

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

# Stop war, fight Trump, walk out on 13 July

Michelle Francis, Peter Symonds College Socialist Students

On Friday 13 July, I and many other school and college students will stand among thousands protesting on the streets against Donald Trump.

Together we will stand against the capitalist system Trump represents, the system of sexism, racism, homophobia, war and poverty that plagues so many today.

On 13 July we can all unite on the streets of London and other cities around the country. We can show Trump how young people stand with the working class of the US and the world.

We see his doomed America. Without healthcare, education, justice - without a future. The super-rich want to doom us: we say it's their system which is doomed.

I once thought that bigotry would be a thing of the past by now. That the horrors of war and the terror of nuclear conflict would have been a lesson learned.

But capitalism's inability to promise a future to the working class has led to an openly bigoted demagogue being in control of the wealthiest and most powerful country in the world.

He cares more about his ego than human lives. We joke about him and Kim Jong-un comparing the sizes of their 'nuclear weapons' with a ruler in the boys' toilets, because it seems absurd when you take in how much devastation it could cause.

Fellow right-wing politicians, including Boris Johnson, present him as a peacekeeper, as someone worthy of a Nobel Peace Prize. But this reckless warmonger was the one who escalated recent nuclear tensions with North Korea!

He has inflamed the Middle East through his moving of the US embassy to Jerusalem. This while peaceful protesters are shot dead on the Gaza border, including a 14-year-old boy.

He talks himself up for calling peace summits - then backs out of them! His impulses put countless lives at risk and vanquish hopes of peace for many.

But many see the need to fight back through their anger.

Now the demagogue wants to visit London. Join me and thousands of others on 13 July. Let your voice be heard, and be part of starting to change history.

If you have school or college on that day, organise a walkout. Show solidarity with workers, young people and the oppressed that Trump and his fellow billionaires have persecuted. Show Theresa May and the Tories that young people and workers do not accept their bigoted capitalist agenda either.

Together we are more powerful than Trump. Together we can bring hope to those who need it most, and fight for a world free from inequality and division: a socialist world.

- Join the walkout on 13 July! [See Socialist Students' "walk-out against Trump" event on Facebook](#)

---

## Editorial of the Socialist issue 997

# United working class movements can defeat Trump

When asked by a journalist if North Korea is "playing games", Trump responded: "Everybody plays games". He was referring to the interplay between the global elites, but in this case his flippancy - being on the issue of nuclear weapons - will be especially repellent to workers and young people across the world.

The recent "games" involved monstrous threats: North Korea's foreign affairs vice-minister speaking of the possibility of a "nuclear-to-nuclear showdown" and Trump saying the US nuclear capability is "so massive and powerful that I pray to God they will never be used". He added: "We are more than ready than we have ever been before".

These shows of brinkmanship, alternated with charm offensives, are claimed to be for the objective of denuclearising the Korean peninsula. But less overt agendas are numerous, not least the idea in Trump's administration of forcing 'regime change', so tensions at a later stage could escalate to a more dangerous level.

Fear of this has increased since Trump elevated a number of 'hawks' to the top levels of US government. Among them was new national security advisor John Bolton, who previously - under George W Bush - oversaw US withdrawal from the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty originally signed with the Soviet Union. He wants no limits placed by treaties on the US's arms capability and has made clear his appetite for war on many occasions.

It was Bolton who threw the US talks with North Korea into jeopardy by saying the denuclearisation could follow the "Libya model", remarks later rubbed further into the North Korean regime by US vice-president Mike Pence. Gaddafi in Libya had given up his nuclear project only to face being removed and killed eight years later, with western backing for his fate.

Added to the Trump administration's ramping up of tensions on the nuclear issue, with Iran too, have been other aggressive or destructive actions, including backing the Israeli military's barbaric killings of Palestinian demonstrators, launching missiles on Syria, and pulling out of the Paris climate change accord.

All this is more than enough to merit building massive demonstrations against Trump internationally, including in Britain when he visits on 13 July. And workers internationally must give solidarity to the anti-Trump movement in the US, which has the task of developing its strength in order to see him and his coterie removed from power as soon as possible.

## The US

The strategists of US capitalism are wary of Trump's unpredictability and the volatility he causes in international relations through trade protectionism and his other policies - witness at present the fissures with Europe over the Iran deal. US big business is therefore concerned about US credibility and influence weakening internationally and over whether opportunities are being given to Russia and China to advance their interests.

Added to this is concern over the US debt level, which Trump's policies have increased.

But the latest issue of the Economist concludes that on balance US big business is content and benefiting from Trump's office, due to the deregulation measures and massive tax cuts, along with some of the changes in trade relations, which all fuel their profits bonanza.

In the first quarter of 2018, mentions the Economist: "The earnings of listed firms rose by 22% compared with a year earlier". It also points out the underlying weakness of the growth: "Investment was up by 19%. But ... the investment surge is unlike any before - it is skewed towards tech giants, not firms with factories".

Following the 2007-08 crisis, the US economy was nudged by unprecedentedly huge stimulus measures into nine years of expansion. But this growth has been at a [low rate by historical standards](#) and the economic cycle will head into recession again in the not too distant future.

For the time being though, the growth helps Trump to maintain his core base among sections of workers, who hope that wage growth will pick up from its present sluggish level if the economy continues to grow. And while polls show that more US workers disapprove of Trump than approve of him, his use of the issues of trade policy and immigration to appear to be fighting for those who have suffered from lost industry, haven't yet been fully exposed as being no solution.

Contributing enormously to this is the fact that the main electoral alternative, the Democratic Party, is a second party of big business, not offering any way out of the problems ordinary Americans face, whether on housing, education, low pay or health care. This unattractiveness, and memory of the cuts, privatisation and racist policies carried out during the Democrats' terms in office, paved the way for Trump's arrival in the White House.

Even so, Trump and his Republican Party are not facing the November mid-term elections with a secure prospect of victory. Every seat in the House of Representatives will be re-elected and just over a third of the Senate. If the Democrats win control of the House, which recent polls indicate they could, Trump will face an additional obstacle in pushing through laws he wants passed and he could face more corruption investigations.

While the Democrats are no real alternative, a victory for them in November would open up a further period in which they can be tested out and have their limitations exposed, through applying pressure on them to resist Trump's policies and to deliver improvements in workers' living standards.

Some excellent workers' struggles have recently taken place, in particular a wave of strikes by teachers fighting for adequate pay and education funding. Action began in West Virginia and spread to Kentucky, Oklahoma, Arizona and North Carolina. In most cases these states voted for Trump in 2016, but that hasn't meant an unwillingness to struggle. The action has been pushed along mainly by rank-and-file trade unionists and an influx of new union members.

Notable also have been the many student walkouts against gun violence; and during May a 50,000-strong strike of staff at the University of California, and a victory by the Tax Amazon campaign in Seattle. The latter spearheaded by Socialist Alternative, the co-thinkers of the Socialist Party in England and Wales.

These struggles come after the interest shown by many young people in the left-wing ideas of Bernie Sanders and the growing interest in the ideas put forward by left radical and socialist organisations - including Socialist Alternative.

Socialists call for the coordinating and linking of present and future struggles, along with the anti-racist and anti-sexist campaigns against Trump, to develop the power of a united working-class based movement that can bring forward the removal of Trump. In the process, vital steps forward towards building a political alternative in workers' interests can also be taken.

---

## **Historic victory for social progress: Landslide vote to repeal Ireland's abortion laws**

**Statement by Solidarity TDs and Socialist Party members [Ireland Republic], Ruth Coppinger, Paul Murphy and Mick Barry**

The dramatic and clear-cut 'Yes' in the referendum is a political earthquake and turning point for Ireland.

It is a huge victory, particularly for women in Ireland, who have thrown off the oppression of the 8th Amendment after 35 years.

No delay can now be justified. There is nothing to stop the Dail [Irish parliament] to move quickly to enact legislation to give effect to the proposals from the Oireachtas Committee. No more people should suffer.

This is part of a global feminist and LGBTQ revolt against longstanding discrimination and this victory will be a huge boost to all those fighting oppression and for real equality right throughout the world.

In particular, women and pregnant people in Latin America who literally die through lack of abortion rights will be empowered by this result.

## **Ending the hypocrisy**

This is also a victory delivered primarily by young people, the generation often disparaged as "snowflakes".

They were the ones who said enough was enough and made this an issue, particularly after the tragic and unnecessary death of Savita Halappanavar [Savita Halappanavar died of sepsis in 2012 after being denied an abortion during a protracted miscarriage].

It was young women who refused to go along with the hypocrisy of the "Irish solution to an Irish problem" and demanded and organised to force this change on a petrified and reluctant political establishment.

It must also be said and said loudly, that once again, as was the case with the water charges movement and the Marriage Equality referendum, the working class was the "secure foundation" as James Connolly once put it, of this enormous social change.

Because of lived experience, a sense of solidarity is innate to the working class. It is the force pushing forward progress in this country, as was witnessed during the campaign and will be demonstrated by the size of the votes in working-class communities.

## **Grassroots movement**

There was a broad official 'Yes' campaign, and then within that, there was an independent grassroots movement that unfolded over the last years, months and weeks.

It was this movement that made the decisive difference, including answering the outrageous scaremongering and lies of the No side.

This victory was also framed in large measure over the last years by those who have been the most ardent proponents of the right to choose, socialists and those of the left.

Until very recently, Solidarity - People Before Profit was the only political entity in the Dail fighting for abortion rights, and with a clear pro-choice position.

There is a huge difference between some who voted 'No' and then the organisers of the 'No' campaign. The No campaign gave a frightening glimpse of the type of Ireland the self-styled religious right would like us all to live under.

Dripping in misogyny, the No campaign spread suspicion about women and portrayed them as selfish killers and murderers. Their shaming and blaming of women from the start to the finish is completely unacceptable and devoid of morals.

## **Backward ideas rejected**

Many felt increasingly vulnerable and less safe as their rhetoric was ratcheted up. They and their backward ideas have been rejected in this referendum.

The fact that the majority of the public representatives of Dianna Fail [the main opposition right-wing party] were part of this campaign should not and will not be forgotten by people.

The referendum vote has implications for the North, where women and young people will not accept being left behind.

Already in the North, ROSA activists are launching a major campaign to demand abortion rights there, starting with a Bus4Choice that will travel throughout the North next week with abortion pills, which have been proven to be safe.

What this resounding vote must lead to is the prompt passing of the legislation in the Dail and provision for the necessary services and care through the health service to allow for abortion for 12 weeks on request and for health.

The Solidarity Bill on Sex Education should be passed. Free contraception must now be provided in the health service and promoted in society.

For this to happen, the political establishment needs to be kept under pressure by the grassroots movement.

Remember we had to wait more than five years after Savita died before we finally had a referendum, the same must not happen in relation to these.

Young people were the key dynamic that created this victory against oppression and for control over their own bodies.

With this under their belts it is not a matter of if, but when, will they act against an increasingly oppressive and pressurised education system; on the fact that they cannot get jobs with decent pay and conditions; that they cannot afford to rent or buy a decent place to live.

## **Build a socialist left**

Leo Varadkar [Irish prime minister] may get a boost from this result, having jumped onto the right side of history at the last minute.

But he, Fine Gael [the right-wing governing party] and any other party that defends and implements capitalist policies will face the full force of the youthquake that is coming.

That is because they have no solutions to these burning issues and cannot satisfy the deep desire for justice and equality which is decisively pushing younger generations towards left and socialist ideas in many countries like America, Britain and Spain and, after yesterday's vote, in Ireland, too.

As TDs [members of the Irish parliament] for Solidarity and long-standing members of the Socialist Party [Irish section of the CWI], we have a long record on these issues and fighting for the right to choose.

We are proud to have been part of ROSA's Time4Choice campaign which brought a real cutting edge to the 'Yes' side in the referendum campaign and facilitated the development of the grassroots movement.

This movement and ROSA are not going to go away, and aim to become a major socialist feminist force fighting for a radical transformation of this country.

---

This version of this article was first posted on the Socialist Party website on 28 May 2018 and may vary slightly from the version subsequently printed in The Socialist.

---

# **Irish abortion referendum - historic victory won by grassroots movement**

**Keishia Taylor, Socialist Party (CWI Ireland) and ROSA in Dublin**

On 25 May, Irish citizens voted decisively to repeal the 8th Amendment, a resounding rejection of the abortion ban and misogynistic ideas about women and our bodies. The Yes vote won a landslide 66% and in

all but one county. The significance of this victory over decades of anti-choice misogyny and repressive Church control cannot be understated.

The story of the 8th Amendment is a catalogue of hypocrisy and suffering - that abortion in Ireland was criminalised yet travelling for one was not, that it was public knowledge yet shamed and stigmatised, that the Church who dared to judge women ran the horrific Magdelene laundries and mother and baby homes.

This referendum was not just about winning abortion rights, but a complete break with this horrendous history. The seismic shift in attitudes is reflected in the vote, with approaching 90% among those aged 18-24, a large majority in all age groups except the over 65s and many working class communities in Dublin over 80%.

## Youthquake

Following the tragic, unnecessary death of Savita Halappanavar in 2012, which was a result of the 8th, a grassroots movement for repeal erupted.

This has been driven by empowered young people (even school students), women, LGBT+ and working class people. Young people used the massive marches and Strike 4 Repeal, student union campaigns, art and the iconic 'Repeal' jumpers to put pro-choice demands in the spotlight. Many courageously shared their own experiences of crisis pregnancy on social media when their voices were locked out of mainstream debate.

This is an extremely militant movement. We will no longer tolerate any sexist oppression. This was affirmed by the explosive #IBelieveHer protests in response to the horrendous Belfast rape trial only two months ago.

The same militancy has also been shown in the incredible struggles around #MeToo and trans rights, and in the growing movements against women's oppression in the Spanish state, Latin America and Poland. All these struggles provided inspiration and solidarity to people in Ireland.

[The members of the Irish parliament \(TDs\) for Solidarity](#) played a vital role in winning abortion rights, alongside ROSA - the socialist feminist campaign. Ruth Coppinger (TD), Paul Murphy (TD) and Mick Barry (TD) are Socialist Party members. They were the voice of the working class, grassroots movement in the parliament.

The ROSA campaign is led by young women and LGBT+ activists, including members of the Socialist Party. It campaigned on a fully pro-choice programme and used creative demonstrations inspired by the TV drama *Handmaid's Tale* to condemn the repressive misogyny of the establishment.

Our campaign of civil disobedience, which included distributing the safe but illegal abortion pills, exposed the reality that abortion already happened within Ireland. This made a mockery of the law that criminalised women and propelled abortion up to 12 weeks on request onto the agenda.

Hundreds took part in canvassing and leafleting as part of ROSA's Time 4 Choice campaign, including a 10km march to the airport in solidarity with those forced to travel for abortions. Similarly large numbers got involved in putting up our posters all over Dublin and around the country.

ROSA fights on a socialist feminist programme, demanding free healthcare, contraception, childcare, housing, freedom from violence and secure, well-paid work.

Young women and LGBT+ people are attracted to ROSA's wider perspective, that not only fights for abortion rights and economic security but for self-expression, sexual liberation and freedom from all oppression. ROSA speaks to these issues that lie, correctly, at the heart of this generation's sense of justice and provides a socialist strategy of how to win them.

## Yes campaign

In contrast, the official 'Together for Yes' campaign was directed to the much-exaggerated, conservative 'Middle Ireland' and focused on the 'hard cases' of rape, incest and fatal foetal abnormalities. They even told

canvassers to avoid the words "abortion" and "repeal".

Disappointment with their soft approach was reflected in the huge appetite for our posters featuring Savita and combatting the previously unchallenged lies of the No campaign. Before polling day, there was palpable momentum for a Yes vote, but the misogynistic lies and bullying tactics of the No campaign emboldened sexist aggression from a small fringe.

This profound victory belongs to the youth and grassroots movement, with right-wing trade union leaders playing a minimal role and the establishment holding us back at every turn. Only when holding a referendum was inescapable did they comply. In 2013, the main parties voted to criminalise abortion with 14 years in prison.

In 2015, they voted against the bill demanding a referendum moved by Socialist Party members in the Dail. Taoiseach Leo Varadkar and Health Minister Simon Harris, currently presiding over the cervical cancer testing scandal, did a complete u-turn to support repeal less than six months ago. Now they are lauded as heroes!

## **Mass struggle**

But ordinary people can see through the hypocrisy of the capitalist establishment politicians and the contradictions of their neoliberal policies and are ready to fight for more. After this landslide victory, the associated legislation must be passed immediately.

This emphatic result shows the need for a complete separation of church and state, and specifically, for objective, inclusive sex education in schools and free contraception. We must continue to develop the struggle for abortion rights in the North.

Building on our immense victory and the many other struggles against women's oppression globally, we should fight for a socialist society based on equality and freedom.

## **Theatre: The Last Ship**

# **Sting's shipbuilders showcase class pride and change from below**

**Geoff Jones, Swansea Socialist Party**

It's not often that a West End-style stage musical can be politically inspiring. But imagine one with amazing sets, great music by Sting, a strong cast - and an anticapitalist story line. That's 'The Last Ship'.

Returning to the Tyne after 17 years at sea, sailor Gideon gets two shocks.

Not only does he learn that the girl he left behind was pregnant and he now has a teenage daughter - but that the shipyard, the main local employer, faces closure. The near-completed ship is to be scrapped, along with all the jobs in the yard.

The manager and a Thatcher lookalike cabinet minister give the workers a lesson in capitalist economics: no one wants to buy the ship - it could be built cheaper abroad - and its only value is as scrap. The workers go on strike but then decide to occupy the yard and finish the ship.

The foreman, Jacky, effectively echoes the words of Bob Crow: "If we fight we may lose. If we don't fight, we will certainly lose."

In one of the most powerful scenes, when the workers hear that mounted riot police are massing to retake the shipyard, Jacky's wife Peg leads the women of the community to form a human shield. She says "the BBC won't be able to edit this report like they did at Orgreave to make it look as if unarmed women are attacking the police."

The show ends with the huge ship sliding down the slipway into the Tyne. Victory for the workers.

Although we are left wondering what happens next. Where is the ship going? It is no accident that the ship is named Utopia!

The characters are well-drawn: foreman Jacky, the sailor Gideon, a shop steward quoting Marx; another who can only express himself by reciting poetry, another who has become a hopeless drunk.

Refreshingly, there are three really strong women characters in Peg, and Gideon's girlfriend Meg and daughter Ellen. The songs, and the singing, are first rate. The message is one of working class solidarity.

All in all an excellent night out with a good message.

**Pete Watson, Nottingham Socialist Party**

In May I went to see *The Last Ship*. I was pleasantly surprised by the whole show.

Previous generations of my family worked at the shipyards on Tyneside so I was expecting a bitter and nostalgic journey about the destruction of heavy industry in the north east. And that was an important part of the musical.

But it was more than that. It brought out the pride that skilled workers had in producing the ships of Tyneside.

It brought out, too, the conflict within the workforce between a socialist union steward and a more reformist foreman, against the capitalist owner and a thinly disguised Margaret Thatcher figure.

Women featured quite strongly in the show. The songs were good and the cast were very talented. And there was a love interest thrown in too!

I did think *The Last Ship* was meandering to a pessimistic close. However, right at the end, a cast member came to the front of the hall and spoke to the audience about how change can come from below.

She highlighted the Occupy movement, the fight to keep the NHS - and the feminist strike and protest in Spain (in fact, the Socialist Party's sister party Izquierda Revolucionaria played a leading role in that). I was gobsmacked by the end!

I'm sure most people going there didn't expect a left-wing message. It's not cheap either to get in. But if you can go, it's a good show. Maybe we should ask Sting for a donation to the Fighting Fund...

- *The Last Ship* is touring Scotland and the north of England in June and July

## **Fiction: Black River**

# **Aberfan disaster novel reminds us Grenfell was not an anomaly**

**Scott Jones, East London Socialist Party**

Aberfan, Hillsborough, Grenfell. Names synonymous with warnings ignored, corners cut and the disregard capitalism has for working class lives. There are parallels, too, between these disasters in how the media portrays victims and survivors.

'Black River', a novel by Louise Walsh, is about events after [the Aberfan disaster](#). 116 people, mostly children, were killed by the collapse of a coal tip on the Welsh village in 1966.

The novel follows Harry, one of the first journalists on the scene, who amid the chaos and horror is appalled by the behaviour of other reporters and their attitude to survivors and rescuers.

He is co-opted into the real-life campaign to take on the media and get them to lay off the village. Like with Hillsborough and Grenfell, the media tried to divert anger onto survivors and victims - instead of those responsible for these preventable disasters.

The Telegraph branded the people of Aberfan "greedy" as the community demanded control of the £1.8 million in donations to the 'Disaster Fund'.

We have seen a similar struggle by Grenfell survivors. Some even turned down offers of free holidays in fear of how it would be reported.

The novel takes us back to 1960s Aberfan, Cardiff and Fleet Street, with cameos from a young Rhodri Morgan, and well-known [left Labour MP for Merthyr, SO Davies](#). Davies battled the press over its reporting on Aberfan - but also his own party leader and prime minister Harold Wilson, who used some of the Disaster Fund to pay for removal of the tips.

Because of this he was deselected and expelled from Labour on the eve of the 1970 general election. Running as an independent socialist, he defeated Labour by 7,000 votes.

Black River is a fascinating glimpse into the aftermath of Aberfan. But while many things have changed since the late 60s, Grenfell shows the need for the real voice of the working class to be heard.

And the story of SO Davies reminds us that we need political representatives who don't ignore warnings, but fight the profit-driven causes of these preventable disasters. Deselecting the Blairites and booting out the Tories - who all preside over austerity and privatisation - would be a good start.

- 'Black River' by Louise Walsh: [£7.50, published by Gwasg Carreg Gwalch](#)

## 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.

## Rhyheim RIP

On 5 May a 17-year-old lad was shot dead just up the road from where I live. His name was Rhyheim.

I didn't know him but I know the area very well and just an hour or so later I walked nearby to where he was shot as I made my way to an early evening do in Camberwell.

Rhyheim now joins a tragic list of dozens of young Londoners who have been killed this year either by knife or gun. They were all so incredibly young and no doubt incredibly loved by family and friends. Their untimely deaths will affect thousands - family, friends, schoolmates, neighbours and communities.

As politicians cry crocodile tears and well-heeled commentators ask "why?" other young Londoners will be taken as well.

But those of us who really live in London know why. A decade of austerity has sucked hope from communities across London and those that thrive on hope the most are the youth. The very essence of being young is hope for the future, a future, some future.

But if you deliberately take that away what do you have? You have despair, and that leads a minority into mayhem and murder. And being shot dead on a beautiful, sunny Saturday evening in Kennington.

So who is to blame? Well, I blame all those lickspittle careerist politicians who have accepted the mantra that austerity is the only way. I blame all those who have voted to decimate local youth services and rid our communities of skilled workers who can nudge young people down more positive paths.

I blame all those who support an environment where food banks, zero-hour working and grinding poverty are the normal state of affairs for so many Londoners. I blame them all.

I was a young Londoner once, and I had hope, and luckily I still have hope. I suspect that Rhyheim had hope but I imagine that hope has long been gone from his killers.

And now all that is left is another ocean of tears - but also the burning need to build a truly fair and equal and socialist society, that returns hope to the youth and allows them to dream, and to be free, and to be themselves.

**Steve Nally, Kennington, south London**

---

## **Disability benefit cuts**

Few people realise that mentally ill people receive 'severe' and 'enhanced' disability benefit premiums under the current system. That will change with universal credit.

This will result in a loss of £2,000 per claimant per year. This effectively takes disabled people to the same level as the current jobseeker's allowance - a pitiful amount that no one can live on.

I use my premiums for therapeutic interventions that help keep me 'well' and out of the Hartington Unit at Chesterfield Royal Hospital - a place that costs the NHS £1,000 per patient per week, even before any treatment. When my money is cut I will be in a state of distress and I will find myself needing the Hartington.

My circumstances have changed since my last stay there 22 years ago, as now I have no support that I could possibly be discharged to. Sadly, I feel it would be a considerable time, possibly years, before I could safely be discharged.

Simply put, the present government is out to destroy me, and I will make a fight of it to the end.

**Adrian Rimington, public governor, Derbyshire NHS Trust and chair, Disability Campaigners (personal capacity)**

---

## **Regulate or expropriate?**

A recent opinion piece by George Monbiot in the Guardian rightly takes to task greedy corporate bosses at Carillion, who after bankrupting the company and its £2.7 billion pension fund didn't simply walk away scot-free, but laughed all the way to the bank.

He cites the example of Carillion finance director Richard Adam, whose company share values were allegedly inflated by "accounting tricks" until the day he sold them. Weeks later, their value had crashed by three-quarters.

Monbiot suggests that corporate bosses should have 50% of their massive remuneration packages held in an escrow account. An 'independent' third party would then judge whether or not the boss should receive this 50% based on the company's performance.

Monbiot says this is only a tentative proposal and invites readers to suggest alternatives. Well, obviously only a left-wing government would consider implementing such a plan. But why then would it stop there?

With a public mandate a left government could nationalise the major companies and finance houses and subject management to the democratic control of representatives of workers and government. That way, those in charge will be fully accountable to society and fat cats will become a thing of the past.

**Simon Carter, Forest Gate, east London**

---

## **Prince Charles irrelevant**

The accession of Charles Windsor to the leadership of the Commonwealth has been portrayed - at least by the more toady sections of the press - as a great victory for monarchism.

Nothing could be further from the truth. The choice of Charles Windsor as a new figurehead underscores the irrelevance of the Commonwealth.

The Australian government for example couldn't care less whether Mickey Mouse or Goofy became head of the Commonwealth. In the terms which count to Australian big business - ie dollars - trade with south east Asia is more important than clinging to the remnants of Empire.

Charles makes George III look like a model of sanity. According to legend, George made a tree on his estate prime minister. Charles regularly talks to his plants. If you find he tries to replace May with a hawthorn don't say I didn't warn you.

It is way past time to sweep away these royal parasites.

**Derek McMillan, Worthing**

---

## **EU toilet law**

The EU rail law 1300/2014/EU, entitled 'Persons with reduced mobility' (PRM), proudly states: "When toilets are fitted in a train, a universal toilet shall be provided accessible from the wheelchair space." The rather glaring loophole is that there is no requirement to have toilets on a train at all!

The Wales and Borders train franchise is currently operated by Arriva Trains Wales, a subsidiary of the German company Deutsche Bahn. A lot of Arriva's stock is rather old and creaky, not least the 1980s 'Pacers' which only have four wheels per carriage and make a horrible squealing noise when the track curves.

These trains' toilets do not meet these disability accessibility requirements, which have an implementation deadline of 2019.

As yet, Arriva has given no firm date for replacement of the outdated Pacers, and it's certainly not going to be before next year. Ian Walmsley, a retired train engineer who was manager of the Valley Lines fleet under British Rail in the 1980s, said: "There are two principal costs to PRM in a Pacer - the toilet and the passenger information system.

"The latter costs about £2,000 per vehicle, so not too much. The toilet is big money as it has to go mid-vehicle. The obvious answer is to lock them all." So there we have it. Rail privatisation and the greedy profiteering of Arriva is likely to mean we can't even use the loo on the train!

I take the train to work every day, and suffer from irritable bowel syndrome. It could potentially cause me a serious problem to be unable to access the toilet on the journey.

Effectively this would mean the company has reduced its disabled access in order to comply with what is supposedly accessibility legislation - a damning indictment of the rail privatisation agenda of both the neoliberal EU and the Tories.

The only way we can have good quality, reliable, comfortable public transport is to bring the entire system under public ownership and democratic workers' control, with not a penny in compensation for the privatising parasites.

**Joe Fathallah, Cardiff**

---

## **Fight developers' charter**

Changes to planning law brought about by the Localism Act 2011 were supposed to give communities the opportunity to shape development in their area. Developers were supposed to consult local communities before submitting a planning application.

Increasing democracy and giving members of the public greater influence over the big decisions that affect their lives were supposed to be the hallmarks of the new legislation. What a failure. What a lie. Let me tell you my story...

I live in a perfectly ordinary part of York. Our quiet, narrow little street has a diverse mix of residents from young families, students and the elderly. At the corner stands a Wesleyan Methodist chapel from the early 1880s.

Since the 1970s the chapel has been used by the NHS as office space. But, recently, it has been sold due to being surplus to requirements.

We heard rumours that a developer wanted to convert it into a supermarket. Concerned by the potential for increased traffic, we approached the council to raise our concerns.

We were told to wait until a planning application had been made. We were impotent. All the while the developer was engaged in exclusive discussions with planning officers. When the application was submitted it would be recommended for approval, despite there being no public consultation.

But it gets worse. Local councillors refused - point blank - to discuss our concerns. They likely didn't even read the many objections that had been submitted.

They were led by officers who are overworked and fearful of repercussions from the developer's army of solicitors if approval isn't granted. Residents were cast aside as an irrelevance - almost a nuisance in the process.

This is not unusual. This is how the planning system works. Residents have no voice. Change planning laws. Everyone should have a say and be heard.

- Please help by signing our petition: [petition.parliament.uk/petitions/216751](http://petition.parliament.uk/petitions/216751)

Andrew Dickinson, York

---

# Johnson and Rees-Mogg widen Tory Brexit splits

## Strike together to kick Tories out

Tom Baldwin, Socialist Party national committee

This minority Tory government is the weakest in a generation. Its splits over Brexit are clear for all to see, and that rift extends all the way to the top of the cabinet.

Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson has used an official trip to Latin America to unleash more open criticism of Theresa May, calling on her to "get on with it" and take Britain fully out of the EU's Customs Union.

This is only the latest of a series of attacks he has made on the prime minister's Brexit policy. A few weeks ago he referred to May's proposals for a post-Brexit 'customs partnership' with the EU as "crazy."

Such dissent would never normally be tolerated from members of the cabinet, who are supposed to be bound by 'collective responsibility'. However, May cannot risk sacking Johnson for fear of collapsing her weak and wobbly government.

This is not an isolated spat between Johnson and May. It reflects deep divisions throughout the Tory party, caught between the capitalist class - which wants to stay in the neoliberal EU's Single Market and Customs Union to maximise exploitation and profit - and the big sections of the Tories' diminishing electoral base which oppose it.

Other MPs such as backbench Brexiteer Jacob Rees-Mogg have also gone public with scathing criticisms. Johnson or other ministers could yet force May's hand by resigning if they felt it was in their interests.

### Weakness

The Tories' weakness is compounded by the fact that they lost their majority at the last election and are forced to rely on the support of the leadership of Northern Ireland's reactionary Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) to govern.

This will now be exacerbated by the overwhelming referendum vote to legalise abortion in the Republic of Ireland, on the back of a mass movement which Socialist Party Ireland helped initiate and lead (see pages 3 and 16). Northern Ireland is now the only part of Britain and Ireland that retains a virtual ban on abortion - which DUP politicians will insist on retaining.

Parliament is supposed to vote on Brexit proposals in September, and the government's deal with the EU is supposed to be finalised by October. Open splits are paralysing the government as these key deadlines come ever closer.

The Tories are incapable of serving their main purpose - ruling effectively in the interests of British capitalism. One of the few things holding them together is the fear of the alternative, a Corbyn-led Labour government, which big business wants even less.

Although it could happen at any time, workers cannot assume that the Tories' divisions will lead inevitably to collapse.

We must bring down this weak and hated government by stepping up and uniting strikes and protests against cuts and privatisations, the pay cap, the roll-out of the cruel universal credit benefit system, and all the other attacks they have inflicted on us.

Jeremy Corbyn must use his position to call for immediate action, and convene a meeting with union leaders to plan coordinated strikes.

---

## Welsh Labour reprivatises rail lines: reverse Tory sell-offs!

**Dave Reid, Socialist Party Wales**

The Welsh government has announced, with great fanfare, handing the new £5 billion Wales and Borders rail franchise to multinational corporation KeolisAmey. Not only has it reprivatised the operating franchise - it has handed over the tracks and stations too.

Under the current franchise, Arriva Trains has been running the Welsh rail system into the ground. With powers over rail transferred from Westminster to the Welsh government, here was an opportunity for Welsh Labour to carry out Jeremy Corbyn's policy of bringing the trains back into public ownership and starting to provide a decent service to long-suffering, overpaying customers.

But yet again the Welsh government has taken the Blairite road of Tory privatisation.

Welsh Labour could have set up a public company to operate the trains. In fact, the Welsh government claims reprivatising the franchise was not its preferred option, and argues it does not have the power to effectively nationalise the 15-year franchise.

But the whole process has been shrouded in secrecy. The legal powers available to the Welsh government are unclear.

And if the Tories had dared to intervene to try and stop them, Welsh Labour would have been able to call on the mass support of working class people, who, if given a lead, could move into decisive action against the Tories and in support of nationalisation.

Instead, the Welsh government has handed the lot over to KeolisAmey - train operations, tracks and stations.

On the basis of building a campaign with the unions, the weak Westminster government could be overcome. What is lacking is not the powers, but the political will to fight for publicly owned public transport.

Many rail workers and passengers are asking: if the Tory government in England has been forced to bring the East Coast Main Line service back under public control, why could the Welsh Labour government not do the same?

The details of the deal have not been released yet. So rail workers and users do not know what kind of service and level of job security there is.

But unlike Labour authorities in England who have not supported keeping guards on the train, the Welsh government has promised to retain them. Mick Cash, general secretary of transport union RMT, has welcomed this. But if some of the trains are replaced by trams, will guards be retained on those routes?

Wales's underfunded transport infrastructure is creaking. The new franchise is charged with delivering the new South Wales metro system, integrating rail, bus and tram services to alleviate the transport mess that has developed.

But that has been used as the pretext to privatise the tracks and stations currently publicly owned by Network Rail.

Rail unions have been fighting the attempts of the Tories to hand over tracks and stations to their private corporate friends - but Welsh Labour is carrying out the Tories' policy for them.

# Toxic air hits schools as EU ponders slap on wrist years late

**Lawanya Ramajeyam, Waltham Forest Socialist Party**

Toxic air is so bad in London that school students are exposed to higher levels inside their lessons than outside on the street or in the playground, according to a study for the mayor of London.

And after years of inaction, the European Union has threatened only to start proceedings towards a possible fine - largely toothless in reality - at some point in the next two years, if the British government goes on ignoring the problem.

Meanwhile, air pollution causes over 400,000 early deaths in the EU each year - according to the European Union itself.

Pollution is a mass killer. You can't always see or smell it, but it is there. Why in the world do we have to tolerate this, and also the damage to planet Earth?

Toxic air is primarily a product of diesel vehicles, tyre and brake dust, and solid fuel burning, but can also come from inside a building itself. Levels of nitrogen dioxide, predominantly produced by diesel vehicles, have broken EU limits since 2010 in the majority of city areas in the UK.

Air pollution knows no borders and puts everyone at risk. Those most vulnerable - pregnant women, children, the elderly, those already ill or poor - are particularly affected.

It starts to harm a child in the womb: premature birth, stillbirth, miscarriage, low birth weight and organ damage. Pollutants breathed by the mother could cross through the placenta to the baby, damaging lung and kidney development and increasing the chance of asthma and diabetes in later life.

The European Court of Justice has threatened to pursue legal action which may result in fines. Why has it taken years of rule-breaking and potentially millions of premature deaths to get to this point?

When refugees arrive, some fleeing the bombs of EU member states, the EU acts instantly to close borders. When the working class of Greece voted to reject EU austerity, the EU imposed further austerity straight away. The EU immediately supported the Spanish state's violent repression of the Catalan national liberation movement.

New technology is there - we can ensure clean air for all. The neoliberal EU and Tories won't invest fully in this because the oil market will fall and profits suffer.

Only public ownership of energy and transport, as part of a democratic, socialist plan of production, can guarantee the motivation and resources to end poisonous air. EU rules restricting nationalisation and promoting free market capitalism stand in the way of this.

Jeremy Corbyn is right to say Brexit must mean escaping these anti-worker rules. Tories and Blairites out! Fight for a socialist, internationalist, environmentalist Brexit!

---

## England facing water shortage due to underinvestment

**Nationalise water and utilities!**

**Laurel Fogarty**

Serious leaks, rising domestic use, and massive consumption by an unsustainable energy sector, mean much of England could see water shortages in the coming decades, says the Environment Agency.

What irony at a time when torrential rain has caused flashed flooding in parts of Britain! Crumbling infrastructure loses over three billion litres a day. That is enough to provide water to 20 million people.

Britain's privatised water firms are so inefficient that they continue to use medieval-style superstitious divining rods to locate leaks! And the industry is still reeling from a damning 2016 parliamentary report on price fixing worth over £1 billion in additional profit, with regulator Ofwat also implicated.

Continued and careless overexploitation of resources and underinvestment by profit-driven water companies has had a devastating effect on the environment. Between 6% and 15% of UK rivers have already fallen into poor condition as a result of water overuse.

The amount of water taken from 28% of UK groundwater sources is already unsustainable, along with 18% of surface water sources such as rivers. This is a ticking time bomb for Britain's water ecosystems.

As their profits grow, and amid criticisms of tax breaks and inflated charges, water companies have put shareholder dividends above infrastructure repair, and above the rights of ordinary people to clean and sustainable water sources - as well as our right to enjoy an unspoiled environment.

Capitalism, a system that prioritises accumulation of wealth at all costs, has been shown again and again to be unable to provide the necessities of life to the vast majority of people. By paying out shareholder dividends while their leaky pipes waste billions of litres, drying up our river ecosystems, water companies have demonstrated this yet again.

Under socialism, water companies, along with all other big firms currently profiting from basic human needs, would be nationalised under democratic workers' control and management. The use of water and other natural resources would be democratically planned.

Large-scale introduction of sustainable water sources, along with renewable energy sources that reduce the need for cooling water, and a crash programme of pipe improvement, would be easily possible under a system driven by the needs of the majority, not the profits of the few.

---

## **Them & Us**

### **Medicine mark-up...**

Boots charged the NHS £3,220 for medicated mouthwash - available for the equivalent of £93 on the high street, says a Times investigation. This equates to a mark-up of 3,478%.

The chief executive and 15% shareholder of Boots's parent company, Stefano Pessina, is worth \$13.7 billion, according to Forbes. He lives in Monaco and owns a 50-metre yacht. Nationalise big pharma!

### **... poor lose GPs**

The number of GPs in areas home to the poorest fifth of people fell by 511 between 2008 and 2017. Meanwhile, numbers near the homes of the best-off fifth rose by 134, says a written parliamentary answer to Labour.

The total number of GPs working in England fell by 541 in the last year, according to NHS Digital data.

---

## Top Trumps and happy families

Ivanka Trump, Donald's daughter, tweeted a pic of herself embracing her toddler - as US press reported on border agents separating migrant families. Trump's policy is to send adults straight into the court deportation system, while tearing kids as young as one from their arms for resettlement as refugees.

Back in Britain, property developer Jomast has been forcing adult asylum seekers to share bedrooms in Newcastle. The firm subcontracts for notorious privateer G4S. A tribunal has ruled the practice legal.

---

## Town and gown

Oxford and Cambridge universities, with their constituent colleges, own combined assets worth at least £21 billion, Guardian analysis has found. Average UK graduate debt is set for £50,800, according to the IFS.

---

# PCS conference 2018: members ready to fight to end pay misery

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

At the union's conference on 22 May, delegates massively voted to proceed to a strike ballot. Delegates called for the union to be, in effect, placed on a war footing to put an end to a decade of pay misery.

Last November, in a consultative pay ballot, the union gained a 99% vote to reject the pay cap with 79% willing to take strike action on a 48.8% turnout. This ballot result, within a whisker of the statutory 50% turnout threshold, gives confidence for launching the 18 June ballot.

While the ballot proceeds, negotiations with the treasury over the union's demands will be ongoing. As will plans for the necessary action if talks fail.

It will be the rank-and-file activists in the PCS groups and branches who will win this ballot. The mobilisation of this force is underway.

Winning a statutory ballot is not a given - with all the obstacles put in the way by the Tory anti-union legislation. But the UCU and CWU unions have shown it can be done, as have PCS's own members in DWP, Driving Tests, BIS and Acas.

In the conference debate, Socialist Party member Dave Semple summed up the mood. "We need a sober discussion on how to mobilise our members to fight back. But the key question is are we ready for this fight? The answer is yes, absolutely yes."

---

## Conference prepares for action

**Socialist party members in PCS**

PCS union conference celebrated its 20th anniversary at Brighton last week. It also celebrated 17 years of uninterrupted left leadership following the election results announced before the conference.

In its 20 years of existence, PCS has had to counter multiple attacks on the union, its activists and members. The removal of 'check-off' and savage cutbacks on facilities for reps have challenged the union, but such difficulties have been largely overcome. The strength of the union was demonstrated by the conference

attendance and debates. Staff cuts, a decade of pay misery, and office closures have been resisted, along with many other austerity measures.

## **Pay ballot**

First up at the conference was pay. Supported by every delegate bar a handful was the executive committee motion to hold a statutory strike ballot - fixed to start on 18 June. Small concessions above the pay cap for local government and health service workers were instanced as evidence of continued unfair treatment of the government's own employees.

More striking still is the 4% settlement for the Scottish Government's PCS members. The conference said no to the pay cap, yes to the union demand for a fully funded 5% increase, yes to talks with the Treasury on our claim and a big yes to action if talks fail.

In 2010, civil service unions negotiated new redundancy compensation arrangements. The Tories ripped these up in 2016 looking to cut, by a third, the 'cost' (benefits) of the scheme. A PCS High Court victory forced the government to reopen negotiations. PCS members, in a consultative ballot, rejected by 96% the government-imposed 2016 terms, a rejection that was reaffirmed by conference.

PCS conference decided policy on a whole range of other issues directly affecting our members, including resistance to office closures in HMRC and DWP and challenging harsh and discriminatory personnel regimes.

Conference heard from John McDonnell who pledged an end to the victimisation of PCS and its members and an end to anti-union laws. He said he and his colleagues would stand with PCS members on pay picket lines.

Conference reflected this support and acknowledged the Corbyn-led Labour Party's anti-austerity programme in agreeing PCS should make more clear its support for a Corbyn-led Labour government. Conference agreed to consult members on this issue.

A substantial minority of delegates expressed, both in their vote and contributions, a degree of caution. This included opposition to any 'back-door' affiliation and acknowledging that Labour is in effect two parties in one, with a substantial right-wing influence in parliament and local councils. Increased and more explicit support for Corbyn's Labour without compromising political independence was the position most delegates appeared to favour.

There were also important debates on issues such as the Windrush scandal, climate change, Syria and organising resistance to Trump's visit in July. Conference agreed to affiliate to Tamil Solidarity.

## **Unwelcome distraction**

The unwelcome distraction in the conference venue was the decision by Janice Godrich - publicly supported by Mark Serwotka - to challenge the incumbent Chris Baugh as assistant general secretary and treasurer, posted on Facebook on the eve of conference. This announcement angered and perplexed many ordinary delegates - most of whom had supported Chris since his election as Left Unity candidate in 2004.

Sympathy and support for Chris showed itself with a rousing round of applause as he approached the microphone to make his union financial report. The divisive attack on Chris Baugh, by Janice Godrich and Mark Serwotka on the eve of the decision to launch a pay strike ballot, further angered many delegates.

See left for a report of the excellent fringe meeting which launched Chris's re-election campaign.

At the conclusion of this year's PCS conference delegates left to start work and preparations for winning the statutory strike ballot.

---

## **Strong support for AGS Chris Baugh in packed Socialist Party fringe meeting**

Around 120 people packed into the Socialist Party fringe meeting at the annual delegate conference of the PCS civil servants' union on 23 May.

The meeting was dominated by the threat to unity of the left in PCS brought about by the decision of union president Janice Godrich to stand against fellow Socialist Party member Chris Baugh to be the Left Unity candidate for assistant general secretary - a position Chris has held since 2004.

The Left Unity election will take place in the autumn. This is where the political issues should be debated.

## **Record**

In his introduction to the discussion, Chris described his record in the union, from the important part he played in the decades-long fight to remove the stranglehold of the right under Barry Reamsbottom, to his present-day role, including in fighting for the best deal for members during negotiations on several key PCS disputes.

He referred to the way in which, in his capacity as treasurer, he had helped lead the union's successful, determined struggle against the Tory government's attempt to bankrupt PCS through the removal of 'check-off'.

Chris was also keen to point out the emphasis he has always placed on a collaborative approach, shown in his consistent willingness to work with all fighting individuals and forces. At the same time he explained that this did not mean he sacrificed his own principled position as a Socialist Party member.

Chris made clear that he was prepared to answer all attempts to impugn and undermine his record as AGS.

Socialist Party general secretary Peter Taaffe also spoke from the platform. He set this attack on Chris in its broader political context. This included remarks on the struggle currently taking place within the Labour Party, in which the Blairites are continuing their offensive against Corbyn.

Peter pointed out the importance of the trade union movement intervening in this struggle, raising as an example the welcome move by Len McCluskey, leader of Unite the Union, to publicly confront those Blairites using smear and slander to undermine Corbyn, including with spurious claims about antisemitism.

## **Danger**

Peter described the danger posed to the "historic conquest" of the left in PCS by this divisive move. Regrettably, Janice had called a meeting to launch her campaign to clash with the Socialist Party meeting. PCS general secretary Mark Serwotka, who has publicly backed Janice's stand, was on the platform. Peter explained that Chris had written to Janice suggesting the two meetings be merged and include a debate between the two proposed candidates. She declined.

Marion Lloyd, PCS group president for BIS and chair of Left Unity, chaired the Socialist Party meeting. Given the very short time for discussion - the meeting took place within the one-hour lunch break of conference - Marion explained that she would only be taking questions and comments from those attendees who were not members of the Socialist Party. Every speaker gave support to Chris.

There was anger at the fact that Janice and Mark are putting the division down to a 'personal clash' rather than any political or strategic differences over the direction of the union. Several speakers also expressed disappointment that the general secretary had intervened in this manner, essentially calling for the removal of a sitting elected official and employee of the union.

## **Good work**

Many in the room, including those who were clear they don't support the Socialist Party, listed Chris's good work and attributes. Concerns were raised about the way in which union publications seem to have been used to boost Janice's profile and keep Chris' role more hidden.

The dominant feeling was that - at a time when the union is facing huge challenges, including a national strike ballot on pay - it is irresponsible to divide the left in this way and stand against a fighting, left, incumbent candidate.

---

## **UCU conference: Members are organising and winning - build the union, build the struggles!**

**Sam Morecroft, UCU conference delegate (personal capacity)**

It's been an explosive year for the University and College Union (UCU), with members forced to take unprecedented strike action to defend our jobs, terms and conditions. But by any measure possible, UCU members have risen to the challenge brilliantly.

UCU became the first union to take nationally coordinated strike action in the shadow of the hated Trade Union Act, overcoming its barriers and proving decisively that workers will not be prevented from struggling by government legislation.

The magnificent 14-day university pensions strike showed what is possible when we come together to take serious and sustained industrial action. Not only did our members give Universities UK the shock of their lives - but when our leadership looked set to ballot members on an offer that wasn't good enough, branches organised brilliantly to coordinate meetings and a protest outside UCU headquarters to send a clear message of no capitulation.

Furthermore, as a result of the fantastic struggle of our members, the employers have withdrawn their threat of completely scrapping 'defined benefit' pensions (which guarantee a certain amount after retirement according to how much the member of staff earns and how long they stay in the scheme) - for now at least.

While the strike was a huge victory, there is much anger at the way the dispute ended. The so-called consultation and ballot, held during the Easter holidays, were rightly described in the Socialist as a "stitch-up". As a result, complaints and motions of no confidence in the general secretary have been put to this congress.

But we also need to look to the future and recognise the need to build a fighting, democratic and socialist UCU, led and controlled by the membership. This is of incredible importance when we consider the strikes now breaking out in further education over pay. The sector is in complete crisis, with national bargaining almost completely broken down and 40% of colleges refusing to implement any pay rises that are agreed anyway.

Pay has fallen by as much as 25% for our members in the last five years. That's why 13 UCU branches have taken action over pay this year, showing magnificent resolve in the face of enormous challenges. Sandwell College UCU has secured a victory already, agreeing a 6.25% pay increase over the next three years. That shows what's possible, but we need to support our branches to build the action, and that requires a democratic and member-led union willing to fight.

There have been important local strikes developing throughout the year. Crucially there have been victories as well, for example at Manchester, Coventry and Leeds universities.

These struggles are a reflection of the attacks we're facing across education as a result of privatisation, marketisation and austerity.

It's almost certain that in the pre-92 higher education institutions we will have to strike to defend our pensions again in the future, and all branches definitely have to begin the campaign for a successful ballot and industrial action over pay - we cannot accept the below-inflation offer of 1.7%. When we consider the scale of the challenge our members face over pay in further education we should be fighting for coordinated action in both higher and further education.

But we need a discussion about how we run our union. We lack a fully democratic, accountable collective leadership that is responsive to the demands of the members. Sheffield, Bath and Bournemouth UCU have all submitted similar motions to congress calling for a 'democracy review'.

Unfortunately these have been ruled out of order on the grounds that it is not the role of congress to determine the terms and conditions of employees of the union.

But this is not what these motions are about - they are asking for discussion on our democratic structures, like the executive committee and the general secretary. Delegates must challenge the decision, and support the call for a democracy review. Currently the executive council allows the office of general secretary far too much power - we need to build a democratic and collective leadership of the union.

It's been an incredible year, but the struggles still to come will be even greater.

## 900-strong north west NHS strike

**Becci Heagney, North West Socialist Party organiser**

A historic strike has taken place at three hospitals in the Wrightington, Wigan and Leigh NHS Trust. 900 porters, domestics and caterers are under threat from plans to transfer services to a 'wholly owned subsidiary' or 'special purpose vehicle' - forms of outsourcing which pave the way to NHS privatisation - called WWL Solutions.

Members of health unions Unison, Unite and GMB took 48 hours of strike action to oppose this after huge turnouts and votes for action in both the indicative and consultative ballots.

Big and lively picket lines were held and maintained from first thing in the morning until evening. Placards read: "WWL Solutions is not the NHS" and others: "Save Our NHS".

At a strike rally held in Wigan town centre, the biggest cheers were given to speakers who linked the strike to the need to defend the NHS from private companies.

The Socialist Party leaflet pointed to partial victories in Leeds in delaying the transfer of services to a special purpose vehicle and in Huddersfield in halting the closure of HRI - showing that nothing is inevitable about the destruction of the NHS. When we fight, we can win!

The announcement from the rally stage that two more strike days are to be announced was welcomed by the strikers.

## Unison ballots workers at Yorkshire hospitals at risk of privatisation

**Matt Hirst, Huddersfield Socialist Party**

Unison will soon be balloting hundreds of health workers at Huddersfield Royal Infirmary (HRI) and Calderdale Royal Hospital (CRH) at risk of being moved out of NHS employment and into a 'wholly owned subsidiary company' (a form of privatisation where an arm's-length organisation is set up, at first owned by the NHS).

HRI has recently been saved from closure following a mass campaign where the Socialist Party played a leading role.

Staff affected include porters, housekeepers and domestic and procurement workers. The local NHS trust has said that these moves will represent a saving due to a tax loophole they would be able to exploit.

But as the cleaning staff and kitchen staff at either hospital will tell you, experience shows once they have been transferred out of direct NHS employment, then attacks on workers' wages and conditions will begin.

New staff that are taken on will likely be employed at lower rates, creating divisions among workers, and they will not have access to the NHS pension scheme.

However this is not just happening in Kirklees. Already this week, staff at Wrightington, Wigan and Leigh have walked out on a two-day strike against the same proposals in their hospitals, and it is likely that the ballot will result in strike action at HRI and CRH through meeting the undemocratic levels required under the Tory Trade Union Act 2016. Indeed, earlier this year, Unison held an indicative ballot and the results met what is now required by law.

The ballot opened on 25 May and closes on 14 June. Should the decision to take strike action go ahead, this will be on 5 July, a poignant day as it is the 70th birthday of the NHS.

Huddersfield Socialist Party sends support and solidarity to these workers in their time of struggle.

---

## **Wales TUC 2018: Socialist Party members challenge leadership at undemocratic conference**

**Roger Butler, Swansea Trade Union Council delegate**

It was Socialist Party members who brought some life to the Wales TUC congress, speaking in numerous debates and appealing for basic democratic rights. This went down well with delegates.

Nine Socialist Party Wales members attended the biennial congress in Llandudno, north Wales. Our members included delegates representing trade union councils; members of civil service union PCS; and Amy Murphy, newly elected president of retail union Usdaw. A number were there for the first time.

Socialist Party members were involved in proposing action. This included motions on ending local authority cuts and outsourcing, fighting the public sector pay cap, campaigning for more housing and mental health services, and supporting renationalisation of rail.

Some were defeated on the recommendation of the Wales TUC general council after their failure to persuade delegates to remit their motions.

However, the response from the floor, with consistent applause, showed that there was considerable support from delegates whose hands were unfortunately tied by their delegation leaders when it came to the actual vote.

Ushaw's motion on fighting low pay, scrapping zero-hour contracts and for a real living wage of £10 an hour was passionately moved by Amy Murphy, who highlighted the devastating impact that poverty pay and zero-hour contracts are having on workers, particularly in the retail industry. Even a right-wing general council couldn't oppose this motion, which was passed unanimously.

The biggest applause of the three days came when Swansea Trade Union Council delegate and Socialist Party member Alec Thraves protested at the general council continually asking delegates to remit motions without allowing the proposers a right of reply.

Alec protested that it was a matter of basic democracy to be able to respond to criticism and outright distortions. This struck a big chord with rank-and-file delegates, some of who discussed submitting rule changes in future to prevent such bureaucratic obstacles being repeated.

As a first time attendee I agree with the observation made by one of the delegates who commented that Socialist Party speakers were "fearless" in confronting a right-wing dominated general council.

---

## **Springfield school strike in Birmingham against job cuts and workload**

**Bob Severn, South East Birmingham Socialist Party**

What a racket! Hundreds of car (and some bus and truck) horns were honked in support of Springfield Primary School teachers on 24 May when National Education Union (NEU) members took their first day of strike action against further job losses and increased workloads.

Springfield, in south east Birmingham, is becoming an academy, but the effects of academisation are already being felt. Over the past year experienced teachers and support staff have already been cut, and now more experienced teachers - some who taught the parents of current pupils at the school - are for the chop. The job losses would result in increased workloads that are already at a dangerously high level.

The NEU members believe that further increases to workloads will reduce their ability to provide the school children with the high-quality teaching they deserve. Yet at the same time there are plans for four non-teaching director roles. Alternative proposals put forward by the NEU have been ignored. It is no surprise that staff morale is at an all-time low.

Aghast at the size of and support for the strike, management ushered pupils into school while trying to stop them talking to their own teachers! The NEU members, who will escalate action after half term if the plans aren't dropped, marched along the roads outside the school at the end of the picket.

The fantastic support for the pickets from parents, children and the wider community shows the value of a community school with settled, experienced teachers. Academisation, forced following an Ofsted inspection, threatens to tear that apart.

---

## **Broad Left candidate elected as Usdaw deputy general secretary**

Dave McCrossen, the Broad Left candidate in Usdaw's deputy general secretary contest has been elected.

Dave is taking his position alongside the new president, Socialist Party member Amy Murphy. This means the shop workers' union will now have two lefts out of three among Usdaw's leading elected representatives.

Following his victory, Dave said: "I want to help build a stronger union that is fit and ready to take on the government and employers who continue to attack our terms and conditions."

Dave McCrossen is currently the divisional officer of Usdaw's Eastern region and has been involved in the Tesco Dagenham distribution pay strike, whose 24-hour walkout on 17-18 May has forced Tesco to the table, with talks at conciliation service Acas ongoing.

---

## **Socialist nationalisation: what it is and why we need it**

**Paul Callanan, Socialist Party national committee**

The surge in support for Corbyn's radical programme at last year's general election and the collapse of Carillion has led to a widespread discussion around public ownership and nationalisation. Polls show widespread support for the renationalisation of railways, gas, electricity, water, the Royal Mail and the NHS.

Is it any wonder that in the minds of workers and young people the question of falling living standards and growing inequality is going hand in hand with a questioning of who is really in control in society. By 2030 on current projections, 1% of the population will own 64% of all wealth. The richest 1,000 bosses are now worth £724 billion and have seen their wealth increase by 10% in the last year.

Meanwhile, working class people in Britain have endured the longest fall in living standards since records began. And across the world nearly half of humanity lives off less than \$2.50 a day. 80% of all people live in countries where wealth differentials are growing.

## **Essential policy**

The concentration of wealth and power in an ever-vanishingly smaller number of hands is linked to the growing immiseration, insecurity and precariousness for the majority.

The question of how we take control from the hands of the bosses and provide solutions to the problems faced by working class and poor people is therefore an extremely important debate for all those engaged in struggle for socialist change.

For socialists, nationalisation under democratic workers' control and management is a key means through which power can be taken out of the hands of the bosses and placed in the hands of working class people. Genuine socialists don't only fight for improvements under capitalism, we seek to get rid of it altogether, along with the crisis, inequality and chaos that comes with it.

That is not to say we don't fight for reforms. We are at the forefront of all workers' struggles for a £10 an hour minimum wage, free education, an end to NHS cuts and so on. But as the saying goes 'you can't control what you don't own'. Any victory won or gain made is important. However, while overall control of the economy remains in the hands of the capitalist class, there is a danger that any reform won can be reversed.

Socialists have always defended the original [Clause IV, Part 4](#) of the Labour Party constitution (see below).

It was this passage that committed the Labour Party to the historic goal of public ownership of the commanding heights of the economy. It was adopted by the party in 1918 in wake of the Russian Revolution. The pro-capitalist leadership of the party saw this as a concession they had to grant in order to prevent haemorrhaging support to the new workers' state and the idea of fundamental change.

For the mass of workers in the Labour Party, however, it was seen as Labour's commitment to socialism and as a tool with which to force the party to adopt reforms favourable to the working class.

Support for nationalisation was demonstrated in 1972, when a motion moved by Militant supporters (forerunner of the Socialist Party) calling for an enabling act to nationalise the top 350 monopolies was passed at Labour Party conference. At that stage the top 350 companies represented around 80% of the economy - 'the commanding heights'. Nationalisation of these companies, under democratic workers' control and management, could have represented a break with capitalism and laid the basis for the development of a democratic socialist plan of production.

All through the party's history there were attempts to get rid of Clause IV. Various right-wing and reformist leaderships saw this as part of freeing themselves from any pressure to deliver socialist change.

Hugh Gaitskill, Labour leader from 1955-63 was defeated in his attempt to remove Labour's socialist pledge. It was only on the basis of the defeat of the miners' strike, the collapse of Stalinism and the resultant throwing back of class consciousness, that Tony Blair was able to end Labour's historic commitment to socialism.

The clause adopted by the party as part of the Blairite counterrevolution committed the party to the dynamic "enterprise of the market", "the rigor of competition", and "a thriving private sector". It was designed to reassure the ruling class that a future Labour government would pose no threat to them whatsoever.

Under Jeremy Corbyn and John McDonnell's leadership of the Labour Party there have once again been important steps forward towards supporting nationalisation.

In the wake of Carillion's collapse this January, Shadow Chancellor John McDonnell said the next Labour government would commit to "taking them back" in relation to privatised public services and the energy and utility companies. However, an examination of the detail of the Labour leadership's programme in relation to public ownership reveals that's not quite the case.

In their recent report 'Alternative Models of Ownership' the Labour leadership outline a number of measures on public ownership. They envisage a mixture of government-owned public services and regionally and municipally owned energy and water companies.

At the launch of the report Corbyn said: "We need to take a new direction with a genuinely mixed economy fit for the 21st century that meets the demands of cutting edge technological change".

For Corbyn and McDonnell nationalisation is not a measure for transforming society. They instead wish to change the existing one, ameliorating the worst effects of capitalism on working class people. McDonnell has spoken since becoming chancellor about "transforming capitalism" or even "stabilising capitalism".

The dangers of this approach are manifold. Take for example the energy sector. At present the 'big six' corporations in this sector control 80% of the market. This would leave small public local and regional enterprises scrambling around for a small share of the market.

They would still be vulnerable to market forces, with the big companies - on the basis of huge profits and greater access to the national grid - much more able to lower prices. It certainly could not be ruled out that they would become locked in unwinnable price wars with each other and the big six.

The banks would be far less willing to invest in small council or regional public companies and cooperatives. Firstly, because the big six are a better guarantee of a return on their investment. There would also be an unwillingness from capitalists to invest in enterprises that are seen as a threat to their control.

We support Corbyn and McDonnell's plan to fully renationalise the NHS, but it needs to go further. The NHS is in thrall to big pharmaceutical companies.

In 2017 alone the NHS paid £31 billion to greedy companies for drugs that treat illnesses like cancer, MS and arthritis. Hikes in prices of drugs like Tomoxifen and Bulsufan, which treat cancer, mean that they have to be rationed. The nationalisation of the pharmaceutical companies is key to ensure the future of the NHS.

## **Ruling class sabotage**

A Corbyn-led Labour government would give the working class confidence and an appetite to fight for more. Such a government would instantly be opposed by the forces of the ruling class. They will use every means at their disposal to undermine and defeat Corbyn's attempts to implement a programme of public ownership - no matter how limited. This would include use of the media, the state and economic sabotage.

The Macquarie Group, an investment bank with interests in UK utilities, has already advised investors to start moving businesses and assets abroad in order to protect them from any future nationalisation.

This is just a very small glimpse of the kind of economic measures the ruling class would use in the event of a Corbyn government. This raises the need to nationalise the banks which are responsible for 12-15% of all UK investment.

Only by nationalising the commanding heights of the economy, today around 125 massive corporations and banks, would it be possible to break the power of the capitalist class and lay the basis for building a society

that really met the needs of 'the many not the few'. Compensation should not be paid to the fat cats, but only to those small shareholders who are genuinely in need.

Even Labour's programme of nationalisation implemented in the aftermath of World War Two, which went much further than Corbyn's current proposals, fell prey to capitalist sabotage.

With the collapse of the economy after the war and the threat of revolution which was sweeping Europe, the ruling class felt that they had no option but to make big concessions to the working class. This included the welfare state, the creation of the NHS and the taking of big sections of the economy into public hands. Coal, the utilities, and many other industries were nationalised.

However, they were set up to fail from the start. Rather than nationalised on the basis of democratic workers' control and management, they were run by bureaucrats from Whitehall. In some cases, such as in the coal industry, the old bosses who had run them into the ground were put onto the new boards. Without the input of workers and the people who relied on those industries, starved of investment and run on a capitalist model, there were inevitably inefficiencies.

## **Thatcherism**

The economic crisis that began in the mid-1970s was blamed on nationalised industry and used as excuse to begin reversing the gains of the post-war period. Thatcher declared war on the working class and embarked on a vicious privatisation programme. The programmes of successive Labour and Tory governments since have been continuations of this process.

Along with the nationalisation of the companies that control the wealth and resources of society, the question of democratic control is key. Socialist nationalisation would include having elected committees to run every workplace. In turn these would elect representatives to be on committees that would form regional and national government. On this basis the whole of society would be able to take part in drawing up a plan for what industry should produce.

A socialist plan, with workers free from exploitation and oppression, could unleash the full productive and creative potential of humanity. And on that basis we could eliminate poverty and inequality.

## **The Constitution of the Labour Party Clause IV (4)**

To secure for the workers by hand or by brain the full fruits of their industry and the most equitable distribution thereof that may be possible, upon the basis of the common ownership of the means of production, distribution and exchange, and the best obtainable system of popular administration and control of each industry or service.

- Clause 4 was adopted in the aftermath of the Russian Revolution and seen as Labour's commitment to socialism. It was jettisoned by Tony Blair's New Labour

## **Walthamstow: action demanded from new council**

**A 'Save Our Square' press release**

In a fantastic show of unity in action, campaigners from across the spectrum of local issues came together on the evening of 24 May at Waltham Forest town hall.

The Save Our Square (SOS) campaign had raised the idea of making demands on the new council - and people fighting for special education services, libraries, teaching assistants, schools, against the Leabridge Road development, undemocratic implementation of Mini-Holland, and more, responded.

Among the crowd on the town hall steps were children, parents, trade unionists, socialists, dogs, and even four 'tower blocks' who came to push out the ordinary people of the borough in a touch of street theatre.

No chance to ignore the crowd was given to the town hall occupants as the idea of uniting and fighting to 'Save our Square, Save Our Services' rang out.

This was very definitely a protest against cuts - but the first council meeting after the 3 May election was also understood as an opportunity to appeal to new councillors to listen and defend the services under attack.

SOS campaigners handed them a letter which said:

"We call on councillors to demand a full council debate on the Mall and Square as a matter of urgency.

"In the last council the doings of councillors, many themselves landlords or variously involved with property companies, were shielded from public scrutiny by their decision to exempt themselves from declaring interests.

"We call on councillors to call a vote to re-institute an open register of interests. Save our Square campaign is pledged to maintain active opposition to this grotesque Town Square project. We are not going away."

One of the themes of the SOS speeches that was popular with all the campaigns was to come together as a 'people's budget' conference or assembly.

In her speech on the open mic, Nancy Taaffe, chair of Save Our Square, called on the sympathetic councillors to help us convene such an event to put our submissions forward to the councillors as they prepare for setting the budget this autumn.

Speakers called on everyone to contact their local councillors to put this idea to them and seek their backing.

Danny Herbert, a parent of a child with autism, explained why he was there: "Children with special needs and disability are being failed in Waltham Forest, including practices likely to be unlawful under the Children and Families Act 2014.

"Mental health services have closed their books to children in the area unless they are suicidal or self-harming.

"We are calling for services to reopen for all kids in need! Children with special needs and disability have been refused adequate transport to school.

"We are calling for the system that denies transport as a default to be overhauled! This year 2.3% will be cut from the high needs education budget in Waltham Forest, despite increasing numbers of children needing support. We are calling for this cut to be reversed".

Donna Bibby, Unison convenor in schools, said: "We have lost many teaching assistants due to school budget cuts.

"We really need to link up and fight for jobs for education workers and to protect vulnerable children who need us".

Two things were clear from this protest.

One: The idea that a Labour council is helpless in the face of Tory austerity was not accepted by the protest. Action was demanded.

Two: We're not going away. As things stand there is no future for our young people - so we have to join together to fight for a future that includes public services, open spaces and affordable homes for all.

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/SaveOurSquareE17/>

This version of this article was first posted on the Socialist Party website on 25 May 2018 and may vary slightly from the version subsequently printed in The Socialist.

---

# Hands off Teignmouth Hospital!

Sean Brogan, Socialist Party Teignmouth

Having closed the minor injuries unit in Teignmouth Hospital, South Devon, despite massive opposition from local people, the clinical commissioning group (CCG) is showing its intention to close the hospital entirely.

Occupying a site which is a developer's dream, the CCG promised bed refurbishment two years ago. Now, the CCG claims that the success of the 'Care Closer to Home' regime - set up for those discharged from the main hospital in Torquay - means that 'beds are no longer needed'. When challenged, the CCG and NHS trust have no clinical evidence of the success of this policy.

The Care Quality Commission has produced reports of the main private providers of home visits being of a low standard! Low pay, inexperience and lack of training was in their reports.

Socialist Party members are working with Save Our Health Services Devon to mount a campaign to stop the closure and reinstate the beds/wards in Teignmouth.

The 'consultation' process is now seen as a sham as the CCGs have devastated Devon with the closures of many community hospitals - "a done deal" is the refrain from some local people. The cynicism towards politicians and the CCG is well-founded as research has shown how billions of pounds of NHS property has been sold off to the rich.

However many are willing to fight this undemocratic process. A protest march has already taken place and a rally is now planned for Saturday 2 June.

- Save Teignmouth Hospital rally. Assemble 12 noon, 2 June 2018, The Triangle, Teignmouth TQ14 8QU

---

## France '68 anniversary meeting

# Socialist Party members inspired by revolutionary events

Paula Mitchell, London Socialist Party secretary

There was a great atmosphere at London Socialist Party's meeting to discuss [the world-shaking events of France '68](#). To the sounds of music from 1968, members and new people looked at the articles and timelines on display, and bought copies of the Socialist Party's book 'Month of Revolution'.

Author Clare Doyle was the opening speaker, giving a lively narrative of the events.

Socialist Students organiser Theo Sharieff said we can learn from the May '68 days to aid the current struggles of young people, especially in calling for school and college student walkouts when Trump visits Britain in July.

Socialist Party general secretary Peter Taaffe was a participant in the debates on the left at the time. When others wrote off the possibility of working class struggle in the west, the Militant (forerunner of the Socialist) predicted that revolutionary events were coming in France.

The massive movement of students inspired workers to take action, and when they did, the biggest general strike in history shook capitalism to its core. But what was missing was a revolutionary party that could offer leadership and take the next steps that were necessary for the working class to take power.

Participants from the floor included socialist activists at the time and young socialists who were inspired to join the Socialist Party when they studied France '68. This upbeat mood was reflected in the bumper fighting fund collection which raised £654.

---

## Police shootings in Tamil Nadu condemned

Tamil Solidarity reporters

On 26 May Tamil Solidarity organised a protest outside the Indian High Commission in London to condemn the Tamil Nadu and Modi governments for the killing of 13 people on a peaceful protest in Thoothukkudi, Tamil Nadu. Over 300 Tamils along with their families participated. The protest was supported by the Socialist Party and Socialist Students.

The police shootings took place on 22 May outside the Sterlite Copper plant, owned by Vedanta Group, when thousands marched against the expansion of the environmentally damaging site.

At the start of the London protest candles were lit to mourn for the innocent civilians who were shot dead by state police.

Slogans were chanted against the Edappadi Palaniswamy (Tamil Nadu chief minister), prime minister Narendra Modi and Anil Agarwal, owner of Vedanta Group. People also masked themselves to criticise the government for unleashing state-sponsored terrorism. There was also parai music played by children, men and women.

On our leaflets Tamil Solidarity put forward ten demands to the Tamil Nadu state and central government. These include closing down Sterlite industries permanently - the temporary closure announcement is not enough - along with provision of adequate aid and jobs for all the workers.

We also called for the immediate release of all arrested protesters and the dropping of all charges against them.

Further, we demanded the urgent convening of a democratic, open and accountable investigation into the killings and atrocities committed by the Tamil Nadu police. The inquiry should be led by the representatives of workers and victims. We demand justice and adequate compensation.

The management of natural resources must be brought under democratic popular control, including democratically elected workers' bodies. It is only through such action that we can protect the environment from corporate damage and protect human lives from harm.

Representatives from other organisations at the high commission protest, including the Socialist Party, also condemned the brutal shootings. At the end of the protest, the accusations against the governments and support for the people of Thoothukkudi were sung as song.

- For more information see [tamilsolidarity.org](http://tamilsolidarity.org)
- 

## Leicester plans sales boost of 1,000th edition of the Socialist

As part of the drive to nationally [sell 1,000 extra issues of the 1,000th edition](#) of the Socialist (21-27 June), Leicester East Socialist Party branch aims to sell an extra 30 papers that week.

In preparation for achieving the target we will focus in June on the importance of selling, subscribing to, reading and writing for the Socialist.

We've planned a Saturday stall workshop, along with Leicester West branch, to discuss our methods of engaging with the public, raising donations and politically selling the paper. We'll follow this with a stall in the city centre to put these ideas into practice.

There will be a week of action, with extra stalls and paper sales throughout the week of the 21st with activities at the hospital, jobcentre, train station and our local Tesco. On Saturday 23rd we'll divide our forces and have two stalls instead of one, extending them by one hour.

Our 19 June branch meeting is: "Do revolutionaries still need a paper?", when we'll be discussing the role of the paper and its continued relevance in an age of social media.

This strategy and focus should arm us with the tools we need - practical and political - to play our part in achieving the overall target for this milestone edition of the Socialist.

**Caroline Vincent, Leicester East Socialist Party**

---

## 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/27424>