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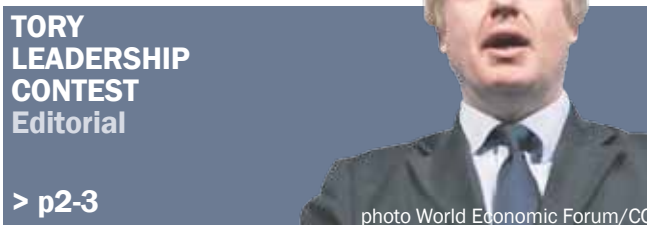
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# the Socialist

Formerly **Militant**



# Trade union action can END LOW PAY

## Come to the 2019 NSSN conference

Ruth Byrne  
Catering worker

**F**ive million workers in Britain (over one in six) are stuck in low-paid and insecure work.

Amy Murphy, president of the shop workers' union Usdaw, will be speaking at the National Shop Stewards Network (NSSN) conference on Saturday 6 July on how unions are campaigning for a living wage and guaranteed minimum hours.

Employers say it's all about flexibility - but who gains from it? They have a workforce on tap, but only pay for people to work when they want them.

Their workers on the other hand have to live in constant insecurity. Have you ever seen a contract that lets you pay less rent some months? Does anyone get discounts on food or travel when they get less hours? Does your mobile provider (essential for getting work for most workers on zero-hour contracts or in other precarious jobs) reduce your bill when you're short of cash?

### Bills

Udaw has found that three-quarters of low-paid workers rely on credit cards, overdrafts, borrowing from family or payday loans to pay essential bills.

Employers and agencies also use insecure work to instil fear and stop workers from standing up for themselves. When you know that refusing a work shift could mean you are never offered one again, it isn't easy to risk losing it. Never mind having a life or commitments outside working whatever hours your employer wants you to work. The same goes for mentioning unsafe working conditions or standing up to harassment.

But despite the obstacles, many workers are fighting back, and the NSSN conference is a fantastic place to hear and meet other people who are doing this. It brings together union shop stewards, rank-and-file trade unionists and campaigners to share ideas and build links between different workplaces. Whatever issues you are fighting on, it will inspire you.

### The Socialist Party fights for

- A minimum wage of £10 an hour with no exemptions, and £15 an hour in London
- Scrapping zero-hour contracts, and guaranteeing full-time hours and permanent jobs for all who want them
- A maximum 35-hour working week with no loss of pay



All welcome: Saturday 6 July, 11am - 4.30pm  
Conway Hall, 25 Red Lion Square, London WC1R 4RL  
£6 registration - pay on the day, or make a cheque out to National Shop Stewards Network and post to NSSN, PO Box 54498, London E10 9DE  
Register in advance by emailing [info@shopstewards.net](mailto:info@shopstewards.net)  
[shopstewards.net](http://shopstewards.net)





# WHILE THE TORIES ELECT A NEW LEADER – PREPARE ACTION TO REMOVE THE LOT OF THEM

## What we think

First there were 13. As we go to press at least one of the remaining six candidates will be knocked out of the Tory leadership election. By the end of the week votes by Tory MPs will reduce the field to two. In the week starting 22 July two will become one and, based on the votes of the 100,000 or so Tory Party members, Britain will have a new prime minister.

Reflected in this process is the splintering of the Tory party - they are unable to agree on a way forward, especially on Brexit. For hundreds of years this has been the most successful party in defending the capitalist system, of putting the interests and profits of big business, the bankers and the billionaires first. But today there is no clear idea among its members of parliament and leaders about how to best defend their system.

### YouGov poll

The Tory membership is overwhelmingly pro-Brexit. A new YouGov poll has found that 54% of members would put achieving Brexit above keeping their party together. Tory Remainer MPs Dominic Grieve and David Gauke currently face challenges from their constituency parties.

The only thing that many Tory members fear more than not coming out of the EU is a Jeremy Corbyn victory at a general election. YouGov says: "Half (51%) of Conservative Party members would rather call the whole thing off rather than allow the Labour leader to ascend to the position of prime minister. Nevertheless, four in ten (39%) are so committed to Brexit that they would want to see it brought about even if it brought their party's nemesis to power."

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photo Paul Mattsson

What lies behind this is the profound crisis of capitalism. It has been unable to recover from the 2007-8 crisis. For workers this means we live in 'the age of insecurity', of under-employment, low wages and precarious housing. The resulting instability is the root of the Tories' crisis - and that of all the establishment parties across the world who can offer no solutions to people's problems.

Recent surveys again and again reveal the resulting crisis of legitimacy of the institutions of capitalism - including parliament, the press, and especially the capitalist political parties. A BritainThinks survey found that 75% of people think that UK politics is not fit for purpose and less than 6% believe that politicians understand them.

Some Tory MPs have come behind Boris Johnson as



the candidate they believe most likely to win among the party membership - but also as the 'anti-establishment' establishment figure they hope will square the circle of defending capitalism while also creating the impression of being outside the hated establishment.

With all eyes on Brexit, Johnson and the other candidates face little scrutiny on their other pledges and their records. That allows Johnson to play to different audiences. He has cultivated an image of a chaotic, irreverent buffoon who speaks his mind, who will not be subject to the rules of the game.

In 2018 he made headlines by saying "fuck business". But big business doesn't need to worry that Johnson doesn't have their interests at heart. At the launch of his campaign Johnson claimed that as London mayor he was the "only politician who was willing to stick up for financial services".

Tory Chancellor Philip Hammond's pleas for no spending promises have fallen on deaf ears, as Johnson has said "we should be cutting business taxes" as well as promising to raise the threshold of the 40% income tax rate - with an eye to his current electorate. Jeremy Hunt, the foreign secretary, has also pledged to slash corporation tax from 19% to just 12.5% - the same level as the Republic of Ireland.

### Ruling-class representative

What big business leaders do worry about is that Johnson could be compelled to implement a chaotic Brexit against their interests. That is because the EU is fundamentally Thatcherism on a continental scale - a bosses' club to aid the profits of the capitalist class.

However, whatever role Johnson comes to play regarding Brexit, it is that class which he represents. The truth is revealed in his record. On the anniversary of the Grenfell tragedy it is worth remembering that he presided over the closure of ten fire stations and the removal of 27 fire engines as London mayor.

In 2014 London Underground workers voted for strike action and in response Tory members of the Johnson-headed London Assembly advocated banning strikes on the tube. That is because between 2005 and 2011 tube unions took over 30 days of strike action, costing London's economy an estimated £100 million a day. Two million commuters travel to London each day. This reveals the enormous potential power the tube workers have.

In that round of the battle between bosses and workers, militant action by the RMT transport union defeated the Transport for London bosses who had Johnson firmly on their side. Boris Johnson and the rest of the Tory candidates may not agree on Brexit but they agree on making the working class pay for the ongoing crisis of their system.

Whoever wins the Tory leadership, workers need to prepare now to fight in the interests of our class. At local level victories are being clocked up by strikes of dinner ladies, tube workers, home care workers, bin workers, teachers and parents against education cuts and academies, and more.

The demand for a campaign to prepare for a new prime minister to face national coordinated action must start here. That action needs to combine defence of living standards with the demand for a general election to get the Tories out.

And that must be combined with a fight against the pro-capitalist elements in the Labour party. The campaign by the CWU and Unite unions against anti-Corbyn deputy leader Tom Watson must be stepped up - along with deselection of all the Blairites, restoration of the central role of the trade unions as part of democratising the party and the fight for a socialist programme in the interests of the working class.

Defeating the Tories means building mass action and transforming Labour into a mass socialist workers' party regardless of who the new Tory leader is.

### Helen Pattison

East London Socialist Party

Barking Reach Residents' Association hosted a large and angry meeting after the fire on 9 June which has left eight flats completely burnt and another 10-15 damaged.

There are a number of residents who have lost everything. The fury poured out of residents, demanding answers. But also demanding action!

None of the representatives of the different stakeholders in the estate or the government were let off the hook. One resident, whose flat has been completely burnt out because of the fire, grilled each of them in turn. She mostly received spluttered answers of "I'll have to get back to you on that".

To the representative from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government she asked why they weren't listening to the Fire Brigades Union's demand for the removal of combustible materials and why they didn't have more power to condemn buildings that posed a fire hazard.

### Complicity

To the representatives of the private landlords and property managers, there were damning questions highlighting their mistakes, sloppiness and complicity in using what has been proven to be a dangerous material.

But the greatest anger was aimed at Bellway Homes which built the blocks. It has been forced to make concessions to the residents' demands - but it hasn't done enough. At first it said it would investigate the material and remove it if it was dangerous.

In answer, the residents said the fire is all the proof we need. Pressure forced Bellway to say it will remove the material from the flats but not the houses, which they would treat with fire retardant paint. The demand remains - remove the dangerous material now!

Faith in these big building companies to build safe homes has been completely destroyed. And why shouldn't it be.

These companies exist to make a profit, the material used was purely decorative, to push up the price of the flats, its safety not adequately considered. We need to kick private profit out of our homes.

The big building companies have built death traps, with 60,000 people still living in properties clad in the same material as Grenfell Tower.

These companies should be nationalised, alongside the swathes of land they plan to build on, so that safe, quality and genuinely affordable housing can be built. We should fight for mass council house building and cheap mortgages to end the housing crisis.

The day after the fire, an independent fire safety officer went round the neighbouring building which is a mirror of the burnt block Samuel Garside, and was built at the same time. At the meeting the residents were presented with a list of the problems identified.

This was all the proof residents needed to decide they want a

## Angry Barking residents' meeting demands answers and action following fire



photo Pete Mason



photo Ian Pattison

residents'-led inquiry into the fire and safety of the buildings. This will include the testimony of residents which the residents' association plans to collect.

On top of this they should involve housing workers organised in Unite the Union, who have been working in a campaign with residents and tenants across London for safe and affordable housing, and defending housing association stock from sale.

These workers want to support residents and tenants, with their knowledge of the housing sector. They should also contact the Fire Brigades Union, which can give evidence against the dangerous material being plastered on buildings and the mistakes over safety being made.

Set aside

The residents demanded that the remaining flats are set aside for residents displaced by the fire. If Bellway continues to refuse to meet this demand the campaign should be stepped up.

Over shouts of "would you live there?" the suggestion was made to protest at Bellway's offices. Worries flashed over the faces of the stakeholders' faces when protesting was mentioned.

If residents don't feel their demands are being listened to or work completed fast enough, they should take their anger to Bellway's door. By staying organised and piling on the pressure the residents could make real gains in the safety of their estate. But it will also show others the strength of ordinary people when we organise.

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

Two Welsh health boards have announced plans to privatise their hospital pharmacies.

Betsi Cadwaladr and Cardiff and Vale health boards say they cannot afford to employ sufficient dispensers to maintain an adequate service. They predict that outsourcing outpatient services to a private, community pharmacy will improve inpatient pharmacy services by reducing workload.

This is yet another consequence of the Welsh Labour government repeatedly refusing to bail out health boards that are over-budget, and its demand on health boards to make cuts to break even. Health boards across Wales are £97.4 million in deficit.

The Welsh government stands by as poverty increases, contributing to the strain on the health service. It blames the Tories in Westminster, instead of joining with trade unions to demand more funds to meet rising need.

### Collapse

Public sector union Unison has condemned the proposed privatisation. It has used the example of Carillion's collapse to illustrate the dangers of NHS privatisation - that private companies will prioritise profit over patient need.

Unison stated it would be willing to work with health boards and the Welsh health secretary to jointly lobby Westminster.

Unfortunately that opposition has so far not been translated into a campaign to explain to union members how privatisation puts their job security, pay and terms and conditions at risk.

Private companies cut costs not primarily by making processes more efficient, but by increasing the exploitation of those who work for them.

Lloyds pharmacy workers took strike action in Ireland last year over the company's refusal to allow union recognition, and poor pay and conditions.

It is the job of unions to organise workers for a fightback, not to passively wait for workers to move into

photo Paul Mattsson



Welsh government  
must block NHS  
privatisation or face  
workers' action

struggle without a lead.

Many health workers feel their unions have not put up a fight as conditions in the NHS have deteriorated over many years. This can create temporary doubts about whether it's possible to fight and win.

Domestic workers in Unison at Princess Alexandra Hospital in Harlow stopped their jobs being outsourced when they threatened a six-day strike, showing how effective workers' action against NHS

privatisation can be with the support of their unions.

Unions should build campaigns with pharmacy workers and link them with other campaigns against attacks on the NHS, such as the hospital downgrades in West Wales. A public campaign opposing privatisation would have massive resonance with NHS staff and the public.

And it would build the basis for the workers' action needed to save the NHS.

**Dave Walsh**

Liverpool council worker  
and Unite member

Local authorities in England are sitting on almost £22 billion of financial reserves, £5 billion more than the year before, the Sunday Times reports. Councils have been accused of choosing to raise council tax in order to build reserves rather than maintain services.

The article accepts that government grants have been drastically reduced since 2010, but suggests that council cuts were mainly a result of bad management.

However, last year the Institute for Fiscal Studies said the current system was unsustainable, particularly for councils in the north and urban areas, which have been hit hardest by the cuts. It also said the government should be honest that these councils will not be able to provide many of the services people expect.

According to the Centre for Cities, in Liverpool Council, where I work, spending is down by £816 for every person in the city compared to 2010. The workforce has been reduced from 12,000 in 2010 to fewer than 5,000 today.

The cuts have been devastating for the most vulnerable people in the city.

When the director of social services, Samir Kalakeche, retired in 2017, he warned in an interview with the Guardian that social services would not exist in Liverpool by 2019 if changes weren't made.

Changes have been made, but only so budgets can be spread extremely thinly. The most vulnerable people now receive wholly inadequate care packages, while those classed as needing moderate care go without help or must find the money to pay.

### Bankrupt

In 2018, the National Audit Office reported that some councils were at breaking point and were using reserves to run day-to-day services, and that reserves would be exhausted by 2021 at that rate. In fact, Northamptonshire County Council declared itself bankrupt in 2017 and was forced to sell its HQ to fund day-to-day services.

Labour councils like Liverpool are implementing Tory cuts, causing enormous pain and suffering.

Labour figures like our own council leader Joe Anderson argue it would be irresponsible to set a no-cuts budget. The government and its wealthy backers would agree, but Anderson should be responsible for the care of the residents and workers of the city. Clearly they are not his priority.

Labour councils have left people in desperation year after year, hoping a Labour government will solve their problems, but how long must we wait? And will Labour, while it's overrun with Blairites, be able to end austerity?

Labour councils should not increase council tax or make cuts to compensate for Tory austerity. Nor should they simply provide a bare minimum of day-to-day services.

Instead they should use reserves

# COUNCIL CUTS CONTINUE WHILE RESERVES RISE



photo Waltham Forest Socialist Party

and borrowing powers to restore services, build new council homes and create jobs. Just like in Liverpool, where the Labour council led by the Militant (now the Socialist Party) conducted such a campaign between 1983 and 1987, local people would respond.

They would see and feel the benefit of the councillors' actions. And the working class could be galvanised in support, ready to rise up, just like in Liverpool, where mass rallies of tens of thousands of people could be called upon to march on the town hall.

If just a few Labour councils were willing to follow the Liverpool example, this weak and divided Tory government would be brought to its knees.

Jeremy Corbyn and John McDonnell should stop retreating from the Blairite challenge and provide bold leadership, encouraging councillors to take this action.

If they fail to provide a clear alternative to Tory austerity, and people are unable to see the difference between them and the Blairites, they will squander their chance of reclaiming the Labour Party and transforming society along socialist lines.



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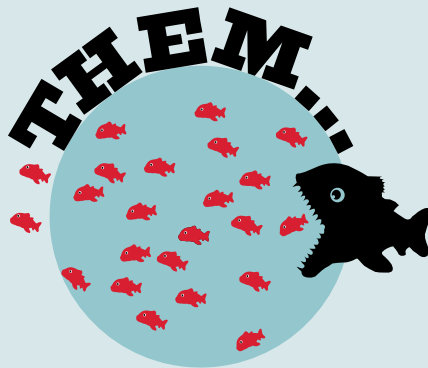


photo WorldSkills UK/CC



photo Ilmicrofono Oggiono/CC

### Mental health provision stretched

Outgoing and hated prime minister Theresa May has told teachers they will be trained to spot mental health problems among children.

But this announcement comes without a drop of extra funding. And education unions, representing overworked and underpaid teachers, have not been consulted.

Thanks to government cuts, a survey of mental health workers in public sector union Unison found that 45% are thinking of leaving their jobs. And 15% of NHS beds for mental health patients in England have gone.

People are sick of the cuts. On all these issues - from jobs and pay, to childcare, leave and mental health - the unions and Jeremy Corbyn should organise mass action to end austerity and fight for the services we need.

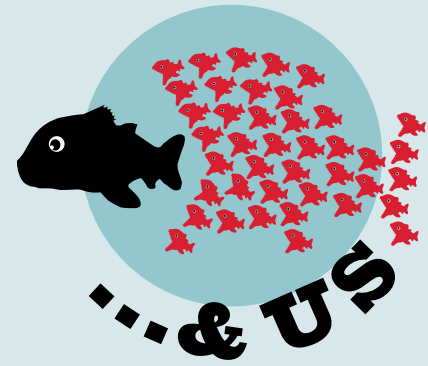


### Nursery cuts and lack of leave

Nurseries in poor areas are closing twice as fast as those in rich parts of the country, according to early education and childcare researchers Ceeda. They reveal there is a £50 million funding shortfall.

And the pain for parents doesn't stop there. Among richer countries, the UK is one of the worst for parental leave.

One of the only countries the UK beats is the US, where fully paid leave guaranteed to mothers is zero weeks.



Have you got news for the fishes? Email [editors@socialistparty.org.uk](mailto:editors@socialistparty.org.uk)

# Cancer stats reveal deep inequality

**Jon Dale**

Secretary, Unite Notts NHS branch

"This year, more than 300,000 people in England will receive the life-changing diagnosis of cancer. And the number of people living with cancer is predicted to rise by 3.2% each year.

"But for too many people, who they are or where they come from will determine what happens next."

Cancer charity Macmillan has brought out a report filled with statistics showing the impact of poverty and austerity.

Compared to the highest income groups, people in the poorest areas

in England are 20% more likely to have their cancer diagnosed at a late stage. Poorer people living with cancer have consistently worse experiences from the point of diagnosis.

40% of people living with cancer in the most deprived areas had surgery compared to 48% in the least deprived areas. Those people living with cancer on the lowest incomes feel twice as likely to need more emotional support as those with larger household incomes.

Inside the home, 38% of people on a low income say they would like more practical support. For people on a high income it's 19%.

Outside the home, 34% of people

on a low income say they would like more practical support, compared to 13% of people on a high income.

In their last year, people living with cancer in the poorest areas faced almost 25% more emergency admissions compared to people from the least deprived areas.

Inequality starts early, with worse living and working conditions. Trade union rights at work allow people to visit their doctor sooner rather than worry about taking time off.

The Socialist Party calls for fully funding the NHS and social care, paid time off work for family carers and a benefits system that meets the needs of those living with cancer.



## South Western Railway staff strike for safety



Bournemouth photo Jane Ward

**Nick Doyle**  
Portsmouth Socialist Party

RMT transport union members on South Western Railway are taking five days of industrial action starting on 18 June.

Many of them are sacrificing five days of pay for safety - to keep a guard on the train. Socialist Party members supported picket lines in London, Bournemouth and a determined picket line at Fratton, Portsmouth.

Action was suspended back in February for talks over the role of the guard. The dispute started again when it became clear that management had no intention of keeping its promises.

As one striking guard put it: "Back again. They had started serious building work when this dispute began which is now complete!" But unlike the construction work this dispute is not over because of the callous disregard of management.

Management are intent on ploughing on with driver-only operation and RMT members are

showing that they will not accept South Western Railway profiting at the expense of public safety.

RMT general secretary candidate and former president Sean Hoyle came down to support as he has done throughout this two-year dispute. Strikers were surprised that the current general secretary Mick Cash came to support for the first time in their dispute! Strikers were under no illusions as to why he was supporting them today.

Sean Hoyle was clear that they have to win this dispute. He went on to explain that of all their walkouts, this action will cause the most disruption for South Western Railway, being the same week as the Royal Ascot racing festival.

Sean also said that the union leadership has been too cautious in the past - calling off action on the busiest days, to not cause problems for the public. The support shown to RMT members on strike shows that train users understand all too well that this dispute is over their safety.

Socialist Students also came and gave their full support to the guards at Fratton and called for the 'Youth Strike 4 Climate' protesters to support the guards on 21 June.

This strike shows that profit should never come before safety. What is needed is a return to public ownership, under democratic workers' control, so we can plan for a public transport system that works for all.



Portsmouth

## Bluestar bus drivers strike over pay



photo Nick Chaffey

Bus drivers at Bluestar in Southampton were out in force at Totton and Eastleigh bus depots on 18 June, angry at their pay and working conditions.

The drivers, members of the RMT transport union, are employed on 40-hour contracts and are expected to drive for 59 hours with no overtime rates for anti-social hours. Strikers know that the 3% increase offer is not a lot on a wage that's not a lot - just £11.13 an hour - for the work they do looking after the travelling public.

Not that Bluestar cares about its passengers either. Drivers explained to us how many passengers support the strike because buses are so frequently cancelled. This is

because Bluestar doesn't employ enough drivers.

In negotiations Bluestar management says there is only a limited budget for pay, but not when it comes to trying to break this strike, with strikebreaking drivers paid £250 a day and put up in hotels overnight.

Strikers were buoyant after the solid support for the strike action, backing from their passengers and lots of support from City Bus and Xela drivers who drove past the protest outside Bluestar offices.

If no agreement is reached then an overtime ban will begin on 1 July which will show management the reality of their understaffed service. **Southampton Socialist Party**

## Unite rules conference 2019

# UNITE MUST BE AT THE HEAD OF FIGHTING FOR A GENERAL ELECTION AND AGAINST COUNCIL CUTS

**Kevin Parslow**  
Socialist Party member in Unite the Union

General union Unite's rules conference takes place on 24-28 June with the Tories in meltdown. Unite has correctly called on Jeremy Corbyn to resist attempts to commit Labour to a second EU referendum and instead said he must be at the head of mobilising a mass movement to fight for a general election to get the Tories out.

Meanwhile, members of Unite at British Steel, Honda, Bridgend Ford and Bombardier face battles for their jobs. It is vital that Unite, along with the other unions, puts its stamp on events by fighting to the end against this industrial destruction.

The willingness of Unite members to fight is shown in the number of disputes regularly breaking out. Many have resulted in victories - including the Birmingham bin workers against a Blairite Labour council. Unite must take the lead in demanding that Labour councils finally refuse to pass on Tory cuts.

Right-wing councillors and MPs are a living reminder that the battle

to defend Corbyn is far from over. They are desperate to prevent a Corbyn government or to sabotage it if elected - all in the interests of the capitalist establishment. This is why it was a mistake for Unite not to implement its policy on mandatory reselection at last year's Labour conference - a policy which a Socialist Party member had proposed at the 2016 policy conference.

### General secretary election

There is speculation that a general secretary election could be imminent. The last election showed that the right in Unite and Labour saw removing Len McCluskey as an important step to attack Corbyn's leadership.

It is crucial that there is a left candidate who can take on the right wing with a fighting political and industrial programme that defends and extends lay democracy.

This conference is a real opportunity to set that in motion. In 2015 the words "so far as may be lawful" were removed from the rule book. This was a big step forward, but Unite must not be afraid to challenge the undemocratic trade union acts in

order to defend the jobs and pay of our members.

There are several amendments this year which support democratic structures for Unite Community and retired members, which the Socialist Party supports. Many proposed amendments deal with representation at policy and rules conferences.

There is an undoubted dislocation that still exists in the structures, where too often the union's over 3,000 branches do not engage with the regional industrial sector committees.

Unite still has a biennial conference, attended by only a quarter the number of delegates that public sector union Unison's conference has. Enhancing representation at our conferences would encourage and increase participation in the union's structures.

Unite's executive council proposes only an increase in delegate entitlement to one per 1,300 members in each regional sector, but disappointingly reduces rules conference delegations by half. We feel this should be opposed and the democratic changes for annual branch delegate-based conferences supported.

existing factories and to develop existing skills to make electric cars.

Big business is pulling the plug on this investment, choosing cheaper labour markets on different continents, and abandoning loyal and skilled workforces. The Welsh government's plan so far has been to throw subsidies at Ford with no guarantees for jobs or investment and it is now down to the workers to take action.

The current leader of Welsh Labour, Mark Drakeford, will cut his teeth during this struggle. He has already pledged to do "everything we can" to save Ford Bridgend. We say nationalise it now!

The Welsh government set a precedent when it nationalised Cardiff International Airport. The same principles apply now!

If Welsh Labour ensured the future of Ford Bridgend then it would give confidence to workers across the UK from Swindon to Sunderland to take action to bring the decay of UK manufacturing to an end.

John McDonnell could promise striking workers that if a general election was forced due to workers' struggle, and Labour were to take power, that money would be made available to modernise a failing industry.

With the Tories on the brink and no one at the helm, if we fight, we can win. Solidarity to the Ford plant workers!

■ National Shop Stewards Network meeting: Monday 24 June, 7.30pm at the Bridgend YMCA, Angel Street, Bridgend CF31 4AD

## FORD BRIDGEND WORKERS VOTE TO FIGHT TO SAVE THREATENED PLANT



Mass union meeting of Ford workers at the plant votes for action photo Unite Wales

**Alex Wedlake**

Unite Young Members national committee (personal capacity)

Following a series of mass meetings on 12 June, Unite members at the Ford plant in Bridgend decided overwhelmingly to fight the closure of the engine factory.

With over 80% of workers voting in favour of action, there is a huge mandate for the union leadership to launch a campaign to protect the jobs and skills at the plant.

The mood on the street is resolute. With hundreds of signatures already, the Socialist Party has shown that the people of Bridgend and the wider community across Wales support whatever action the workers of the plant deem necessary.

The automotive industry is in crisis. Nissan and Honda have begun to scale back operations not only in the UK but across Europe.

The electric car is emerging as a greener alternative to diesel and petrol. However it will require capital investment to repurpose

# Schools unions must turn anger into a fight against funding catastrophe



The Valentine School strike in Southampton against redundancies forced the council to protect funding for two years photo Nick Chaffey

**Nick Chaffey**  
Southern Socialist Party secretary

The catastrophe facing schools cannot be exaggerated. Schools in England have lost out on £5.4 billion in Tory funding cuts since 2015.

Cuts mean less teachers, less teaching assistants and larger class sizes, with primary school classes the largest since 2000 and secondary classes the largest since 2007. Austerity-hit parents are then asked for extra cash to pay for the basics.

Combined with funding cuts, high-stakes testing means a narrow curriculum, with art, music and sport falling off the timetable. The unbearable pressure on the teachers and staff left - underpaid and overworked - has reached breaking point, reflected in a recruitment crisis.

These facts will be familiar to everyone at the 'Together for Education' conference on 22 June. This event must now be about turning anger at this crisis into action.

School strikes organised by the National Education Union are spreading across the country against cuts, closures and academisation. A head teachers' union conference agreed a motion to consider industrial action to stop school cuts.

While draconian Tory anti-trade union legislation has made national strike ballots harder to win, building active local campaigns and utilising 'disaggregated' balloting could ensure those schools willing to fight can begin a movement that would rapidly spread.

### Confidence

Confidence is growing from the example set by schools like Valentine Primary in Southampton. Its strike action against redundancies ensured local council support to protect staff from cuts over the next two years.

There is an urgent need to return to child-centred education, fully funded and delivered by well-trained, well-paid staff under the democratic control of local authorities. The government's proposed

extra funding into schools will not be enough to undo the damage inflicted on children through a decade of Tory austerity.

A survey indicates that in 2017, the snap general election saw 800,000 votes switched on the issue of the education crisis, responding to Jeremy Corbyn's anti-austerity manifesto proposal to create a "unified National Education Service for England to move towards cradle-to-grave learning that is free at the point of use."

If Jeremy Corbyn was to call on every Labour council to use its reserves and borrowing powers to protect school budgets and commit to reimbursing all local authorities from an incoming Labour government, there would be huge support.

There must be a bold call for an immediate general election to ensure an end to school cuts and austerity, and to mobilise a massive education demo of all education trade unions, backed by the Trade Union Congress, linked to a clear commitment to build coordinated strike action against all further cuts.

## East London bin workers call 12-day strike over wage grades

Bin workers in Newham, east London could have lost over £20,000 each over the last decade.

The regional officer for their union Unite, Onay Kasab, said: "Backsliding and 'ducking and diving' has been the hallmark of the council's attitude to this issue."

The 45 refuse workers voted by a margin of 88% to strike for 12 days from Monday 26 June.

Onay went on to say: "If the strike goes ahead, most household bins in the borough won't be collected and there could be an unpleasant stench in the hot weather, worthy of Victorian London."

"This gives an added incentive for the Acas talks... to succeed and deliver a fair settlement for our members."

"Newham Council has repeatedly failed to live up to the agreement it signed more than a decade ago for the progression from grade 3 to grade 4 and then grade 5 on the national pay scales."

These important council workers can take inspiration from Newham gas managers, also in Unite, who last month blocked pay cuts with just the threat of strike action.

**Ian Pattison**  
East London Socialist Party

## Swansea Parcelforce workers picket depot in support of victimised rep



Socialist Party members on the picket line photo Swansea Socialist Party

Communication Workers Union (CWU) members at courier company Parcelforce set up a picket line on 12 June outside their Swansea depot.

They walked out in support of their local union rep who is being threatened with disciplinary action, and who has been forced away from his job for the past 21 weeks.

CWU members' frustration at the lack of progress to resolve this dispute blew up when workers walked out in an attempt to remove this threat to their union rep. There is recognition that if any victimisation by a bullying management is left unchallenged, then further attacks on members

would almost certainly take place.

The large numbers of CWU members on the picket were determined to defend their rep and to ensure he returns to work immediately and continues to defend their interests.

CWU officials were on site attempting to resolve this longstanding dispute.

Socialist Party and Swansea Trade Union Council members were warmly greeted on the picket line and thanked for their support and solidarity.

**Alec Thraves**  
Swansea Socialist Party  
and vice president,  
Swansea Trade Union Council

## Harrogate academy workers strike against closure

A lively picket of staff at Harrogate's Grove Academy, a unit educating vulnerable secondary school pupils, took place on Thursday 13 June despite the pouring rain.

North Yorkshire County Council has created a major funding gap which has already resulted in children losing places.

The council has twice delayed

producing a plan of action without which the unit risks closing by Christmas. The strike was supported by the NEU, NASUWT and Unison education unions and parents.

The protest continued in the town centre with many shoppers stopping to sign the petition.

**Kevin Pattison**  
Leeds Socialist Party



# SUDAN: THE REVOLUTION UNDER THREAT

## A socialist plan of struggle needed to avoid defeat

Nearly two months after the overthrow of the former dictator Omar al-Bashir, who ruled Sudan for 30 years, the struggle between revolution and counterrevolution has entered a critical stage as **Tony Saunois**, CWI secretary, explains.

Mass protests against the former dictator began in December 2018. He was removed by the Transitional Military Council (TMC) to try to contain the developing revolutionary movement. While al-Bashir is gone, the regime he led has until now largely been left intact. This has driven the mass movement back onto the streets in opposition to the continued rule by the TMC.

In order to try and reassert its rule, the TMC, especially its most repressive component, the Rapid Support Forces (RSF), unleashed a vicious crackdown. Now access to the internet has been cut.

Although the internet and social media can play an important role in organising social protests and struggle, it is not a replacement for the need for organisation, political parties, trade unions, action committees and other forms of organisation by the working class.

The shutting down of the internet by the TMC is an answer to those who have argued that organisation and parties are no longer needed in this 'digital age' to organise a struggle to transform society.

### Repression

The bloodiest attack was the brutal repression on 10 June of a mass protest camp in the centre of the capital, Khartoum. At least 120 people were reportedly killed and others suffered beatings, rape, torture and violent assaults.

The bloody slaughter was carried out by the RSF whose leader, Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo, known as Hemedti, is the deputy head of the TMC. The RSF, a brutal paramilitary force, was established in 2013 under the former dictator al-Bashir. Its origins can be traced to the tribal Janjaweed militia, which earned its reputation for mass killings, rape and torture during the war in Darfur, western Sudan, over a decade ago.

It was in response to the latest massacre that a general strike involving millions has taken place. It involved workers, sections of the middle class and the poor.

Despite having many features of what in India is known as a 'hartal', which involves support for a strike by sections of business and movements in the countryside, it revealed the potential strength of the working class.

The social weight of the general strike illustrated the potential for the working class, together with the middle class and others exploited by capitalism, not only to challenge and defeat the TMC but also capitalism and landlordism in Sudan.

### Trade unions

The strike reflected one of the gains of the revolutionary movement in the beginning of forging a unified movement, and the building of unions or workers reclaiming some of the already established official trade unions which existed under the dictatorship.

This includes sections of the radicalised middle layers in society, like the Democratic Lawyers Alliance, the Sudanese Central Doctors Committee and others, who have come together in the Sudanese Professionals Association (SPA). They have adopted some methods of struggle of the working class.

These layers have linked together with some public sector workers. In other sections of the working class we have seen workers move to wrest control of the

official trade unions which existed under the old regime. They seek to remove those official union leaders who had collaborated with the al-Bashir regime.

At the same time, there has been the formation of local neighbourhood committees. These seem to have now become the main vehicle for the organisation of opposition to the regime.

These committees could have the potential to develop further into becoming real organs of struggle. They could possibly develop and evolve to become an alternative potential power to the regime and existing state machine.

The Sudanese masses have a strong tradition of workers' struggle. In the past, a powerful Communist Party existed, which was founded in 1946. It lost much of its base following its entry into a coalition government in 1969.

A split took place during a failed attempted coup in 1971, when a wing of the Communist Party supported it. However, the relatively strong traditions of the working class are reflected in the current movement.

The recent developments have terrified the Sudanese ruling class and the regime. It has provoked alarm among the capitalist class throughout Africa and internationally. The capitalist class can see the potential danger which exists for them, with the emergence of a powerful independent workers' movement.

The recent deployment of representatives of the ruling class from the African Union and Ethiopia to Sudan reflects the fear they have of losing control of the situation.

US imperialism was prepared to leave it to the regional powers, like Saudi Arabia, the UAE and Egypt, to intervene to defend their own vested interests. However, reflecting the fears of US imperialism, the White House belatedly sent an 'envoy' to Sudan.

They hope to act as a restraining influence on the TMC and possibly attempt to secure an agreement for a transition to a coalition. This would involve the current regime and those representatives of the opposition which pose no threat to the ruling class. However, such a prospect is

not going to result in the establishment of a stable Sudanese capitalist government, whatever forces are involved.

The umbrella opposition leaders, organised in the Forces of Freedom and Change (FFC), includes not only the SPA but also pro-capitalist opposition parties, like the National Umma Party and the Sudanese Congress Party. The role of such forces, as in any revolutionary movement, is to act as a brake on the movement, keep it within the confines of capitalism, and derail it.

If the revolution is to advance and defeat the threat of counter revolution, no trust can be placed in these pro-capitalist parties. The working class needs to urgently build its own mass workers' party, which unfortunately does not exist at this stage.

### Pro-capitalist opposition

The real role of the pro-capitalist parties and groupings in the FFC was reflected in April when they tried to reach a negotiated settlement with al-Bashir, as part of their opposition to the Sudanese

masses expressing themselves through early elections. Now it has been repeated during the recent general strike and civil protests, which terrified them as much as it did the regime and international capitalism.

The strike was seen by the pro-capitalist parties and groupings as a form of protest to be called off as soon as possible. The stoppage was not followed by calls to extend the strike indefinitely, with the objective of overthrowing the regime.

Workers and supporters of the strike were wrongly urged to stay at home rather than come onto the streets in a mass demonstration of strength in preparation to confront and overthrow the regime. After only 72 hours the strike was called off and negotiations re-opened. Such steps can only serve to eventually demobilise the masses and prepare the way for a betrayal and victory of the counterrevolution.

To take the revolution forward and overthrow the regime, a plan of struggle needs to be prepared and urgently carried through. The neighbourhood

committees need to be strengthened rapidly and built into really democratic organs of struggle.

Delegates need to be democratically elected to them from the workplaces and the local neighbourhoods and subject to recall. These then need to link up on a district, city-wide, regional and national basis.

It is urgent to take steps to organise armed defence committees and a militia under the democratic control of the neighbourhood committees.

As in all revolutions, the mass movement has already provoked divisions among the ruling class and within the TMC.

According to some reports, there are already splits between the RSF and the regular Sudanese Army. Should the revolution and the working class not take the necessary steps to advance, there is the real prospect of a collapse into conflict and clashes between the rival military and paramilitary forces.

The splits which have begun to open between the RSF and the army are not

an accident. They reflect the social pressure felt on the rank and file of the army which is drawn from the working class and poor.

A bold appeal needs urgently to be made to the rank and file soldiers to break from the TMC and their commanding officers, and to support the workers and poor in a revolutionary movement to transform Sudan.

Rank-and-file committees of the soldiers need to be formed and carry through a purge of reactionary officers and to elect replacements.

A defence militia of the working class and poor could be armed, if the rank-and-file soldiers can be won to the side of the revolution.

### General strike

But for this to happen, the soldiers must be convinced that the workers and revolutionary movement can go forward and overthrow the old regime. The mass movement must therefore demonstrate its strength, determination and confidence by calling an indefinite general strike and the formation of democratically elected committees of action.

These, if linked up on a city-wide, regional and national basis, can form the basis for a revolutionary government of the workers, the poor and all those exploited by capitalism.

Such a revolutionary government could then enact a programme that would include:

- Convening elections to a revolutionary constituent assembly
- The establishment of workers' tribunals to bring to trial all those collaborating with the former regime and TMC
- A purge of the supporters and collaborators of the old regime in the state
- Disbanding the RSF
- The right to organise political parties, and free and democratic trade unions
- A democratic press and media based on public ownership of printing and broadcasting resources and outlets, under democratic control and allocation of press and media facilities, based on support
- Nationalisation of all major companies, banks and multinational corporations under democratic workers' control and management
- Massive investment in infrastructure and the economy
- No to foreign capitalist intervention
- For a democratic socialist Sudan, with full democratic rights for all minorities, and an international appeal for support and solidarity from the working class of Africa and internationally



photo M Saleh/CC





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### ■ Conservative climate crisis

Reducing carbon dioxide emissions globally is essential to fighting the climate change crisis that threatens the planet.

A new plan announced by departing prime minister Theresa May proposes dropping Britain's net carbon dioxide emissions to zero by 2050. But May's plans have already been torn apart by climate experts and campaigners.

Professor Phil Taylor, head of engineering at Newcastle University, said the government's policy is "way off the mark." Put simply, it doesn't have policies that come close to getting to that goal.

The government already has a goal under the 2008 Climate Change Act to reduce UK emissions by 80% of 1990s levels by the year 2050. For that we need a 51% reduction by 2027, and the government is already off track to reach even that.

The Conservatives are no leaders on fighting climate change and their record shows it. They have pushed fracking on communities, increased our spending on fossil fuels, and cut incentives for green investment.

Plus, senior Tories Andrea Leadsom, Michael Gove and Boris Johnson - all participants in the struggle for the top job of party leader and prime minister - have denied man-made climate change previously.

With the Tories in power, we will make no progress towards the essential task of reducing our emissions and moving towards a green economy. The Conservative Party is wedded to the interests of capitalism, and capitalism has little interest in action on climate change that will harm profits.

Oil companies and the biggest businesses have spent decades using their economic clout, political influence, propaganda and deception to hold back changes that would harm their own interests and power.

Critics of the new plan are already concerned the burden of fighting

climate change will be put on the working class.

The climate movement must instead coordinate with trade unions and organised workers to push the representatives of capitalism out of power, and bring the working class to power with a programme for a green and socialist transformation of our economy and society.

**Adam Harmsworth**  
**Coventry**

### ■ Housing and class struggle

At the start of the 20th century, 90% of Britain's population lived in private rented accommodation. The sector was subject to minimal regulation.

With the coming of World War One - and the attendant pressures on housing - landlords began to hike up rents. This was at a time when most working-class men were at the front fighting. Women saw it as a betrayal and began to organise tenants' groups to resist the rises.

In Glasgow in particular the women got the support of the Independent Labour Party and were championed by socialists such as John Maclean. They also won backing from workers in the factories and shipyards.

Their agitation forced the government to take action. Rent controls were introduced. So too was security of tenure which made it more difficult for landlords to evict tenants.

Then, in 1972, rent strikes broke out across Britain in response to the Heath government's notorious Housing Finance Act. That legislation aimed to force council rents up to market levels.

While most Labour councils - even those that originally resisted - eventually caved in one by one, Clay Cross stood firm to the end. Eleven councillors risked prison because of their refusal to implement the rises.

And in Liverpool in the mid-1980s, the then socialist council - in the face of massive opposition from Whitehall - embarked on a huge housebuilding programme. It built over 5,000 new homes and froze council rents.

More recently there has been campaigning against the bedroom tax, and



The 12 April youth climate strike  
photo Mary Finch

Grenfell Tower after the fire in 2017  
photo James Ivens



resistance to the social cleansing of social housing in parts of London.

So housing has been and still is a focus for class struggle, and it is excellent to see the Socialist outline a programme for safe homes after Grenfell.

**Alan Stewart**  
**Wakefield, West Yorkshire**

■ See 'Grenfell two years on - still fighting for safety and justice' at [socialistparty.org.uk](http://socialistparty.org.uk)

### ■ D Day defiance

I saw some of the TV coverage of the preparations for D Day on 5 June. On BBC1 a former soldier was interviewed. At one point he said: "What are all these politicians doing here? They are not needed."

I switched on the radio a bit later and another former soldier said "I like the queen being here but these politicians should stay at home." Mutiny in the ranks?

**Pete McNally**  
**Welland, Worcestershire**

### ■ Euro vultures gather

As we anticipated, in the wake of the Euro elections, the vultures moved with renewed vigour to crush Jeremy Corbyn and the anti-austerity approach he espouses.

Jeremy must know he will never mollify the Blairite wing nor the capitalist media who have displayed sickening sycophancy in defence of arch-Blairite Alistair Campbell. He's got to go on the offensive.

The rest of the anti-socialist brigade should join Campbell. Watson and Campbell are blatantly working to implement

'Operation Anaconda', their instrument designed to crush Corbyn.

There should be no more retreats or apologies. Trigger ballots should be implemented now to rid the movement of the fifth column, or it will destroy the Corbyn project.

It's time for Jeremy to organise up and down the country to mobilise the massive support that exists for an anti-austerity alternative to the catastrophic cuts of the Tories. Those who organise his activities should be bombarded with demands for a mass campaign which can change the whole landscape of British politics.

Secret demos should be replaced by a confident call for millions of supporters to get on the streets to demand a general election now.

**Tony Mulhearn**  
**Liverpool**

### ■ Don't extradite Assange

The Merseyside Pensioners Association has agreed to support Jeremy Corbyn's statement that the UK government should not extradite Julian Assange to the United States.

Like Corbyn, we believe that Assange is being pursued by the US because he has exposed wrongdoing by US administrations and their military forces.

They, backed by the Tory government, are keen to get Assange extradited because WikiLeaks exposed and embarrassed the major western powers, especially over how their military and intelligence forces operate outside of any notional democratic public oversight, often conducting extremely violent operations including acts of terror against civilians.

We note that in November 2016, Assange was questioned at the Ecuadorian embassy by Swedish officials over remaining rape allegations. They should be investigated via due process without the threat of deportation to the US.

The Merseyside Pensioners Association also confirmed our support for the Justice for Shrewsbury Pickets Campaign, and wish them every success in the forthcoming judicial review of their case.

**Merseyside Pensioners Association**



WikiLeaks founder  
Julian Assange

### ■ Years and Years

'Years and Years' is a new six-part fictional family drama, starring Emma Thompson and written by Russell T Davies. The drama starts in 2019 and follows the lives of the Lyons family who are scattered all over the UK.

The story begins with the birth of the newest member of the family, baby Lincoln. It plays out over the next 15 years, as Britain stumbles into a sombre future which is becoming increasingly unstable, led by a new political party.

Increasing tensions between the United States and China include a nuclear weapon being fired, causing one of the Lyons family members, an activist in the vicinity of the explosion, to suffer radiation exposure.

There's a global economic crash, leaving banks to close as people are wiped of their savings and homes are repossessed. There's poverty, the plight of deportation, and people fleeing to Britain as refugees.

There's also some futuristic but plausible technological advances as the Lyons negotiate their own twists and turns, tragedies and triumphs.

The drama isn't easy watching, but highlights some of the impact of capitalism and the greed of the super-rich 1% ruining the lives of the working class. Socialism can stop this.

**Calvin Fowler**  
**Worcester**

# Defend free TV licences for over-75s!

**Keith Dickinson**  
West London Socialist Party

The sheer hypocrisy of this Tory government, with candidates fighting like rats in a sack for the leadership, is exposed further by its demand that the BBC rethink its plan to scrap free television licences for over-75s.

The interests of all pensioners are completely secondary to both sides, except as election votes or what little money the capitalist class considers pensioners are entitled to.

The BBC says it will scrap free licences for over three million pensioners from June 2020, with a means test leaving only those on pension credit eligible. Only 1.5 million households of the present 4.45 million will receive the service.

The charity Age UK says: "For over a million of the oldest people in our country, the TV is the constant companion and window on the world. And now it's under threat." It estimates that the extra cost could push over 50,000 pensioners below the poverty line, and has handed in a petition of 80,000 signatures to 10 Downing Street.

Caroline Abrahams, the charity's director, adds: "If this scheme goes ahead, we are going to see sick and disabled people in their 80s and 90s, who are completely dependent on their cherished television for companionship and news, forced to give it up."

"Means testing may sound fair, but in reality it means at least 650,000 of our poorest pensioners facing a big annual bill they simply can't afford, because though eligible for pension credit they don't actually get it."

The Government says the BBC is responsible for this. Theresa May is "very disappointed." But it was her government in 2015 that stopped paying for the scheme, and insisted the BBC pay.

The Tories and their ruling-class backers have for a long time considered the BBC a load of 'lefty liberals', despite its pro-establishment bias, and wanted all broadcasting to be commercialised. Effectively, huge chunks of the BBC have been privatised, as with the NHS.

Most of the drama productions are now 'produced for the BBC' by outsourced companies which make profits from selling them around the world. Hundreds of millions of pounds, which in the past would have filled the BBC's coffers.

The BBC says it will cost £745 million a year if it can't collect fees from all those over 75, and only £250 million with the new scheme. Of course, it could recover a couple of million from the huge salaries of some of its senior broadcasters - which Tories constantly exclaim about without mentioning the salaries of their millionaire cabinet and big business backers.

The BBC director-general, Lord Hall, stresses that the government's licence fee settlement in 2010 left funding 24% lower than if the fee had gone up with inflation.

But he doesn't point out that



3 million

Pensioner households would be affected by the cut

many MPs and their capitalist friends are advocating the BBC abolish the fee altogether - effectively abolish the BBC as it presently exists. He says there has been no public consultation or parliamentary scrutiny on the last two government settlements.

And he doesn't point out that the licence fee is, in effect, a form of regressive taxation. A socialist programme for broadcasting should abolish it for all, with funding guaranteed from other sources such as the taxes we already pay and nationalising the banks.

In the context of austerity and privatisation, the entertainment unions have understandable concerns about abolishing the licence fee because - for now - it is ring-fenced funding for public broadcasting.

But only by booting out the Tories, and replacing austerity and privatisation with socialist nationalisation and democratic workers' control, can funding be guaranteed.

The BBC is supposed to be a public service. Hall claims "the BBC belongs to all of us. Young and old. Rich and poor." If so, it should be publicly owned, fully funded and democratically controlled. This should include guaranteeing airtime to alternative viewpoints according to their support in wider society.

The governing body could be

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# Orgreave injustice - 35th anniversary march and rally

**Alistair Tice**  
Yorkshire Socialist Party secretary

The 35th anniversary of the “Battle of Orgreave” was marked on Saturday 15 June with the biggest turnout yet of around 500 demonstrators, on what has become an annual march for “Truth and Justice”.

During the historic year-long miners’ strike of 1984-85 to save pits, jobs and communities, the Orgreave coking plant just outside Rotherham/Sheffield was the scene on 18 June 1984 of an organised police riot against striking miners who were trying to stop lorries taking coke to the steelworks in Scunthorpe.

### Police ambush

In what was a ‘set up’ on the day, 6,000 officers commanded by the now infamous South Yorkshire police subjected hundreds of striking miners to mounted charges.

Many pickets were hit, beaten and seriously injured by police on horses and on foot wielding their batons.

95 miners were arrested, and most prosecuted for the offence of riot, which carried a potential life sentence in prison. The police withdrew the prosecution 48 days into the trial, after a succession



photo A Tice

of police officers were accused of lying and presenting false evidence, including the forgery of a signature on a statement.

No inquiry was held, no police officer was ever disciplined for any offence, and no officer resigned.

The Orgreave Truth and Justice Campaign (OTJC) began its campaign for a full public inquiry in 2012, since which successive Tory home secretaries have continued to protect the Thatcher Tory government and police from being

exposed. In October 2016, Home Secretary Amber Rudd refused an inquiry because “nobody died”!

Well, as ex-miner John Dunn said at the rally on behalf of OTJC: “Thatcher is dead but we are still here and growing in numbers.”

The Orgreave campaign has become a rallying point for some of the most combative sections of the trade union movement and has won a commitment that a future Jeremy Corbyn-led government will hold a full public inquiry.

## Oppose big business’s sphere of influence!

**Ian Pattison**  
East London Socialist Party

A Trump backer plans to build a sphere - as tall as Big Ben and as wide as the Millennium Dome - in Newham, east London.

The private venue will host concerts and other events. But the site is already a stone’s throw from the 7,500 capacity Copper Box Arena, in the 2012 Olympic Park and the nearby London Stadium, which can hold 80,000 for concerts.

Campaigners have challenged the effect its construction will have on pollution. Parts of Newham regularly exceed safe levels of air pollution at the moment.

With the arrival of the sphere, nearby residents will lose the right to park for free outside their homes. And there hasn’t been a thought for the extra congestion at the already-busy Stratford station.

There are so many other things the space, surrounded by Newham residents, could be used for.

25,000 people are on the (closed off) housing waiting list in the borough. Housing experts suggest

there’s space for 1,400 homes. Or the area could be turned into a park to give space and light to the people who currently live there.

But the site went out of public hands in 2015 when it was sold to Westfield shopping centre for £9 million. Just two years later, they made an enormous profit offloading the land to the current owners for £60 million.

### Labour

Anti-Corbyn London mayor Sadiq Khan backs the plans. The all-Labour council and Newham Labour mayor Rokana Fiaz must immediately oppose and block the sphere.

The London Legacy Development Corporation - an undemocratic and unelected body that runs developments relating to the 2012 Olympics - also has a say over the space.

It only confirms what the Socialist Party warned. Without working-class control and public ownership, ordinary Londoners won’t benefit in the long-term with homes or regeneration following the Olympic Games.

## Young Socialists - re-establishing Rhondda’s fighting traditions

**Sasha O’Neil**

“What’s important,” Sophie, year eight, told our Rhondda Young Socialists meeting, “is to tell people how socialists like us are coming together to target capitalism and its politicians.”

Likewise Mason, year six, said she’d spotted the ‘socialist change, not climate change’ posters we’d put up around their school and been eager to take part. When I asked Sophie whether she’d been on any of the protests down in Cardiff, she replied with a gleam in her eye, “not yet”.

Mason said the situation was about more than climate change: the council had wasted money building a super-school.

Speaker Finley Toomey-Langford had put up posters in his sixth-form common room. He’d never expected to end up speaking to people so much younger than himself - and yet, their passion and commitment were unmistakable.

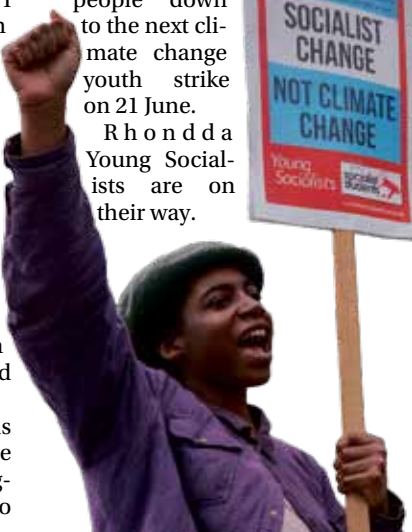
“What this shows,” said Finley, “is that the fighting traditions of the Rhondda are still alive in the younger generation. What we need to

explain is the importance of collectivising” - in other words, the need to organise and build for mass action.

Sophie and Mason exchanged a fist bump when the meeting ended. It was clear they were proud of themselves. They will be leafletting their school canteen and working to get people to the next meeting.

Finley will be campaigning at his school - as well as working to get people down to the next climate change youth strike on 21 June.

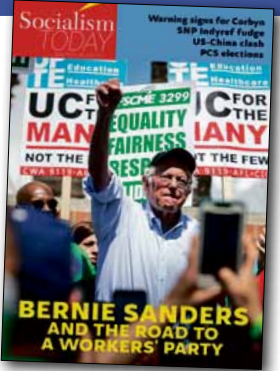
R h o n d d a Young Socialists are on their way.



## Socialism Today

The Socialist Party’s magazine

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## NORTH SHIELDS: SECOND MARCH AND RALLY TO #SAVEOURBRIDGE

**William Jarrett**  
North Tyneside Socialist Party

On the afternoon of 15 June, around 25 people again marched through North Shields town centre to save a much-loved and important pedestrian bridge.

It was greeted with the same wide support which has underpinned the campaign, with the active participation of our local Socialist Party from the start.

Sadly the official campaign didn’t publicise the march, on the basis its leaders felt it may not be well attended. This perplexed us as the first such event attracted 70 people.

We have explained that in order for the campaign to succeed it must be bold and political in nature, calling into question the Labour council’s austerity rampage.

Unfortunately, Labour Party members in official positions on the Tyne and Wear Public Transport Users Group have tried to rely instead on personal relationships with senior council figures.

### Demands

Following the rally at the bridge a resident approached our members, purchased a copy of the Socialist, and asked to place a placard in his window.

He said his kids love the bridge and that he sees people using it at all hours of the day.

Our demands are resonating with those who want infrastructure and services to remain intact and improve - as North Shields enjoys a surge in popularity among developers and speculators who appear to be closely associated with council figures.



photo Elaine Brunskill

## Newton Abbot says no to Tory privatisation of the NHS!

**Richard Worth**  
Torbay and South Devon Socialist Party

With the local and European elections over, the streets of Newton Abbot, Devon, were clear of political parties campaigning just for people’s votes. But Torbay and South Devon Socialist Party never stops campaigning; we were out there again on 15 June.

Our stall against the Tory privatisation of the NHS and the threatened closure of Teignmouth Hospital engaged with many angry people wanting to do something to stop the hated Tories, who showed support for our campaign against austerity, NHS privatisation, and so on.

We also gained the ear of a number of young people who were keen to fight Trump and the Tories. A young woman who wanted to stop climate change and live in an ‘ethical’ world, bought a ‘Dump Trump’



photo Richard Worth

badge and quickly put it on to show her opposition to his racism and climate denial.

We sold 21 copies of the Socialist, and received £28 in donations for the fighting fund to support the

Socialist Party’s campaigning work. That’s a total of £49 raised from the people of Newton Abbot to fight for a publically run NHS, quality education for all, no to Trump, and for socialist change not climate change!

## Worcester: Building on our successful library campaign

**Ruthie McNally**  
Worcester Socialist Party

Worcester Socialist Party did another door-to-door paper sale on the back of the article of our success in the St John’s library campaign (see [socialistparty.org.uk](http://socialistparty.org.uk)).

We decided to cover the blocks of flats in the St John’s area given our wonderful weather at the moment!

The flats are sheltered accommodation for the elderly so many have disabilities. It was quite easy to sell

the paper as most had heard about the campaign.

We also handed out our leaflets explaining the campaign success but also warned that there were no guarantees the money would be there for long, so the fight would continue. Moreover, the council is making cuts elsewhere.

I talked to one resident about the firefighters’ campaign. Hereford and Worcester Fire Authority is proposing a cut of 60% in full-time firefighters at night in the two counties, alongside other reductions in

service. Firefighters produced a petition and a response to the ‘consultation’ and we also put out a leaflet and petition on our stalls.

Another resident wanted us to push for a mobile library service to the flats (as we had been successful with our campaign) due to many residents not being able to access the local one.

The local councillor also got praise from some of the residents as he’d said he had been part of the campaign - unfortunately we never got to see him!

## Socialist Party Building Fund

The Socialist Party is being evicted 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 launched a building appeal for a new premises.

We do not have any rich backers. Our branches are based in working class communities,

among workers, students and young people who have been hammered by austerity, debt and low pay. But our members and supporters have been prepared to make a sacrifice to ensure that we have the funds we need.

In London, rents and property prices are high.

Your donation, however big or small, will make a difference. Be part of something bigger - donate to the Socialist Party building fund and know that you’re part of fighting for a better world.

You can make a donation at [socialistparty.org.uk/donate](http://socialistparty.org.uk/donate) and include ‘building fund’ in the comments.



## Socialist Party Fighting Fund

	£ target	£ received	April-June 2019										Deadline: 2 July 2019									
South West	1,800	1,726																				96%
Wales	2,300	1,757																				76%
East Midlands	1,850	1,394																				75%
Northern	750	435																				58%
Yorkshire	3,300	1,690																				51%
Southern	1,600	786																				49%
London	6,100	2,948																				48%
North West	2,100	868																				41%
West Midlands	2,600	910																				35%
South East	750	227																				30%
Eastern	1,200	350																				29%
Other	5,650	2,375																				42%
TOTAL	30,000	15,467																				52%

### Donate today!

If you agree with what you read in the Socialist, consider making a donation to the Socialist Party’s fighting fund:

■ pay by card on 020 8988 8777

or [socialistparty.org.uk/donate](http://socialistparty.org.uk/donate)

■ cheques payable to

‘Socialist Party’, PO Box 24697, London E11 1YD





# Chinese regime’s puppet government in Hong Kong pushed back by mass protests

Building independent working-class movement with socialist programme vital

Dave Carr

Political pressure arising from a mass protest movement - including a demo estimated at two million people - has forced a humiliating climbdown by the pro-Beijing executive in Hong Kong over its infamous ‘extradition bill’.

Similarly, a repressive national security bill - with its Article 23 banning parties deemed “subversive” by the repressive Chinese state - was also ‘indefinitely postponed’ following mass protests in 2003.

The current bill would allow political opponents of the Chinese state to be extradited to the mainland (although not tax evaders!), further eroding democratic rights in Hong Kong (HK). Executive leader Carrie Lam said she was suspending it indefinitely having stated that the bill had caused “much division”. Her days as Beijing’s political puppet appear numbered.

The Chinese ‘Communist’ Party regime of president Xi Jinping undoubtedly became alarmed at the size and determination of the mass protest movement, and especially its potential to radicalise the oppressed working class in mainland China.

Many protesters - who on 12 June braved tear gas and rubber bullets when HK police viciously attacked peaceful demonstrators outside the Legislative Council (Legco) building - are demanding the immediate scrapping of the bill and not accepting its postponement.

The postponement is obviously a delaying tactic by Beijing, which hopes to reintroduce similar legislation at a more opportune time.

## Genuine democracy

The HK executive and half of the Legco is ‘indirectly elected’, ie chosen by Beijing. In 2017 Beijing succeeded in removing a number of democratically elected Legco members on spurious legal grounds.

Activists will now be seriously addressing how to develop the movement, not only to defend what few democratic rights still exist but how to establish a genuine workers’ democracy.

The HK Confederation of Trade Unions, with a claimed membership of 190,000, called a strike on 12 June and announced a further strike on 17 June.

However, many HK self-appointed democrat leaders ally themselves to rotten western capitalist democracies - whose governments are typically dominated by pro-establishment and big business parties. The middle-class democrats



Part of the massive demonstration on 16 June which went ahead despite Carrie Lam announcing the postponing of the repressive legislation photo Studio Incendo/CC

of the pan-democratic movement that dominated the 2014 Umbrella Movement in HK have, since then, failed to achieve any reforms.

The 12 June mass protests, which brought the former British colony to a standstill, showed the potential for the working class, along with students and sections of the middle classes, to go further and elect action committees to build for further strikes that can sweep aside the rigged Legco, roll back the anti-democratic measures of recent years imposed on behalf of the Chinese regime, and fight for a democratic revolutionary constituent assembly and a genuinely democratic worker-led government.

Such a government would act as a beacon for the oppressed working class in China, as well as Taiwan, Macau, and throughout the Pacific region, to fight too for such a transformation.

Significantly, the mass protests in Hong Kong coincided with the 30th anniversary of the Tiananmen Square massacre in Beijing by the Chinese Stalinist regime, then led by Deng Xiaoping.

Threateningly, days before the anniversary, China’s defence minister General Wei Fenghe justified the brutal army crackdown on pro-democracy protesters in 1989 saying it “took measures to stop the turbulence”.

This is a sober warning to pro-democracy activists in HK that it’s vital to build a movement armed with a programme of revolutionary change to prevent brutal repression and to spread the movement into and across China.

As well as fighting for basic democratic freedoms, such a movement must fight to end the capitalist system with its massive, ever-widening inequalities between super-rich and working poor in HK.

Last year, according to Oxfam, the wealth gap in HK reached its widest level since records began 45 years ago.

It takes a poor person in Hong Kong an estimated three years and eight months to earn what rich households make in a month. In 2018-19 HK government spending on health, education and welfare was nearly 16% less than in 2003.

Ending such inequality means building a working-class movement and a democratically organised mass workers’ party, independent of corporate capitalists, some of who allowed their employees facility time to participate in the recent protests.

## Capitalist interests

These companies, ordinarily, will happily do business with rotten repressive regimes and ruthlessly exploit their workforces in order to realise profits. Their chief concern is to maintain a legal framework which doesn’t impede their ability to freely exploit markets and labour.

However, if the US government ends HK’s ‘special status’ then Trump’s recently imposed trade tariffs on Chinese goods would also apply to HK businesses. And that could boost rival Singapore’s business interests.

A working-class movement must also be independent of Trump’s administration, and other western governments, which are content to work and conduct lucrative trade with a multitude of odious



The postponement [of the Bill] is obviously a delaying tactic by Beijing, which hopes to reintroduce similar legislation at a more opportune time

dictatorships around the world, including China, but will utilise Hong Kong’s democracy protests as useful propaganda in their geopolitical struggle against Xi’s regime.

A revolutionary working-class movement in HK, armed with a democratic socialist programme of ending capitalism and democratically planning the economy, would also link up with workers’ struggles in China to aid the overthrowing of the brutally oppressive regime which exists there.



photo Paul Mattsson

# What way forward to tackle climate change?

Clare Wilkins  
Nottingham Socialist Party

Around 50 people attended the recent Nottingham launch of ‘This Is Not A Drill’, the new handbook about challenging climate change by Extinction Rebellion (XR) which contains ‘everything you need to know about’ how ‘to be radical’, ‘rise up’ and ‘rebel’.

The intended speakers were trapped on a train at Corby caused by a land slip after heavy rain, so local activists spoke instead.

The campaign is one of non-violent direct action. XR thinks that a ‘critical mass’ of people taking action will lead to government action because they will be ‘impossible to ignore’. They are not interested in party politics. Time is short, so they argue they have to deal with the current Tory government.

The introduction in the book does refer to ‘a crisis of capitalism and colonialism’, but XR calls upon existing capitalist governments to ‘tell the truth, act to halt biodiversity loss and move to zero CO2 emissions by 2025, and set up citizens’ assemblies’. There were no proposals about how such assemblies should be democratically elected or accountable.

The speaker from XR said that the ‘April rebellion’ in London had raised the climate debate up the political agenda and made it hard to ignore. Indeed, the government de-

clared a ‘climate emergency’ but said it would seek to reduce CO2 emissions to zero by 2050. This shows that the government is not serious about fighting climate change (see letter on page 10).

The young speaker from XR blamed older people for putting the young in this situation. She said that every older person was aware how they were responsible but had been too busy consuming and had ignored climate change.

## Who’s guilty?

Just 100 companies globally cause 72% of CO2 emissions. It is in fact capitalism that is causing climate change, not older people or individuals per se.

The capitalist profit system and capitalist governments will not solve climate change. We need to get rid of capitalism and have socialist planning to end climate change and achieve a sustainable economy.

XR said that all social classes were equally affected by climate change, yet it is already clear that the world’s poorest people are disproportionately affected by the effects of climate change, with, for example, flooding in Mozambique and Bangladesh and widespread drought in India.

XR is ‘non-hierarchical’ and is made up of ‘working groups’. But it is a network rather than a democratically run national organisation.

Socialist Party member Geraint raised the issue of involving trade

unions. He said that a number of unions had passed policy on action on climate change and asked how XR was orientating towards the unions and workers.

The response was that international activist Greta Thunberg had called for a general strike on 20 September.

We encourage youth climate strikers to engage with trade unionists over steps towards achieving workers’ strike action. But practical ideas about how to achieve this were not put forward at the Nottingham meeting.

In the battle against the Poll Tax in the early 1990s, demos and street protests, including blockades of bailiffs and so forth, were important.

However, it was mass non-payment, organised through democratic anti-poll tax unions led by Militant supporters, now the Socialist Party, that made the tax unworkable (many Militant supporters including Labour MP Terry Fields were jailed for refusing to pay the iniquitous tax).

XR has organised some impressive activities but its demands are limited and rely on putting pressure on capitalist businesses and politicians to change and do what is needed. But the capitalist system exists to maximise profits, not to meet human needs and the environment.

To end destructive climate change and achieve a sustainable planet we need to unite the working class to get rid of capitalism and implement socialist change.



## 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.

### 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!  
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# STOP CLIMATE CHANGE FIGHT FOR SOCIALIST CHANGE

Theo Sharieff

Socialist Students national organiser

In recent months tens of thousands of students have walked out of schools and colleges, demanding urgent action against climate change. More and more debate is taking place on what this action should be and how it can be brought about.

No confidence can be placed in the Tory government or any other pro-capitalist politicians to prevent climate catastrophe, as they represent a system that places the profit-making of the billionaires at the top of society above taking far-reaching measures to protect the environment.

The Socialist Party argues that burning fossil fuels, deforestation, and other drivers of global warming can only be rapidly phased out by taking into public ownership the giant corporations which are responsible for most of these environmentally damaging practices.

Only by placing the control and management of those companies in the hands of working-class people, on a democratic, socialist basis, can decisions be taken to massively invest in alternative energy and other environmentally sustainable technologies.

This means escalating the protest actions to bring down the Tory government, while at the same time building support for a socialist programme - and developing a mass movement which can make sure that a Jeremy Corbyn-led government can deliver it.

Students can start building now in schools and colleges for a day of climate action in September - Friday 20 and Friday 27 are being raised - for the largest-yet walkouts and demonstrations.

This means organising meetings to democratically plan how the turnout can be maximised. Students' unions can be set up and coordinated with other local schools and colleges.

These unions would have the potential to organise fightbacks on other issues too - including against low pay and funding cuts in education and youth services.

The idea of an 'earth strike' on 27 September has been raised, which correctly points towards who really holds the power in our society: the working class. Workers in industry, transport, and all other key workplaces producing goods and delivering services, have the power to bring the economy to a halt.

School and college students and other climate protesters should ask local trade unions and trades councils to back the September protests and discuss with them whether workers can join them at any stage of the day.

For example, protests could be held at the front of their workplace at lunchtime or the start of the day. There is already discussion on this in some unions, especially education unions.

Local and national union leaders should be called on to speak at the demonstrations, bringing the voice of representatives of the six million organised workers in Britain into the climate actions and the preparations for developing them further.

By linking up with the trade unions, young people can be in the frontline of building a potentially colossal and very powerful movement for the fundamental, system-level change that is urgent and essential to stop climate change: socialism.

See also letter 'Conservative climate crisis' on page 11 and report 'What way forward to tackle climate change?' on page 15

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