Birmingham home carers’ victory

Birmingham home care strikers are celebrating a hard-fought victory!

There is finally an end to the Birmingham home carers’ 20-month long dispute, with over 80 strike days, against attacks to their working patterns and pay - and indeed the service itself - by Birmingham Labour Council.

This will be another blow to the Blairite council who recently lost to another group of workers - the Birmingham bin workers who won their fight against blacklisting in March this year.

The Birmingham home carers were defending their working hours as the council originally proposed a pattern of three split shifts. But as the dispute escalated the council changed this to cutting all contracted hours to part time - meaning some staff would lose up to £11,000 a year!

The council used every dirty trick to wear the workers down - isolating them in one-on-one meetings, pushing voluntary redundancy and other heavy-handed managerial tactics. The workers still stood strong with continued support for strike action which was led by public service union Unison. This was a battle of wills with the council wanting to save face and not lose to another set of its workers.

However, it was the workers who came out on top with the council withdrawing every proposal and the staff being able to keep their jobs under current hours and shifts.

While this is an amazing win for the workers and communities of Birmingham, there are no illusions that this story is completely over. The battle over hours may be behind them but the war over saving the service indefinitely is far from complete.

Only this year the council voted to scrap another 1,000 jobs - where these will come from is yet to be made public. Will this be the entire home care service? Will they attack the bin workers again?

Who knows - but one thing is clear, no worker is safe while the Labour council continues to carry out the Tories’ dirty work. This Labour council is more afraid to stand up to weak and wobbly Theresa May than of their own workers going below the poverty breadline.

The best way for the home carers to ensure their jobs are safe in the long term is to link up their issues with all council workers facing similar attacks.

A citywide council strike would not only stop the Labour councillors in their tracks, but it would also show to the workers and people of Birmingham who really has the power in society.

It’s the workers who keep everything going. It would firmly pose the question of the need for councillors who stand for the working class.

Continued on page 5
European elections expose deepening political crisis

WORKERS NEED A PARTY OF OUR OWN

Tony Blair’s premiership, five million

the Tories, the capitalist class and all its institutions into
gerang against austerity, the rich and the capitalist politi-

Brexit, understanding that the enormous working-class

was “sorted”. A leadership election could be the trigger

be short-lived.

multiple contenders, including current front-runner Boris

June. This would then mean a summer Tory leadership

withdrawal bill back to parliament in the first week of

ter until the Brexit deal was passed, but in yet another

them in fifth place behind the Green Party, on just 8.3%.

It is expected that on Thursday there will be a total col-

many Labour voters were lost before the 2017 election because of Labour’s previous
crises. They are bringing to the forefront again the

historic crisis of British capitalism and the rage

-angry.

-angry.

In 2016, the Socialist Party campaigned for a socialist

But despite this catastrophe for the Tory Party, in

child poverty is now above 50%. Household debt is at

class,” says another. “Now I seem to think that Labour is

strong message.

Saying that ‘we need to get rid of the politicians’ is a

A new survey by Opinium shows that, since the EU ref

Many Labour voters were lost before the 2017 election because of Labour’s previous
crises. They are bringing to the forefront again the

The same YouGov poll showed that three in five people

fear.

They are bringing to the forefront again the

The fact that they are even taking place is an

he euro-elections were never meant to happen.

A leadership election could be the trigger

in fifth place behind the Green Party, on just 8.3%.

Labour’s 2017 voters are for Remain, and that a large

bee - have of course continued to argue that the Labour

voted for a pro-EU party, not Labour.

Labour sufficiently. Former Blair minister Jane Kennedy,

-Remainer Tories) has so far flopped and not undermined

just days before the election the Blairites stepped up

Party and Plaid Cymru was expected to be 37.5%.

were predicted to be 36%, and the combined vote of pro-

votes as any other party - on 34%. At the weekend, the

In this euro-election campaign, thousands of people are

Remainer Tories) has so far flopped and not undermined

A general election would be the chance to put a pro-

in building their own party. As an illustration of what

ger, but active participation of working class people

- anti-racists’. People are turning out to them because

Alternatively both expressions of the need to build a mass

Socialist Party is trying to organise in the name of.

working-class people to pay for economic crisis through

if the workers’ movement didn’t step up to the plate to

A leadership election could be the trigger for a

By Farage is tapping into a strong sense of betrayal.

a different way, a similar sentiment - anger and fear for

they could vote for ‘Remain parties’ are expressing, in

The words of people attending a Brexit rally in Merthyr

for Remain parties’ are expressing, in

Marxism and class war – have people flocked to rallies to hear. In two weeks, thou-

James May had said she would stop prime min-

the deal was sealed, but to yet another historic disaster

nine deputy Prime Minister has had the whip suspended for saying he would

The Tories, the oldest and most successful party of

In 2016, the Socialist Party campaigned for a socialist

But despite this, many Corbyn supporters who are now saying

100,000 people who flocked to the rally in Merthyr. It is

As an illustration of what

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just days before the election the Blairites stepped up

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What is needed is not just ousting the

The Tories will be standing in a general elec-

But Farage will learn the lesson from recent weeks.

For Farage, a majority of the electorate, even those who voted for Remain, are

Farage - have of course continued to argue that the Labour

But Farage is tapping into a strong sense of betrayal.

Farage - have of course continued to argue that the Labour

A party and mass movement that can

Tories but to fight for a real working-class

What active participation of working-

class people in building their own party.

A party and mass movement that can

would mean not just passive voting and expressions of danger,

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The words of people attending a Brexit rally in Merthyr

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Many Labour voters were lost before the 2017 election because of Labour’s previous

tive to mount a massive fight to boot them out. But even

Meanwhile, the main dynamic behind the surge

that the Brexit Party is currently being seen as a weap-

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British Steel threatened closure

In a move that could shake world steel markets, British Steel has threatened to lay off 5,000 employees across the UK, leading to a potential widening of the steel industry's problems. The company's announcement has raised concerns about the future of the steel industry and its impact on employment and the economy.

Retailer Bankruptcy

Over the weekend, a bankruptcy petition was filed against a major retailer, raising concerns about the future of the retail industry and the impact on consumers and employees. The petition has been filed in a US district court, but details about the petition are not yet available.

Labour's Nationalisation Plan

Labour Party leaders have unveiled a nationalisation plan, which includes nationalising the National Grid, transport, and water. The plan aims to create a more sustainable and equitable society, and to bring back public ownership to key industries.

Labour's Plan for a Carbon-Neutral Britain

Jeremy Corbyn has announced a "Green Industrial Revolution," which includes nationalising the energy sector, setting a goal of achieving net-zero emissions by 2030, and introducing a green jobs guarantee for young people.

A Day of Action Against Cuts in Hull

Trade unions and local communities are calling for a day of action to protest against cuts to public services and the impact on ordinary people. The protest is expected to attract thousands of participants.

Birmingham Homecare Workers' Victory - New Coordinate Action to Fight All Cuts!

The affiliated trade unions should put their own candidates forward who will stand in these elections. If he doesn't, he will jeopardise the massive support the trade unions have built. Instead, they should put their own candidates forward who will stand in these elections.

Day of Action against Cuts to Special Needs Education

The Tories badger themselves as the party of the working class. In reality, they have sided with a lobby of small businesses that have been in dispute with the council. In 2018, Unison's representatives had to apply political pressure to persuade the council to change its plans.

Budgetress and Socialist Party

News

The Unite union should immediately begin to mobilise the working class to fight these cuts. There were massive demonstrations against Trump's visit in 2018, and the working class, particularly the organised working class and campaigning for trade unions to take on the council. In 2018, Unison's representatives had to apply political pressure to persuade the council to change its plans.
Woolwich Ferry workers begin ten days of strike action

Prohibition workers celebrate case management renationalisation

Probability workers take strike against the privatization

UNISON members at Woolwich Ferry on behalf of Transport for London (TfL) have begun ten days of strike action.

The action, in response to open and closed conditions claim, is in protest in order to retain their jobs and for the TfL pension scheme.

The first day of action on 17 May was uneventfully self-policed with only one striking picketed object being moved.

This has been a huge battle for the workers who are in denial about the scale of the problem.

The action is part of a wider campaign to expose how the government’s ‘reform’ agenda is leading to a decline in the quality of life for workers.

The gesture by the strikers means that they have fought for jobs and services of the same standard.

This is a massive challenge for the company that is being run without the workers.

The proposals are typical of TfL’s management’s approach to cut costs and keep prices down.

Passengers say the new fares should not be understated. Having a single, all-day fare should have put an end to this.

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WHAT LIES BEHIND THE US–CHINA TRADE WAR?

To ask what has been the increased in the intensity, duration and rapidly escalating trade war between the world’s two most powerful economies, US President Donald Trump announced that, under the rarely invoked International Emergency Economic Powers Act, the Chinese were about to be added to the ‘Tariff List’.

This effectively ended any prospect of acquiring components and technology from China without obtaining prior government approval.

Blocking Huawei from purchasing semi-conductors from US firms will have an immediate and damaging impact on its ability to develop and produce consumer and industrial technology. Companies based in America that continue trading with Huawei will henceforth have to apply to the Commerce Department for a licence to sell them technology.

This dramatic move follows the Presidential announcement two weeks ago, that September’s import tariffs of 10% on $200 billion of Chinese goods would be raised to 25%, if China did not agree to change its economic policies.

Tariffs

There will be $55 Billion of US tariffs on specific Chinese technology goods coming into the US by the end of 2020, which will be borne by American consumers. No wonder US consumers are in industries that produce goods which have been targeted for retaliation by China. 9% of US manufacturers have reported being hit by increased production costs.

The 2018 Presidential election presents a challenge for Trump’s China-bashing policies nicely with the Republican’s in the US Senate, seeking to drive up their chances of being re-elected. The Natural Resources Defence Council has already warned that the US President’s China trade policy is likely to be the single greatest factor in disrupting the US-China trade war.

The Chinese leadership is well aware that it cannot be met by a comprehensive trade war. The new US administration is likely to find it difficult to contain the Chinese, especially since they have been hit by US sanctions.

The Chinese leadership is aware that a slowing growth rate creates a precarious position for its political stability. Political rivalries have become more acute with the US administration’s efforts to neutralise the rising political influence of China. This has been done by strengthening China’s political and economic ties with other countries.

Yet China has a genuine interest in maintaining good relations with the US. The US-China trade war is likely to continue as the US-China relationship becomes even more acrimonious.

The main contention is that the US wants China to be a market and not a competitor. China is wary of the US using its market power to exert pressure on China’s economic policies. China’s economy, which is expected to overtake the US by 2030, is likely to face a more difficult trade environment as the US-China trade war escalates.

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Pouring cold water on the Riverside estate

Barking Reach Residents Association was leading a campaign to bring a new boiler to Robert Lewis House to reduce fuel costs and improve living conditions. However, the request for funding was turned down by the council from dealing with immersion heating for hot water.

The demand for a sustainable alternative was met by reopening the issue of the council’s commitment to climate change. The Local Plan commits the council to becoming carbon neutral by 2030, but this is not happening.

The mood on the estate was reflected on our Socialist Party’s election for the National Health Service and in Newham Abbey, Dagenham. On 10 May, Anger was expressed not only at the privatisation and running down of the NHS but also at the way the country is being run, or more accurately, how the country is not being run.

Anger was expressed against government policies that have produced a housing crisis, unemployment, and a lack of support for the majority of the population.

But support for our socialist ideas and concerns was not there. We sold 15 papers and 15 was also collected in the Fighting Fund.

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Opinion: socialists must link climate struggle to power of organised workers

Wayne Scott
Socialist Party Scotland

I attended a meeting organised by the Socialist Workers Party (SWP). It was billed as a debate between them, Friends of the Earth and Extinction Rebellion (XR). XR didn’t turn up. The guy from Friends of the Earth gave few solutions beyond recycling and carbon taxes.

He was responded to by Amy Leather, a member of the SWP’s central committee. She started off with a good introduction on the history of industrialisation in Britain, the development of plastic industries, and so on – all very interesting.

This, however, set the tone for the rest of her speech. The SWP limits itself to anti-capitalist argumentation, and Leather spoke repeatedly of “system change” to prevent climate change, without explaining what that has to mean socialist change.

So she spoke of doing away with production methods that are environmentally harmful, ditching fossil fuels and so on. Not once, though, did she raise any demand anywhere close to public ownership of the big polluters.

The word socialism was given a mere passing reference, with no real explanation of what that means or how we achieve it. She said nothing about the potential role trade unions can play here.

I spoke from the floor for the Socialist Party, making some points around climate change being a class issue. I asked the Friends of the Earth guy how he expected me to consume less than I do when I’m on Universal Credit. These points were echoed by SWP members in the room who also rejected individual solutions.

I raised with Leather that I thought it was wrong to simply pose the question of shutting down the fossil fuel industries with no qualification, as this would cut us off from the workers in those industries and so damage working-class unity and power.

Instead we demand the nationalisation of the top companies and big polluters, without compensation to the bosses; a rapid transition away from fossil fuels towards renewables; a guarantee of a job for all in those industries with no loss of pay, retraining people where necessary; and a system of democratic workers control and management based on a socialist, planned economy.

I also pointed to the potential role the trade unions can play here, saying that if the union leaders built towards coordinated strikes against austerity, it would attract the young people fighting climate change in their thousands.

I finished off by pointing to the role Socialist Party members in the National Education Union played in getting a motion passed defending students who walk out and supporting the establishment of school students’ unions.

Why give no concrete proposals for how to link the trade unions with the school students in her initial remarks? It’s because, unlike the Socialist Party, the SWP doesn’t put the working class central to achieving fundamental change.

Genuine Marxists take part vigorously in every social movement and campaign, but always try to link them to the huge economic power that organised workers have to shut down the economy and ultimately run society. That is what is needed to resolve the multiple crises facing society and achieve socialism. That is what the Socialist Party does.

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Farage EU elections

The Merseyside Pensioners Association views with grave concern the growing popularity of Nigel Farage’s Brexit Party, which, according to polls, is polling 34% for the EU elections, with Labour next closest at 16%, and the Tories on a detrritory 20%.

We believe this support for Farage reflects a disaffection with the two main parties, and has created a vacuum which Farage is filling with his “anti-establishment” demagogy which is the stock in trade of the populist right.

The question of austerity, equality and growing poverty, particularly among the working poor, is completely absent in these debates.

We are calling on Jeremy Corbyn and the trade union leaders to launch a mass campaign to expose the hypocrisy of Farage, “Tommy Robinson” and their allies, by highlighting the ongoing attacks on working people which continue to be the policy of this government, a policy to which Farage’s Brexit Party offers no alternative, and clearly posing the socialist alternative to austerity.

Tony Mulhearn
Merseyside Pensioners Association

Saving app scam

On social media I’m getting constant adverts for apps that can “help me save” from the likes of “Plum.” They analyse your transaction history and automatically take money out of your account and put it into savings.

Others round up when you pay for items, and put your change into savings. This alongside patronising tweets by banks about cost-cutting measures show how removed those at the top are from the lives of working-class young people.

They take 1+1 and find it equals 3. I would like to see the Plum app try and “analyse” the bank account of a Deliveroo driver or someone on a zero-hour contract. I suspect it will make the app crash.

Helen Pattison
Ilford, east London

Pensioner benefit cuts

Lord True has recommended that pensioners’ free bus travel, TV licences and winter fuel payments should be next in line for skinflint Tory cuts.

He has the audacity to scrimp on pensions for the lack of affordable housing for young people.

As an unelected parasite, presumably he has forgotten that pensioners have votes.

Derek McMillan, Worthing
Domestic abuse accommodation

TORIES SHIFT - BUT SAFETY IS MORE THAN A BED

Amy Cousins
Women’s Lives Matter

The government has announced new changes to place a legal duty on local authorities to deliver ‘accommodation-based services’ to victims of domestic violence.

The Women’s Lives Matter campaign at its national meeting on 8 December 2018, made the legal responsibility to fund services one of its core demands. We welcome this legal protection but the fight must definitely go on to end cuts to the services women need to be safe.

Prior to this new law, part of the domestic violence bill consultation, councils had no statutory responsibility to fund services which meant that, in a climate of cuts, local councils were choosing to cut back or stop funding altogether anything which they were not legally obliged to fund.

Local authority spending on refuges has been cut from £31.2 million in 2010 to £23.9 million in 2017 despite no corresponding reductions in incidents of domestic violence.

However, as can be expected from a government that has proven it is not genuinely interested in supporting domestic violence victims, it is grossly below what is needed. We need an end to austerity and all the public services required to give women routes out of abusive situations.

Instead the government boasts that it has already ‘increased’ refuge provision for domestic violence victims. Statistically, between 2010 and 2017 there has been a 10% increase in bed spaces for those fleeing domestic violence. However, provision has decreased in real terms. 20 refuges have been lost in that time.

There is a cost-cutting trend for local authorities to commission ‘catch all’ services which are larger, more generic and therefore cheaper. In reality, this means a decrease in services and more work and heavy workloads for the same number of staff.

More than a bed

Specialist domestic violence services are vital. But even worse, in some cases, women and children are being housed, unsafely, in generic homeless hostels.

Refuges need to be far more than beds. They provide specialist advice, support, advocacy and therapy including for children. Funding these specialist support services saves money in the long run. More importantly it saves lives.

What the Tories have also done, which they have made no promise to amend, is strip back community service provision, outreach support and therapy services. Supporting domestic violence victims and survivors takes much more than a bed.

The government has said it will accompany the law with funding, but that the exact levels will be determined by ‘stakeholders’. The government has already ‘increased’ refuge provision for domestic violence victims by £22 million for domestic abuse projects in England. If Tory austerity has taught us anything, it’s that any money put out by the Tories will be far less than what is needed.

We cannot trust the Tories with the safety of women. Corbyn’s Labour Party shouldn’t be waiting for a general election to bring in measures to ensure women’s lives are safe. Labour councils can and should be funding domestic violence refuges and community services sustainably now. Women’s lives are at risk now. Labour councils should be mobilising the labour movement and wider communities to fight for no-cuts budgets to secure all our public services.

John McDonnell needs to act now and use his power to mandate councils to use their reserves and borrowing powers to fund these vital services.

Haringey: Socialist’s stance fully vindicated

Nick Auvache, Karen Tate and David Kaplan

Barbara Blake was one of three right-wing Blairite Labour candidates to stand for the ward of Seven Sisters, Haringey, north London, during the 2018 council elections.

But having been elected a councillor she has now been expelled from Labour due to her public support for Change UK - the small anti-Corbyn group of renegade Labour and Tory MPs.

Haringey Labour Party had moved to the left prior to the council elections, replacing Blairites with many left candidates opposing the Haringey Development Vehicle (HDV) and austerity cuts.

The HDV gentrification scheme would have ‘socially cleansed’ huge swathes of the borough by pushing out working-class residents. It would have been a tragedy if the anti-austerity fight associated with Jeremy Corbyn was not reflected by any of the candidates in that ward.

Therefore the Socialist Party decided it was essential to take part in that process and stand candidates that were opposed to all cuts.

TUSC challenge

As a result six candidates stood under the broad left Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC) banner, against the remnants of the old-guard Claire Koher (the former council leader) regime which was associated with the HDV.

TUSC candidates worked to win their Labour in Seven Sisters ward who would effectively get a Tory.

However, many people in Haringey voted enthusiastically for Labour believing that it had changed to reflect the anti-austerity mood in Labour more broadly.

Much was made of Haringey becoming the first ‘Corbynista’ council.

Now the truth has been revealed and Barbara Blake’s justified expulsion has confirmed what TUSC candidates said at the time. We were the real socialists not Barbara Blake and her crew.

Blake should now call a by-election and fight on her own programme of cuts and misery. If she did we are confident that she would be roundly defeated.

Anti-cuts Corbyn supporters should make sure that whoever replaces her is a real socialist committed to fighting the cuts.
Sri Lanka - Ten years after the brutal end of the war
Mullivaikal - Remember the dead and fight for the living!

Socialism and the struggle for justice

The conflict in Sri Lanka and the Tamil Eelam in the late 20th century was one of the most protracted and brutal conflicts of modern times. After decades of conflict, the Sri Lankan government and the Tamil Tigers (LTTE) signed a ceasefire agreement in 2002, but the war continued until 2009. The conflict resulted in the deaths of hundreds of thousands of people, and the displacement of millions.

The Tamil Solidarity and Committee for a Workers’ International (CWISocialistParty@socialist_party text 07761 818 206) are part of the Committee for a Workers’ International (CWI), a socialist organisation that works to unite the working class and oppressed throughout the world. The CWI is organised in 45 countries and works on various struggles. Socialist Party and CWISocialistParty@socialist_party text 07761 818 206 Solidarity also joined forces with the Socialist Party in the UK in 1988.

The CWI is one of the leading diaspora organisations in the UK, with over 200 activists and supporters. It is a member of the Committee for a Workers’ International (CWI) and works on various struggles. The CWI is organised in 45 countries and works on various struggles. Socialist Party and CWISocialistParty@socialist_party text 07761 818 206 Solidarity also joined forces with the Socialist Party in the UK in 1988.

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4 June - Walk out against Trump!

Climate Criminal Not Welcome

Tom Baldwin
South West Socialist Party organiser

The latest in the series of global youth strikes for climate is on Friday, 24 May. These monthly actions have been hugely successful with tens of thousands of students walking out of British schools, colleges and universities to join protests, coordinated with events across the entire planet.

Young people have confounded negative stereotypes of being a self-obsessed generation with their willingness to come together and fight for their futures. These protests can be the impetus to build school student unions. These would help democratically organise the movement and protect those taking part from being victimised. Student unions would also be able to discuss a response to all the other issues facing young people in this age of austerity.

The climate strikes are not just an excuse to bunk-off. Protesters have been engaged politically and open to radical solutions to save the planet.

Socialist Party calls for ‘socialist change not climate change’ have been widely welcomed and have also provoked discussion and debate at the open mic street meetings.

Protesters’ anger has largely been directed at the big businesses that have profited from destruction of the environment and the politicians that have allowed them to get away with it.

The most prominent of these, US president Donald Trump, will be coming to Britain for a state visit on 3-5 June. The built up momentum of the youth climate strikes should be fed into the mass demonstrations that will greet him on 4 June. This climate criminal has pulled the US out of even the extremely limited Paris Agreement and showed his support for expanding fossil fuel industries.

Trump’s climate change denial doesn’t just come from scientific illiteracy. He represents the interests of those billionaires who want to profit at the expense of our planet. The same interests lie behind his ratcheting up tensions on the world stage and his attempts to divide the working class with sexism and racism. We will be protesting not just against Trump himself but the capitalist system that he represents and raising the socialist alternative.

More on climate change - see page 12 & 4

photo London SP