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the Socialist

Formerly **Militant**

Tory cash boost not enough

SAVE



OUR NHS

Tessa Warrington
East Midlands Socialist Party

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

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

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

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

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

Health Education England.

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

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

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

The Tories are worried not just

about losing an election - but of the potential for workers to grow in confidence that they can fight back and demand more.

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

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

We know any concession from capitalist politicians is temporary. And we know they will try to make

the working class pay for it with cuts elsewhere.

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

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

■ National march for the NHS - 70th anniversary - Saturday 30 June, assemble 12pm at Portland Place, London W1A 1AA

Eight-page pull-out inside
1,000 issues of the
Socialist: a vital weapon

How the Socialist paper helped save heart unit



The Socialist newspaper was invaluable in the successful campaign to save the Glenfield children's heart centre in

Leicester. Through its pages we were able to put the campaign arguments across regularly, report on events and help to build the campaign.

Eventually we used it to encourage others with our success. It also meant that people who bought the paper

because they supported the campaign could read about all the other battles going on, and link it to the wider struggle to save the NHS - and change society...

- Steve Score, chair, Save Glenfield Children's Heart Centre





What we think

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

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

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

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

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

Government defeat

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

Responding, in part, to mass pressure on the question of the future of the NHS and eager to grab a few positive headlines, May to announced an (in reality paltry) increase in spending on the health service (see front page). But even this has been the subject of a Brexit row.



The Socialist Party has been consistent in calling for a class-based, socialist approach to the EU. For us, the question is not 'hard or soft Brexit', but Brexit in whose class interests?

DESPERATE DIVISIONS IN TORIES - CORBYN AND UNIONS MUST ACT



Photo Mary Finch



photo Paul Mattsson

Government ministers have openly disputed May's claim to be able to fund the spending with money saved as a result of EU withdrawal - the 'Brexit dividend'.

Veiled threats are very much a thing of the past where the Tory party is concerned. Now, MPs announce that they are considering bringing down May's administration live on television. On 17 June, Grieve openly stated that

rebels could "collapse the government". The prime minister's attempts to diffuse the situation over his 'meaningful vote' amendment by putting forward a supposed compromise wording, which would have made any parliamentary vote over a Brexit deal effectively non-binding backfired, paving the way for her defeat in the lords.

But it is not just the Tory remain-backers making

threats. David Davis, May's Brexit secretary, is now reported to have threatened to resign on five separate occasions. A walkout by the supporters of a 'hard Brexit' from May's cabinet, including Boris Johnson and David Davis, could trigger the collapse of the government and a possible general election. Even if May is able to cobble together a deal between warring factions and avert an immediate defeat in parliament, further headaches will follow closely behind.

Among the issues still dogging the government is the thorny question of the Irish border. May's attempt at a sticking plaster - the so-called 'backstop arrangement', in which the status quo essentially remains in place pending an undefined 'new customs arrangement' - is fraught with contradictions and remains the subject of

bitter disagreement. Hostilities could be further heightened as the question of the role of the European Court of Justice - which EU negotiators are demanding is given continued jurisdiction so long as the backstop arrangement remains in place - comes to the fore.

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

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

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

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

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

Socialist approach to EU

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

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

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

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

Seattle council repeals Amazon Tax

Only days after passing a tax on Amazon and big business in Seattle, corporate politicians repealed the ordinance. Socialists always emphasise that while we must fight to tax the rich, this will always be fiercely resisted and ultimately reversed unless we also have a socialist struggle to change society to place ownership of these companies under the democratic control of workers. We publish an edited version of the council chamber speech by Seattle City Councilmember **Kshama Sawant**. Kshama is a member of Socialist Alternative (co-thinkers of the Socialist Party in the US).



photo Socialist Alternative

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

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

The Democratic Party establishment has presided over this crisis.

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

The people's budget struggle last year brought 400 people to the public hearing who spoke with one voice: "City council, do your job! Tax big business so that we can begin to address the affordable housing crisis." That night we engaged in peaceful civil disobedience in an overnight occupation of city hall.

Because of our courage, determination, strategies and political clarity we came to that unanimous vote on 14 May. Now less than a month after that unanimous vote, these council members are going to overturn that hard won victory.

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

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

To quote Tim Harris, "any progressive measure you talk about,

you will find big business opposing it."

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

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

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

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

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

Boeing did that decade after decade. And the legislature caved to them. The logic was always, you can't fight big business. If they threaten to take away jobs, then accept whatever they want.

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

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

Ask them, "do you think we need affordable housing?" They will say yes. "Do you think big business should be taxed for that?" They will say yes.

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

Have you got news for us? DEADLINE: Friday before publication date - urgent news: Monday

020 8988 8777 editors@socialistparty.org.uk @socialistpaper

Editor: Sarah Wrack
News/letters: James Ivens

International: Dave Carr
Workplace/campaigns: Scott Jones

Layout: Ian Pattison
Sales: Chris Newby

Photographer: Paul Mattsson
Website: Judy Beishon



Five reasons to walk out on 13 July

NUMBER 2:

NO TO TRUMP'S CLIMATE CHANGE CHAOS

Roan James
 Sheffield Socialist Students

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

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

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

Trump's plan of an industrial re-

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

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

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

But most significantly a contribution of \$250,000 was made by Kelly Warren, CEO of Energy Transfer Partners - the company in charge of building the Dakota oil pipeline. It shows the corruption of Trump's

government, as the last stage of building the Dakota pipeline was given the green light despite regular oil leakages that pose a significant threat of contaminating water sources.

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

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

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

■ **Search for Socialist Students' "walk-out against Trump" event on Facebook**



Universal Credit delivers claimant misery and will cost more than it saves

■ Fight for liveable benefits, real support and decent jobs

Karen Seymour
 Mansfield Socialist Party

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

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

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

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

In my view, as a welfare rights adviser, Universal Credit is deliberately designed to wear people down.

Depression cases will rise even further among claimants as they desperately try to free themselves from a system dubbed the 'lobster pot'.

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

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

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

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

**Join the fightback!
 Join the Socialists!**

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REFUGEE SUICIDE SCANDAL - FIGHT FOR JOBS, HOMES AND SERVICES FOR ALL

Isai Priya
Refugee Rights campaign

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

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

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

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

Destitution

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

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

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

Donald Trump's 'zero-tolerance' policy has seen thousands of refugee children, including toddlers, separated from their parents at the Mexico-US border and held in wire mesh cages. Over a six-week



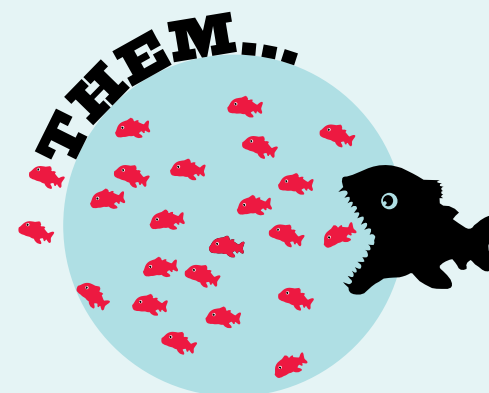
Refugee Rights campaigners photo Senan



We are demanding immediate access to mental health support and more investment into jobs, homes and services - for everyone

period at least 2,000 children have been separated from their parents. Rightly there has been an uproar and condemnation against this. Ordinary people are sickened by these images.

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



Macron China crisis

French president Emmanuel Macron is doing his bit to assist budget cuts and economic belt-tightening... by buying a new set of plates for £44,000 according to the Journal du Dimanche. The real price could be nearly ten times that according to 'Le Canard enchaîné' who make it - over £438,000.

The extravagant purchase of over 1,000 plates comes at the same time as huge austerity measures being implemented or planned by Macron and his government. And the news comes after a video emerged of Macron saying "crazy amounts of cash" were being spent on welfare benefits. He should eat his words - he has enough plates to do so.

School toilet trouble...

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

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

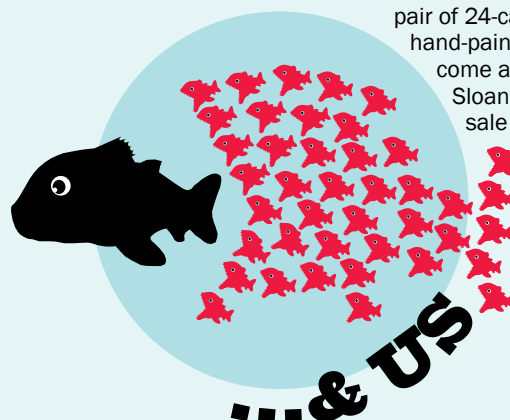
One parent at the school said: "If the school is begging for toilet paper then it makes you wonder what's next?"

...super-rich bathroom opulence

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

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

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



Have you got news for the 'fishes'?
Email: editors@socialistparty.org.uk



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

book about it."

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

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

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

Richard
Hatfield Socialist Party and
Watford McDonald’s BFAWU member

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

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

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

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

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

Precarious

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

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

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

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

■ Richard will be speaking alongside BFAWU general secretary Ian Hodson at the NSSN conference on 7 July (see page 7)

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

Dave Semple
PCS DWP group assistant secretary
(personal capacity)

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

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

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

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

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

Pay cap

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

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

Now the government is trying to force civil servants to accept job losses and office closures as a trade for any pay rise above the cap. With real



photo Paul Mattsson

wages down by as much as 20% since 2010 and more than 100,000 jobs already gone, this is not acceptable.

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

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

This pressure on wages, where surveys show civil servants relying on food banks at the end of the month, was why PCS annual delegate conference voted overwhelmingly



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

to move to a statutory strike ballot on pay. Union members decisively showed their rejection of the pay cap in a consultative ballot last autumn, which saw 99% say the government should bust the cap. The government continues to delay and so the next step is to prepare for industrial action.

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

The ballot runs from 18 June to 23 July.

■ PCS assistant general secretary Chris Baugh will be speaking at the NSSN conference on 7 July (see page 7)

GMB union: NHS reps reject Tory pay offer

GMB NHS rep

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

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

They explained to members that performance-related pay was to be introduced into the NHS for the first time and about the attacks on

unsocial hours payments. Where we met with members and balloted them on the spot the rate of rejections was highest.

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

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



In spite of limitations in resources and pressure on facility time GMB managed to hold meetings with our members across the health services in the UK

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

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

As reported in last week’s Socialist, GMB was the only health union to vote against the deal. See ‘Health unions accept divisive NHS pay deal - but fightback could have won much more’ at socialistparty.org.uk.

Yorks NHS workers fight outsourcing

Mick Griffiths
Wakefield and Pontefract
Socialist Party

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

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

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

Northern Rail strike reaches 21 days of action to save guards

Elaine Brunskill
Northern Socialist Party

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

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

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

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

progress is being made is Northern.

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

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

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

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

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



Miners demand end to pensions robbery

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

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

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

Miner 1: “The miners went through enough with the closure of

the pits and the following years of chronic respiratory diseases. Communities and family ruined for generations. Now this. It is so tragic it makes me want to cry with anger.”

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

“We’re subsidising their City chums and corporate masters so as

they can carry on tax dodging. Richard Branson and Sir Philip Green send their thanks.”

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

Miner 2: “Nothing but a bunch of careerists posing as Labour MPs. Tory Blair’s ‘New Labour’ were just

a Tory second eleven - all those MPs who aren’t prepared to stand by and defend their class should be... replaced with people who will.”

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

Miner 2: “That’ll be New Labour though. A sort of Tory-lite.”

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

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

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

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

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

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



The Socialist Inbox

Do you have something to say?

■ Send your news, views and criticism in no more than 150 words to editors@socialistparty.org.uk - or if you're not online, Socialist Inbox, PO Box 24697, London E11 1YD

■ Blairites attack firefighters

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

Pete McNally
Welland, Worcestershire

■ 'Intergenerational fairness'

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

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

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

The report calls for working pensioners to pay additional National Insurance to fund the crisis in social care, and for a grant of £10,000 for every 25-year-old to help them with housing. Promising 25-year-olds a bung of £10,000 to solve their housing problems is a vote-buying gimmick. It is the lack of social and affordable housing, unfettered private rents and property prices, and low-paid and insecure employment which currently put house purchase out of the reach of most young people.

Claude Mickleson
Lydney, Gloucestershire

■ Trump's economics

A recent feature in the Economist (26 May) discussed the US economy under Trump. Noticeably, the article started by confirming our analysis of the economy in the post-economic crash period: "Comparing 2009-17 with an average of the past half-century, post-tax profits were 31% higher as a share of GDP. But they were spent on share buybacks

and cosy market-consolidating mergers rather than investment, which was 4% lower as a share of GDP than its 50-year average. Pay was 10% lower."

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

But the article does go on to point out that business investment in the first quarter of 2018 rose by 7% compared to 2017, and 19% for big firms. But almost 50% of this is accounted by the top five US tech firms, which have generally been cash-rich - Amazon, Alphabet (Google), Apple, Intel, and Microsoft. Trump's policies, including his recent tariff threats on steel and aluminium, won't create a renaissance of industrial jobs, but at best a tech and automation boom that will mean any new industrial capacity is largely automated.

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

Iain Dalton
Leeds

■ Waterworks and pensions

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

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

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

The outcome of this battle will affect us all, because it is part of a generalised



photo William Warby/CC

assault on workers' pensions by big business - which will leave the next generation more dependent on the tax-funded state pension, set to be the worst in the developed world.

The OECD warns that a typical retired worker in Britain will receive a state pension and other benefits worth only about 29% of their previous wage, compared to an average of 63% elsewhere. Only with a decent private pension will this come up to 60% - still below average. Companies and politicians have used rising life expectancy as an excuse to justify their attacks on pensions and increase of the retirement age to 68. But this has now peaked and is going into reverse for some social groups due to austerity and attacks on the NHS and social care.

Professor Dorling warns that if the trend continues, people in the UK will have the lowest life expectancy in Europe, with a larger proportion dying before, or soon after, receiving a pension. One thing is for sure. Without these workers supplying us with clean drinking water and safely taking away our sewage, our life expectancy would be decades lower. So let's all give them our support and their unions our solidarity.

Brent Kennedy
Carlisle Trade Union Council, chair

■ University gender inequality

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

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

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

Only 39% of women reach the position

of senior lecturer, principal lecturer, reader or principal research fellow. Less than one-quarter of professors are women. 80% of vice-chancellors are male. As I write this I am the only woman on an all-male management team. I have to shout louder to be heard. I have to fight against a system that does not provide an even platform for women.

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

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

A Welsh higher education worker

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.



photo The Young Karl Marx/Diaphana Films

Film: The Young Karl Marx (2017)

Inspirational account of young Marx's political battles

Séamus Smyth
Birmingham South East
Socialist Party

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

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

We see a passionate Marx (August Diehl) going through enraging exile, and meeting his collaborator Friedrich Engels. He finds love in his

wife Jenny (Vicky Krieps), who continuously supports her husband in his struggle against the exploitation of the working class and the capitalist system.

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

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

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

a response titled 'The Poverty of Philosophy'.

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

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

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

Theatre: Marx in Soho

Rousing, funny take on Marxism - from the man himself

Bridget Taylor
Manchester Socialist Party

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

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

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

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

thought are drawn out.

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

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

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

This seems to be the main message: that Marx should not be

idolised - he was a human being with human foibles - but neither should we let his personal circumstances detract from the importance of his thought.

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

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

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

■ International tour dates at marxinsoho.org



What we stand 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. Scrap zero-hour contracts.
■ 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 un-recycled 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 and anti-racist and anti-cuts campaigns, to provide a fighting, political alternative to the pro-big business parties.
■ Fight for Labour to be transformed into such a party: deselect the Blairites.

SOCIALISM AND INTERNATIONALISM

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

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Sarah Sachs-Eldridge
Socialist Party
national organiser

The PCS civil servants' union voted at its recent conference to "step up its work to remove barriers to the participation of women in the activities of the union at workplace, branch and group levels". The motion also proposed a year-long consultation on "rule changes that would ensure that at least 50% of the ordinary NEC [national executive committee] seats are filled by women candidates".

The Socialist Party welcomes this opportunity to debate, as well as all measures to increase the participation of women fighters at all levels of the PCS and all unions. We support all measures that place the trade unions at the centre of the struggle against inequality and women's oppression.

However we do not accept - and nor should the PCS - the idea that being a woman automatically qualifies someone to represent women.

Theresa May is the very obvious proof of that. Like Thatcher before her, her priority is not defending women but the capitalist class and its priorities.

Frances O'Grady is the first woman leader of the Trade Union Congress (TUC) but under her leadership the TUC has not given a lead in the fight against austerity.

Women leaders

Last year, under her leadership, the TUC intervened in the Southern Rail dispute by brokering talks and a deal between Southern Rail and the Aslef union which excluded the RMT. How is this representing RMT members, including the many women workers involved in the dispute?

UCU has a majority women membership (51%), a majority women executive body (60%), and a woman general secretary. But the recent conference was dominated by the struggle being fought against a leadership which is not prepared to lead the struggle demanded by members.

In fact the claim that a woman can better defend women can be used as a weapon by the right wing to undermine the left. Jess Philips has levelled allegations of sexism and misogyny at Jeremy Corbyn on the grounds that both he as Labour leader and the deputy leader are men.

False claims of misogyny and sexism, like false claims of antisemitism, are attempts to undermine Corbyn because of the fear of the capitalist elites that a Corbyn-led government elected on an anti-austerity programme could be pushed

to take measures that challenge capitalism.

Nonetheless it is understandable that there is impatience in the search for ways to make the unions, especially the tops, more inclusive of women and representative of the working class as a whole. However, no administrative measure alone can resolve this.

For example, would ensuring that at least 50% of the ordinary NEC seats are filled by women candidates guarantee a union will be more able to fight low pay, job cuts, deskilling and privatisation?

No union has gone as far as public sector union Unison down this road. With 78% of its membership and 62% of its national executive women, it has implemented quotas to a greater level than any other union. Looking at the bald figures this can appear impressive but we have to ask what have been the gains for Unison's members?



Would ensuring that at least 50% of the ordinary NEC seats are filled by women candidates guarantee a union will be more able to fight low pay, job cuts, deskilling and privatisation?

It's estimated that by 2020 over one million jobs will have been cut in the public sector. A 2014 TUC report found that within local government, job cuts have had a disproportionate impact on women.

Four years into Tory austerity and 96,000 men in full-time posts had gone (21%), compared with nearly 141,000 (31%) who are women. The situation in the NHS is similarly bleak with women NHS workers in England earning nearly a quarter less than men.

However, we do not want to 'even out' the misery between women and men - our task is to build a united working class movement to transform society and end the exploitation of the working class as a whole.

Low pay itself is an obstacle. Low-paid domestic workers, mainly women, at the Barts health trust in east London went on strike last summer for better pay. Many of them worked two or three jobs to get by, which makes participation in trade union activity harder.

However, the greater obstacle was the refusal by Unison to sanction strike action, only possible once a number of workers had been forced to transfer to



HOW CAN WE FIGHT FOR TRADE UNIONS THAT FIGHT FOR WOMEN?

Unite. Once action was called women workers were often to the fore on the picket lines.

This and a number of other strikes - of teaching assistants, of nursery workers, of teachers - show that women workers are ready to overcome obstacles to fight when a determined lead is given.

Lack of time impedes women's participation. The demand for a shorter working week with no loss of pay must be fought for.

In Britain in 2016, according to the Office for National Sta-

tistics, women did almost 60% more work in the home, on average, than men. Trade unions can take immediate steps to ameliorate some of the impact of these barriers.

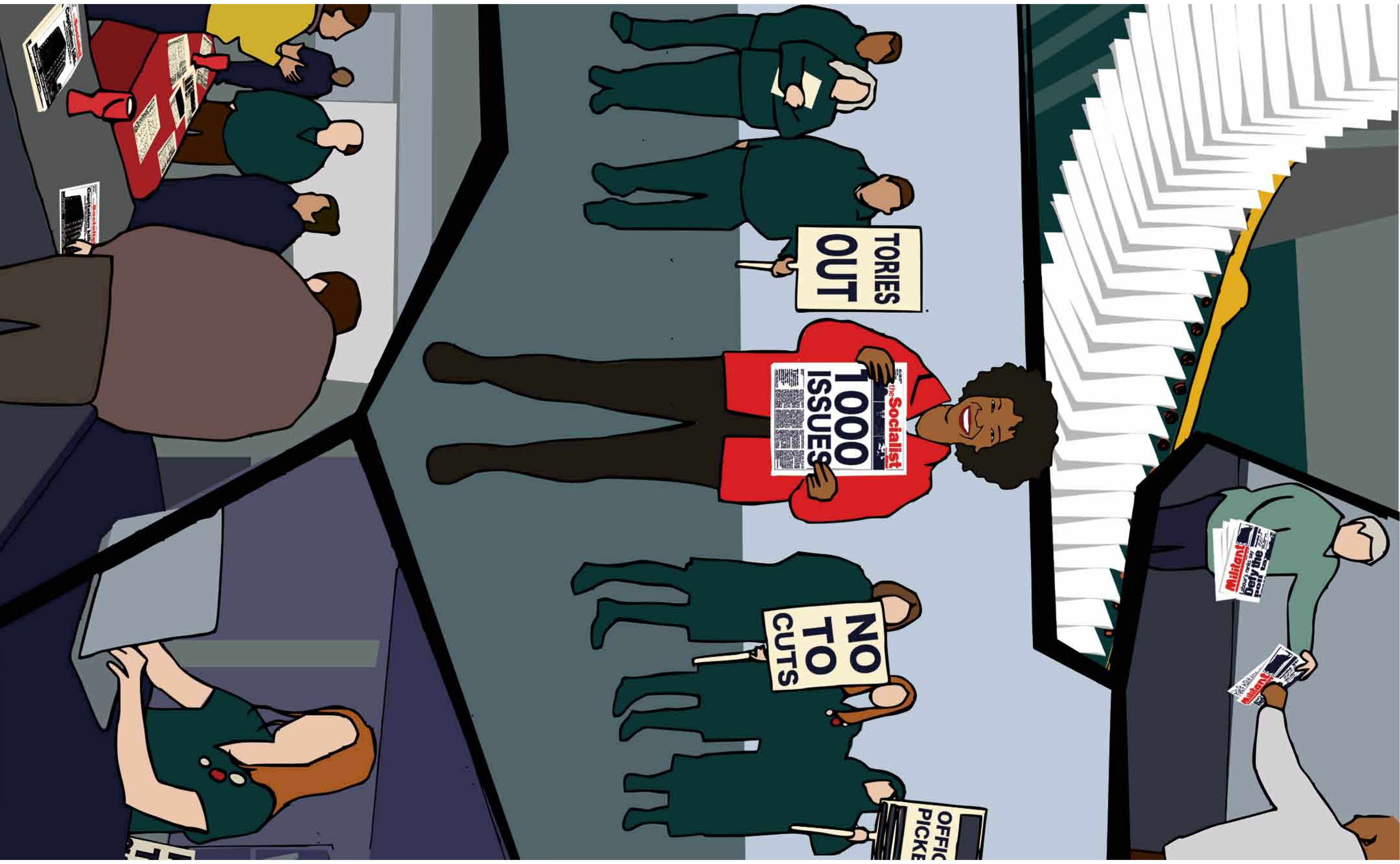
Do unions provide crèches at important events? Is there a straightforward process for getting money for childcare so parents can attend meetings where there isn't a crèche?

Trade unions could make a further impact on women's ability to participate by arguing for a sharing out of household work so

that both parents can be active, and by fighting for free public quality childcare, etc.

Are resources made available so low-paid workers, of which over three-fifths are women, are compensated for loss of income incurred by trade union activity? Especially above local level, are there measures that can minimise the problems related to the distances trade union activists need to travel and time away from home?

Fighting for the right to hold trade union meetings in the



1000 issues of the Socialist A VITAL WEAPON STANDING IN PROUD TRADITIONS

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



photo Mary Finch

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

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

as the majority of the working class is concerned. That was particularly the case when we first started with *Militant*. But even today, the paper is vital in making sure the full scope of the views of the Socialist Party are reflected and carried to our members on a weekly basis, but also to a broader layer of young

people, of workers, of people that we want to reach.

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

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

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

How did *Militant* first come about?

From very humble beginnings! It began with an idea. It began with a handful of people. We had



photo Mary Finch

The Socialist always gives me info on struggles taking place, while the establishment media ignores and distorts the truth. If you want the truth, and want to change the world - read the Socialist! -Judy Griffiths, secretary, Coventry Communication Workers Union (personal capacity)

If you did not have a newspaper you would be invisible as far

a basis in Merseyside - where I came from - in south Wales, we had people in London, and we had comrades in Nottingham.

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

I was in Liverpool at that stage. We had a very strong basis in the Labour Party Young Socialists (LPYS). There were 20 to 25 branches of the LPYS on

Merseyside alone. We developed our position by arguing in the Merseyside LPYS federation. We actually controlled two branches. But over a period of two years we won over a majority.

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

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

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



photo London SP

How is the Socialist different?

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



photo Mary Finch

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

The Independent pitched itself as forward thinking and modern for moving to an online-only format. The *New Day*, a venture by *Trinity Mirror* supposedly designed to attract social media-savvy non-newspaper readers to buy a printed publication, lasted only two months.

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

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

The paper always places the struggle of working people in its historical and international context. Its analysis is a guide to action and essential reading for all workers. -Chris Baugh, assistant general secretary, PCS union (personal capacity)

and we carried material from our own comrades but also took up the ideas of our opponents. We collaborated with the Labour left, we had a close collaboration with Tony Benn, with people who supported the *Tribune*



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

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

The establishment newspapers instead promote those lies. Why? Because their CEOs and shareholders are the capitalists. Five billionaire men own 80% of printed newspapers in the UK, as well as a host of other media. The very role

of those papers is to defend the interests of the capitalist system. Alongside the fake news scandals, outrageous episodes of front-page racism and attacks on workers and their unions, no wonder swathes of ordinary people have turned their backs.

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

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

During our 19 days of strike action, the Socialist paper reported, explained, ran interviews with strikers, and consistently supported and sustained the picket lines and public meetings. The paper was invaluable in developing the increasingly socialist conclusions being drawn by those involved in struggle against the privatisation of education. -Louise Cuffaro, school teacher and secretary, Newham NEU (personal capacity)

the publishers' incomes.

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

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

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

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

Socialism Today
The **Socialist** Party's magazine
July/August issue also includes:
■ Understanding the far-right threat
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1000 issues of the Socialist - A vital weapon standing in proud traditions

newspaper. We criticised them, but not in a sectarian manner. We weren't hesitant about raising what our ideas were and our differences with them.

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

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

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



“The Socialist paper featured our fight endlessly throughout our 90 days of strike action in 2014 and spread our defiance to a larger audience. What it instilled in me is a sense that we can achieve anything if we stand up in the face of the despicable Tory austerity agenda. Congratulations on your 1000th edition. Long may you continue!”

-Roger Hutt, chair, Doncaster Care UK strike committee

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

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

What role did Militant play in struggle?

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

“At a time when workers are facing enormous challenges, and the tops of the unions are failing to lead, the Socialist provides crucial analysis of our collective struggles. All serious trade unionists should subscribe!”

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



photo Birmingham SP

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A video of this interview can be found on the page at [facebook.com/CWISocialistParty](https://www.facebook.com/CWISocialistParty)

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

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

Thatcher demanded that Kin-nock, then Labour leader, carry through expulsions of Militant, and

he obliged. They thought that by cutting off the head, which was the Militant editorial board, the body would die. That didn't happen.

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

I was once selling the paper at Walthamstow tube station in east London: "Buy the Militant, it gives an analysis of the Poll Tax, we're going to defeat the Poll Tax." But a worker said: "Listen mate, how can you defeat the Poll Tax and defeat Thatcher?"



She defeated Galtieri in Argentina and the miners. What are you going to do against that?" I said: "Do you know a million people are not paying the Poll Tax in Scotland?" He didn't.

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

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

Then of course we had the collapse of Stalinism, which created a new situation. There was a

capitalist counterrevolution in Russia and eastern Europe. That was used for an enormous international campaign against the ideology of socialism and in favour of capitalism. This has been a cloud hanging over the labour movement to one extent or another since.

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

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

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

The basic reason was because the word 'militant', when we first named our newspaper, was identified with the more advanced layer of the working class and industrial

struggle. It's still used in that sense today as well, but it's now muddled up and confused by the press with 'militant' right-wing Islamic fundamentalists'. People often judge you, from a distance at least, by your banner, and we thought that if we changed our name to Socialist Party and the Socialist newspaper, that would be more in tune with what we were trying to say at that stage.

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



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

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

of the Labour Party. And that was taken up internationally.

Social democracy in its classical form is finished; it cannot exist as a viable stable form today. The

world economic crisis of 2007-08 undermined it. In the enormous growth of inequality that exists in capitalist society at the present time, you couldn't find a greater confirmation of Marx, Engels, Lenin or Trotsky. Socialism is now back on the agenda of young people, workers and the labour movement.

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

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

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

He asked: "Aren't you dissuaded by what's happened in the Soviet Union and the swing towards the

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right in the Labour Party?" I replied: "No because we believe that's a temporary phase. Ten or 20 years in the life of a man or a woman is a long time, but ten years in the life of a society is a minute." We said it will break.

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

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

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

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

Above all, the people who've got the greatest stake in change and socialism is the new generation.

“I really look forward to reading a copy of the Socialist as I can be sure to be reading the truth and not the tripe you get from the daily rags. I also appreciate the world news concerning the struggles of workers everywhere. Long may the Socialist go on providing.”

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

They might not be completely aware of that, but they're kicking against the system. Loaded down with as much debt as Chinese peasants had in the past, and they'll never pay off these loans, and extortionate rents.

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

I remember reading Militant (forerunner of the Socialist) in the '80s. I'd read other left-wing papers, but the Militant was different. They weren't just talking about history, they were making it! Ordinary working class people changing history. I learned from the paper... fight to change things.

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

When Birmingham City Council took it upon themselves to try and lower the pay of our 'grade three' bin workers, it was nice to know that we weren't entirely alone. The Socialist Party and Socialist paper took it upon themselves to help support us, playing an integral role. Thank you, comrades.

-Ken Savage, Birmingham bin striker

Thanks to the Socialist paper, the underhanded, colluding, job-robbing tactics of Scumbarts [union-busting haulier Stobart] and Tesco were exposed during the strike of 2012.

-Trevor Cheetham, secretary, Doncaster Tesco drivers Unite union branch

This is the only paper telling the truth about what's



Everton fans with a Militant bulletin during the Liverpool City Council struggle photo Militant

happening to the NHS. By giving a voice to health workers and reporting on successful campaigns against NHS cuts, the Socialist inspires and empowers us.

-Beth Webster, nurse

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

-Keith Morrell, anti-cuts councillor, Southampton

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

-Mick Joyce, senior Unite union rep, Kone lift engineers

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

-Mark James, secretary, Unite Community South Yorkshire

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

-Len Hockey, secretary, Unite union Barts Health branch

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

-Kev Dudding, Hull GMB union activist

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

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

of the nature of the class struggle. This was clearly demonstrated during the 1980s campaign of Liverpool socialist city council, in which supporters of the Militant newspaper played a decisive role in securing a famous victory over the Thatcher government, and carried out the most radical programme of social change in the history of local government.

-Tony Mulhearn, socialist Liverpool councillor 1983-87

■ More comments from working class fighters on the Socialist newspaper's record and role - online at socialistparty.org.uk

Do you agree? Donate today!

If you agree with what you read here and throughout the Socialist, consider making a donation to support your paper:

■ pay by card on 020 8988 8777 or socialistparty.org.uk/donate

■ cheques payable to 'Socialist Party', PO Box 24697, London E11 1YD



How do we produce the Socialist?

■ Planning

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



■ Distributing

The physical papers are delivered first thing Wednesday morning to our print-shop, also in east London. There our circulation and printing teams package the bundles to be sent to Socialist Party branches, as well as the smaller packs for individuals to sell and for subscribers. At the same time we're also getting the paper ready for online distribution. Two of the editors upload the content of the paper to our website and add appropriate links and photos. Our website editor then checks the homepage of the website and moves things around to make sure the most important articles are highlighted. Once everything's live on the website, we share the image of the front page of the Socialist to our Facebook page and schedule other key articles to be shared over the following few days.



■ Finishing

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



■ Commissioning

Each page editor contacts members around the country, at our national office, or in our sister parties internationally to write the articles needed. It's also really helpful for branches to arrange articles on local issues and to let us know about people who are willing to write for the paper. We'll offer some guidance on the type of article we're looking for, a word length (we aim to keep each page to 8-900 words) and a deadline (usually by the Wednesday before publication for feature or comment material and first thing Monday or Tuesday morning for news or reports from weekend events). Don't be daunted by the task, even if you haven't done something like this before. We believe that working class and young people are the best experts on the topics we cover in the Socialist. Other Socialist Party members in your area are likely to be very willing to advise you and if you're not sure about anything, the editors are always happy to offer assistance. You can contact us by emailing editors@socialistparty.org.uk or calling 020 8988 8777 and asking to speak to an editor.



■ Writing

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



■ Editing

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



■ Laying out

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