave of clashes broke out between the students and the Granaderos (riot police). In Tlatelolco, the students staged a first confrontation with army units on 21 September.

The army withdrew from the schools that had been taken on 30 September. On 2 October, a meeting of leaders of the CNH strike committee was organised in order to transform the march called for that day into a brief meeting. They felt that the appearance of calm was needed to facilitate negotiation.

But the intentions of Ordaz and the government were very different. On the morning of 2 October, state security agents arrived in Tlatelolco and, without raising too many suspicions, proceeded to cut the telephone lines and light in the area.

Snipers were located in strategic places. Government agents infiltrated the crowd and took key locations within some buildings. The square was surrounded by tanks and military units. The government turned the place into a deadly trap with only one exit.

At six in the afternoon, when 10,000 people were in the Plaza of the Three Cultures listening to the rally, a flare thrown from a helicopter gave the signal. Snipers and stationed troops began firing. Some soldiers pointed to the crowd, others, who hadn't known the nature of the operation, attempted to protect it.

Later, independent reports indicated that the fatalities totalled around 400, while the official media spoke of 30. All were young people aged 18-20. Thousands more were detained and wounded.

Investigations indicate that the vast majority of the corpses were taken from the plaza and thrown into the Gulf of Mexico from helicopters, a sinister foreshadowing of the extermination methods used by Operation Condor in Chile and Argentina.

On 12 October, the Olympic Games were inaugurated.

The criminal history of the Mexican state was not limited to the regime of Díaz Ordaz, although this was one of its most barbarous acts.

The government feared that all the solidarity that the students had awakened with their action could be transformed into a revolutionary uprising. The agitation of the brigades in the industrial zones, the unity with the teachers, oil workers, landless peasants, and so on, all reminded the government of the unfulfilled

demands of the Mexican revolution. It reaffirmed that the PRI did not represent the ideals of the revolution of 1910 as it claimed.

Despite the impact of the massacre, and after the truce imposed by the Olympics, the strike lasted for two more months. It demanded the unconditional release of political prisoners, the return of the schools that were still in the hands of the army and the cessation of the repression.

But the student movement had reached its limit. It had two possible paths to follow: to promote a broader revolutionary movement, which implied a true rebellion of the workers against the straitjacket of the trade union structures co-opted by the government; or return to winter studies. No organisation on the left had the capacity or political orientation to follow the first path.

The tiredness, fear, and lack of perspective imposed themselves. On 4 December, the strike was lifted and the CNH disbanded.

After the great massacre, the legitimacy of the army before the people was shattered, although in return it obtained all kinds of privileges and corruption. PRI was weakened, never again could it speak as a representative of the 1910 revolution.

In 1971, the same year in which the student movement was brutally repressed again, then-President, Luis Echeverría, was forced to release the majority of political prisoners, including railway worker leaders, adopted as standard bearers by the movement. He was also forced to repeal article 145 - a law used to repress political dissent - one of the main demands of the movement.

The heroic struggle of youth changed Mexico in 1968, and that example of revolution and courage survives in the collective memory of all the people.

- Read the [full version at socialistworld.net](http://socialistworld.net)

## CWI news in brief

### USA: Socialist Alternative convention success

Socialist Alternative (CWI USA) held its biggest ever National Convention in Chicago on 20-22 October.

Over 300 socialists from across the country discussed the crisis of global capitalism, the rising wave of labour struggle, the growing women's movement, renewed interest in socialist ideas, and the growth of the new left.

Alongside national and international issues, it also discussed the critically important campaign to re-elect Socialist Alternative member Kshama Sawant to the Seattle City Council in 2019. And as a demonstration of the sheer determination of members, the financial appeal raised \$125,000!

### Taiwan: Fighting for LGBT+ rights

On 27 October, a record 137,000 people marched in Taiwan's capital in the 16th annual Taipei Pride demonstration.

The main reason for the high turnout is the LGBT+ referenda - one pro and one anti-LGBT+ rights - on 24 November, the same day as local and regional elections.

International Socialist Forward (CWI Taiwan) last summer set up the radical platform "Let's fight! LGBT" - holding three protests and calling on people to kick out homophobic politicians. In contrast to the official LGBT+ movement, it stands for politicising the movement with a class struggle approach and orientation.

## Union rally brings Melbourne to a standstill

A "Change the Rules" rally on 23 October, called by the Australian Council of Trade Unions, saw more than 100,000 people bring central Melbourne to a standstill, demanding pay rises and secure jobs.

The union leaders' strategy is solely based on getting Labor elected in Victoria and at a federal level. However, the very rules unions are trying to change were implemented by Labor!

The Socialist Party (CWI Australia) says the campaign must prioritise mass industrial action, including a one-day national stop-work, to really change the rules, regardless of who is in power.

---

## Nae Pasaran a film about working-class solidarity by Felipe Bustos Sierra

**Paul Heron**

This is an inspiring film and I don't doubt that if you see it you will shed a tear. It is a story of international solidarity of the working class and the power of those acts of solidarity having a ripple effect.

The 1973 military coup in Chile is a defining moment in the history of the international working class. It saw a cabal of US imperialism, the Chilean military and the neo-monetarist Chicago School of Economics scheme to bring down the democratically elected socialist Popular Unity government of president Salvador Allende.

Naomi Klein in her book the Shock Doctrine notes: "In the years leading up to the coup, US trainers, many from the CIA, had whipped the Chilean military into an anti-Communist frenzy..."

The Pinochet-led coup took place on 11 September 1973. From the start General Pinochet, apart from a few officers and soldiers loyal to Allende, had complete control of the army, navy, air force, marines and police.

The real tragedy was that Allende had refused to organise the working class into armed defence leagues so he had no army of his own.

News of the military coup spread globally. International solidarity began to grow, and so in Scotland's first 'new town', East Kilbride, a group of engineers were faced with the prospect of having to conduct maintenance on several aeroplane engines from the Chilean air force.

Bob Fulton, a shop steward, knows what these engines had done and took the simple but heroic decision that they wouldn't be doing it again. He proposes a 'no work' on the engines, and his fellow workers immediately back him.

The workers, some now in their 70s, now sit in a pub discussing with the director of the film how the events unfolded.

The chat is a mixture of 'the craic,' pride and a clear sense of what solidarity is all about. They make clear they would do it again.

### Shop-floor power

As members of a strong union Bob Fulton, Stuart Barr, Robert Somerville and John Keenan have the power to stop the repair of the engines and, unbeknown to them, that small but significant decision has a direct impact in Chile - particularly for some of the prisoners held by the military dictatorship.

The documentary successfully welds historic film reel and news reports, with the aid of some skilful animation.

The film director introduces us to a leader of the Chilean Air Force who explains the difficulties pilots began to encounter as engines sat rusty and there was no way repairs would be done on the Rolls Royce engines.

Interviews with survivors of torture, who have since grown old, provide a serious gravity to the film and it is their gratitude to the workers that makes you realise how much collective acts of solidarity can reverberate across the world.

As a result of the decision to block repair on the engines they sit unrepaired in the yard of the Rolls Royce factory in East Kilbride - not for weeks, but years. In 1978, two or three of the engines are taken in the night. It transpires, and certainly it appears that they are traded for political prisoners, possibly by the then Labour government.

One of the political prisoners is interviewed on film explaining that he was released from detention precisely because those engines were released in exchange. He is sure of it.

He came to the UK, and advised Amnesty International. It grated on me that the 'worthy' operators in the 'human rights industry' never thought of telling the workers in East Kilbride.

Nae Pasaran is a film grounded in working-class solidarity. The sincerity, modesty and humour of the workers who acted in solidarity with their brothers and sisters in Chile against the violent Pinochet military regime shine through.

These workers, who placed their own jobs on the line, demonstrate the risks they were prepared to take in order to take on the powerful, and show the strength we can have when part of a union.

Nae Pasaran makes it clear international workers' solidarity is a powerful act, and an act that shakes the powerful.

- Nae Pasaran is showing until 16 December, see listings - [naepasaran.com](http://naepasaran.com)

---

## 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.

---

## Gentrification killing music

Popular Brighton music venue Sticky Mikes Frog Bar announced that it is to become the latest in a long list of recently closed venues in Brighton, with others such as the Haunt (the city's main rock club) also facing a similar fate.

The rising cost of rent makes music venues difficult to run under normal circumstances, but high-end property developments such as new apartments and hotels have pushed them to breaking point.

Gentrification is having a disastrous effect on social spaces for young people. Councils should make an effort to provide funding for these important parts of the community and restrict developments that damage them.

Ultimately though, democratic, socialist planning is the only real solution to protect music venues and other social spaces, and ensure the needs of the community come before private profit.

**Connor Rosoman, Brighton**

---

## Global parasites

While most workers and poor people around the world struggle to exist under the constant pressure of capitalist exploitation, the insatiable thirst for profits knows no limits.

Over several decades a small number of private equity companies have been allowed to amass more money than some countries' GDP - which gives them enormous power. These companies recognise no borders and hold no allegiance except one - profit.

No industry is safe from the tentacles of the private equity company which will buy it, suck it dry and then dispose of it in a blink of an eye.

**Rebel with a cause Rotherham**

---

## Hobson's choice

One of capitalism's great attributes according to its supporters is its ability to offer choice through competition. Forget for a minute that many goods are actually produced by the same company trading under different names.

How do you know which is the best product? Well, how about some more companies seeking to make their own profits by trading as the arbiters of what's best for you? Like price comparison websites for example.

But hold on a minute. The most well-known company (the one with the supposedly cute, but frankly bloody annoying, meerkats) has breached capitalism's own competition rules by insisting companies who use its services don't then advertise goods at a lower price elsewhere.

Consumers are not only not getting the best price available, they're contributing to the profits of big business making and trading such goods and also to the profits of a company supposedly regulating prices but actually keeping them artificially high!

**Dave Gorton, Chesterfield Socialist Party**

---

## Podcast thumbs-up

The first episode of the new podcast by the Socialist Party received a positive response from newer members and supporters as we listened through it at a recent Coventry East branch meeting.

We listened to the questions from Sarah Wrack, then paused to discuss how we would go about answering them, before continuing and hearing a more comprehensive reply from deputy general secretary Hannah Sell.

This was a really effective tool for exploring the party's core ideas and political perspectives, and a good test for the more experienced members! I would very much recommend going through all or part of an episode at branch meetings.

**Adam Harmsworth, Coventry East Socialist Party**

---

## Jobs and nukes

The socialist arguments against the Trident nuclear missile system and nuclear energy are vast, but many activists often come up against a common stumbling block - jobs.

The Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND) found that of the 30,000 jobs claimed to be dependent on Trident, 11,520 of them are civilian. The argument that these mostly engineering positions could not be shifted anywhere seems wrong.

Could these skills not be put to use in, for example, the building and maintenance of wind turbines in the renewable energy sector?

The case for the transfer of jobs being possible from the nuclear power is even stronger. Nuclear power plants use steam turbines to create electricity, with around two-thirds of the heat energy produced being wasted. Why not the cheaper and cleaner solution of renewable energy?

However, without a socialist government this alternative is fantastical. A Corbyn government would need to work to convince workers in these sectors that they would be guaranteed suitable, well paid, and local jobs.

For this vision to be achieved we would need full nationalisation of the energy industry in order to ensure the transition into renewable energy - as well as to avoid the artificial inflation of energy prices. Democratic socialist planning of the economy is key.

**Tom Vale, Youth and Student CND committee and Lincoln Socialist Students chair**

---

## Editorial of the Socialist issue 1017

# Tories out - we need socialism!

We need socialism. That will be the central case presented on 10-11 November at Socialism 2018 - a weekend of discussion and debate hosted by the Socialist Party.

It will be the key argument made in discussions covering a broad selection of topics: Corbynism, Brexit, how to kick out the Tories, the fight against low pay, the struggle against racism, and the urgency of saving the planet. We need socialism. And we need to fight for it.

Socialist ideas are all about addressing the most pressing problems faced by working-class people in everyday life. They are about how we build a society that works for the majority - how we secure a future for the 99%.

Socialism 2018 takes place in a world in crisis, amid a capitalist system in turmoil.

As we go to press, it's crunch time for May in the Brexit negotiations. She is up against the clock - desperately trying to reach an agreement with EU negotiators.

## Brexit deal

But even if she is able to secure a deal in Brussels, her troubles are far from over. Next she'd need to get the deal through parliament. And she'd have to do this against the background of a desperately divided party, a flimsy parliamentary majority, and with the risk of a chaotic no-deal Brexit - potentially a disaster for British capitalism - a serious possibility should she fail.

In the face of this, a pessimistic attitude is wholly justified from the perspective of May and the Tories. Indeed, it is justified from the perspective of the whole capitalist class.

But pessimism should not be the attitude of socialists, nor of the trade union and labour movement more widely.

Because for socialists, politics is about far more than what takes place inside the walls of parliament or the closed conclaves of treaty negotiations.

One of the key-note speakers at Socialism 2018 will be a striker from Glasgow Unison - one of thousands of mainly women council workers currently engaged in an historic battle to win equal pay.

It's this kind of example that we should look to.

The Socialist Party argues that now is the time for our movement to go on the offensive. The election result of June 2017 left May hanging by a thread. Since then, this paper has consistently raised the need for Corbyn and the trade unions to prosecute a mass campaign, fighting to kick out the Tories and force a general election.

On this score, these leaders have been found wanting. Worse, as in the case of Frances O'Grady - the general secretary of the Trade Union Congress - they have echoed arguments about what's in the 'best interests of Britain' when taking up questions like Brexit.

But the truth is there is no such thing as 'British interests' devoid of class content. Do the Glasgow strikers have 'common interests' with Philip Green, Richard Branson or Alan Sugar?

Low wages, privatisation and cuts to public services have all served to boost the share of wealth which goes to this small, privileged elite over the years of austerity. This is in spite of the fact that it's workers who create wealth in the first place - workers who produce goods, provide services and keep society running.

Our interests and those of the capitalist class - the class which the Tory party was established to represent - are ultimately opposed.

That's why the Socialist Party fights for political representation for working-class people that is independent of the interests of the capitalists. It's why we welcomed the election of Jeremy Corbyn as leader of the Labour Party - something we saw as a potential step towards this.

But, since Corbyn's election, he has faced a constant barrage of attack, slander and sabotage from the representatives of capitalism in his own party.

As a potential parliamentary vote on Brexit approaches, the campaign to undermine Corbyn is once again intensifying. Overwhelmingly, the capitalist class is desperate to secure a 'soft' Brexit - one in which Britain remains part of the single market and customs union for all intents and purposes. They are more than happy to sign up to follow all the neoliberal rules and pro-big-business directives that would be necessary to do this, including those which present barriers to nationalisation and state aid, for example.

## **Tax proposals**

It's this that is the backdrop to the most recent parliamentary rebellion over Corbyn and McDonnell's position on income tax.

Rightly, many working-class people were furious when Hammond's supposed 'end of austerity' provided no genuine relief from attacks on benefits, public services, or welfare - with proposed tax cuts primarily benefiting the better off.

The policy outlined in Labour's 2017 manifesto, which John McDonnell has subsequently reiterated, is that people earning up to £80,000 would be protected from tax rises under a Labour government. In other words, any increase in taxation necessary to fund greater investment in public services, welfare, and so on, should come from the richest 5% of society.

In line with this policy, Corbyn whipped Labour MPs to abstain in the parliamentary vote on the Tory plans raise income tax thresholds, including increasing the higher-rate threshold from £46,350 to £50,000. More

than 20 MPs chose to break the whip.

In justifying this rebellion, the ultra-Blairite millionaire Margaret Hodge summed up the source of the difference most bluntly:

"We can't keep pretending that punishing the wealthy is the solution to underfunding. We need to have a truthful conversation with voters about how much we need to raise in tax to fund public services."

So, as far as Hodge is concerned, the cost of funding public services must be borne not by the 1% - those who've continued to enrich themselves throughout the years of austerity - but instead by the majority of working and middle class people who have suffered.

The super-rich must be forced to pay. Corbyn's quite modest proposals to increase tax on wealthy individuals and corporations are a start. But a serious approach requires that you take more far-reaching, socialist measures. After all, it's estimated that more than £33 billion was avoided or evaded in 2016 alone.

The super-rich are more than adept at avoiding paying even the minimal amount of tax currently required of them. This makes nationalising the banks essential - a necessary first step to avoiding a mass exodus of capital from the country should a Corbyn government threaten their enormous wealth through taxation or other measures.

But it also requires addressing the root cause of such obscene wealth polarisation: production for profit. It would only be by bringing the major monopolies into democratic, public ownership, that it would be possible to plan production to meet everyone's needs - not to fill the pockets of the rich few.

Socialism is not simply a plan to redistribute wealth. It is about reorganising society to allow working-class people to democratically plan the economy - opening the door to eliminating all the waste, inefficiency and duplication created by the anarchy of the market.

## **Inviting aggression**

But Corbyn faces being held back from implementing even the most basic measures to redistribute wealth by Labour's Blairite fifth column - spearheaded by the likes of Hodge. These are the same forces potentially preparing to come to the rescue of May, and the capitalist class, by supporting a Tory Brexit deal.

Corbyn has offered reassurances to the Blairite rebels that there will be 'no consequences' to having broken the whip on the income tax issue. This conciliatory attitude is particularly worrying in light of what could potentially come in the next weeks over Brexit. The Blairites are as hostile to the prospect of a Corbyn-led government as May.

That explains why - at a time when the government teeters on the edge, with the potential its collapse could lead to a general election at any point - the Labour right are considering acting decisively to save May by voting for a Tory Brexit deal.

This gives renewed urgency to the task of taking on the right - a fight Corbyn must lead. But doing so would involve a dramatic change of course by the Labour leadership.

Ahead of a potential Brexit vote, this requires a clear statement of intent to take decisive action against any Labour MP who votes for a Tory deal. This should include the threat to withdraw the whip and 'deregister' any Labour MP who votes to save May's bacon. In constituencies with MPs who took this road, this would allow selection processes to begin which could be used to put in place Labour candidates prepared to fight on behalf of working-class people to contest the next election.

Such a measure by Corbyn should go alongside fighting for demands the Socialist Party has been raising since his election in 2015: Mandatory reselection to put Labour members and trade unions in control of who represents them in elections; an opening up of the party to all genuine anti-austerity forces, including the Socialist Party, to participate in a renewed federal structure.

Crucially, on Brexit - as well as all other issues - it is vital the Labour leadership adopts a clear, independent working-class stand. That means fighting for a socialist alternative to the EU, based on a rejection of all rules requiring austerity and neoliberalism and on protecting workers' rights. On this basis, it would be possible to win support for such a stand not just from workers in Britain, but across the continent - paving the way for a socialist Europe.

---

## Labour councils should use £14bn reserves to fight all cuts

**Tom Baldwin, South West Socialist Party organiser**

A new report from the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC) has set out the ability of Labour councils to resist cuts.

Local authorities have been among the areas worst hit by austerity, losing more than half the money they receive from the government. Savage cuts have been made to jobs and to services like social care, libraries and road maintenance.

Despite the desperate cost-cutting, some councils have still been pushed to the brink of bankruptcy and are struggling to provide even the services that are required by law.

Shamefully, all the parties leading councils have taken them down the path of austerity. This serves a dual purpose for the Tory government - they get the cuts and privatisation that they want, and they can also try and deflect the blame.

### Choice

But councils have a choice. Three years in to Corbyn's leadership of the Labour Party there has been no change in direction for the party in local government to try and make his anti-austerity agenda a reality. Councillors claim they have no choice but to cut. But this is not true, there is an alternative.

Labour councils have significant amounts of money in reserve as well as the ability to borrow. They could use this to fund no-cuts budgets. This would buy the time to build a mass campaign that could successfully demand funding.

The TUSC report lays out the enormous potential for doing this that Labour councils have at their fingertips. There are 125 Labour-led local authorities in Britain which administer a total budget of £79 billion! They hold a combined £14.2 billion in usable reserves and there is nothing to stop them creating a solidarity fund where reserves are pooled across different councils. Blairite council leaders are using the lie that they can't fight austerity to hide the fact that they don't want to.

Most English councils used reserves in their last budgets anyway. Funding cuts have been so severe they've been forced to dip into savings. Surely it is better to do this as part of a clear strategy to end cuts? Labour's leadership could empower local councils by announcing they would restore full funding and reimburse reserves that have been used as soon as a Labour government is elected.

It's beyond time for Labour councils to actually make a stand for the people they're meant to represent. Doing so wouldn't just be a vital line of defence for jobs and services, it would be a direct challenge to a weak and wobbly Tory government.

- See the TUSC report at [tusc.org.uk](http://tusc.org.uk)

# University bankruptcy threat - kick the market out of education

**Tom Costello, Manchester Socialist Party and Socialist Students**

"A university going bust is more likely than at any other point in the last generation". These were the words of Nick Hillman - former advisor to Tory universities minister David Willets. Three universities across Britain have been found to have been facing bankruptcy, often relying on short-term loans to keep themselves above water.

The blame for this situation has been passed around constantly. Some have correctly linked this to Theresa May's disastrous hostile environment policy and the negative effect it has on the quality of life for international students. It is becoming clear, though, that this has much more to do with the ongoing

marketisation of our education system. With universities now reliant on attracting enough fee-paying 'customers', in the form of students, those struggling to enrol enough people face potential ruin.

Past Tory and Blairite governments have consistently pursued a policy of gradual backdoor privatisation of universities, selling education as a commodity to an increasingly debt-burdened clientele of students.

We need to be clear: if higher education is run on the basis of the market, a crisis of this sort is bound to happen. Education is not a commodity to be modelled on the endless and ruthless profit-seeking of the capitalist system.

The recent University and College Union and Unison ballots for strike action against declining pay and gender inequality in the workplace is part of the same struggle to save our education system. Despite action being blocked by Tory anti-union laws, the majority votes for action show the appetite that exists for a fightback. Students and staff are both under threat from a government that is determined to dismantle and sell off higher education.

Now is the time for a mass mobilisation of students and staff together, demanding publicly owned and fully funded universities as part of a plan to unseat the Tories and their rotten big business agenda.

---

## Stand up against abuse - justice not racism

**Mike Forster, Huddersfield Socialist Party**

Huddersfield has once again been in the news for all the wrong reasons, as 20 men found guilty of street grooming and abuse were jailed for a total of 221 years.

Some of the evidence submitted in court painted a terrible picture of young girls being routinely groomed, raped, abducted and forced into prostitution. Victim statements were too difficult to endure as young girls told of their despair, isolation and self-loathing.

These incidents are not isolated and follow on the heels of similar cases across the country including Rotherham, Rochdale, Peterborough, Oxford, Bristol and Newcastle.

Inevitably, these cases have been exploited by the far right and Tommy Robinson, the former leader of the far-right English Defence League (EDL), in particular. He was jailed for contempt of court for potentially risking the collapse of the trial by live streaming the names of the accused in Leeds earlier in the year.

This has brought the case into the public eye for all the wrong reasons and has prevented a proper debate, both about how this abuse could happen in the first place and how it could be tackled.

The EDL are not interested in the whole issue of sexual abuse in our communities and how it must be dealt with. But it serves their vile agenda of scapegoating the Muslim community.

The most recent statistics from the Ministry of Justice continue to show that 77% of male prosecutions for cases of sex abuse were of white men and 7% of prosecutions were of Asian men.

Young people are far more likely to be abused by a member of their family than a stranger. The Roman Catholic Church in Italy recently revealed that it had unearthed almost 4,000 cases of sexual abuse by priests which had recently 'come to light'.

Society is also well aware of the now infamous sex scandals in the BBC, where predominantly white men used their position of power to perpetrate abuse and continued to be protected by people around them. And now the #MeToo movement is giving more female victims the courage to come forward and call out instances of abuse and unacceptable behaviour.

The Huddersfield cases once again reveal the huge class inequalities in society. The vast majority of victims were either in care, from very poor backgrounds, or had some kind of learning disability.

Disgracefully, the authorities knew about this abuse from 2003, when the first girl reported her experiences to the police. Local MP, Barry Sheerman, raised his concerns in parliament in 2008 but was told police surveillance was too expensive. He got a negative reaction in parliament, and the council was reluctant to face up to it.

Witness testimony from victims confirmed that they felt trapped, powerless, afraid and never listened to. Two were in care, but their foster parents or carers were themselves threatened by the abusers.

Of course, the problem goes even further when online grooming is considered. The police describe this as an epidemic which they cannot properly deal with. Unfortunately, the media has chosen to selectively highlight the ethnicity of those groomers who come to court.

For example, little mention was made of Peter and Avril Griffiths who were jailed for a total of 36 years on 19 October for repeatedly grooming and raping teenage girls over the last 30 years. Police were even present at one of the sex parties on their boat! However, they were a white couple from Wales, so no EDL protests there!

The rise of the far right and the prominence given to this case gives socialists and the trade union movement a big responsibility to address this whole issue. We cannot afford to leave or abandon the debate to the EDL and must call out all abuse where it comes to light.

However, the current judicial system is unable to address this issue adequately. Public sector cuts to police and young people's services make the situation far more serious. The massive power imbalance in society between the classes, as well as between men and women, will mean more young people will be vulnerable. A class-based analysis and socialist answer is required.

We must demand a reversal of all public sector cuts and greater investment in children's and young people's services; the reopening of children's centres with fully resourced services; full gender equality to ensure victims are listened to and protected; an end to racist scapegoating and to the far-right EDL; and a fully accountable police and judicial system.

This issue goes to the very heart of capitalist inequality. This system protects powerful institutions and those who preside over them. It should give us all further incentive to fight for a socialist society.

---

## Care crisis cashing in

Scott Jones

Private companies are making millions treating NHS patients in psychiatric hospitals that often fail to provide decent and safe care. An investigation by the Times found that thousands of patients are affected - many of them detained against their will under the Mental Health Act - and in some cases for years.

To provide this poor service the NHS can be charged as much as £13,000 a week, with some companies making huge profits. One firm has squirrelled away £25 million into a secret trust in Belize being investigated by the government. Another pays its chief executive £496,000. The latter - St Andrew's Healthcare - has been accused of locking a 17-year-old girl in a cell-like room with only a mattress and chair and meals passed through a hatch in the door. 76 of its other employees are paid more than £100,000.

About 2,400 people are thought to be being failed by these companies - most with learning disabilities or autism. The figure includes 250 children.

Patients are shipped out to private firms due to hospital closures and cuts to NHS mental health services. We need a fully-funded, completely publically owned and run NHS which can provide the services and care vulnerable patients need. Nationalise the private hospitals and kick out the fat cats that rip off the NHS and provide terrible care now!

---

## **Back Chris Baugh and Marion Lloyd for a fighting, democratic, lay-led union**

This month, voting meetings are taking place to decide the PCS civil service union Left Unity candidates for the 2019 national executive committee (NEC) and assistant general secretary (AGS) elections. Here, we carry the election statements of two Socialist Party members seeking nomination. Chris Baugh, the current AGS, is standing to once again be the Left Unity candidate for this position next year. Marion Lloyd, who is currently a member of the national executive committee (NEC), is seeking the Left Unity nomination to contest the position of national president. The candidates being supported by the Socialist Party and by the Chris4AGS campaign in the Left Unity voting meetings can also be found below.

We thank Left Unity members for their support during the nomination process. Chris and Marion both received eight nominations and the number of votes for Chris Baugh and Janice Godrich were very close. This shows that the election is neck and neck, with everything to play for. In the London Left Unity nomination meeting for example, Chris got 18 votes and Janice got eight. The latest article by Janice Godrich's supporters gives a misleading impression about the nominations for Janice. What it doesn't say is that, unfortunately, there were insufficient members in two of the Left Unity regional groups for a nomination to be accepted according to the rules. We have respect for every Left Unity member and look forward to the discussions at the voting meetings, where all the issues can be debated. This is what we have always wanted.

---

### **Chris Baugh for PCS assistant general secretary**

I ask for your support as Left Unity candidate in the 2019 AGS election. Elected three times since 2004, I have spent all my working life building the union and the left.

I played a leading role in creating PCS Left Unity and was national chair for many years. I have shown a lifetime commitment to implementing union policy, to working-class struggle and a socialist alternative to capitalism and climate change.

I was part of a left leadership that defeated the right wing, challenged Tory austerity, and defied their unlawful attempt to bankrupt us.

I have navigated the union through Tory attacks on union finances and helped secure the union's survival.

I have extensive bargaining experience - an area in which I play a lead role - winning gains on PMR and Apprenticeships and fighting to restore our national bargaining rights.

I am a consistent supporter of groups and branches taking action, including members fighting privatisation and in the private sector.

I have :

- Challenged racism from the 70s to the present day.
- Won breakthrough childcare and parental leave provision In the Land Registry.
- Led opposition and exposed the discrimination of PMR

I stand for a national campaign to challenge discrimination embedded in HR practice, remove barriers for women at work, close the gender pay gap and support equality groups fighting for Black, Disabled and LGBT+ members. I will defend the rights of transgender members in line with union policy.

## **Young members**

I was responsible for setting up the vibrant Young Members network in 2006 which has brought hundreds of young members into activity in PCS and the wider movement.

As group president I laid the foundations for the Land Registry group who defeated privatisation and delivered the 50% threshold in the pay ballot.

I have consistently defended the authority of the union's conference and lay power. I will work to implement the election of full-time officers. I have kept my promise to repay part of my salary into union funds and various labour movement and environmental causes.

I was instrumental to the union's intervention in the Independence Referendum and pay strategy in Scotland which has won gains for members. I worked to implement a conference policy on devolution that protects jobs and public services in Wales. I am proud to be a close ally of the NIPSA public service union in Northern Ireland.

I helped set up Tax Justice Campaign and 'PCS alternatives to austerity'. I have been at the forefront of developing a trade union approach to climate change in the UK and internationally.

Our political strategy should be based on the implementation of union policy to support politicians who support us. This means working with the Labour leadership and parliamentary groups across the UK in support of PCS campaigns and policies. We need a Labour government led by Jeremy Corbyn to enact a shared and radical programme in members' and workers' interests.

The pay ballot recorded our biggest vote for action but didn't reach the 50% threshold. We need to do more than recruit more members and ballot again in March.

We need to consider a special conference and all options for 2019, including the precise form of statutory ballots; a national industrial action strategy; national and group action; potentially linking pay with jobs and other issues; key organising and recruitment priorities; pressing the TUC, STUC and WTUC for coordinated action on pay; and working with unions preparing for action in 2019.

Unsubstantiated claims have been made against me in a manner alien to the best traditions of Left Unity and against natural justice. I hope you will reject such methods and support me as the best qualified AGS candidate in the 2019 election.

---

## **Marion Lloyd for PCS president**

I am standing for re-election to Left Unity National Chair, to be the Left Unity candidate for national president, and to be a candidate for the NEC.

I have been active in PCS since I was 16 and served at all levels: as a member of the NEC, group president, regional chair - across many departments, including the private sector.

I have extensive experience across PCS - which I believe is vital to represent all members, whether in big operational areas like the DWP or HMRC, in smaller policy areas like Education, Transport, and Culture, or in the Commercial Sector.

I was the first left candidate elected to the Ministry of Defence section executive following political victimisation, before being forced to move to Department for Health and Social Security. I led the Forest Hill dispute against the removal of screens whilst in the Department for Employment and, despite right-wing sabotage, won significant concessions after a year-long strike.

I have substantial bargaining experience linked to campaigning and organising, most recently leading members to save BIS Sheffield - winning protections for 9,000 staff facing abolition of their 11 employers, playing a significant role in the ACAS dispute, leading talks and working with reps to win the strike vote. I fight hard for members across all equality groups including winning break-through childcare support.

The next steps on pay should not be more of the same. We should consider different options, including pay linked with jobs and services, and an aggregate ballot building from the grass-roots. The brilliant £3 million win in court can support this.

Working to re-build Left Unity whilst Chair, I stand for a democratic, campaigning, independent organisation: vital to maintain PCS as a fighting union.

I believe passionately in lay democracy and full-time officers elected and accountable to a fighting membership-led left leadership.

A Corbyn Government is crucial. As a Socialist Party member, I believe that we must ensure that a radical programme reflecting union policies is implemented.

Please vote for me, Chris Baugh for AGS and those supporting #Chris4AGS.

- Nomination for Left Unity candidate for AGS: Chris Baugh
- Nominations for Left Unity slate for the PCS national executive committee:
- President: Marion Lloyd
- Vice-President: Katrine Williams
- NEC: Clive Bryant, Alan Dennis, Steve Thorley, Kris Hendry, Rhea James, John Jamieson, Tahir Latif, Marion Lloyd, Kenny McKay, Dave Semple, Hector Wesley, Katrine Williams, Harvey Crane

### **PCS Left Unity national committee**

- Chair: Marion Lloyd
- Treasurer: Alan Dennis
- Equal opportunities officer: Kris Hendry
- Editor: Dave Semple
- Young members' officer: Sarah Spencer
- Scrutineers: Sian Ruddock
- Committee members: Clara Paillard, Bobby Young

## **Arriva Rail North strike hits 34 days of action against driver-only operation**

**Striking Arriva Rail North guard**

1,300 train guards across the north of England took their 34th day of strike action in defence of a safe, secure and accessible railway on 3 November.

Despite Arriva Rail North management claiming to have run 800 trains, the sustained action every Saturday has seen a shambolic low of 182 and an average of 250 services running. Last services of the day between major northern cities have been as early as 3.30pm.

After 34 days of action the members have remained absolutely solid! Many depots have had no staff crossing picket lines and a pathetic 0.3% of non-members have been working on strike days.

## **Pugs**

Management have become increasingly desperate, with efforts to cajole members of office staff and those on administration grades to act as a "person utilised as guard" or Pug. Indeed these staff - who have been rushed through a condensed nine-day training programme, when it can take up to six months to qualify as a guard - have made many serious safety-related mistakes.

The strikes take a continuing toll on Arriva Rail North and its parent company the German state-owned Deutsche Bahn. The taxpayer subsidy has soared to £282 million, with the company now locked in crisis talks with the Department for Transport and demanding an even bigger public bail-out.

Managers are being put up in fancy hotels and flown in from around the Arriva empire while underhand tactics like refusing to grant leave and not releasing reps for union duties only make the members more determined.

A series of public meetings is being organised with trade unionists and supportive Labour MPs as guest speakers. Despite it being Labour Party policy to halt the roll out of driver-only operation, local Labour politicians have maintained a deafening silence.

We call on the wider trade union movement to increase its support for the strikes by attending picket lines and raising money for the hardship fund. We are in a position of strength and determined to fight for a safe, secure, accessible and publicly owned railway, run in the interests of the passengers not the fat cats.

---

## **Leeds public back rail guards' strike in 'ballot'**

Socialist Students and the Socialist Party held a mock ballot at the RMT's picket line at Leeds station on 3 November, which showed public support for striking workers on Arriva Rail North.

Lots of people were keen to get involved and show their support for the striking workers in their struggle against driver-only operation. We had ballot papers asking for Yes or No votes to the question "should we keep a fully safety-trained guard on Arriva Rail North services?" Our ballot box soon filled up - the final vote was a unanimous: Yes, with 115 votes!

Many people told us about the help they have had from guards in the past, or about friends and family who rely on assistance.

This was the 34th day of strike action for Arriva Rail North staff and picket line morale remains high as they struggle for public safety. A calendar of further dates is in place through November and December. We'll continue to show our support and publicise the campaign.

**Robert Hooper, Leeds Socialist Party**

---

## **Socialists support striking Carlisle rail guards**

Members of the Socialist Party in Carlisle presented a petition to striking Arriva Rail North guards in support of their fight to keep a guard on the train. This was part of a protest on 3 November by passengers against the company's attempt to scrap the guards.

900 people have signed our petition which also calls the privatisation chaos to be stopped by renationalising the railways.

Passenger Jutta Timmermann said: "Women don't feel safe on some train routes without the presence of a guard, so it's irresponsible of the private train companies to leave us unprotected just to cut costs and make more money."

The Socialist Party will continue to support the RMT until the guards win.

**Carlisle Socialist Party**

---

## **Cable workers' Halloween picket line attempts to 'scare' management into talks**

**Declan Clune, Southampton and South West Hampshire Trade Union Council secretary**

It was a spooky affair outside Prysmian Cables in Eastleigh on 31 October with workers joining the picket line dressed appropriately for Halloween.

One worker jokingly said: "We're trying to scare management back to the table". Fittingly there was a worker dressed as a ghost alongside a mocked-up headstone with "RIP fair pay" written on it.

This is now the sixth week that Unite members have been in dispute with the company over a derisory pay offer. It is below inflation and comes on the back of previous years of real-terms wage cuts.

Steve Phillips, one of the branch activists, said that there has still been no contact from management - although it has now been said that conciliation service Acas will be brought in to facilitate talks. Details and confirmation of this have not yet been received.

Speaking to workers on the picket line it was immediately obvious that there is a determined mood and some defiance.

It is now known that the strike, as well as overtime bans and the work-to-rule currently in place inside the factory, have had an impact on output - with significant financial implications for the company. One source stated that production has fallen to as little as half of what it was before the dispute.

The majority of workers told me that morale inside the factory is at an all-time low. But morale for the strike and ongoing dispute is high and growing.

Some described how a manager had passed a previous picket line and had stuck a middle finger up towards the workers on entering the factory! This further strengthened the anger and resolve of the pickets.

One had what he called the perfect response to the manager: his Halloween outfit consisted of a big foam head in the shape of a fist with a large middle finger raised in the air.

Many deliveries to the site were stopped by other workers arriving and refusing to cross the picket line. They were cheered and clapped as they left the factory with some tooting horns in support of the dispute, along with other passing vehicles.

---

# Royal Bolton Hospital: Another victory against NHS privatisation

Steve North, Salford Socialist Party

A dispute involving Unison health union members employed as cleaners, caterers, porters and other ancillary workers at the Royal Bolton Hospital has won. The workers took 48 hours of solid strike action in October against their employer and were gearing up for a further three days on strike.

Their dispute was against their employer iFM - a company wholly owned by Royal Bolton NHS Trust. Despite previous assurances to the contrary, the trust was denying them the NHS pay award. The workers have now achieved a complete victory without the need for any further action.

I spoke with one striker, who told me that when they returned to work after the initial two days, the hospital was a complete mess. This,

combined with the unity of the striking workers and the solidarity shown from the wider trade union movement, forced management back to the table.

Within the space of a few hours, they gave in to all of the workers' demands, meaning that the NHS pay award will be implemented in full. The Socialist sends its congratulations to those workers for the brave and vital stand they took.

This is not just a victory for these workers. It is a victory against NHS privatisation and the race to the bottom it promotes - for staff and patients.

At a rally in support of the strike days before their victory, speakers from Unison's north west region declared that winning NHS rates of pay at iFM would only be the start. The real goal was to get them back in the NHS, where they belong.

The trade unions must fight NHS privatisation. What Unison members have achieved at iFM shows that victories can be won.

---

## Occupy and demand nationalisation to save Devon shipyard from closure

Sean Brogan, Exeter Socialist Party

The owner of Appledore Shipyard in north Devon, Babcock International, has announced its closure. Such an action would be devastation for the workers, their families and the whole community.

There would be a loss of nearly 200 jobs in an area where skilled jobs are few and far between. Already, 140 workers face being shipped by bus to Plymouth for a 5.30am start time.

Babcock has been offered £60 million worth of contracts by the Tories to continue. But this is not enough, and they intend to close by March 2019 - the site is leased by them from Langham Industries.

There has been a demand to reveal the nature of these contracts. Babcock received £1.5 million for work carried out last year.

There have been mass meetings, a 10,000 signature petition, and visits to politicians in London. Jeremy Corbyn has said he will be supporting the campaign according to Jake McLean, the senior GMB union rep at the yard.

This workforce is poised to fight a weak Tory government which can be forced into saving jobs and the community by strikes and occupation of the yard by workers. If they decide to strike or occupy then the whole of the south west labour and trade union movement should be mobilised to support them.

Alongside this, a demand should be made that the shipyard be nationalised and that Corbyn should give a commitment that an incoming Labour government would do so. This would put huge pressure on the Tories.

This is a battle that can be won. The workers at a meeting on 5 November resolved to continue campaigning. Let the leadership of our movement show its strength!

---

## **Unison higher education ballot: 62% vote to strike but anti-union rules block action**

### **Unison higher education activists**

Unison trade union members at universities across the UK voted 62% in favour of strike action after rejecting the employers' final offer of 2% (with slightly higher increases for the lowest paid of up to 2.7%).

While this is a significant result, and the best for many years, the turnout of 31% falls short of what's required to take action under the anti-democratic Trade Union Act.

Many activists will be angry and frustrated about our union's apparent inability to engage with members enough to inspire more of them to vote in this important ballot.

For many of us, it felt like this year would be different and that we could fight alongside the University and College Union (UCU), with the support of thousands of students, to improve the offer to match inflation and make up for the many years of derisory pay offers.

The way forward starts with a sober assessment of the vote and discussion on what steps are required to bring the levels of confidence and engagement up to a point where serious and effective action can make a difference.

Throughout the campaign there was no serious attempt to contact individual members and adopt a systematic approach to making sure that members voted.

Much of this work was carried out by the heroic efforts of branch activists in the workplaces. But the lack of stewards and reps with the time and confidence to campaign to deliver the vote was demonstrated by the result.

Many members will question why the tactic of an aggregate ballot (requiring a national 50% turnout) was adopted, when a disaggregate ballot (individual ballots by institution) could have proved more effective.

The results of the UCU ballot over the same issue - where some institutions gained a 50% turnout and a legal mandate for action - show that strong, confident branches are able to mobilise members sufficiently.

Delegates to the Unison higher education conference in January will want to hold the leadership to account and support motions which commit Unison's higher education service group to a strategy which is most likely to deliver effective action and significant results next year.

---

## **Bradford uni strike**

**Iain Dalton, Yorkshire Socialist Party organiser**

"Today is the day we say enough. Together we can't be defeated," said workers at a strike rally on the first day of a four-day walkout by Unison union members at Bradford University. The university is trying to cut 165 jobs (down from the original 250). It is the latest in a series of 'restructuring' schemes.

Garbed in Halloween costumes, around 50 workers were on picket lines at both the main university campus and a satellite campus.

Anger is high among staff. One striker, Stephen, said: "I've only been working here ten months and already I've been through two restructures."

Unison, University and College Union and Bradford Students Union all have passed motions of no confidence in the university's vice-chancellor. Unison's showed that 98% of members are demanding he resign.

- Messages of support can be sent to [unison-executive@bradford.ac.uk](mailto:unison-executive@bradford.ac.uk)

---

## Hundreds march to save Blackwood leisure centres

**Dave Reid, Socialist Party Wales**

The council has underestimated working-class determination.

Hundreds of people from Blackwood and Pontllanfraith marched to keep open their local leisure centre and swimming pool. Labour-controlled Caerphilly Council wants to close Pontllanfraith leisure centre and Cefn Fforest swimming pool to 'rationalise' leisure facilities.

Twice attempts to close the centre have been beaten off by a determined campaign. But now the council has come back with new proposals to close the centres and build houses on the land.

This is about more than stopping cuts - it's about preventing developers moving into bulldoze community facilities on what they see as prime land. Campaigners knew they'd need to raise the stakes and called a march which the council tried to block by requiring public liability insurance.

Campaigners refused to back down. They worked hard to publicise the march.

Despite short notice - and the fact that few had yet heard about the council's plans - over 200 local people turned out.

Home-made placards rode high behind the Pengam youth football club carrying the banner. Marchers ignored threats from the council and flowed onto Blackwood High Street, chanting and blowing whistles.

Significantly, Corbyn supporters had been to the fore in forcing the Labour council to back down before. This time they won the backing of Islwyn Constituency Labour Party for the march.

Contingents from Caerphilly Trades Council and the Unite Wales Young Members Executive also took part.

The determination of campaigners was shown by a succession of fighting speeches. Socialist Party member Mariam Kamish, secretary of Caerphilly Trades Council, got the biggest round of applause when she said: "This campaign is here to help councillors out - before they find themselves down the job centre."

"We're here to give them one of their own-style 'performance reviews'" she said to applause.

A surprising cameo appearance was made by former Labour leader and anti-Corbyn politician Neil Kinnock, in a rare visit to his old constituency. The crowd heard him politely but he received a mixed reception and remained incognito for most of the event.

As one campaigner put it: "Kinnock, Touhig and a few other undesirables rolled up, but my goodness, Kinnock left with several fleas in his ear".

# Crowds turn out for Corbyn in Rugby

## Jeremy should condemn Blairite cuts and promise nationalisation

Clive Dunkley, Rugby Socialist Party

350 people packed into Rugby's Indian Association on 3 November to hear Jeremy Corbyn and the Momentum-backed parliamentary candidate for Rugby, Debbie Bannigan.

Socialist Party members leafleting the crowd were warmly received. Many wanted to kick the Blairites out of Labour.

One person asked whether I thought the Socialist Party would be allowed back into Labour. All 300 leaflets were taken and several papers were sold.

Corbyn and Bannigan rightly visited threatened GE Energy Power Conversion site in Rugby before attending the rally. But this 90-minute delay, as well as the hour-long queue to get in, didn't dampen the enthusiasm for Jeremy.

GE intends to cease manufacturing in Rugby and 197 jobs are at risk. Corbyn declared: "Decades of manufacturing decline and eight years of austerity have held Rugby back.

"Last week's budget did nothing to revive and renew our country's industry in towns like Rugby. Labour has a plan for a green-jobs revolution to dramatically expand renewable energy and rebuild British industry.

"That's why we'll back the Swansea Tidal Lagoon, which will bring high-skill jobs designing and producing turbines to Rugby."

These remarks are welcome, but a serious strategy is needed to achieve such a 'revolution'. Ultimately, you can't control what you don't own. Only real nationalisation, including of the big engineering companies, can safeguard jobs.

Meetings in Tory marginals are necessary, and Corbyn couldn't be more correct that such towns are being held back by Tory austerity. But it's a shame that he has only chosen to visit the handful of Tory-run local authorities in the West Midlands, and avoid the numerous Labour-run towns and cities that have also seen sickening levels of austerity and attacks by Labour councils

A stark example of this is the Birmingham homecare workers who were on strike on the same day against Birmingham Labour Council. If Jeremy Corbyn really wants the Labour Party to be for the many not the few, he needs to also show support for heroic fighting workers like these.

---

## But anti-democratic methods on show in Nuneaton

Jeremy Corbyn met a similar reception earlier in the day in Nuneaton. But Labour Party officials tried to stop Socialist Party members leafleting and bar them from the event.

This hostility was also extended to RMT transport union national executive committee member for the Midlands, Paul Reilly.

---

# Thousands march against overnight closure of Shropshire A&E

**Rachel Jenkins, student nurse and Birmingham Socialist Party**

Princess Royal Hospital faces overnight closure. 3,000 people marched against plans that would force people to travel an extra 17-23 miles for emergency health services after 8pm.

Local hospitals in Wolverhampton and Shrewsbury would feel a knock-on effect of increased admissions. The mood was sombre on the silent, steady march, but lifted for speeches and chants.

Gill George, local Defend Our NHS chair, noted the absence of Wrekin's Tory MP Mark Pritchard. The hospital board justified closure because seven more doctors are needed to keep the department open, and these vacancies had not been filled. But the jobs had not been advertised!

We need new NHS training facilities in Shropshire. There are very few at the moment.

Susan, a local resident, commented: "It's great that new housing developments are continually being built, encouraging people into the area. But they're also cutting funding for services, continuing to close healthcare facilities, the demand for which is steadily increasing."

The health trust say closure is temporary, but we know it would be permanent.

It is clear from this display that the people of Shropshire will not let go of their health services without a fight.

- Please sign the online petition at [petition.parliament.uk/petitions/229602](https://petition.parliament.uk/petitions/229602)

---

## Protesters drive far right out of Liverpool

**Roger Bannister, Liverpool Socialist Party**

Hundreds of anti-fascist protesters prevented a far-right group, Frontline Patriots (FP), from moving more than a few yards from the entrance of Liverpool Moorfields train station. People from students to pensioners were determined that these racists would not achieve their twin objectives of holding a march followed by a rally in the city centre on 3 November.

The police initially divided the protesters into two groups in an attempt to create a passage for the pathetic six or so FP members who turned up and to allow them to proceed with their plans. But the sheer numbers of protesters stopped this.

Cheers and jeers went up as the police escorted the FP back into the station. But the episode did not end there.

Word quickly got round that the FP were attempting to leave the station by a second exit several streets away. This exit is normally only open on weekdays, so it is difficult to believe that the police were not involved in the decision to open it on a Saturday.

However, the protesters managed to get to this entrance in time, and in such force as to prevent the FP from getting into the city centre via this route. After a standoff for about an hour, the police eventually abandoned any attempt to get the FP away from the station, and ensured that they got onto trains and left.

---

# Unions and campaigners challenge Southampton cuts inside Labour and out

Josh Asker, Southampton Socialist Party

The phony unity in Labour has been exposed! Blairite cutting councillors in Southampton have had their proposals to close two care homes opposed overwhelmingly by Labour Party members as well as by council unions Unite and Unison.

Angry workers and residents' families took the opportunity to voice their opposition outside the South East regional Labour conference on 3 November by blocking the road outside of the venue. The union-organised demonstration succeeded in having the current leader of the council removed from the list of speakers at the conference. The demonstration was also supported and joined by campaigners fighting to re-open Kentish road respite centre - a service closed by the previous leader of the council, and now prospective parliamentary candidate, Simon Letts. As Simon gingerly approached the megaphone he was booed by the Kentish Road delegation and made his way into the conference without daring to have a say.

The correct strategy has to be to confront councillors making cuts and to expose them as being responsible for undermining Corbyn's anti-austerity message.

An emergency motion to propose a legal no-cuts budget was moved at Southampton Itchen constituency Labour Party (CLP). The motion won support from trade unionists who played a crucial role in bringing down the previous Tory council administration but who have seen their members continue to lose jobs under Labour.

The motion passed says: "This CLP believes to win the fight against Tory austerity it is necessary to oppose all cuts to local services. Southampton City Council should adopt the call from Unite and Unison to set a legal no-cuts budget."

The leader of the council has emailed all Labour members to remind them that they have no say on the voting of councillors and can only make recommendations. This has to change! Councillors should be held democratically accountable to the anti-austerity Labour membership and the unions. Where they vote for cuts they should be removed from office and replaced with those who will fight!

---

## Support the Socialist alternative, subscribe to the Socialist

Chris Newby, the Socialist campaign organiser

"The Socialist is a proper newspaper that cuts to the chase. It is a no-frills paper that doesn't have the same bias as the mainstream media. It is written by ordinary people, and the news reported we can relate to."

This quote appeared in the 1000th issue of the Socialist. It is from Dee Millhouse and Alison Beaumont, health workers from Chatsworth ward, Mansfield community hospital, where there was a successful campaign to keep the ward open.

As Dee and Alison say, this is a paper written by ordinary people - people involved in campaigning to defend the NHS, fighting tuition fees or striking to defend jobs, pay and services.

Alan Rusbridger, the former editor of the Guardian has apparently recognised the importance of this type of reporting in an interview he gave in the latest issue of the National Union of Journalists magazine:

"There's this new media mantra 'your readers know more than you do'. Somebody who works in a school or hospital is likely to know more than a journalist - why could they therefore not be used as a resource."

But unlike the Guardian, the Socialist Party has always recognised the vital importance of workers, community campaigners and young people writing for our paper.

And unlike the Guardian, our starting point is that it is collective struggle by working-class people which holds the key to changing society and transforming the world.

Each week the Socialist gives a socialist analysis of events, helping to clear away the lies, distortion and deliberate confusion put forward in the capitalist media.

Whether it's putting a bold socialist alternative to the crisis of Brexit, building a movement to challenge the far right, or the strategy that Jeremy Corbyn needs to adopt to defeat the Blairites, the Socialist provides answers in a clear fashion.

Mears housing workers in Manchester are another group who recognise the importance of the Socialist.

"If you have to take strike action for 87 days then know this: help is out there. Our friends from the Socialist Party and the Socialist newspaper stood shoulder to shoulder with us throughout six months. Never failing to offer support on protests, demos, leafletting, [and with articles] online and in print, to raise awareness of our cause."

But it is vital that we have the resources to continue to fund the production of the Socialist. Mears workers recently took out a subscription to the Socialist.

This provides an excellent example of what you need to do. Follow their example by subscribing to the Socialist today!

- [Take out a direct debit subscription to the Socialist](#) for only £4.50 a month and receive a free book
- 

## East London public square threat halted

The Save Our Square (SOS) campaign in Waltham Forest, east London has heard that building company Mount Anvil has pulled out of the contract with the shopping centre owners to build monster tower blocks in our town square. We welcome this news and warn any other contractor that if the plans don't change we'll make them as unwelcome as Mount Anvil. Nancy Taaffe, SOS chair and Socialist Party member, said: "We petitioned and encouraged people to reject the plans. Hundreds protested and attended meetings. We stood in the council elections and made this an issue. And we're still meeting and campaigning for this public land to stay. Considering all the other unaffordable eyesores that are being flung up, we were the difference."

---

## Audio version of this document

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

---

## What the Socialist Party stands for

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

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

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

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

Our demands include:

## Public services

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

## Work and income

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

## Environment

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

## Rights

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

## Mass workers' party

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

## Socialism and internationalism

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

---

## Audio version of this document

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

---

---

<http://www.socialistparty.org.uk/articles/28220>