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# the Socialist

Formerly **Militant**



## Editorial

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# ***TORIES DENY DIRE POVERTY ...LOOK AROUND YOU!***

# **BOOT OUT THE TORIES**

Tessa Warrington  
Leicester Socialist Party

**“I reject the idea that there are vast numbers of people facing dire poverty in this country.” Those were the unbelievable words of Tory chancellor Philip Hammond.**

In an interview on BBC Newsnight, Hammond discussed a recent UN report which describes poverty in Britain as “systematic” and “de-liberate.” It references the findings of the Social Metrics Commission that a total of 14.2 million people - a fifth of the UK population - currently live below the poverty line.

The report charts the normalisation of food banks, rising levels of homelessness and child poverty, drastic cuts to benefits, and severe restrictions on legal aid. This ‘normalisation’ apparently translates to selective blindness for Hammond, who was estimated to himself have a net worth of £8.2 million in 2014.

He continued: “I don’t accept the UN rapporteur’s report at all. I think

that’s a nonsense. Look around you, that’s not what we see in this country.”

Even Newsnight interviewer Emily Maitlis was compelled to disagree. “We’re in Downing Street, so if I look around me I’m not going to see a lot of poverty, but if I went to other parts of the country I would.”

Most of us don’t need a report to know the extreme level of poverty in Britain. Most of us see it every day; at work, on the streets, in the schools and at home. 1.5 million people experienced destitution in 2017, according to the Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

Hammond, arch-defender of the super-rich elite and his own wealth, is not blind, but has in fact been the

author of austerity, of poverty budgets for the working class, throughout his time as chancellor.

Average chief executive pay at ‘FTSE 100’ top firms has risen to 145 times that of their average workers, says the Institute for Fiscal Studies. Sir Angus Deaton, author of the review, warned the bosses: “There’s a real question about whether democratic capitalism is working, when it’s only working for part of the population.”

The capitalists see mass anger brewing under the surface of society, and growing disillusionment with the pro-capitalist political establishment. In reality, they only care about lessening inequality to save their system and their wealth.

But under capitalism, there is no solution on offer, as ten years of global economic crisis and austerity have demonstrated. The alternative is the working class getting organised and fighting to build a new society, along the lines of a publicly owned, worker-controlled, democratically planned, socialist economy.

The working class has waited long enough. Jeremy Corbyn and the trade union leaders must call mass mobilisations for a general election to kick out the Tories.

A fight for a Corbyn-led government with a firm socialist programme to end austerity would receive a massive echo, and could be a first step towards building a mass socialist movement to change society.





# CORBYN MUST GO ON THE OFFENSIVE AGAINST THE RIGHT WITH SOCIALIST POLICIES



## What we think

Unprecedented crises continue to engulf the two main parties, Conservative and Labour. The main capitalist party, the Tory party, is consumed by a leadership contest that is revealing the fissures along which it could tear itself apart.

Following the humiliating resignation of Theresa May, who departs as party leader this week, a horde of potential leadership candidates have thrown their hats into the ring. As we go to press the number of leadership candidates has reached 12, so thinly spread is the potential leadership of this “strong and stable” party.

The crisis in the Tory party is symptomatic of the political and social crisis facing capitalism which is struggling to maintain social support for the system itself. This was reflected in the EU referendum vote which was at base a way for disaffected working class people to strike back against the effects of austerity and of the crisis of capitalism.

Boris Johnson is front-runner to win the Tory leadership contest with wide support amongst the dwindling and ageing Tory membership, but if he wins he will not be able to unite the irreconcilable wings of the party.

Johnson will not be able to command a parliamentary majority for his Brexit policy but it would be very dangerous for him to call a general election to attempt to strengthen his parliamentary position. His manifesto would itself split the Tory party and also risk handing Jeremy Corbyn an election victory.

### General election

All the Tory candidates shrink from the prospect of a general election because the party faces the prospect of a serious, possibly terminal, defeat and even worse - the election of a Corbyn government.

Such is the political gridlock in parliament that normally a general election would have been called and the capitalist establishment would have turned to their second eleven, a pro-capitalist Labour leadership. But they fear a Corbyn government that would come under pressure from a militant working class movement that would press for even more radical measures.

Labour's pro-capitalist Blairite opposition might claim that Corbyn will not win an election but neither they, the Tories nor the capitalists are confident of this. They all fear the prospect of a Corbyn government like death. However so split are the Tories that a new Tory government could collapse and force a general election.

So serious to them is the threat of a Corbyn government that the Financial Times (03/06/2019) has advised the utility companies on how they should value their companies for compensation when “the compulsory purchase order plonks on their doormat” – when a Corbyn government nationalises them.

Of course, there should be no compensation to the profiteers who have already made billions from water and energy, only to small investors who can show proven need. But the article shows the serious fear with which the capitalist class views the prospect of a Corbyn government.

A Corbyn government would come under enormous pressure from the capitalists to retreat from radical measures in favour of the working class. But a Corbyn victory could inspire the development of a mass movement that would defend popular reforms and even push



photos Paul Mattsson

the government further than it intended to go.

And the fear of a Labour victory under Corbyn is not limited to the Tories but is the worst nightmare of the pro-capitalist majority of the Parliamentary Labour Party, who are determined to prevent it by any means necessary.

Following the poor result for Labour in the Euro elections the Blairites have renewed their attacks on Corbyn. The abject showing of their Blairite sisters and brothers in Change UK in the elections - splitting within a few months of being formed - may have discouraged some from leaving Labour for now. (Although some may be tempted to join Chuka Umunna and defect to the Lib-Dems).

They see little hope of another internal coup succeeding so they are hoping to isolate Corbyn and soften his policies by concentrating their fire on removing Corbyn's advisers.

### Unions

This campaign was sparked by remarks of the former Corbyn supporter, rightward-moving Paul Mason, but has been taken up by arch-Blairite Lord David Blunkett. Writing in The Observer Blunkett says: “In my view there are two forces within the Labour movement – the unions and Momentum – who must now act to get rid of those key advisers who are a block on policy changes”.

It is striking that Blunkett believes that to undermine Corbyn he can enlist the support of the undemocratic leadership of Momentum, which originally arose as a mass campaign to support Corbyn following his election as leader.

Blunkett also calls on right wing union leaders to step in: “The major unions have historically played a key role

in the stability of the Labour Party, taking difficult and sometimes painful action when failure had to be dealt with”.

Here he is referencing the key role that right wing union leaders played attacking Militant (forerunner of the Socialist Party) which was the necessary pre-condition for the Blairites to seize control of the party in the 1990s. It was the union leaders not the members in the constituency parties who allowed Neil Kinnock to force through the purge against Militant.

### Brexit Party

This campaign will be intensified in the event of Labour losing the Peterborough by-election to the Brexit Party. There are special circumstances in the by-election coming so soon after the Euro elections and following the removal of the previous Labour MP by recall petition after criminal wrong doing.

But the Blairites would use a defeat to pile the pressure on Corbyn to jettison his current advisers and isolate him within a circle more pliant to the right wing.

The Blairites hope to force Corbyn to support the call for a second referendum to enable the reversal of the Brexit vote as well as blunting his more radical policies. But calling a halt to Brexit would cut Corbyn off from millions of working class Leave voters, who would feel cheated by such a manoeuvre.

The right wingers claim that more Labour voters could be won back from voting Liberal Democrat, Green and SNP/Plaid Cymru than from those that voted for the Brexit Party, an idea echoed by John McDonnell.

But as we explained in this column last week, the Euro elections offer a very distorted snapshot of the current

support for the parties, with a low turnout and in an election that has a tradition of protest voting. There was a lower turnout among working class and Labour voters than middle class and non-Labour voters.

Those Labour supporters who did not vote or backed Remain-supporting parties could be mobilised with a radical manifesto to end austerity and raise living standards together with other ex-Labour voters who abandoned the party in the Blair/Brown years.

It is also possible that Farage could help deliver a victory to Corbyn because the Brexit Party will take more votes from the Tories than from Labour. Nevertheless the opinion polls after the Euro election do indicate the dangerous potential for Farage to use the frustration of working class Leave voters to try and develop a new right populist party, by posing as a rebel against the attempts of the political elite to prevent Brexit.

The way that Corbyn can cut across both the rise in working class votes for the Brexit Party and Remain votes for the Liberal Democrats and Greens is to campaign on socialist policies that undercut all the politicians who support austerity, including Farage.

### Establishment

The Euro elections were certainly not a vote for the incumbent middle-of-the-road Westminster politicians. The votes represented a rejection of the professional political elite. This presents Corbyn with an opportunity to go on the offensive against the Blairites and for socialist policies in favour of the working class.

That means taking the democratic measures the Socialist Party has argued since Corbyn's leadership victory. Most socialists and Labour Party members would have cried “good riddance” to the expulsion for voting Liberal of Blair's spin doctor, Alistair Campbell, one of the leading architects of the disastrous Iraq War. And been happy to acquiesce to the request of the Blairites who declared “#expelmetoo”.

But above all members need the opportunity to deselect the pro-capitalist Blairite MPs through an automatic reselection process as part of the democratic transformation of the Labour Party into a genuine workers' party.

# Tens of thousands march against Trump in London

Theo Sharieff

Socialist Students national organiser

Tens of thousands of people marched on Trafalgar Square to Downing Street on Tuesday 4 June to protest against Trump's visit to Britain to meet with doomed prime minister Theresa May.

The day before, hundreds gathered outside Buckingham Palace as Trump sat down inside to enjoy a banquet with the queen.

Socialist Students placards with the slogan “Trump out, Tories out, fight for a socialist future” were taken enthusiastically by protesters, many deciding to give generous donations for them.

Protesters furious at Trump's racist, sexist, big business agenda responded enthusiastically to chants led by the Socialist Students contingent. “Say hey, say ho - Trump and Tories have to go!” and “save the planet, change the system, what we need is socialism!”

Unfortunately, however, the march was smaller than last summer's mobilisations against Trump in central London.

It was a missed opportunity by the organisers to not more explicitly link the fight against Trump and the ideas he stands for to the need to fight for a general election to get rid of our rotten Tory government here. The Tories, like Trump, stand for the interests of the capitalist class and big business.

Jeremy Corbyn spoke to the crowd and was warmly received by demonstrators. But the EU election results - which saw Labour come in third - demonstrate why it is crucial he too comes out fighting for a general election on a clear socialist programme, to rally the support of the millions of workers and young people who are desperate for an alternative to austerity, racism, sexism, climate change and war.

### Nottingham

Around 100 people gathered at the Clough statue in Nottingham. Tessa Warrington spoke on behalf of the Socialist Party. She pointed out that Trump and May are both representatives of big business and capitalism.

Tessa was cheered and applauded when she said that we have to get rid of capitalism and build a socialist society to end oppression. Other speakers spoke of the dangers of war and the problems caused by Trump, but unfortunately did not go as far as proposing a solution.

**Clare Wilkins**  
**Nottingham Socialist Party**

### Hull

At the rally in Hull, speakers condemned Trump's racism and sexism, but focussed on the fact he represents big business and is an enemy of the working class in the US and Britain.

London

Naomi Byron



Leeds

Iain Dalton



Bristol

Tom Baldwin



Sheffield

Alistair Tice



Hull



Newcastle

Elaine Brunskill



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photo Paul Mattsson

# Reverse the GP cuts

## NHS worker

7,000 GP vacancies are expected in the UK by 2024. Chronic underfunding is causing doctors to resign, without prospects of replacing them.

138 GP surgeries closed in 2018 - the most in UK history.

Many practises are pooling their resources and merging to avoid closure. Vulnerable patients are travelling further to see staff who are unfamiliar with them and their health needs.

## Privatisation

500,000 people have already been affected by GP closures. If there isn't a concerted fightback, the Tories and their big-business associates will use austerity to continue opportunistic, back-door NHS privatisation.

Rather than resolving the NHS crisis, services are subjected to audits and put out for tender. This enables private companies - such as Virgin Care, Specsavers and Nuffield - to profit from public NHS money.

A private company recently took over the cleaning contract for York hospital. The company made 'sav-

ings' by reducing pay and increasing staff workload.

One worker said: "They moved my three-hour contract from 6.30pm-9.30pm to 5pm-8pm. Not only does this mean I am expected to clean rooms while they're still in use by clinicians and patients. But it means I get paid less for my shift, as I was previously compensated with unsocial pay rate for the 1.5 hours that I worked past 8pm."

The plans of big business also steer healthcare into a two-tier system. The strain on GP surgeries mean patient 'choice' is waiting two weeks or more for an appointment, going to A&E or paying to be seen privately.

My own GP surgery runs a first-come-first-served same-day appointment system. Sick people trek to their GP for 7am to chance getting an appointment.

Many surgeries now use online booking systems to manage appointments and repeat prescriptions. But without proper continuation of phone and face-to-face resources, many without internet access - predominately older and poorer people - are affected.

Many GPs see twice the number of patients safely recommended, work eleven-hour days, and increasingly

make mistakes due to fatigue. Allied services - nurses, midwives, physios, occupational therapists and so on - are being asked to work outside their skill scope due to stretched services.

This is dangerous for patients. And workers are not covered by registration insurance if an accident happened while performing outside of training scope.

These strains are effecting recruitment and retention. As a healthcare worker it is truly heart breaking to feel unable to provide quality care to patients.

## Drop in the ocean

The small funding increase for the GP resilience programme from £8 million to £13 million is a drop in the ocean compared to what is needed after a decade of Tory austerity.

Like education, housing and environmental change, the problems in the NHS go deeper than a quick-fix budget top-up. What is needed is massive investment, an end to privatisation, and a fully nationalised NHS that is democratically controlled by staff and patients.

And we need a general election now to force out privatising careerist politicians.



Waltham Forest protest in London photo London Socialist Party

# Parents and children protest against Send education funding cuts

Iain Dalton  
Leeds Socialist Party

Particularly powerful were the children who spoke and demanded a decent education for them and their siblings.

Parents and children gathered outside Leeds Art Gallery on 30 June to send a message of opposition to special educational needs and disability (Send) funding cuts. Parents speaking from the platform explained the horrific impacts this is having on their children's education.

Julie Baird, one of the organisers of the Leeds protest said it "was well attended by around 250 supporters, which included members of Disability Empowerment Action Links (Deal). There were 28 other demonstrations and marches around the country.

"This is just the start of the Send revolution, mainly directed at the Send education system that is broken. However all the services that are supposed to support disabled people need complete reform."

Last year, the Deal campaign of Send parents successfully stopped cuts to transport to education for 16+ aged Send students - with support

from Unite Community and other trade union and labour movement activists, including the Socialist Party.

At Thursday's protest, Labour councillor Jonathan Pryor, the council cabinet member forced into making last year's u-turn, called on Labour and trade union members to "stand in the way and do everything to support them" when Send education is threatened with cuts. He said the council would do everything it can to stand in the way of these cuts.

## No-cuts budget

However, this has not extended to using council powers to license deficit budgets in schools for up to three years to avoid cuts. The council has not utilised reserves and borrowing powers to stop doing the Tories dirty work of cuts. Leeds trade union council called for this in their recently produced alternative budget.

The parents in Deal will welcome the open door to listen to them, as a result of their campaigning efforts. But it is action to stop and reverse cuts to Send education and other public services that will have a lasting impact on their children's futures.

This battle is only just beginning.



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# THERESA MAY ADMITS TUITION FEES SYSTEM IS BROKEN - BUT PLANS NEW ATTACKS ON STUDENTS



photo Socialist Party

## Organise to kick out the rest of the Tories

Theo Sharieff  
Socialist Students  
national organiser

Theresa May has admitted that her and the Tories got it wrong on tuition fees and higher education funding.

The headline proposals, contained in the long delayed Auger report, are to reduce tuition fees to £7,500 and give students from poorer families a £3,000-a-year maintenance grant, admitting that the Tories in 2015 got it wrong.

This is welcome news to students who have been forced to take out loans and accrue debt just for choosing to pursue studies in higher education. It's a reflection of the massive pressure the Tories are under - terrified of the huge anger their policies of cuts and austerity have created.

## Even worse

But other suggestions in the report make the situation even worse. Even the recommendation to cut fees by a small amount to £7,500 is cover for vicious attacks on students and low-paid graduates in debt.

The plan suggests extending the period former students repay their loans from 30 to 40 years! Moreover, the report suggests lowering the income threshold for loan repayments to begin - meaning that

even lower-paid young workers will be forced to give up their wages towards paying off loans and extortionate interest, simply for going to university.

Clearly these changes are intended so that the government has more time to claw back money from the huge and growing pile of national student debt.

The debt stands at £118 billion, and is predicted by the government to reach £450 billion by 2050 without inflation. Three-quarters of students will not pay back their loan in full by the time it is wiped, and the state will be footing the bill.

The Tories are aware that they are presiding over an economic time bomb. Desperately, they are attempting to remedy that by fighting to further shackle former students, as we age into retirement, with a lifetime of paying back debt.

But even the proposal to reduce tuition fees is a poisoned chalice. When the Tory-Lib Dem coalition trebled tuition fees back in 2012, the government cut it's funding to universities, so universities were forced to rely on student tuition fees to stay afloat.

With the report suggesting a decrease of tuition fees to a still ludicrous £7,500 a year, and no proposal for the government to plug the funding gap, universities would face a huge cut to funding - resulting in cuts to courses, redundancies, and closures.

Scandalously, bosses of the Russell Group, vice-chancellors from elite universities, came out in March to rally against reducing tuition fees for this reason, pretending that there would be no alternative. This however isn't true.

A mass struggle of students united with workers to end austerity could provide free, fully funded university education. Jeremy Corbyn raised abolishing tuition fees in the 2017 general election.

## Cancel the debt

And Socialist Students says he should go further - to not only scrap tuition fees entirely and to introduce living grants for all students, but also to cancel all outstanding student debt.

With Theresa May almost gone, now is the time to launch that fightback. Tens of thousands of students have already been walking out against climate change, furious at the state of education too.

Corbyn and the National Union of Students should launch a mass campaign to oppose these Tory plans.

A campaign to fight for free education which mobilised students and workers in demonstrations and strikes could help bring the end of the Tory government which is tearing itself apart with yet another leadership contest - and fight for an anti-austerity Corbyn-led government on a socialist programme.



photo Petteri Sulonen/CC

# Laughable research denies low-pay scandal

Helen Pattison  
London Socialist Party

If you didn't laugh, you would cry.

That's how many young adults will have felt when, sat in their bedsits, back living in childhood bedrooms, or sitting in their single rented room in a shared house, they read that actually they are benefiting from better pay according to the Resolution Foundation.

This latest research by the think-tank brushed over the fact that all the current minimum wage rates are all below what is needed to live off. That's five million people.

But research by the Young Women's Trust has actually found that one in five young people are illegally paid less than the minimum wage.

The Resolution Foundation research also ignored all the other factors affecting people, such as the cost-of-living crisis.

Rising rents has seen a growth in overcrowding and homelessness. The minimum wage went up just two months ago, but Living Wage

Foundation research shows that the cost of bills is rising faster than wages.

In fact, we are in the middle of the worst growth in real wages for 50 years, forcing millions of families and children into poverty. At the end of last year, statistics showed that those working and in poverty was rising faster than employment.

## Real living wage

The super-exploitation of the gig economy and bogus self-employment robs low-paid workers of decent holiday pay, sick pay and pensions. The Socialist Party backs a trade union struggle to win a minimum wage of £10 an hour for all, as a step towards a real living wage.

We fight for rent controls, building council homes, an end to zero-hour contracts and against all cuts to public services.

Bring the major monopolies - including the profiteering energy companies - that dominate our economy into democratic public ownership, under workers' control and management.



# University and College Union conference 2019: Preparing for struggle

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

The University and College Union (UCU) conference 2019 took place 25-27 May, at a important time for our union. Over the last year there have been crucial victories on pay at many further education colleges up and down the country, which show that strike action works and must be built upon.

But we have also been thwarted by the draconian Tory anti-union laws in higher education, where despite winning huge votes in favour of industrial action over casualisation, workload, pay and the gender pay gap we have twice failed to reach the required 50% turnout threshold required for legal industrial action.

The mood and tone of the conference could not have been more different from the chaos of 2018, which was paralysed by staff walkouts.

Our new general secretary elect, Jo Grady, made a carefully judged speech on the first day, pledging to respect the views of the elected

‘democracy commission’, and never to use union employees as a shield as the previous general secretary had done.

By doing this, she signalled her willingness to accept the right of UCU members to recall the general secretary - meaning that if UCU members are dissatisfied with her leadership, we will have the power to force an early election and choose a new general secretary. Socialist Party members fought hard politically for the commission to be created.

## Union democracy

The Socialist Party has always put forward the idea that all trade union leaders should be subject to recall by union members, and we congratulate Grady on accepting this important democratic right.

The election of Grady, a rank-and-file member of the union who came to prominence as a result of the important USS pension briefs group during the USS pension strike, signifies a shift to the left in the union. This was further underlined by the important decisions taken at this

conference.

The further education conference resolved to continue to build local industrial action on pay in England and to support ongoing strikes. In higher education, we resolved to ballot for industrial action if the bosses’ organisation Universities UK press ahead with plans to increase employee contributions to the USS pension, to mount a defence of the TPS pension and to ballot together for strike action on pay, workload and casualisation.

We agreed to spotlight the horrendous struggle at Bradford College, where 165 workers have been threatened with redundancy - a direct result of the Tory assault on further education. Importantly, conference recognised the magnificent struggle of the ‘Youth Strike 4 Climate’, and resolved to call on the Trade Union Congress to organise a general strike alongside the school students.

In UCU we face the wholesale destruction of post-16 education at the hands of this rotten Tory government. But our union is preparing to fightback!



UCU higher education pension strike 2018 photo Gary Freeman

# FIGHTING TO STOP SCHOOL MEALS PRIVATISATION IN BARNSELEY



photo Alistair Tice

**Alistair Tice**  
Yorkshire Socialist Party

You’re Barnsley Labour council. You’ve already suffered some of the biggest Tory government funding cuts in the country. So you pay private consultants £21,500 for a 142-page report into the future of your council school-meals service.

The report recommends that the

council keeps and invests in the service. Your senior council officers ignore the report and recommend a “managed exit” from the service because it might not make a profit.

And the Labour council cabinet is due to decide whether to approve the plans on 29 May, then delayed to 24 June.

Step forward Barnsley Unison and the school meals staff and supporters. Nearly 100 lobbied the

council cabinet on 29 May, who then marched into Barnsley town centre, banging pots and pans.

A blow-up chef, “Sam and Ella catering”, warned of the dangers of privatisation. Primary school student Oliver said his mum is a dinner lady and she’d seen ‘pack-ups’ of just a bread sandwich and a chocolate bar!

So the union campaign is about protecting 220 jobs from being moved into the private sector and about continuing to provide locally sourced nutritious meals to 8,000 children in 49 schools.

While the lobby was protesting outside, Unison organiser Robyn Symonds had a meeting with the council leader inside.

## Backed off

After which, Robyn reported that the council had backed off from going ahead with its proposals and would consult with schools (“shouldn’t they have done this first?”) before making a decision.

This news was greeted with cheers, giving Unison more time to build the union membership and win even bigger community support for keeping the school meals service and jobs in-house.

If this doesn’t stop the council plans, then industrial action will be needed. Last year, dinner ladies and teaching assistants took over 30 days of strike action to save their jobs at Ladywood primary school in Grimethorpe in Barnsley. Their victory will inspire all Barnsley’s school meals staff that they can win too.

# Universal Credit workers’ strike

Benefit processing workers in Walsall and Wolverhampton have been leading the way in the fightback against Universal Credit.

The second round of strike action by civil servants’ union PCS members against understaffing, and the forcing of workers onto high-pressured call centre roles, picking up the pieces of an unworkable system.

Workers from other sections not on strike in Wolverhampton showed their support with plenty of donations to the hardship fund on their way in.

Meanwhile, in Walsall, the effect of the strike was clear to see, with management unable to cover case-work. Many on the picket looked forward to the prospect of action spreading to other offices to put pressure on the department.

**Nick Hart**  
Wolverhampton Socialist Party

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# NATIONALISE THE THREATENED GLASGOW ‘CALEY’ RAILWAY DEPOT

■ Prepare to occupy to defend jobs



Caley workers protest the depot's closure photo Unite Scotland

## Socialist Party Scotland

Skilled jobs are going and more are threatened with the possible closure of the St Rollox ‘Caley’ historic railway yard in Glasgow. Owner Gemini is now issuing compulsory redundancies.

Disgracefully the Scottish National Party (SNP) government and Nicola Sturgeon have refused to step in and nationalise the plant to save the jobs - despite agreeing a refurbishment plan subsidising the private sector for two years.

Gemini Rail took over the Springburn site in August 2018 after a sale was agreed with Knorr-Bremse Rail Services.

But six months later, closure proposals were announced, with the company understood to want to centralise its maintenance services at a base in the south of England. The Unite and RMT trade unions dispute the company’s claim that the depot is loss making.

Gemini has rejected costed proposals from the trade unions for work to continue at the site.

In response Unite and the RMT have launched a ‘Rally round the Caley’ campaign.

Local Labour MP Paul Sweeney has rightly publicly backed the trade union’s calls for nationalisation and raised the possibility of workers

organising an occupation. Sweeney also raised the possibility of a buyout, possibly worker-led, but public ownership is more likely to protect the work in the long term.

Unite organiser Pat McIlvogue has also backed the nationalisation proposals.

He said: “Our primary concern is to keep this site open. The closure plans are complete industrial vandalism - this is a profitable and productive depot.

“We have suggested a range of options that include one of full nationalisation. We believe the owner of the site would be willing to sell or, alternatively, Network Rail could take on a lease.”

The RMT’s Scottish organiser Mick Hogg said: “We support any plan which would preserve jobs at this vital national asset.”

Public support for the idea of rail nationalisation is huge, particularly with the rising anger at the inefficiency of Abellio Scotrail.

It is urgent that the short time left is used to build a mass fightback against the loss of skilled jobs in one of the poorest areas of Britain, blighted by austerity. Socialist Party Scotland gives full solidarity to the workers and trade unions at St Rollox.

The fight of the Caley workers should be linked with that of the tens of thousands of British steel workers for jobs and the nationalisation of steel. Other manufacturing

sectors like the car industry are also in severe crisis.

## Socialist Party Scotland says:

■ Unite and the RMT should demand Gemini open the books and finances for all their sites, to trade union and workforce scrutiny. Fight all redundancies

■ Build a mass trade union led campaign to ‘Rally round the Caley’ including mass demonstrations before the consultation period ends

■ Trade unions to organise mass meetings of the workforce to prepare for mass action to defend the works, including consideration of the tactic of occupation. Appeal to workers and trade unions at other sites and the steel workers in Scunthorpe for support

■ The Scottish government should nationalise the Caley, sack the Gemini and Abellio profiteers and immediately bring all Scotland’s railway infrastructure into public ownership under the democratic management of workers and rail users

■ A planned democratic strategy for the economy for the needs of the majority, socialist nationalisation of key infrastructure such as rail and steel, the banks and the top 150 companies. A Corbyn government should commit to these socialist policies to protect skilled work - capitalism and the free market has totally failed

# Welsh train fleet workers victory against transfer to private company

**Ross Saunders**  
Socialist Party Wales

Train fleet maintenance workers in the RMT transport union are celebrating in South Wales after scoring what looks like a complete victory without having to fire a shot.

With a turnout of 80%, 98% of members voted in favour of strike action, sending an unignorable message to franchise-holder Transport for Wales Rail Services that workers would hit the company’s profits unless it acceded to the union’s demands.

Transport for Wales Rail Services - a trading name for giant corporations Keolis and Amey - capitulated immediately. Workers will no longer be outsourced and their pay, terms, conditions and pensions will receive the same protection as workers in the stations and on the trains in the

franchise, as direct employees of Transport for Wales Rail Services.

The action shows that with the right tactics, carefully identifying the issues which the members feel most strongly, it is possible to defeat the Tory anti-union laws. It has boosted the confidence of workers in workplaces far removed from the railways and raised their sights as to what is possible if bold action is organised.

RMT assistant general secretary Steve Hedley explains: “We fought the Welsh Assembly [Government] which wanted to outsource our workers despite saying we’d bring them all in house. We’ve won that battle. And if trade unions get united - there’s six million of us and we can pull a lot more people with us.

“We can defeat all the attacks we face. We can renationalise every service. We can make this a socialist country.”



Transport for Wales train photo Geof Sheppard/CC



# THE TIANANMEN SQUARE MASSACRE - 30 YEARS ON

Claire Doyle  
Committee for a Workers' International (CWI)

Days before the 30th anniversary of the 3-4 June 1989 massacre of hundreds, possibly thousands, of unarmed demonstrators in Tiananmen Square, Beijing, China's defence minister, general Wei Fenghe maintained that the crackdown was absolutely justified!

"That incident", he said, "was a political turbulence and the central government took measures to stop the turbulence which is a correct policy."

The events of May-June 1989 in China constitute a dramatic and horrific illustration of the lengths to which a ruling clique will go to maintain its rule and privileges.

It was 40 years since Mao Zedong at the head of the People's Army had presided over the wiping out of capitalism and landlordism from that vast country in what Marxists describe as the 'second greatest event in world history' after the October 1917 Russian revolution.

But by 1989 a mass movement was developing from below and beginning to take the form of a political revolution against the Maoist dictatorship.

From the beginning, China had been a 'deformed workers' state' (a military-police dictatorship resting upon a nationalised economy), with no elements of workers' control or workers' democracy which provide the vital 'oxygen' for developing the elements of a democratic workers' state.

Without it, as in the Soviet Union after the rise of Stalin, the ruling clique would zig-zag from one way of running the economy to another - centralisation, decentralisation and back.

This included the 'Great Leap Forward' begun in 1958 (which failed to industrialise and led to widespread famine) and the infamous 'cultural revolution' of Mao in 1966 (a bloody factional struggle within the regime) in which hundreds of thousands of talented youth and workers perished.

By the spring of 1989 - 13 years after Mao's death - students, some inspired by the 'reformer' Hu Yaobang, began

to challenge the ruling elite under Deng Xiaoping.

Their demands were simple and modest such as freedom of the press, freedom of speech, free elections, freedom of organisation and so forth. But they challenged the control and privileges of the so-called Communist Party that ran the 'People's Republic of China'.

## Aims

There were, and still are, varying opinions as to whether the aims of the protests were to move towards market capitalism and the so-called democracy of the US and other major capitalist countries, or to try and take control of the economy and the state into the hands of democratically elected representatives of the working people - a 'political revolution'.

Before the end of 1989, that very same question was posed across the whole of the Soviet Union and eastern Europe.

As in all revolutionary movements, in China in April and May of that historic year, there was a profusion of ideas and theories as to what was needed, including a political revolution.

What was lacking was any party, even in embryo, with leaders who had a clear idea of how workers and young people could channel that revolutionary energy into overthrowing the old regime.

As in Hungary 1956 or elsewhere, a revolution can begin without a revolutionary party, and go nine-tenths of the way towards victory. Workers and young people were prepared to fight to the end - to the extent of sacrificing their lives.

In these conditions a revolutionary party can be rapidly built. But without it, and without elected fighting bodies like the soviets, the most favourable situations can turn into their opposite and a whole period of reaction can ensue.

Whatever the aims of the participants were in 1989, it is clear that the eruption of a mass movement in the capital city and in towns and cities across China was threatening the dictatorial rule of the Communist Party bureaucrats in Beijing.

A sure sign of the revolutionary nature of the upheaval was the participation of school students as well as university students. The wind of



The iconic image (reproduced here as a painting) of a lone democracy protester halting a line of Chinese army tanks in 1989 photo Michael Mandenberg/CC

revolution was blowing the tops of the trees first. The Guardian says millions "including police, judges and naval officers" were drawn in, "prompted by anger at corruption and inflation, but also the hunger for reform and liberty" (1 June 2019).

Once workers began to lend support to the student protests and take action, and the forces of the state began to refuse orders, the murderous suppression of the uprising began.

## Strikes

Both before and after the massacre in Tiananmen Square, there were mass protests in hundreds of cities across the country. According to leaked government documents collected together in the 'Tiananmen Papers', protests were reported in 341 Chinese cities between April and June 1989.

According to Wikipedia: "After order was restored in Beijing on 4 June,

protests of varying scales continued in some 80 other Chinese cities... In Shanghai, students marched on the streets on 5 June and erected road-blocks on major thoroughfares. Factory workers went on a general strike and took to the streets as well; railway traffic was also blocked. Public transport was suspended and prevented people from getting to work." The protests in Shanghai continued for more than a week.

The authorities carried out mass arrests. They saw the threat from workers taking action as more of a threat to their future than students; many were reported to have been summarily tried and executed. Students and university staff involved were permanently politically stigmatised and many were never employed again.

Many Asian countries' political leaders remained silent throughout

the protests. The government of India did not want to jeopardise a thaw in relations with China.

The Stalinist governments of Cuba, Czechoslovakia and East Germany, fearing similar uprisings at home, denounced the protests. Chinese students demonstrated in many cities in Europe, America, the Middle East and Asia.

After these events, the bureaucracy moved in a more pro-capitalist restoration direction. This led to a hybrid, state capitalism. It is this regime which has moved again to clamp-down on all protest and exert mass repression.

## China today

So what of the situation today? The Chinese economy is more than 30 times larger than it was in 1989. The Economist points out that in the late 1980s, in nominal terms, Soviet-

American trade was \$2 billion a year. Now, trade between America and China is more than \$2 billion a day!

In June 1989, the US President, George H W Bush wrote to Deng Xiaoping urging joint efforts to ensure the "tragic recent events" would not harm relations.

Today, notwithstanding Trump's tariff hikes, US/Chinese trade is booming. More cars are sold by US car giant General Motors in China than in the US. China vies with the US in terms of economic and military superiority but the Economist points to the dilemma of trade relations not being quarantined from "hard questions about whether countries are partners, rivals or foes".

Philip Stevens in the Financial Times commented on 17 May that China is seen in the US "not just as a dangerous economic competitor but a looming existential threat. Beijing

may not have the same ideological ambitions as the Soviet Union, but it does threaten US primacy."

Ma Jian, the author of a book called 'Beijing Coma' and a democracy activist in 1989 writes: "Within months of the Tiananmen massacre, world leaders were rushing back to Beijing to do deals, claiming that collaboration would help bring about change." And, "as the terror of Tiananmen is being re-enacted in the gulags of Tibet and Xinjiang, western leaders shake hands with President Xi and look the other way" (Guardian Review 1 June 2019).

A Guardian editorial says: "The silence which began at home is spreading, as shown by the muted reaction to another crime against human rights unfolding in China today. An estimated one million Uighurs and other Muslims are incarcerated in detention camps in Xinjiang and forced to undergo political indoctrination..."

Despairingly, it further comments: "The build-up of the mammoth domestic security apparatus makes a mass movement in the manner of 1989 impossible". But even this journal of the liberal bourgeoisie adds: "The unexpected and implausible does happen"!

## Capitalism

Living standards in China have undoubtedly improved and huge modern industries have developed rapidly. But the regime under Xi Jinping is, if anything, more monolithic than previous ones.

Inside China there has been no straight line development towards the establishment of fully capitalist relations. The collapse of Stalinism and the capitalist 'shock therapy' treatment that plunged the economies of the former Soviet Union into crisis in the early 1990s stayed the hands of the Chinese bureaucracy.

So too, probably, did the news of the fate of the 'communist' generals in Russia who tried to recover their power in the August 1991 coup (which lasted less than three days!).



**The Chinese regime knows only too well that lessons drawn from the past can lead on to more successful challenges to their power in the future**

Today, there still is a very large element of state ownership and state control in the now massive Chinese economy. The proportions zig-zag. For example, telecom giant Huawei is 99% owned by its 'trade union' which, of course, is controlled by the state bureaucracy. Consequently, the CWI describes the Chinese economy as a 'special form of state capitalism'.

The Financial Times quotes analysts who argue that the 'Communist' party "controls levers Trump can only dream of".

The Economist bemoans the fact that any US-China trade deal will do little "to shift China's model away from state capitalism. Its vast subsidies for producers will survive."

Xi Jinping is a dictator and part of a very rich elite. But he still uses Marxist and Maoist phraseology as a cover for autocracy, while viciously repressing opposition and all democratic rights.

At a time when the world's economic and political relations are in turmoil, and capitalist austerity and super-exploitation reach new depths, explosions of anger from below can break out in almost any country and take on unexpected dimensions.

The Chinese regime knows only too well that lessons drawn from the past can lead on to more successful challenges to their power in the future. This is what lies behind their pervasive censorship of all media and a total ban on any mention of 3-4 June.

The CWI will strive to reach ever wider layers of workers and young people in China and throughout Asia in order to build the forces necessary to win real and lasting victories on the way to establishing a socialist world.



photo M Saleh/CC

## Counter-revolution in Sudan

On 4 June 2019, the day of the 30th anniversary of Tiananmen Square massacre, counter-revolutionary forces allied to the ruling regime in Sudan launched a violent attack on the two month-long mass opposition occupation outside the military barracks in Khartoum. Deaths and many injuries are reported.

As the Socialist Party and CWI previously warned, unless the revolution which removed the dictator al-Bashir also overthrew the rest of the ruling class, then the prospect of bloody counter-revolution at some stage remained a constant danger.

To avoid a bloodbath and a coup d'état similar to the al-Sisi crackdown in Egypt, the working class must forge a mass independent party with the aim of carrying through a socialist transformation of society. Such a party could win over the rank and file soldiers to the side of the revolution and destroy the capitalist state.

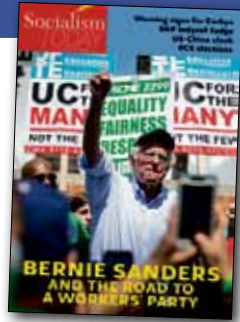
In other words, a struggle modelled on the successful October 1917 revolution in Russia led by the Bolsheviks.

■ **More in a future issue of the Socialist**

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The Socialist Party's magazine

June issue includes...



■ **Bernie Sanders** - the road to a new workers' party

■ **US/China** - what's behind the latest trade clash?

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# Worcester libraries campaign victory

**Sean McCauley**  
Worcestershire Socialist Party

**W**e have won! Money has been found to secure the future of St John's as well as Warndon libraries in Worcester. This is a victory for all those who have campaigned hard to save the library service in the area.

It shows that when we make a stand we can force our councillors to listen and to act. Socialist Party members in the city have led a vibrant and well supported campaign in St John's. The county council now appears to have negotiated a deal with the city council for the latter to help fund each city library to the tune of £157,000.

This is welcome news if it proves to be the case that everything we have been calling for is guaranteed. We still want to check with our fellow campaigners in Unison, the local

government union, that there will be absolutely no cuts in the hours worked by staff at these libraries, no redundancies or restructuring to the detriment of the staff.

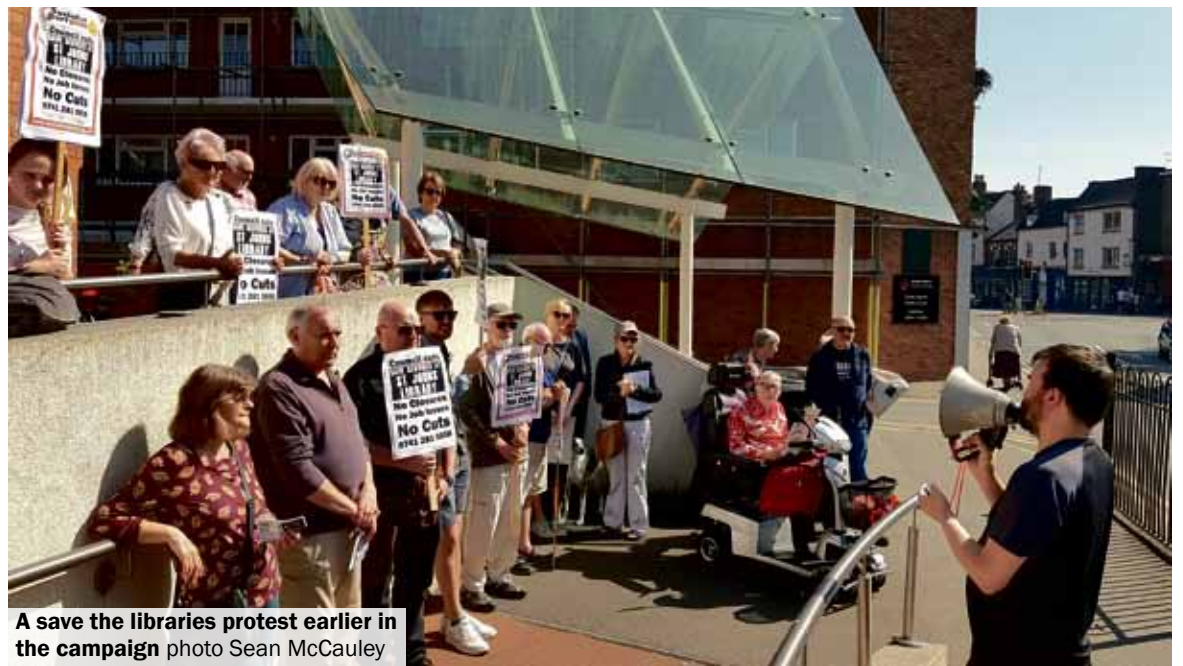
We also still want to check that there will be no reductions in opening hours, no additions of unstaffed opening hours and no backdoor privatisation through alternative private means of funding.

## Fight all cuts

The campaign to guarantee the long term future of library services in the city and indeed across the whole of the county is not over.

Make no mistake, in the future both councils will once more come to try to cut this service. We must be vigilant. There is only one sure-fire way to guarantee services and that is to mobilise local communities, as well as council workers, to fight austerity. We need councillors who truly represent our needs and we need fighting unions.

We demand an increase, not a



**A save the libraries protest earlier in the campaign** photo Sean McCauley

decrease in funding in order to begin to put right a decade of cuts and

we demand better services now. This year, however, we will see a

3.99% increase in council tax for a decidedly worse service.



**Protesting against fire service cuts** photo Alistair Tice

## South Yorkshire: No to fire service cuts!

**South Yorkshire Socialist Party members**

South Yorkshire Fire Brigade Union (FBU) members will be lobbying Sheffield City Council meeting outside the Town Hall at 12.30pm on Wednesday 12 June.

They will be demonstrating against another severe round of cuts being proposed by South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Authority (SYFRA) to jobs and the fire service in the county.

To 'save' up to £4 million a year, SYFRA want to reduce crewing levels on fire engines from five to four which will see the loss of 84 firefighter jobs over the next three years, and reduced night-time cover at Sheffield Central and Doncaster stations from two to only one engine.

These cuts follow on from a halving of firefighter numbers in South Yorkshire, fire station closures and the introduction of a 96-hour continuous shift system that was ruled unlawful by the High Court last year.

These cuts are due to the Tory government

cutting funding to SYFRA by 30% over recent years. In the past, these cuts have then been voted through by a Labour dominated fire authority.

However this time, councillors only "noted" the Chief Fire Officer's report proposing these further cuts. Ten out of the 13 current representatives from the four South Yorkshire councils are Labour. The protest lobby is to demand that Sheffield Labour council and their representatives on the fire authority now vote down these drastic cuts altogether.

While cutting fire services, SYFRA has built up over £25 million in reserves. The FBU has, like the Socialist Party, called on the authority to use these reserves to maintain jobs and services, using a no-cuts stance as a platform for fighting for 'fair funding'.

The Socialist Party has been campaigning with the FBU against these cuts and to force a public debate at the Sheffield council meeting, and have been invited to have a speaker from the top of the FBU's campaign fire engine at the protest lobby.

## Protesters condemn Tory candidate



**Tory leadership candidate Ester McVey presided over the roll-out of the hated Universal Credit** photo Iain Dalton

Around 20 people gathered outside the Brown Cow pub in Bingley on 30 May, where former Department for Work and Pensions minister Ester McVey was launching her Tory premiership campaign tour.

The launch took place in the constituency of McVey's partner, the notorious Philip Davies MP - known for talking out legislation on such issues as banning 'upskirting' and hospital parking charges.

Incredibly, McVey pitched the meeting as 'Blue Collar Conversations' aimed at working-class people, however the only people turning up for their meeting were well-dressed, huge car-driving local Tories.

Local workers commuting past the protest, tooted their support for the counter-protest, which displayed prominent Socialist Party 'Tories Out!' placards as well as homemade placards including one saying 'Sanctions

don't create jobs... but socialism does.'

As DWP minister, McVey presided over the disastrous roll-out of Universal Credit and has defended the rising use of foodbanks as a positive thing - she even briefly tried to make the case once again for this before being escorted inside by her minders.

It is clear that the election of McVey or any other Tory leadership candidate as prime minister will continue the disastrous anti-working-class policies of austerity.

That's why what is necessary to change the situation, as our placards called for, is 'mass working-class action for a general election' with the trade unions playing the key role in pushing for this by calling a national demonstration to demand a general election.

**Iain Dalton**  
West Yorkshire Socialist Party organiser







James Ivens

George Orwell's last and most famous novel is still the go-to source, 70 years on, for anti-authoritarian imagery. But the socialist author's 1949 dystopian masterpiece is also widely misrepresented.

A revolution in Britain and America has degenerated into a science-fiction Stalinist nightmare under the figurehead of "Big Brother." Advances in surveillance, psychology and political science have made human will "infinitely malleable" - or so the ruling "Party" holds.

Perpetual scarcity and war, and the constant snooping of the "Thought Police," maintain the power of privileged bureaucrats. Anyone could be an informant. Alienated functionary Winston Smith rebels, joined by youthful heretic Julia.

There's great entertainment. The characters may lack depth, but sex, conspiracy, torture and terror sustain a straightforward plot.

In truth, the story is just a vessel. An outpouring of human frustration and anxiety at the moment of passing from a world war into the Cold War was the point.

It is not an invective against socialism. "The Party rejects and vilifies every principle for which the Socialist movement ever stood." Nor is it an assault on technology, despite abundant lazy parallels drawn today.

Orwell wrote most of the novel between 1947 and '48. In World War Two, workers across the globe had endured years of austerity, repression and propaganda. Orwell also felt disappointed by the limitations of the 1945 Labour government's reforms.

Now the irreconcilable social systems of the market and planned economies were locked in hostile stalemate. Capitalism seemed spent, but socialist world revolution had stalled after isolation and Stalinist derailment. Meanwhile, the great powers had carved the planet into sprawling spheres of influence.

**'Ministry of Truth'**

Winston works in the "Ministry of Truth" rewriting archive press articles to match the changing positions of the Party. The abolition of history is a central concern in Nineteen Eighty-Four.

Marxists sometimes call the revolutionary party the memory bank of the working class. Part of its responsibility is guaranteeing the lessons of history. In this sense, Nineteen Eighty-Four's Party is a pure inversion, imagined as the logical perfection of Stalinism's airbrush.

In his life, Orwell railed against the lies of the Moscow show trials - indeed, any political distortion. He had also worked for the BBC during the war. The novel's infamous torture chamber, "Room 101," was the location of the military censor in Broadcasting House.

Other ministry staff produce propaganda, or work on the official language of "Newspeak." This destroys and perverts vocabulary "to narrow the range of thought," another theme.

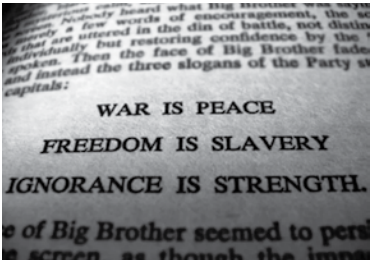
In his provocative 1946 essay Politics and the English Language, Orwell argues that direct, meaningful

## 70 years since the publication of Nineteen Eighty-Four

# “But if there was hope, it lay in the proles”



Frederic Guimont/Free Art Licence



The ideological slogans of "Ingsoc"

become conscious of their own strength," thinks Winston.

However, Nineteen Eighty-Four also seems deeply cynical about the capacity of workers to grasp and overcome their position in society. The "proles" are cartoonish, biddable imbeciles - both in the eyes of the Party and experience of Winston.

This bears no relation to the real working class. But it is not some special mental or moral faculty which gives workers the power to make change. It is their role in mass production of goods and services. Workers' collective action can shut society down, and the workplace breeds collective consciousness and organisation.

The main satirical target does seem to be the smug and fanatical egos which populate the Party. Indeed, in a 1944 letter, Orwell complained that England's intellectuals "are perfectly ready for dictatorial methods, secret police, systematic falsification of history."

In another 1946 essay, James Burnham and the Managerial Revolution, Orwell fretted about "the power worship now so prevalent among intellectuals." Senior Party official O'Brien maintains simply that "the object of power is power."

So perhaps Nineteen Eighty-Four is rather warning those place-seekers who circumvent the working class, or hunt for shortcuts in changing society: be careful what you wish for.

**Glaring contradictions**

In fact, the whole barbarous project fails. The novel's appendix on the principles of Newspeak is written from an undisclosed future time which views that bygone society's glaring contradictions as untenable.

So Nineteen Eighty-Four believes a better future is possible, or at least that police-state tyranny will not last. It just sees no clear route forward.

Orwell's own political views were intelligent but impressionistic. He was an ardent opponent of Stalinism, but not a Trotskyist.

He did, however, support some Trotskyist initiatives, and read the British Trotskyist newspaper at the time, Socialist Appeal. Winston even seeks out a rumoured resistance, adherents of "Emmanuel Goldstein," an open analogue for the person (if not quite the approach) of Leon Trotsky.

Orwell had been a revolutionary combatant in Catalonia, but increasingly fell into political demoralisation. A shame Winston's world didn't have workers like those Orwell fought alongside in the Spanish Civil War.

And it's a pity Orwell didn't penetrate the social and material substance of world events as deeply as he did their language and psychology. Nevertheless, his hallmark lucid prose transmits ideas firm and jolting as a rivet gun.

Nineteen Eighty-Four's cry of despairing individual defiance against the crashing waves of vast, impersonal forces has resonance for many today. It gave us a lexicon of authoritarianism whose overuse and misuse are testament to its insight.

And despite the novel's pessimism, Winston is right: the workers have the power. Whether taking the wealth off the capitalists, or ousting a repressive bureaucracy, they need "only rise up and shake themselves like a horse shaking off flies."

## Sexual harassment of LGBT+ workers shows need for unions to fight

Maddy Steeds  
Socialist Party LGBT+ group

68% of LGBT+ people have faced sexual harassment at work, finds a recent report from the Trade Union Congress. Of these, two in three did not report it to their employers. A quarter of those chose not to for fear of being outed.

The fear of being outed is not unwarranted. Some lesbian and bisexual women reported experiencing verbal harassment with threats of 'turning them straight'.

Bisexual people in the workplace have experienced their sexuality being used as a justification for harassment. One explained their manager "said I had 'brought it upon myself'" and that as a bisexual they "must like that thing."

The trade union movement needs to take a stand against discrimination of LGBT+ people, not only in the workplace but in wider society. Stigma against bisexual people is seen in society beyond the workplace. The trade unions must take a stand that this is unacceptable in all aspects of life.

Transgender people have also experienced sexual harassment. One third of trans women reported being sexually assaulted. One woman reported it was her manager who had assaulted her.

The report stated that not enough trans men responded to the survey, so more needs to be done to investigate the experiences of trans men at work.

The trade union movement needs to protect the rights of trans people in the workplace and beyond.

The TUC report, disappointingly, did not investigate the experiences of non-binary people. The unions need to recognise non-binary people and support the right to self-identification. This is part of making LGBT+ people more supported in the workplace.

The report recommends the government fund services for LGBT+ people who face sexual harassment,



Members of retail union Usdaw marching for LGBT+ rights

as well as funding organisations fighting harassment. However, in a time of capitalist austerity, the TUC needs to do more than politely ask for services in a report.

Action is what is needed. The TUC needs to organise the unions to fight for funding, including calling mass demonstrations and building towards strikes against austerity, to force a general election and get the Tories out.

The Socialist Party says no to all sexual harassment. Trade unionists have fought successfully for issues such as abortion, sexual harassment and domestic violence to become trade union issues in the past. This includes, for example, the Campaign Against Domestic Violence,

led by Militant, forerunner of the Socialist Party.

This starts with a zero-tolerance approach, but also means campaigns and mass action in the workplaces, campuses and streets. Workers on the Woolwich ferry won action against sexual harassment by striking in 2017.

The unions should also fight to ban zero-hour contracts, which make workers more vulnerable, and guarantee employment and trade union rights from day one.

The report does call on unions to organise workplace campaigns to publicise the support they can offer. The best support would be leading a real fight for LGBT+ rights, as the unions have historically, and need to do again.

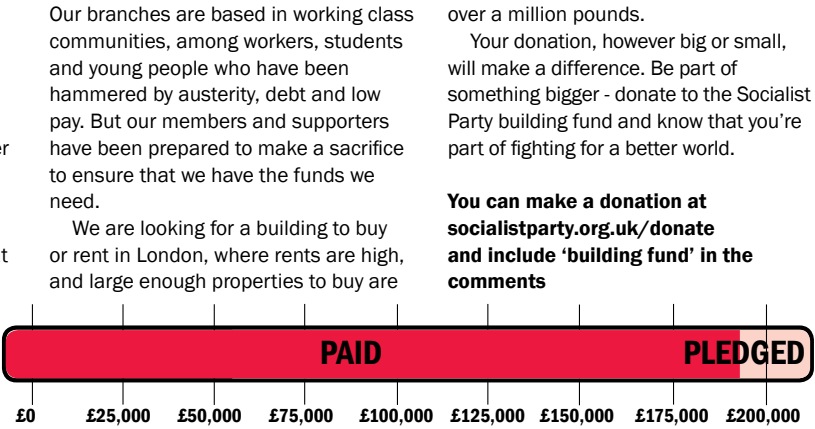
### Socialist Party building fund

■ The Socialist Party is currently under threat of eviction from our national headquarters.

We have had a presence in London since the early 1960s and have been at our current premises for over 17 years.

We believe that it is essential that our HQ remains based in the capital city, therefore we have launched a building appeal for a new premises.

We do not have any rich backers.



■ A column in the 3 June Financial Times warns utility shareholders not to insist on market value if they are nationalised. Lower but more stable alternative valuation measures are proposed. The bosses are worried a Corbyn government is round the corner. No to payouts for fat cats - compensate only for proven need!

■ A Guardian investigation has found 169 peers in the House of Lords - one in five - also work as paid advisers to private business. Meanwhile, lords claimed tens of thousands each in expenses last year, while around a third took almost no part in parliamentary business. 245 of the 785 unelected lawmakers rarely spoke, 88 never spoke, and 46 never voted, found the Guardian. Abolish the Lords!

■ All the main parties have suffered drops in donations, says the Electoral Commission, but none so much as the Tories. They hauled £3.7 million in the first quarter of 2019, compared to £7.4 million the previous quarter, and almost £5 million in the first quarter of 2018.

■ The anger of private tenants suffering in the housing crisis forced the Tories to ban letting fees in England - and it's now come into effect. Citizens Advice reckons the charges were costing renters £13 million a month. Government assessments estimate the ban will set landlords back £83 million and agencies £157 million. They have threatened to claw some back with rent hikes - now cap rents too!

■ Over three-quarters of the poison-spewing diesel cars which manufacturers cheated tests to sell are still on the road. Transit NGO Transport and Environment estimates the remaining 33 million will stay in use for another two years. Nationalise the car-makers - fund affordable, clean public transport for all!

■ Energy price hikes could add £362 a year to bills for households that don't switch tariffs. Gas and electric regulator Ofgem has raised its price cap on default rates by a whopping 10%. Almost 193,000 homes could be affected, for a potential total rip-off of £42 million. Nationalise the utilities under democratic workers' control and management!

■ Have you got news for the fishes?  
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# INDIA: MODI VICTORY UNDERLINES NEED FOR REAL SOCIALIST FIGHTBACK

Jagadish Chandra  
New Socialist Alternative (CWI India)

Prime Minister, Narendra Modi and his party have scored a second general election victory. Given the tumultuous period of the last five years under Modi's governance it was expected that at these 2019 elections the BJP would find it difficult to sell its divisive 'saf-fron' agenda based on reactionary Hindutva ideology.

Voters in fact boosted support for the BJP to 38%, resulting in 303 seats - compared with 31% of the popular vote in 2014 and 282 seats. Unprecedentedly, the BJP got more than half of the votes polled in at least 13 states.

Narendra Modi is the first prime minister to return to power winning a bigger vote share for the party and enjoying a full single-party majority in the Lok Sabha parliament since Jawaharlal Nehru's victory in 1957!

## Unstable democracy

In a country as ethnically diverse and as vast as India - a population of 1.34 billion spread over 29 states - parliamentary democracy can hardly be stable. In the daily lives of people in the previous five years under Modi's 'democracy', social harmony was conspicuously scarce.

In state after state, especially in the Hindi belt, the religious minorities and oppressed castes were at the receiving end of his brutal policies - socially very regressive, with mob lynchings, vigilante attacks on Muslims and Dalits for the crime of eating beef, and young people getting publicly reprimanded by the "cultural police" for the way they dress, talk or even for just having a life.

The Gau Rakshak Dals (Cow Protection Force) has terrorised people, particularly Muslims. Flash mobs would appear from nowhere and 'street justice' was dispensed, often creating an atmosphere of fear and terror, while the state and its agencies were either pliant onlookers or lending a hand to give a tinge of legitimacy.

Thus, the idea of Hindu majoritarianism was constructed and kept alive, as some kind of non-state authority to police the people and to keep their conscience in line with the untold and unprescribed tenets of the Hindu Rashtira.

Incumbency often plays a negative role in Indian elections, mostly with the incumbent leader or government being punished. But this time, as an exception to this rule, the return of Modi has shattered

“The landslide victories of the BJP under Modi has to be contrasted with the pathetic and progressive downward slide of the traditional left, led by the Stalinists and Maoists



The opposition parties allowed Narendra Modi and the BJP to set the political agenda during the election photo Kremlin.ru/CC

those predictions.

Given Modi's dismal performance in the last five years, particularly in not creating jobs and livelihood opportunities for the youth or carrying through meaningful reforms for distressed farmers, it was difficult to foresee such a massive victory for him and his party.

We were cautious in our predictions and wrote: "Though it would be the worst outcome from a socialist and working-class point of view, it is most likely that Modi's BJP will return to government, albeit with a reduced majority, for want of a credible alternative."

In the first two decades of the 21st century, owing to the acute crisis of capitalism globally, we have seen the rise of many far-right political parties, even gaining power through the parliamentary route.

Right-wing populist and nationalist governments are in power in Russia, Turkey, Israel, Hungary, Poland, and the United States and they share power with left-wing populists in Italy. In that context, the advent of Bolsonaro of Brazil and the

increasing possibility of the return of Mahinda Rajapakse's camp in Sri Lanka is something of serious concern for the populations of the neo-colonial world.

Now, the massive victory of Modi and the BJP on a very clearly jingoist and religious majoritarian agenda poses a grave threat to the entire region. There is a huge pile of nuclear arms and installations in this highly tumultuous area, with contentious geopolitical issues.

## Communalism

We had the horrific rhetoric of Modi during his electioneering speeches saying "Ghar mein ghus kar mareng" (We will enter your homes to beat you up) and boasting that the Balakot airstrikes into Pakistan were a counter-response to the terror attack in Pulwama (Indian controlled Jammu and Kashmir), which killed 40 soldiers.

The rise of Modi's regime is not an accidental phenomenon. But what is unique to the BJP's rise is its methodical and nurtured growth in the last two and a half decades from a

7.74% vote share to 38% today.

Secondly, unlike other far-right formations, the BJP cannot be viewed as just another right-wing political party.

It has an organic association with RSS (Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh), its patron and "conscience" keeper. The RSS unabashedly and unapologetically prides itself in setting out to build Hindu Rashtira (Hindu Nation).

Most importantly, unlike other political organisations, the BJP has an unending supply of Hindutva fly-by-night organisations who will carry out the dirty work of assassinations, riots, rapes and communal pogroms on behalf of the party and in most cases the party can distance itself from any accountability.

This has been practiced to perfection right from the period of India's independence from British imperialism. Nathu Ram Godse, the assassin of MK Gandhi (aka Mahatma Gandhi) was also part of the inner circle of the RSS but had developed "differences" with the organisation just in time for the RSS



New Socialist Alternative member leafletting during the historic all-India general strike in January 2019 photo Calvin Priest

to be absolved of all responsibility.

Undoubtedly this election, just like the previous one in 2014, was highly polarised from the point of view of the rest of the opposition.

Modi and the BJP did set the agenda and the opposition popularised it by attacking it with as much vigour as they could muster. Thus the entire opposition - be it the Congress Party or others - were caught in the trap and did not raise other real issues of concern for the vast majority of the population.

The demonetisation and Goods and Services Tax fiascos of the Modi government, which were originally meant to be great achievements for the Modi regime, were never even mentioned by the BJP stalwarts in their electioneering. But even the opposition treated them as secondary issues and did not take them up in earnest.

Instead, Modi, the main star campaigner for the BJP, went full steam ahead with nationalism, terror threats, 'strongman' government and so forth. He even used the Easter Sunday terror attack in Sri Lanka's capital to make anti-Muslim propaganda to his advantage.

## The 'left'

The landslide victories of the BJP under Modi has to be contrasted with the pathetic and progressive downward slide of the traditional left, led by the Stalinists and Maoists and the withering away of social democracy.

After the 2014 elections we wrote that the left was a footnote, but this time round the left is not even a blip on the landscape in its traditional strongholds of West Bengal, Kerala and Tripura.

In all these states, the Communist Parties (CPI and CPI(M)) have been wiped out except for one seat in

Kerala. Their saving grace was that in Tamil Nadu both the CPI and the CPI(M) won two seats each, courtesy of the alliance that was cobbled together with them by the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam and Congress. One progressive feature of Tamil Nadu is that voters did not allow the divisive and communal BJP to get anywhere.

Modi's victory exposes the weakness of the opposition in general and the political parties on the left in particular, who have learned nothing from history.

The programme and strategy of 'lesser evilism' adopted by the left - cosying up to regional capitalist forces in the name of them being 'progressive', 'secular' and 'democratic' - has disastrously dampened down the combativity of workers and poor people to struggle against communalism, casteism and capitalism.

In a clear indication that the left votes have shifted to the BJP in West Bengal, the CPI(M) saw its vote share drop from nearly 23% in 2014 to just over 6.3%. The vote for the smaller CPI in the same state was down from 2.36% in 2014 to 0.39%.

The clear choice made by former CPI(M) supporters and left 'intelligentsia' in West Bengal, to vote for the BJP rather than their own party or the Trinamool Congress, is the logical result of the Stalinist party leadership's bankrupt politics.

The massive victory for the Modi-led far-right in India is the result of ideological disarray on the left and represents a huge set-back to Marxist and socialist fighters. Consequently, the task becomes

yet more urgent to build a genuine and real socialist alternative, not only to the current regime of Modi, the BJP and the RSS, but to defeat the forces of capitalism and casteism in India.

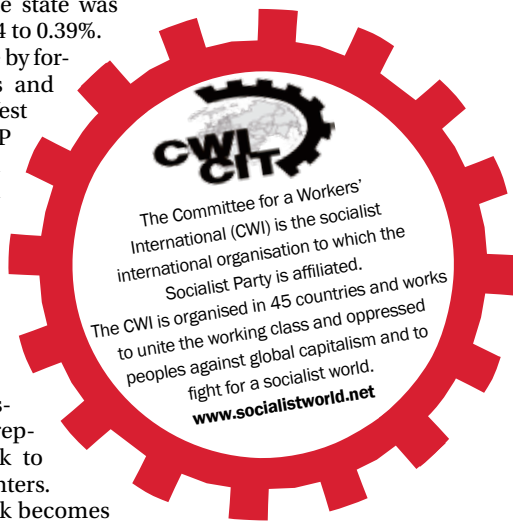
## Socialist programme

Working-class potential for change was shown in January 2019 when the trade unions call for a general strike against unemployment, poverty pay and other social issues saw up to 200 million workers respond - the largest general strike in history!

A fighting socialist programme based on an independent class alternative is needed and building a powerful mass working-class and poor people's party.

It will also need to inscribe on its banner zero-tolerance towards discrimination of all shades based on religion, region, language, gender and most particularly the caste discrimination. This is the need of the hour.

■ See also 'India: biggest general strike ever' - 16 January 2019 on [socialistparty.org.uk](http://socialistparty.org.uk)





**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'!

**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!



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

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**Rob Williams**

Chair, National Shop Stewards Network

This year's National Shop Stewards Network (NSSN) conference takes place as the Tory crisis reaches a new stage with the resignation of Theresa May. But no Tory prime minister will act in the interests of workers.

We need a general election to get rid of them all, their vicious austerity and anti-union laws. And the labour and trade union movement must mobilise to fight for it.

We call on activists to join the biggest annual gathering of rank-and-file trade unionists. It is open to everyone in the labour and trade union and anti-cuts movements.

Hear from some of the biggest union struggles, some of which have achieved important and inspirational victories, such as the Glasgow equal pay strikers and the Birmingham bin and homecare workers.

We're delighted to give a platform to the Swindon Honda shop stewards, who are fighting to save their plant from closure. There will also be militant union leaders addressing conference.

There are both challenges and victories in our movement that will be discussed. We give our full support and solidarity to the thousands of steelworkers who are facing the catastrophic threat of insolvency.

As with the Honda workers, we call for British Steel to be nationalised to save jobs and communities. The U-turn by the government over probation privatisation shows that workers can win.

Many workers continue to be in dispute every week and we continue to build solidarity for them. Victories show that when workers fight they can win and if all these struggles are coordinated we can beat the bosses, kick out the Tories and end austerity.

The NSSN was initiated by the RMT and its former general secretary the late Bob Crow in 2006. Ten national trade unions now officially support our campaigning work, as well as many union branches, shop stewards committees and trade union councils.

The NSSN's annual conference is where hundreds of trade unionists and anti-cuts campaigners come together to discuss and debate how we take the fight forward in workplaces and share experiences on how the bosses can be pushed back.

Come and join the fightback.

# STRIKE TOGETHER TO KICK OUT THE TORIES!

- Defend jobs
- Fight for a pay rise
- Stop the cuts

photo Paul Mattsson

**nationalshop  
stewardsnetwork**

**NSSN 2019  
conference**

**Saturday 6 July,  
11am - 4.30pm**

**Conway Hall,  
25 Red Lion Square,  
London WC1R 4RL**

Pay on the day or you can send us a cheque: make out to 'National Shop Stewards Network' and post to NSSN, PO Box 54498, London E10 9DE. You can register in advance by emailing [info@shopstewards.net](mailto:info@shopstewards.net)

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