

£1/£2 solidarity price

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NO TO BORIS ■ NO TO HUNT



Boris Johnson photo Kuhlmann/MS/CC

GENERAL ELECTION NOW



Jeremy Hunt photo Ted Eytan/CC

Nick Chaffey
Socialist Party national committee

We need a general election, not a no-choice coronation of Boris or Hunt. What do they offer that is any different to the brutal austerity policies of May and Cameron?

Both millionaires, Johnson and Hunt, have long track records of voting for and implementing massive cuts.

By ditching May, the Tories pray they can revive their fortunes. But neither Tory candidate has a policy to overcome the party's fatal divisions over Brexit.

One Tory MP told the Financial Times that frontrunner Johnson "can either try to form a unity government or a headbanger government, he can't do both." The divisions in the main party of big business and the super-rich are hopeless!

The only thing holding them together is fear of a general election, and a Corbyn-led anti-austerity

government. That government could be pushed by workers' anger after a decade of austerity to reverse cuts and privatisation, and restore wages, pensions, benefits and public services.

The pain of austerity has been inflicted on young and old to benefit a tiny handful at the very top of society. If you're poor in Britain you are likely to die nine years earlier than the wealthiest.

For young workers, the future looks bleak under capitalism. Massive student debt, zero-hour contracts and low pay, sky high rents.

It was Jeremy Corbyn's anti-austerity manifesto in 2017 that united young and old against a background of division over Brexit. At the time

it was the Socialist that boldly declared "Corbyn can win with socialist policies!"

It is a fight for these policies that can ensure not only a general election now, but a majority Labour government. That must include ousting the Blairite saboteurs and their failed Tory-lite policies.

In Scunthorpe at British Steel, in Swindon at Honda, in Bridgend at Ford, workers and their families fear for their future as the capitalist crisis puts the thirst for profits before the needs of our communities.

The Socialist Party argues for socialist nationalisation to protect jobs and utilise the skills of manufacturing workers to develop an

economy that meets the needs of working-class and young people and the environment.

Despite their divisions and despite their unpopularity, the Tories will not willingly hand over the keys to Number 10. Corbyn needs to step up the fight with a bold, socialist manifesto, and mobilise the working class and trade unions to demand an immediate general election.

The RMT union's five-day strike of train guards on South Western shows workers are prepared to fight. Rallies, demonstrations and coordinated strike action are needed to build a movement to sweep away the Tories and this rotten capitalist system.



What we think

Since February, every month this year there has been a big protest of young people outside Parliament and in town centres around the country. The “youth strikes 4 climate” have brought thousands of young teenagers (and sometimes even younger) out of the classroom and on to the streets. In an expression of their lack of confidence in the government to act, many of the young people involved are discussing what needs to be done to win effective change.

In April, Greta Thunberg, the Swedish teenager who first sparked off the youth strikes, called for a general strike for the climate.

Socialist Students and the Socialist Party have enthusiastically got stuck into the climate strikes. From the very start we have explained the importance of students appealing to workers in the workplaces and trade unions.

Our leaflets said: “By linking up with the trade unions, young people could build a potentially colossal movement against climate change. Mass collective working-class action – specifically, strike action, has the power to not just shut down the roads but to shut down the whole country. That poses the question then of who should run it. Not the Tories and their fat cat bosses.”

We went on to explain that it is working people who keep our society going day to day – the teachers in our schools and colleges, the bus and train drivers who drive our transport, and working people who create all the goods and services in our society. It is the working class which has the power to grind all of society to a halt.

We said “the trade unions – which have 6 million members in Britain alone – could be key in escalating and building the struggle against climate change and environmental destruction.

“We call on the trade union movement, as well as the Labour leadership of Jeremy Corbyn and John McDonnell, to get behind this youth movement, build links and offer every assistance possible.”

We produced model resolutions to raise the issue in the workplaces and unions.

General strike?

Since then the idea of a general strike has caught hold among layers of activists. At least two dates are now being posed in September - 20th and 27th – for an “earth strike – a general strike for the climate”.

It is very positive that young people are talking about workers taking strike action, using the language of mass class struggle. It points in the direction of the force in society that has the power to decisively change things – the organised working class. It is an instinctive appeal by young people to the working class and their organisations to act.

The day of action in September could be the biggest protests yet. Many trade unionists are discussing what can be done, such as the Bakers Union, and in the education unions the UCU and NEU. For any action to be effective it will need to be discussed and organised by union members.

School and college students should ask local trade unions and trades councils to back the September protests and discuss with them whether workers can join them on the day. The idea could take off of protests being held at the front of their workplace at lunchtime or the start or

HOW CAN WE BUILD WORKERS' ACTION TO SUPPORT THE CLIMATE STRIKES?



The idea of workers taking strike action has caught hold among youth climate strikers
photo Mary Finch

Two million workers in Britain took coordinated strike action in 2011
photo Senan



Britain's general strike in 1926



The climate strikes are the biggest youth movement since the 2010 struggle against tuition fees
photo Paul Mattsson



end of the day. There could be big attendances at the city and town centre protests, with workers taking a day off or ringing in sick. Union leaders at a local and national level should be called on to speak at the demonstrations.

There have been generalised strike actions in recent history in many European countries. Following the world economic crisis of 2008, and the attempt of the ruling classes world-wide to force the working class to pay through savage austerity, many general strikes took place in southern Europe and especially in Greece where the working class heroically undertook more than 30 general strikes. This year began with the biggest general strike ever in India, with 200 million workers on strike.

But in Britain, there hasn't been generalised co-ordinated strike action since 2011, when over two million public sector workers struck in defence of their pensions. With that background, and with the role of many of the trade

union leaders having been to put a brake on strike action, for such action to take place in Britain would be a huge development and would take a more concerted and sustained effort to turn to the workplaces and unions.

We raise this because we want to see this day of action in September as a step in that direction. This is one reason why we have raised the importance of students getting organised – to collectively discuss next steps and what to demand, and to help build. So we have called for, and helped students start to set up, school student unions.

The youth strikes taking place now are the biggest protests of young people since the student demonstrations in the winter of 2010 against tuition fee increases. At that time they fed into the trade unions taking action against austerity, which culminated in the 2011 movement. The Socialist Party played an important part in helping that to happen, mapping out and fighting for preparatory steps.

We called for a mass national trade union demonstration as a step towards strike action. We fought for this through our role in trade unions, including the PCS, and through the National Shop Stewards Network (NSSN). In March 2011, three quarters of a million workers and their families marched in the biggest trade union demonstration in British history.

On that demonstration we called for it to be used as a stepping stone towards a one day public sector strike. We fought for this idea in trade unions, and, following a day of action by PCS and education unions in June, on November 30th 2011 two million public sector workers took strike action.

That itself should have been a step towards a 24-hour general strike. We, along with many trade union members and left leaders, fought again, including organising 1,000 trade union activists to march to the TUC congress in 2012, where a resolution was passed to consider a one-day general strike. At that stage, the capitulation of right-wing trade union leaders meant that this next step was never taken.

Breaking point

However, after ten years of austerity, vast numbers of working-class people are at breaking point. In recent months there has been an increase in localised strike action in several different sectors, as has been illustrated in the pages of the Socialist. Another recession is looming. The Tory party, meant to be the representatives of big business, is in complete crisis.

The young people campaigning against climate change, appealing consistently to workers and putting demands on trade union leaders, could help to build an unstoppable movement from below. If this movement is armed with the socialist demands necessary to end austerity and climate change, it is much more likely that the potential to link up young people and organised workers will be realised.

This is why, on the London protests, we have used our red sound system to hold open-air street meetings or ‘assemblies’ where hundreds of young people have listened, spoken, disagreed with each other, and argued out different ideas, including socialist ideas. We have explained the need for socialist policies and called to kick out the Tories as the first step in fighting climate change.

Such a movement would involve striving to win socialist fighters in the leadership of unions.

And there is a difference between a protest strike and an all-out general strike. Leon Trotsky, one of the leaders of the Russian revolution, warned that an all-out general strike poses the question of who rules society. Either it leads to power or risks severe defeat for the working class. So socialists should not raise the demand for a general strike lightly.

However, power is not necessarily posed by a one-day general strike, instead it is more a testing out of strength. Although given its rarity in Britain, even a one-day strike could have shattering consequences for a government. A one-day general strike could bring down the hated Tories, for example, and propel a Corbyn-led Labour government to power. It could also have a potentially transformative effect on the battle against the right-wing Blairites and for socialist policies in Labour Party.

And a movement capable of achieving that, would then have a vital role to play in providing the counter-pressure to the capitalist interests that inevitably will be mobilised, including their Blairite representatives inside the Labour Party, to strangle and prevent such a government carrying out the socialist policies necessary to end austerity, combat climate change and ensure a decent, environmentally-sustainable, life for all.

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Photographer: Paul Mattsson
Website: Judy Beishon

A PCS member in the DWP

A Tory minister has been forced to retract an official statement from the DWP that there was no link between Universal Credit policies with people being pushed to go into the sex trade to survive.

Will Quince, the minister for family support, claims to have been shocked by the evidence that has been supplied to the Social Security Select Committee that contradicted the official departmental line.

But this is not just an unfortunate impact. It is part of the whole design of the Tory welfare cuts to push working class people into poverty. And some women driven further into poverty are forced into prostitution to make ends meet.

This is another reason that we need to mobilise to defeat these attacks as no one should be forced into the sex trade to survive.

UN report

The Government was already slammed in a UN report in May which recommended that the impact of austerity on vulnerable groups should be examined to restore a social security safety net. This included specific mention of reversing cuts such as the two-child payment limit, and the five-week waiting period for universal credit.

Claimants who had been forced into the sex trade especially cited the minimum five-week wait for Universal Credit as a factor forcing them into prostitution as well as the cuts in the level of the benefit.

This UN report had also highlighted that austerity disproportionately hits women and especially single parents. It is clear that the current welfare policies are driving people further into poverty and many especially women are being forced into desperate measures to survive and feed their kids.

PCS has clear demands to scrap

ITS OFFICIAL - UNIVERSAL CREDIT FORCES WOMEN INTO PROSTITUTION



PCS has a clear demand for the replacement of Universal Credit with a fully resourced, supportive social security system photo Serena

all the punitive measures that have been brought into the benefit system and for the replacement of Universal Credit with a fully

resourced, supportive social security system.

PCS members are active in the TUC campaign to Stop and Scrap

Universal Credit at local level.

PCS members have a key role in formulating the demands of what sort of social security system we

want to deliver and what is needed to lift working-class people out of poverty to put an end to this barbaric scourge.

Charging scandal in Warrington and Halton NHS Trust



photo Paul Mattsson

The destructive privatisation of the NHS in Warrington and Halton continues at pace as it was announced this week that 17 elective treatments, including surgery for Carpal

Tunnel syndrome and varicose will no longer be available free to patients at the Trusts two hospitals.

To add further insult to injury, it was also announced that Urgent

Care Services at Halton will now be provided by a "preferred private bidder" rather than by the NHS.

12 months ago, a coalition of Socialist Party members, Momentum groups and other local people were accused by local councillors of "scare-mongering" when they protested about plans to privatise the hospitals. They have now been proven right.

Councillors arriving at a meeting of Halton Council's Health Board were met by well attended and vociferous protest, with one Labour councillor being presented with an application form for the Tory Party!

These changes to health care provision will cause immense harm and distress in these working-class communities, where people are already struggling to get by due to austerity, wage stagnation and rising rents.

Socialist Party members in the area stand ready to fight to save the NHS from privatisation and free for all who need it, regardless of their ability to pay.

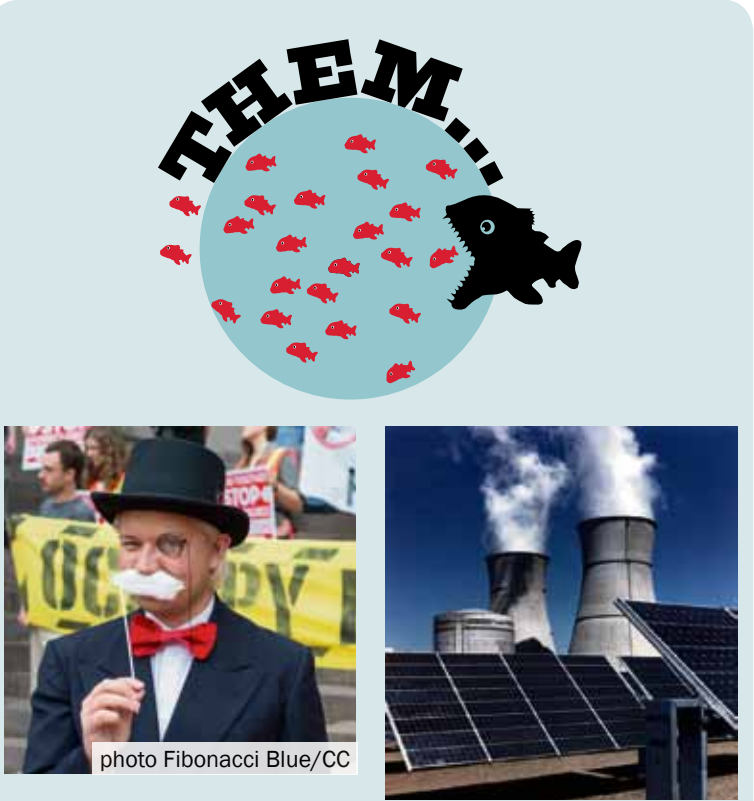
Ste Armstrong
Warrington and St. Helens
Socialist Party

Track record

Warrington and Halton NHS Trust had previously been caught attempting to charge for standard operations. 45 procedures had been made available on the trust website with prices ranging from £1,624 for a cataract operation to over £18,000 for knee and hip replacements.

The Trust was forced to withdraw the list when faced with an outcry and admits that not a single 'customer' had signed up to pay for a procedure since the scheme was launched last year.

But this fiasco shows that trusts are itching to start charging for services that should be available on the NHS when patients need them.



■ A study by the Sutton Trust and the Social Mobility Commission has discovered what we already know - 'top' jobs are still dominated by a tiny rich elite.

■ Royal accounts reveal that renovating Harry Windsor and Megan Markle's new home cost £2.4 million - paid for by you and me - after it was transformed from five homes to one!

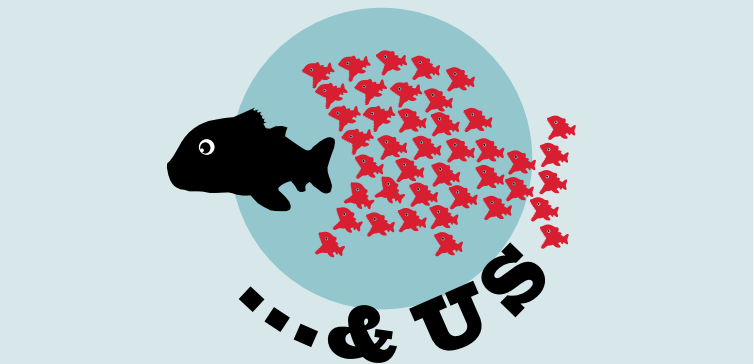


■ Despite 'green' window dressing by the Queen, the Royal family's carbon footprint doubled in the last year.

■ Research by Greener UK and the Climate Coalition has discovered that nearly 70% of people want faster action to fight climate change.

■ Since 1988, just 100 companies are responsible for 71% of greenhouse gas emissions. And the government is making it even harder for individuals to lower emissions. The government is jacking up the VAT - where you pay the same no matter what you earn - on solar-battery systems from 5% to 20%.

■ Restaurant chain Wahaca has been forced to reverse its illegal and barbaric policy of charging waiters when customers leave without paying. Sheer embarrassment brought on this climb down. But we can't rely on the capitalists' blushes for decent rights at work. Strike action by Food workers' union BFAWU beat zero-hour contracts at Hovis and a pay rise at McDonalds.



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

Tackling working poverty

Roger Bannister
Liverpool Socialist Party

Tory politicians are fond of saying that the answer to poverty is to increase employment opportunities, but, like most of what they say, it is not true.

Successive attacks on welfare benefits, a wholly inadequate minimum wage, attacks on trade union

rights coupled with a weak trade union leadership, and the growth of the gig economy have all combined to produce a growing number of the working poor.

For people stuck in this working poverty trap, life is one long struggle to keep their heads above the water, living in fear of getting ill and losing wages, dreading the children needing new clothes, skipping meals to help pay rent or fuel bills.

The Institute for Fiscal Studies points to a sharp rise in this type of poverty, now in excess of eight million households, representing a majority, 58%, of all people in poverty in the UK. The two of the most important factors behind this situation are higher housing costs and lower earnings growth.

The growing poverty in Britain has a generational aspect. A study by the Resolution Foundation reveals that 18 to 25 year olds now have less money left after meeting housing costs than older generations had at the same age. That same study highlights increased housing costs and poor wage growth since the financial crisis of 2008.

The Tory response to this situation is to target older people, by proposals being bandied about to

means-test pensioners' bus passes, make them pay National Insurance, introduce a tax to pay for social care, and to means-test free TV licences for the over 75s. There is surely an irony in the way that the Tories are uniting the generations with their poverty policies!

The labour movement must tackle increasing working poverty head on, with the trade unions campaigning to recruit poorer workers, to lead campaigns including industrial action, to take them out of low pay.

Jeremy Corbyn has supported the introduction of a £10 minimum wage and pledged to apply it to all workers, including young workers. This would start to tackle in-work poverty, but he should also pledge to ban zero hour contracts and end casual labour, both big contributors

to low pay.

In addition, Corbyn's Labour Party must have policies to build council houses to enable poorer people to have decent quality accommodation.

In the private sector rent controls need to be introduced, accompanied by secure tenure rights for tenants, and a reintroduction of Fair Rent Tribunals.

But that is not all - the human misery of poverty is a product of capitalism, which clearly exists to satisfy human greed via massive profits, rather than to meet human need.

The banks and finance houses and the major building companies should be nationalised under democratic worker control, as a step to the abolition of capitalism and the introduction of a socialist economy.

END THE HOUSING SCANDAL

Michael Morgan
Coventry East Socialist Party

It is, of course, a disgrace for people to be living in unsafe and dangerous housing in order to protect the profits of property owners - and for people to be living on the streets, in the fifth richest country in the world. Yet this is a reality in Britain in 2019.

In a recent report in the housing journal Inside Housing it has been revealed that East Kent Housing failed to carry out regular gas safety checks on 544 homes.

Only two years after the Grenfell disaster mismanagement of council housing is still affecting some of the poorest in society. The fact that these checks could save lives is not prioritised because it is not affordable for East Kent Housing to do it on time.

One would have hoped that two years on from Grenfell things

might have changed - but with Tories still in power we need a mass movement, through organised and democratic residents' associations and protests, to create meaningful change.

It has also recently arisen that councils have been tearing down 'tent cities' at an alarming rate. According to The Guardian, 254 homeless encampments were forcibly removed by councils in 2018.

Abhorrent

Nobody should be living in a tent, but to forcibly remove some of the most vulnerable people in society from where they're staying, and in some cases charge them £50 for re-turning of the tent, is abhorrent and wrong.

In many cases, the councils doing removals are Labour councils. It is not good enough for Labour councils to willingly go through with Tory policies by punishing the most

disadvantaged in society.

The rise in homelessness has not been coincidental but is a political choice by the Tories. They have chosen to pursue austerity at any cost. More often than not, the cost is the quality of life, safety and health of the most disadvantaged in society.

Labour councils should not be the strongmen of these policies! They should campaign against them, using reserves to ensure housing is safe and to provide homes for the homeless.

A recent report by The Times has said that more money is needed to tackle homelessness. Under a Tory government no such money will come. Corbyn's policies could alleviate homelessness if he won a general election but we need a programme of socialist policies that tackles poverty and implements a mass council house building programme to provide cheap decent housing.

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Salisbury South Western Rail strikers determined

RMT transport union guards striking on South Western Rail (SWR) on 21 June were determined to carry on the fight to keep the guards. As one of the pickets said, the agreement is on the table and all the SWR management have to do is sign it.

They could not understand why other disputes such as the one on Arriva Rail North had involved 40 meetings between the management and the unions but there had only been four in the case of SWR. They also said that SWR was failing to provide a decent service with filthy trains which often broke down.

RMT president Michelle Rodgers

visited the picket line saying: “SWR need to have a good look at how they were going to get round the table and resolve the dispute. It’s a disgrace that they won’t sit down and get involved in meaningful talks with the RMT. The company has at its disposal the means to offer a solution which will end the dispute.”

Michelle went on to say that what is paramount and at the forefront of everyone’s mind is the issue of safety. This attack on the safety of trains is purely based on the greed of the rail company’s shareholders.

Jane Ward
Southampton Socialist Party

Midlands mental health workers walk out against privatisation

“If this goes through, things will never be the same again. It’s the beginning of the end,” said one Birmingham and Solihull Mental Health Foundation Trust picket as Unite and Unison members began their three-day strike against privatisation through the back door.

The action, which started on 24 June at several sites, is against the trust forcing 160 maintenance and facilities workers out of the NHS into a wholly-owned subsidiary, Summer Hill Services Ltd. The trust has repeatedly failed to answer questions over the claimed savings being used to justify the transfer. As one Unison member told the Socialist, it looks like their main saving will be from tax dodging. Publicly-owned NHS bodies have

to pay VAT but private ones don’t, a double robbery by the fat cats from our public services.

Penny-pinching won’t stop there though. The transfer would see new staff on worse contracts, probably followed by attacks on current workers, combined with corner cutting and reorganisation that will result in a worse service for patients.

The transfer is set for that start of July. However, regulations have not been followed for ether the required consultation or the Tupe (employment contract transfer) process, which could result in legal action by the unions.

Bob Severn
Birmingham South East
Socialist Party



photo Bob Severn

Notts college contract dispute

Over 100 people gathered on 20 June as University and College Union members at Nottingham College prepared for strike action on the 1 July with more days planned at the start of the academic year.

96% of members voted for industrial action as management gave an ultimatum to accept a new contract or risk losing their jobs by 5 July.

Managers at the college have stated that individuals who do not agree to new terms could face dismissal but would then be offered ‘re-employment’ if they subsequently accept the new contract.

The contract would mean more than 80 teachers would be £1,000 worse off in addition to increased teaching hours, removal of workload protections, and cuts in holiday and sick pay.

These attacks would affect workers throughout the college from teaching staff, to librarians to cleaners.

Staff were joined in solidarity by university workers and students at the college. There is a strong desire to coordinate industrial action across unions, linking these regionally and nationally.

Nathan Sharpe
Nottingham Socialist Party

BRIDGEND NSSN MEETING DETERMINED TO FIGHT FOR FORD WORKERS



Packed NSSN meeting in Bridgend addressed by Rob Williams photo Gareth Bromhall

Alec Thraves
Socialist Party Wales

Rob Williams, chair of the National Shop Stewards Network (NSSN), addressed a very successful NSSN public meeting in Bridgend, bringing solidarity and support to the Ford workers in their efforts to keep the plant open and to retain the 1,700 jobs threatened by the proposed closure.

The 40-strong audience, including Ford workers, trade unionists and the local community stressed the devastating impact the closure would have, not just in Bridgend but across South Wales as many workers have been transferred to the plant from previously closed Ford factories.

The idea that a Welsh government ‘task force’ could find equivalent job opportunities for those made redundant was laughed at by locals who know there are no such well-

paid, skilled jobs on offer as manufacturing in South Wales has been decimated over the years. ‘Once these jobs have gone that’s it’ said several speakers.

Ford are dangling a big redundancy package in front of the workforce in an attempt to divide those reaching retirement age and the younger workers who would see even a relatively big payment disappear in just a few years.

But Rob emphasised that to defeat a giant multinational like Ford would require a determined leadership from the trade unions in Wales and nationally as well as in the Welsh Assembly, with the sober message that nationalisation of the Bridgend plant would be the only guarantee of saving these jobs and also defending the jobs of thousands more in the many supply industries.

When the closure of Cardiff Airport was threatened in 2013 the Welsh government forked out £52 million to bring it into public ownership. It is now making such a healthy profit that the Tories want to privatise it again!

As one audience member commented: “Yes, perhaps it is on a bigger scale but at least do the same to save Ford jobs and get a Corbyn government to commit to nationalising it fully when it comes to power.”

There was unanimous support to urge the trade union leaders to call a solidarity demonstration as soon as possible so that the Bridgend Ford workers know that the trade union movement, the communities across South Wales and workers across the country will be behind their struggle to save their jobs and livelihoods.

UNISON CONFERENCE: SOCIALIST PARTY MEMBERS CALL FOR ANTI-CUTS FIGHT AND BUILD LEFT CHALLENGE



photo Paul Mattsson

Socialist Party members in Unison

2,000 delegates gathered in Liverpool for the Unison annual delegate conference from 16-21 June. Despite the city we were in none of the fighting traditions of Liverpool seemed to rub off on the union’s leadership.

Given the onslaught on jobs and services in the public sector it is a scandal that the union conference isn’t even allowed to debate setting legal no-cuts budgets, let alone demand Labour councils implement them. However this did not stop the four Socialist Party members speaking in the cuts debate and calling for the union and Labour to do what socialist-led Liverpool’s Labour council did in the 1980s.

With a rumour that the unions were due to meet Jeremy Corbyn to discuss Brexit and the call for a second referendum the leadership tried to get an emergency motion on the agenda that included the call for a second referendum.

Unions and campaigners discuss fight to end education crisis

A Southampton National Education Union member

Hundreds of education campaigners rallied in London on 22 June at a ‘Together for Education’ event organised by five national trade unions and education campaign groups, united in opposition to Tory funding cuts.

Determined to shout loud for the needs of all children, the cruel reality of Tory cuts was there for all to hear. The mood of anger and solidarity in a hall filled with passionate people was what was needed to fire up some tired teachers, heads, governors, teaching assistants and parents for the battle ahead after a long academic year.

Tinderbox

An explosive tinderbox has been created by the combined effects of funding cuts per pupil of 8%, rising school costs, increased teacher workload, cuts to pay and pensions, high stakes testing (stressing teachers, pupils and parents alike) a narrowing curriculum, and falling support for children with special needs

and those at risk of exclusion.

Reports of activities across the country show how the campaign is building support at meetings, rallies, demonstrations and significantly, through growing numbers of strikes, all showing education is at breaking point.

Certainly a highlight of the day was hearing from Jeremy Corbyn and his commitments for an incoming anti-austerity Labour government to fund our schools and end SATs tests for primary schools. It was good to hear from local councillors joining the campaign.

But the loud applause for Jo Grady, newly-elected general secretary of the University and College Union, calling for national coordinated strike action to stop education cuts, shows what is needed is action to stop the cuts now.

Linked to Corbyn’s call to reverse school cuts, should be a fight by Labour councils to use their reserves and powers to stop school cuts, combined with strike action across education.

This would gain huge support and create enormous pressure for an immediate general election. The crisis in education must become a crisis for the Tory government.



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

Striking workers defy the race to the bottom at Glasgow and Aberdeen airports

Philip Stott
Socialist Party Scotland

The strikes for pay and pensions justice at Glasgow and Aberdeen airports are a fight for every trade unionist and worker in Scotland and beyond.

The workers and their union Unite deserve our full support and solidarity. They have been treated disgracefully by a profiteering employer intent on tearing up every right the unions have won in the past.

The strikes so far have proved, however, the outstanding determination of hundreds of staff pushed to breaking point. Below inflation pay rises - cuts in reality - and now an attempt to tear up the pension scheme the bosses agreed to in 2016 are the straws that broke the camel’s back.

The current pension scheme at Glasgow, Aberdeen and Southampton - run by AGS Airports - is to be axed at the end of June, with staff forced onto a defined contribution scheme that ends the far better current defined benefit pension.

In truth, since AGS took over there has been one attack after another on the workforce. The actions of



photo Socialist Party Scotland

Glasgow AGS bosses, the highest paid of which receives £277,000 a year, are a legacy of privatisation.

Airport services, security, fire safety crew, maintenance, and engineering used to be government-owned. But the Thatcherite privatisation programme in the 1980s saw them sold off and then eventually dismantled and sold off again as

greedy corporations saw the chance to take over lucrative businesses.

Since then it’s been a race to the bottom in terms and conditions, jobs and pay. The union is suspicious that the removal of the pension scheme is linked to a further sell-off of the company, making it more lucrative for potential buyers and shareholders.

Colloids strike to support sacked rep

Over 150 Colloids workers turned out for the fifth consecutive week for an organised day of action and mass support in the dispute with Colloids in Kirkby over the sacking of Unite the Union rep George Gore.

Tensions spilled over as scabs crossed the picket line, insulting the pickets and antagonising and intimidating them using their cars. The police looked on and did nothing.

The company claims business continues as usual but they have taken ‘no entry’ signs off an exit gate to get wagons and deliveries in and out of the other side which resulted in a crash.

Gary, a worker and Unite member explains: “All that was needed was the correct disciplinary process to be adhered to. Workers are often paid incorrectly and the same staff responsible for that are now crossing the picket saying we are traitors.”

Unite’s official interim steward Chris said: “The level of support has been fantastic. Post is not being delivered and many scheduled deliveries and pick-ups are refusing to cross the picket.”

Neill Dunne
Liverpool and District
Socialist Party

Academy workers strike against cuts

“If it hadn’t been for this school I would have ended up in prison” were the words of one former student who came to support the picket line on 20 June, the third day of strike action by members of the NEU, NASUWT and Unison education unions at the Grove Academy in Harrogate.

Socialist Party members joined the picket lines once more to stand shoulder to shoulder with workers fighting the impacts of austerity.

There has been tremendous support from across the education sector locally with a march around the six Harrogate secondary schools that refer students to the Grove seeing head teachers from those schools supporting the strikers and speaking to the media calling for the Grove to be saved.

The immediate threat to the school is that North Yorkshire County Council is cutting £2 million from its budget for pupil referral units across the county, without any plans or proposals for how this will affect the services provided by places like the Grove. After losing 25% of its budget in 2018, the Grove now faces losing a further 25-40%!

A further three days of strike action has been called to continue the pressure to demand a fully-funded service at the Grove. The strike shows the need for a reversal of the cuts to education by central government and the reintegration of the fragmented education system, with decisions about schools and their funding under the democratic control of staff and parents.

Iain Dalton, Socialist Party
North Yorkshire organiser

From our history - the Great Miners' Strike 1984-85

35TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE 'BATTLE OF ORGREAVE'

Last week, the Socialist reported the Orgreave Truth and Justice march near Rotherham/Sheffield commemorating events which occurred at the Orgreave coking plant during the Great Miners' Strike (1984-85). The marchers were not only keeping alive the memory of that titanic industrial battle - between the heavy battalion of the organised working class and the British capitalist state, as represented by the Thatcher government - but also demanding an independent public inquiry in order to bring some justice to the miners who suffered at Orgreave and thereafter.

The 'battle of Orgreave', on 18 June 1984, involved nearly 10,000 pickets and 4,000 police. Police, including mounted police, attacked the pickets and made nearly 100 arrests, including National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) president Arthur Scargill. Many miners sustained injuries from police truncheons.

Subsequently the belief has grown that Orgreave was a deliberate trap sprung by the police acting on orders from the political establishment to smash the NUM.

Despite evidence of assaulting striking miners and subsequently perverting the course of justice and committing perjury - the so-called Independent Police Complaints Commission said in 2015 it would not pursue a criminal investigation into the actions of South Yorkshire police on that day "because of the

passage of time".

The following year, then Home Secretary Amber Rudd justified blocking an inquiry on the grounds that "ultimately there were no deaths or wrongful convictions".

The fact that there were no deaths given the repeated baton charges by mounted police was purely fortuitous. Moreover, there were no "wrongful convictions" only because 95 miners facing charges of unlawful assembly had their cases dropped after six weeks on trial because police evidence was deemed "unreliable".

Rudd was clearly seeking to protect from exposure the political establishment's role in conspiring to break the miners' strike.

Jeremy Corbyn has said a future Labour government would guarantee an inquiry in what happened at Orgreave.

The battle of Orgreave - eyewitness report

I remember that it was a beautiful sunny English summer's day. But that was as good as it got. As I arrived the amount of pickets was surprising as getting to a picket was very difficult in 1984, everything was put in your way by police road blocks etc.

The police at first were very accommodating, directing pickets to specific areas. Today we know this as 'kettling'. The pickets were in good spirits. Against us were lined the massed ranks of police, in ordinary uniform at first. These officers soon stood down for those kitted in full riot gear.

These storm troopers soon weighed into the pickets who fought back manfully at first but all we had were fists and feet against batons, shields and helmets. The blows were relentless, bloodied pickets were everywhere.

The memory that has stuck with me is the look on the faces of the police, they were loving the pain and terror that they were paying out to people fighting to save their communities.

One comrade from my pit was trampled by a horse and even after the end of the year-long strike couldn't return to work for another three months due to the extent of his injuries. What a price to pay for wanting to secure a future for your family.



NUM president Arthur Scargill



A civil war without guns

The 1984-85 miners' dispute was the major episode in the Thatcher government's planned and phased onslaught on the organised working class.

As Ken Smith says in the Socialist Party publication 'A civil war without guns', the British capitalist state used all its resources to smash the powerful and militant NUM:

"It was not long after the unprecedented violence at Orgreave, provoked by the police, that Thatcher referred to the miners as the "enemy within"...

"Once started, Orgreave was a battle that neither side could afford to lose.

"Thatcher and the Tories threw everything at it: state forces; propaganda; political pressure on the Labour and trade union leaders and the full force of the legal system against arrested miners.

"Police 'gladiators' were instructed from early on by police officers with loudhailers to "take prisoners".

"In reply the miners mobilised the biggest, most determined, pickets this country has ever seen."



A Civil War Without Guns - the lessons of the 1984-85 miners' strike by Ken Smith (ebook £3)

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Laying bare the nature of the capitalist state

During the course of the 1984-85 strike 500 miners joined Militant (forerunner of the Socialist Party) after drawing socialist conclusions. This edited extract from **Peter Taaffe's** book - 'The Rise of Militant' (available on socialistparty.org.uk) - indicates the strategy proposed by Militant, as well as giving a taste of workers' reaction to the horrendous attack by the state on the working class.

Revenge for the Tories' humiliation at the hands of the miners at Saltley Gate in 1972 [a successful blockade of a fuel storage depot in Birmingham by NUM 'flying pickets'] was taken by the police on the Orgreave picket line.

The most brutal methods yet seen in this or any previous dispute were played out in the full view of the world's media. The conflict gave the impression of a virtual civil war in the mining areas of Britain.

Eyewitnesses at an earlier battle reported: "The baton charge has returned. This brutal police method of attacking pickets, synonymous with the industrial battles of the 1920s, has become a standard tactic of today's police... The idea is to hurt people, intimidate people, frighten people."

Even Arthur Scargill was arrested on a trumped-up charge of obstruction...

On the day of the first Orgreave battle there were about 7,000 pickets assembled. Eyewitnesses said: "It was then that the real battle began. It was the most terrifying thing I have been through in my life... What made it worse for me was that this was happening in the village where I'd lived most of my life..."

"I saw an elderly miner of about 60 have his head split open by a baton... The riot police would march straight up to you shouting 'one two, one two' and provoking the miners: 'Come on then, have a go...'.

"And one snatch squad policeman went too far and got snatched him-

self! They had to send police horses in to get him back - he was in a far from healthy state when he emerged from the picket."

A group of miners from the North East writing later in Militant about their experiences at the battle at Orgreave commented: "They were treating us like animals, chasing us with dogs and horses. Some pickets outside the plant had been shoved into this field - it was completely flattened, concrete lamp posts and walls crushed. Lads were coming away crying, heads bleeding, bruises all over their backs, some having to be carried..."

Brutality

These brutal scenes at Orgreave, together with similar scenes that were enacted in numerous pit villages throughout the coalfields, laid bare before the miners and working class as a whole the nature of the capitalist state.

An army of occupation descended on the coal fields, particularly in the heartland of the strike, the Yorkshire coalfield.

Such actions changed forever the consciousness of workers, particularly the miners. Because of this Militant's ideas found a powerful echo.

It shared with and assisted in all the struggles of the miners but at the same time put forward a strategy which it considered was capable of ensuring victory.

Following the first battle of Orgreave

(6 June) Militant advised that at local level, direct approaches should be made, backed up by arguments and mass leafleting, to steelworkers, lorry drivers and power station workers. The leaders of the TGWU [now Unite] and the ISTC (steelworkers union) should back up this campaign with a national internal drive in support of the miners.

Wherever possible mass meetings should be organised and a call for solidarity, addressed by striking miners... Conferences of shop stewards should be organised, specifically to prepare for solidarity action. These conferences should be called either directly by the NUM, by local trades councils or by the Broad Left Organising Committee.

This strike also now demands national action and a national co-ordinated drive for solidarity by the Trades Union Congress. It would be naive however to put too much faith in the TUC. The left unions should therefore come together independently to organise solidarity.

At the same time Militant believed that the NUM could put before such a conference in detail all that was needed in solidarity action, to stop the movement of coal and win this strike.

High on the agenda of such a conference would be the calling of a one-day general strike. It would result in a magnificent show of strength of the entire labour movement around the miners and prepare the way for an historic victory.



The Militant-initiated Broad Left Organising Committee lobbying the Trade Union Congress in 1984 to demand a 24-hour general strike photo Dave Sinclair

Why you should come to NSSN conference 2019

>> Continued from back page. The 2019 National Shop Stewards Network (NSSN) conference on Saturday 6 July is a great opportunity for trade unionists and anti-austerity campaigners to link up the fightback. The Socialist asked Marion Lloyd and Chris Baugh of civil service union PCS for some of their reasons for coming.



NSSN conference 2018
photo Mary Finch

■ The NSSN plays a vital role - not just in supporting disputes, but also coordinating between trade unions and their members at a time when this is required most.

The attacks against workers have been relentless since the Tory-imposed, Blairite-backed austerity agenda. There can't be anyone who isn't touched. Either by cuts and closures of vital services in our communities, or the massive job losses including the threats faced by workers in Honda Swindon, Ford Bridgend or British Steel in Scunthorpe.

But the Tories have had a massive wake-up call. Not only is their party in complete disarray because of the outcome of the EU referendum - but their anti-trade union laws, designed to stop struggle, have failed to cow workers.

Strikes are cropping up, particularly in previously unorganised areas such as Uber, Amazon, and others. Workers come together boldly and bravely to fight for what is rightfully theirs.

In my own union, PCS, despite the loss of two national pay strike ballots because of the Tories' anti-democratic turnout threshold law, members are still determined. The magnificent HM Revenue and Customs strikes in Ealing to keep their

office open have won a deferment of closure pending further talks.

There have been inspirational strikes in the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, where out-sourced workers employed by Aramark and ISS have won concessions on pay. Not enough, however, which is why they are moving to indefinite strike action.

Interserve workers in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office are fighting for the living wage. HM Revenue and Customs workers Liverpool employed by ISS are balloting for action as well.

The strikes in the Wolverhampton and Walsall Universal Credit offices are inspirational too. They expose the poor staffing levels and therefore the poor attitude the government has towards the most vulnerable in capitalist society.

The need for strong, combative trade unions is as vital now as ever. Not just to defeat the Tories, but so that if Jeremy Corbyn comes to power on an anti-austerity programme we can fight to ensure he is able to implement it. The NSSN has a vital role to play in supporting and leading that work.

Marion Lloyd
PCS national executive committee
(personal capacity)

■ The evidence is now compelling that global warming and extreme weather events are linked to climate change. Since the first earth summit in Rio in 1992, the emissions of greenhouse gases have actually increased.

Capitalist governments have shown themselves incapable of the decisive and effective action needed. Capitalism has shown itself to be the obstacle to the scale and pace of change needed to end our reliance on burning fossil fuels and move to a zero-carbon economy.

The trade unions need to heed the call to action raised by the inspirational global school student climate strikes, and the civil disobedience of the Extinction Rebel-

lion protests we saw in London. PCS has played an important role in campaigning for the climate as a trade union issue.

Unions in Britain need to take this issue seriously, and mobilise their power and influence to win support for a just transition - one that places workers' interests at its heart, based on public ownership and democratic planning, from the local to the national to the global scale.

The NSSN can play a vital role in bringing trade unions together in the fight for socialist change, not climate change.
Chris Baugh
PCS assistant general secretary
2004-19 (personal capacity)



The Socialist Inbox

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

■ Platini's red card

The French football legend and former head of European governing body Uefa, Michel Platini - already suspended for an illegal payment - has been arrested.

In another kick in the 'Ballon d'Or', police have detained him as part of a further criminal investigation into alleged corruption linked to awarding the 2022 World Cup to Qatar - an investigation that implicates members of both the French and Qatari ruling classes.

Controversially, Platini voted in December 2010 to award Qatar the World Cup. The process led to allegations, recriminations and upheaval at world football governing body Fifa, with even long-standing football villain Sepp Blatter taking an overdue fall from grace.

Platini is accused by French authorities of "private corruption", "criminal conspiracy" and "influence peddling and trading influence."

Less than a fortnight before the vote, Platini had lunch with then French president Nicolas Sarkozy, and the emir of Qatar, Tamim al-Thani. At the time, Sarkozy had made clear France was seeking trade and deals with mega-wealthy Qatar, and French club Paris Saint-Germain, which Sarkozy supports, was broke.

Within two years of the vote, Qatar Sports Investments - owned and funded by the Qatari state - bought Paris Saint-Germain. Platini's son Laurent was made Qatar Sports Investments' chief executive; Qatari broadcaster 'beIN' bought the TV rights for French football; and Qatar Airways signed a deal to buy Airbus planes made at a factory in Toulouse, an order reaffirmed in 2017. It doesn't take much to join the dots.

The case shows that football isn't independent of the rotten capitalist system and the pursuit of profit. The fight to take football out of the clutches of big business and its representatives is linked to getting rid of capitalism.

The Socialist Party calls for club ownership by fans, club employees and communities, and for football businesses and governing bodies - and their wealth - to be owned and controlled by fans, club employees and the wider working class, as part of a socialist society run for all.

Scott Jones
Loughton, Essex

■ 'Reclaim the Game' - a socialist programme for football by John Reid - available from leftbooks.co.uk

■ Key workers' homes

"Key workers cannot afford to buy homes." This was a page 2 headline in the Metro on 17 June.

The key worker wage is an average of the following occupations: nurse, teacher, paramedic, police officer and firefighter. In a survey the Halifax looked at affordability and in nearly all parts of the country they are priced out due to the level of their salaries.

As someone raised in a council house, who acquired a mortgage at the age of 25, I would conclude that the jobs in question are not worth doing given the purchasing power of the salaries involved.

Clearly in the last decade, perhaps the whole of the 21st Century, workers and the working class by definition have been suffering reversed fortunes under capitalism. Trade union leaders please take note!

Adrian Rimington
Chesterfield, Derbyshire

■ Heroic Eleanor Marx

Women have often been overlooked when it comes to writing political history. I would like therefore to make a few comments about the contribution of Eleanor Marx.

Eleanor was born on 16 January 1855, and by the age of 17 she was, according to her mother Jenny von Westphalen, "political from toe to toe."

Her political activism was said to have been awakened first by her hearing of the Irish people's struggle against British imperialism. However, from 1871 onwards she was also involved in helping refugees from the Paris Commune. She had a relationship with Prosper Lissagaray, author of a book on the Commune's history.

In industrial matters also she was to the fore. She helped push forward the 'new unionism' that arose out of action such as the 1888 matchgirls' strike. She supported the organisation of the Women's Trade Union League. And then in 1889 she featured prominently in the dockers' and gas workers' strikes. Plus she found time to teach Will Thorne, gas worker and founder of what was to become the GMB union, how to write!

Eleanor had been a participant in the founding of the congress of the International Workingmen's Association (the

Eleanor Marx, hero of the workers' movement



Michel Platini, hero of football turned big business hack
photo Nazionale Calcio/CC



First International). She was also involved in founding the Second International in 1889.

Domestically her initial allegiance was to the Social Democratic Federation, led by the autocratic and chauvinistic HM Hyndman. She broke with the SDF after a year, and with William Morris and her partner Edward Aveling set up the Socialist League.

She in turn broke from the League, in part over its opposition to standing candidates in elections, and had an eventual reconciliation of sorts with the SDF. However, she had no illusions in the SDF, and

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Opinion: capitalism's Fukushima showed same recklessness as Stalinism's Chernobyl

Clare Wilkins
Nottingham Socialist Party

While lauding the marvellous TV series Chernobyl (see 'Chernobyl - workers' heroism vs sclerotic Stalinism' at socialistparty.org.uk), the capitalist press has gleefully criticised 'socialism', and even Corbyn, for the Ukrainian nuclear disaster.

In 1986, capitalist governments quickly reported the radioactive emissions from Chernobyl and the extent of the catastrophe. The secrecy and bureaucratic control of Stalinism were central in causing and mishandling the incident. But capitalism is just as incompetent and secretive in dealing with disasters.

The explosion of one of Chernobyl's reactors was a 'level 7' incident on the International Atomic Energy Agency's international nuclear event scale. Level 7 is the top of the scale and describes an "accident causing widespread contamination with serious health and environmental effects."

In 2011, the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear plant in Japan suffered a meltdown in no fewer than three reactors, also assessed as a level 7 incident, following an earthquake and tsunami that breached the plant's sea wall. This was a disaster waiting to happen that officials had been warned about on a number of occasions.

Warnings ignored

Issues with design were raised in 1967. Seawater shut down turbines in 1991. In 1998 the International Herald Tribune had an article describing almost exactly the 2011 scenario. In 2008 a tsunami study was ignored. The warnings were discounted because officials claimed the risks were unrealistic.

In 2012, the Economist said of the Tokyo Electric Power Company, Tepco: "the [private] operating company was poorly regulated and did not know what was going on. The operators made mistakes. The representatives of the [government] safety inspectorate fled. Some of the equipment failed."

"The establishment repeatedly played down the risks and suppressed information about the movement of the radioactive plume, so some people were evacuated from more lightly to more heavily contaminated places."

The parallels with Chernobyl are clear.

The 2012 Japanese government inquiry said the causes were foreseeable, and Tepco had failed to meet basic safety requirements such as risk assessment, preparing to contain collateral damage, and developing evacuation plans.



Fukushima Daiichi before the meltdown
photo IAEA/CC

would say it was a cover up... It's extremely regrettable." It begs the question - what else has been and is being covered up? It is difficult to get proper information. Tepco, the Japanese government and global capitalism have no interest in giving full information and are yet to be forced to.

They say the radiation release was 10 to 40% lower than Chernobyl, because, unlike Chernobyl, Fukushima had a concrete containment vessel.

Still, environmental groups have revealed that all the fish in the Pacific were affected, and radiation reached the west coast of the United States in a matter of months. When environmental groups in California expressed concerns about the safety of seafood, the authorities carried out tests and declared the radiation "harmless and temporary."

Uncontrollable spread

In July 2011, Tepco said it was "unable to control the spread of radioactive material" from Fukushima. In 2013, radioactive isotopes were detected by over 40 monitoring stations all around the world.

Occasional stories surface about the safety of seawater off the coast of the plant because radiation continues to leach into the sea. But these are not followed up with official information. In August 2012, fish caught near the plant had 250 times the government safety limit of the radioactive isotope caesium-137.

The amount of damage to the reactor cores was 'unknown' according to Tepco. They reported 70% damage to fuel in unit one, 33% in unit two, and only reported complete meltdown in August 2014.

In February 2014 they said they had reviewed the radioactivity data and found it "significantly higher" in the groundwater than earlier reports. Since 2013 the Japanese government has taken over control of emergency measures from Tepco.

In September 2015, a typhoon overwhelmed the pumps at Fukushima, and hundreds of tons of radioactive water were released into the Pacific.

One of the recommendations of the 2012 inquiry was that nuclear power stations should not be built so close to the coast. There are two others in Japan alone, and many more around the world.

In the aftermath of Chernobyl, the Stalinist state took belated remedial action at like reactors around the Soviet Union. It did take some years, and the whistleblowing and suicide of a leading scientist, to force this. But it looks like the full facts of Fukushima have still not been disclosed and that remedial measures are inadequate.

Capitalism's capacity for inaction, withholding information, and covering up danger seems at least as serious with Fukushima as Stalinism's crimes at Chernobyl. Crucially, neither system had democratic workers' control of the plants and relief measures, or democratic accountability of officials to the majority of the population.



Fukushima was a disaster waiting to happen that officials had been warned about on a number of occasions

Another official report said the disaster was manmade and the plant was "incapable of withstanding an earthquake and tsunami" - and yet it was built in an earthquake zone.

In 2016 it was revealed that Tepco officials were instructed not to call it a "meltdown" - measured as 5% of fuel damaged - despite the fact that 25 to 55% of the fuel was damaged. Proper figures for the damage have not been fully disclosed, and Tepco has released various different figures for the radiation emitted.

Tepco's president has said: "I

CLIMATE CHANGE PROTESTS REACH IMPORTANT STAGE

Students, predominantly school students, along with trade unionists and environmental activists, protested for a fifth successive month on 21 June against the government's failure to seriously tackle climate change. Socialist Party members helped mobilise and assisted these student walkouts and demonstrations (reports below). However, with lower turnouts at the protests, it is becoming critical to discuss the correct strategy and tactics to achieve meaningful measures to halt catastrophic climate change (see page 2).

York

Although there was a smaller turnout at this month's strike, the mood was no less determined. The school students' campaign meeting, which followed the strike, looked at ways of developing links between schools and action within schools and beyond.

Students at Millthorpe school have gained the support of the school in holding a climate meeting. This was attended by 60 students. In other schools the students are being discouraged and threatened with sanctions for attending the strike. Students from those schools still attended the strike, but in smaller numbers.

The meeting discussed linking with other groups, especially trade unions, Extinction Rebellion and individual teachers. There was a decision to invite sympathetic teachers to the next campaign meeting and try to explore ways of spreading ideas around climate change more effectively into schools, through school student groups, in assemblies, and by inviting speakers into the schools. York Trade Union Council, which sponsored the meeting, will discuss ways of supporting this at their next meeting. Students also discussed taking the strike to the Nestlé factory as it is one of York's biggest employers and Nestlé is a major producer of unnecessary packaging. The students have already developed their own website and Instagram account

and want to use these and other forms of social media to improve communication between schools. They will also continue to hold meetings. York TUC will continue to support them and delegates will be asked to approach their branches for funding.

Nigel Smith
Secretary York TUC and Socialist Party

Newcastle

"The oceans are rising - so are we!" This and other chants rang out as students marched from Newcastle's Civic Centre down to Grey's Monument in the city centre.

Although there were less attendees than the May protest, the anger and enthusiasm was unmistakable. The organisers of the protest brought along a megaphone, which they used to both lead chants, and implement an open-mic policy. Of the young people who spoke there was a greater number of them putting forward socialistic views - rather than simply affirming personal actions - which was welcome.

One young person told us that some students from her school still supported the movement but had been scared off by the threat of sanctions by the school. A member of the local NEU teacher's union also spoke, and confirmed the policy of supporting students that go on climate strike (which was proposed by Socialist Party members within that union).



School students gather at the Newcastle protest photo Elaine Brunskill

A student who got in touch with us after last month's protest has become more active in the movement and asked for more information about the Socialist Party.

Sam Morden
South Tyne & Wearside Socialist Party

Nottingham

Around 50 people gathered in Nottingham Market Square for the climate strike on 21 June. There were school students aged eleven to 15 from at least four schools as well as some older campaigners and trade unionists. Organisers were disappointed that older students, whose terms have ended, were not there, saying students who study elsewhere and lived in Nottingham could have come. There are, however, limitations to mobilising events solely via social media.

Once again, students clearly saw the need for going beyond the limited demands of Youth Strike for Climate eg declaring 'climate emergencies'. The Canadian parliament had just declared a 'climate emergency' but the next day the government agreed another oil pipeline project across indigenous lands!

Most people agreed that capitalist governments and big business would not solve the climate crisis. Our demands for socialist change to end climate change were well received when explained.

There was a short march. Before this set off, the organiser, who is in the Labour Party, talked about the Tory leadership contest and said that he wanted "anyone but Boris", instead of calling to boot out the Tory government whoever leads it.

When the march returned to Market Square, the organiser talked about the general strike demand for 27 September. He said that it would be the "first general strike of our generation and we're going to walk away from our schools and workplaces".

However desirable a general strike would be, unless Youth Strike for Climate, Earth Strike and Extinction Rebellion link up with workers and the trade union movement to discuss how to make it a reality, then it will not happen (see editorial page 2).

As the protest ended, news broke that governments were lobbying the United Nation's current president, from Saudi Arabia, not to arrange a full session to discuss the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change report.

This shows the unwillingness of the capitalist profit system to halt catastrophic climate change. Only the socialist transformation of society would enable democratic planning of the economy and genuine international cooperation to secure sustainable production and hence the planet's future.

Clare Wilkins
Nottingham Socialist Party

London

Around 1,000 school students and protesters joined the demonstration in central London outside Parliament. The numbers had decreased from previous protests showing the need for organisation and clear leadership.

The climate strikes this year have shown anger at the capitalist system that can only offer young people inequality, exploitation and climate catastrophe. Members of the Socialist Party and Socialist Students have been organising school student unions - helping students set up bodies that can defend students against punishments, link up with workers and trade

draw up and implement a socialist plan of production.

While others on the left were just calling to "keep the coal in the ground" we put forward what is necessary to end climate change and to run society based on what people need not what makes profit for a few at the top.

Mark Best
East London Socialist Party

Leeds

The latest youth climate strike in Leeds featured a few additions to the usual environmental placards. The organisers made the event a joint climate protest and Pride event, as it fell within Pride month. Throughout the crowd were a colourful display of various flags and signs.

The display showed the diversity and determination of Leeds youth, and their continued willingness to push against the council's attempt at further expansion of Leeds/Bradford airport - which will significantly increase CO2 emissions.

Around 250 people made an appearance throughout the day with most attending the march. The Socialist Party's leaflets were well received by marchers and onlookers. Afterwards there were a number of speakers, myself included, many of which warned of the danger of societies' continued reliance on capitalism.

Lilli Green

Brighton

Hundreds of students walked out of their schools and colleges in Brighton for the fifth time this year to protest the government's inaction over the climate crisis.

Students were eager to get organised and continue building the movement, and crowded around our stall to sign up for Socialist Students.

The vast majority were angry at the Tory government, who have proven that they hold no solutions, and are increasingly looking toward a socialist alternative. We explained that we should organise to kick them out and fight for a Corbyn government with the socialist policies needed to tackle climate change.

Connor Rosoman
Brighton Socialist Students

Angry Barking fire victims demand action from landlords and authorities

Pete Mason

Chair, Barking Reach Residents' Association and east London Socialist Party

A fire risk assessment report in January this year of Samuel Garside House in Barking, east London, identified inflammable wooden balconies.

The report recommended that corrective work be carried out within a month but the landlords and managing agents failed to act. Five months later on 9 June - coinciding with the two-year anniversary of the Grenfell Tower inferno - the worst happened when a block of flats went up in flames. Fortunately no one died but 79 households were displaced.

Around 30 flats were destroyed, either partially or completely, in a fire that spread from flat to flat in about seven minutes. Only now are the balconies at other flats on the

estate being stripped away by the original builders, Bellway.

Our association is still not being sufficiently informed of what is going on, and at a meeting, mostly of the displaced residents, we voted unanimously to hold protests if we are not satisfied with the response to our demands by the end of this week.

Accommodation

The most important demand is that residents are given proper accommodation while the renovation works are carried out to restore the flats.

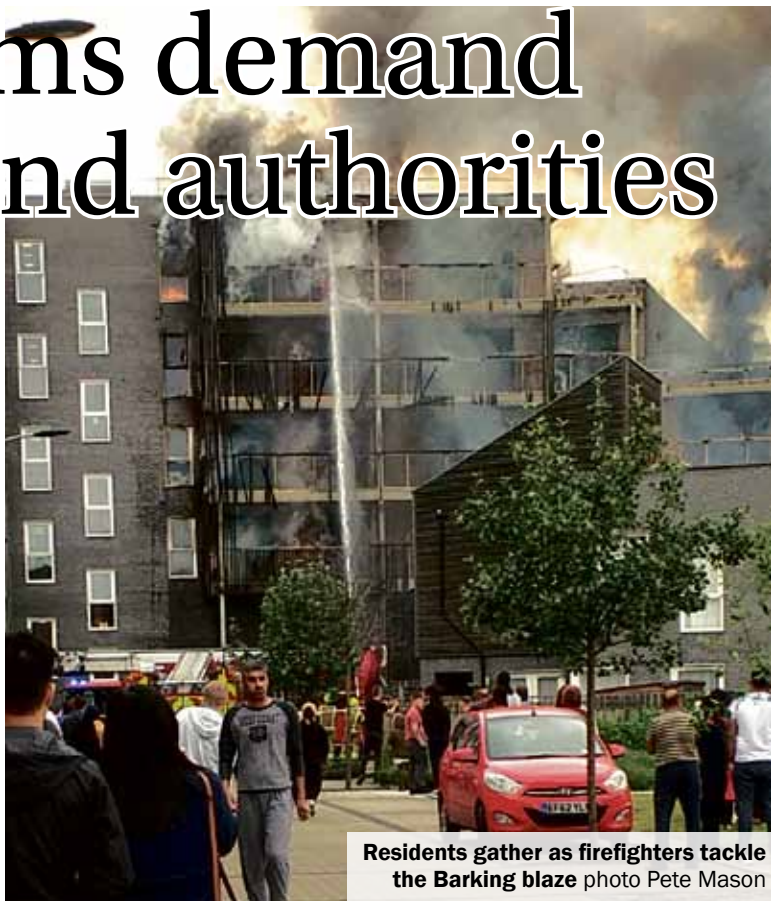
Each day displaced residents are being left until the very last moment to find out where they are staying. This is temporary hotel accommodation without facilities for babies, washing clothes and so forth. One resident reported being on the phone for 90 minutes with those put in charge of this to fix up a night's accommodation.

The second demand is the removal of the flammable cladding from the rest of the estate.

On 13 June, 200 residents crammed into a meeting called by the Residents' Association, which was attended by representatives from the government, council, landlords, managing agents and builders. Residents voted unanimously that they believe that all those representatives were negligent. Compensation for the distress has still not been offered.

We agreed that Adriatic, the landlord, has forfeited the right to own the block due to this alleged negligence. The residents want to be involved in the restoration process, such as the rebuilding of the balconies - one of the displaced resident's is a qualified architect.

They identified the need for fire doors in the ground floor car park, which was confirmed by a fire expert who attended a further residents' association meeting.



Residents gather as firefighters tackle the Barking blaze photo Pete Mason

■ See 'Angry Barking residents' meeting demands answers and action following fire' on socialistparty.org.uk

Hull trade union festival a great success



photo Lucy Nuttall

Lucy Nuttall

Hull Socialist Party members were central in organising a hugely successful trade union festival, 'Engage for Change', that took place on Saturday 22 June.

Taking the stage were a mixture of community and trade union speakers alongside local bands and artists, with a children's activity area making it a family friendly day.

Vincent and Pierre-Emmanuel, members of Gauche Révolutionnaire (the Socialist Party's counterpart in France), travelled over from

France and addressed the crowds as activists in the anti-austerity Gilets Jaunes (yellow vests) protest movement.

Also inspiring to hear from was Lyn-Marie O'Hara, one of the Glasgow council workers involved in the successful strike last October for equal pay.

The festival gets bigger every year, with an estimated 5,000 people participating during the day.

Our socialist programme received an excellent response. We sold 70 copies of the Socialist and 33 copies of L'egalite - the paper of Gauche Révolutionnaire.



photo Paul Mattsson



STOP THE FIRE SERVICE CUTS

Firefighters in Devon and Somerset have reacted with fury to swingeing cuts in which will reduce the fire service 'to the bone'.

The fire authority plans to close eight fire stations and get rid of 30 fire engines, yet claims there's no risk to the public!

The FBU firefighters union Devon and Somerset brigade secretary James Leslie said: "The FBU will not tolerate these dangerous plans and we plan to mobilise against them."

Socialist Party members will be mobilising through the trade unions and in the local communities in support of the FBU's action against the cuts.

More in a future issue

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 have 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 and include 'building fund' in the comments.



		£ target	£ received	April-June 2019												Deadline: 2 July 2019
Wales	2,300	4,941														215%
South West	1,800	1,934														107%
East Midlands	1,850	1,498														
Northern	750	479											64%			
Southern	1,600	971											61%			
London	6,100	3,547											58%			
Yorkshire	3,300	1,857											56%			
North West	2,100	1,084											52%			
West Midlands	2,600	1,042											40%			
South East	750	245											33%			
Eastern	1,200	360											30%			
Other	5,650	2,457											43%			
TOTAL	30,000	20,416											68%			

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

■ cheques payable to

'Socialist Party', PO Box 24697, London E11 1YD



RATCHETING UP OF IRAN-US TENSIONS

Neither imperialism nor regional powers offer a way forward for region's workers and poor

Robert Bechert
Committee for a Workers' International (CWI)

The apparent last minute cancellation by Donald Trump of US military retaliation - after Iran shot down a US surveillance drone - has not significantly lessened the chances of new military clashes given the continuing tensions in that region. This is particularly true as the drone incident followed explosions on four oil tankers in the Gulf region earlier in June.

Given that the Middle East remains a cockpit of competing world and regional powers each with their own agendas, new clashes - possibly turning into a wider conflict - cannot be ruled out.

At the same time Trump's claimed personal U-turn of calling off direct military action actually graphically illustrated the conflicts both within and between the US state machine and the cabal around Trump.

Trump's decision last year to break with the other main imperialist powers and withdraw from the 2015 nuclear deal with Iran opened a new stage. However, while opposed by sections of the US ruling class, this move was not simply Trump's personal decision.

For one wing of the US ruling class it was both aimed at rebuilding US imperialism's position in the region especially after its failure at regime change in Syria. And, linked to that, an attempt to work with the US's closest allies in the region - Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Egypt and Israel - to reverse the increase in regional power and influence the Iranian regime has recently enjoyed.

Following the 1979 overthrow of the regime of their ally, Iran's then autocratic ruler the Shah, the western powers worked to limit Iranian influence. This was because the new Iranian regime was seen as

a threat to their remaining Middle East allies.

Thus Iraq's then dictator Saddam Hussein had the support of most western powers in the bloody 1980-88 Iran-Iraq war.

But then the western powers fell out with Saddam after his 1990 invasion of Kuwait. When this was followed by the second gulf war in 2003 - in which the US-led coalition invaded Iraq, overthrew Saddam and disintegrated the old Iraqi state - the Iranian regime was able to significantly expand its regional reach.

Divisions

Alongside this development there was division and rivalries among the imperialist powers. Some like China and Russia clearly leaned towards supporting Iran as part of their strategic competition with the western imperialists.

The complexities of the situation helped produce divisions within the US ruling class with some, especially Obama, sharing a similar position to that of most European ruling classes of trying to 'engage' and work with the Iranian regime.

Others in the US, particularly Republicans like John Bolton, currently Trump's National Security Advisor, rejected this, calling for the military overthrow of the Tehran regime. However large sections of the US military leadership are currently reluctant to undertake a new military adventure which, in their minds, would not lead to a quick, if any, military victory.

While Trump's repeated emphasis that Iran "can't have a nuclear weapon" will have support within the US and some neighbouring countries like Israel and Saudi Arabia, it is not clear whether that would at this time outweigh opposition to military strikes, let alone a new war.

But such military action would not simply have huge implications in the region, it would also have worldwide economic repercussions

as the oil price would probably, at least for a time, sharply rise.

Trump's contradictory statements in recent days reflect these divisions in civilian and military US ruling circles. On the one hand Trump has warned Iran, a country of nearly 83 million, of "obliteration like you've never seen before", while also talking of wanting to help to "make Iran great again". Partly this is Trump's negotiating strategy, including a clumsy attempt to take advantage of divisions within the Iranian regime.

Within Iran the failure of the 2015 deal to open the door to sustained economic development has weakened Iranian president Hassan Rouhani. And now the brutal sanctions which the US administration has imposed have deepened an economic crisis.

In the year to March 2019 Iran's GDP (total output) fell by 4.9%. Inflation is currently officially running at just over 50% a year at a time when wages are often not being paid on time.

Significantly this is taking place against background of an important revival of workers' struggles and oppositional activities since the end of 2017. Workers in both the private and public sectors have taken to the streets in their thousands and gone on strike on different issues including regular payment of wages, skyrocketing living costs and poor working conditions.

But these movements have not simply been on immediate economic issues. The Haft-Tapeh sugar cane agro-industry workers have become known for having formed an independent workers' council, with its call for the workers' control of their privatised workplace.

Repression

As a result the workers have faced repeated repression and arrests. Last year the regime also targeted left-wing students.

Since the 2018 May Day, Amnesty International recorded the arrests of hundreds of workers and other activists. Courts have handed down harsh prison sentences to dozens of workers. Around 45 workers have been imprisoned since May Day 2019.

These are very significant developments as they pose the possibility that the coming period, despite the regime's repression, could see important progress being made in the building of an independent workers' movement. Such a development would strike fear not just in the Iranian regime but also in neighbouring countries.

Currently the Iranian working class is, probably alongside its Turk-



US Navy ship test firing guided missile photo Leah Garton/CC

ish brothers and sisters, potentially one of the strongest in the region and if it became a politically independent factor it could begin to inspire challenge not just to the various dictatorial regimes but also to capitalism itself.

Clearly this is one factor in Trump making his offer to "make Iran great again", in an attempt to try to exploit opposition against the regime and also to try to head it in a pro-capitalist direction. However, Trump's appeal will probably have limited support.

While there may be some illusions in the US providing a 'better life', there is also the historical legacy of the nationalist anger in Iran at its history of imperialist intervention, especially by the US and Britain.

After the bitter experience of the 2003 Gulf War, opposition to any new imperialist attacks on Iran will be widespread. But it will need to be linked to solidarity and support to those working to build



Sudan Solidarity protests



photo Naomi Byron

Demo applauds call for a democratic, socialist Sudan

Chris Newby
Hackney Socialist Party

On 22 June Socialist Party members took part in a protest outside Downing Street in central London, called by the Sudanese community in Britain. It was called in response to the continued rule of the Transitional Military Council (TMC) and the recent mass killings and rapes carried out by the notorious Rapid Support Forces paramilitary organisation - whose leader General Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo, known as Hemedi, is becoming the real power in the TMC.

Protesters in London rallied against the British government which, while condemning the TMCs violent crackdown, continues to "engage" with the TMC.

The demonstrators were clear

in their opposition to the TMC but there were differing opinions about what needs to happen next.

Demonstrators took our Socialist Party placards which called for a workers' government and for a democratic, socialist Sudan. Our leaflets which put forward our programme of what is needed were taken by most of the demonstrators.

Naomi Byron gave solidarity greetings from the Socialist Party and Committee for a Workers' International. She also outlined key demands; such as for the local neighbourhood committees to link up on a city-wide, regional and national basis, which can then form the basis for a revolutionary government of the workers, the poor and all those exploited by capitalism.

Such a government could enact a programme of democratic public ownership of all the major

Protesters rallied against the British government which continues to "engage" with the TMC

companies, banks and multinational corporations, so that these resources could lay the basis for establishing a democratic socialist Sudan. This was met by cheers from sections of the protest.

Using the Socialist's centre page feature on Sudan we sold 20 copies and several people came up to us asking for more information about the Socialist Party.

No trust in imperialist powers

speakers, with revolutionary songs and chanting interspersing this.

Iain Dalton addressed the rally bringing greetings from Leeds Socialist Party. He called for the disbandment of the RSF and those guilty of the horrific repression to be tried by revolutionary tribunals.

He outlined that the Sudanese working class should place no trust in the establishment and imperialist powers, but rely on their own

organisations to convene elections to a revolutionary constituent assembly and form a workers' government.

Armed with a programme of bringing the key sectors of the economy into public ownership, under democratic workers' control, a workers' government could transform the lives of ordinary Sudanese workers and poor and bring about a democratic, socialist Sudan.



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!
Join the Socialists!

socialistparty.org.uk/join 020 8988 8777

@socialist_party text 07761 818 206 /CWiSocialistParty



Trump signs presidential order imposing sanctions on Iran photo Shealah Craighead/CC

Strikes get results

COORDINATE THE FIGHTBACK!

Come to the 2019 NSSN conference

Corinthia Ward

Birmingham North Socialist Party

Birmingham's Labour council has been brought to its knees in the last two years by two groups of its own staff - the home carers and bin workers.

The National Shop Stewards Network (NSSN) 2019 conference on 6 July is a fantastic opportunity to hear more and coordinate the trade union fightback.

The bin workers went on strike in 2017 to defend their jobs, and again in 2019 against "blacklisting" by the council. The home carers took over 80 days' strike action to defend their hours and pay.

Their disputes, while originating from different issues, were connected. Both were attacks by the Labour council as it carried out the Tories' austerity agenda. The home carers themselves were inspired to strike by the bin workers' victory, and by the beginning of 2019 both sets of workers found themselves on strike.

On 22 February the home carers and bin workers held a day of joint action. They have shown the potential of what can be achieved when workers coordinate our disputes.

Their pressure forced the Birmingham City Council to show its cracks. Cabinet councillor Majid Mahmood stepped down from his position. 23 councillors signed a letter criticising the new council leader, Ian Ward - after the last leader, John Clancy, was forced to resign over the 2017 bin strike!

Workers' power

This demonstrates the massive collective power workers have. By taking strike action, not only do workers show who really keeps the city running, but we can act as a political catalyst to rupture pro-capitalist parties.

The Trade Union Congress and union leaders should learn from the heroic determination of the Birmingham workers, and build for a mass mobilisation against austerity and for a general election.

If two sets of workers can bring the second largest city's council to its knees, imagine what pressure national strikes would put on this extremely weak and divided Tory government. They can't even agree on a suitable leader, let alone how to meet the demands of millions of angry workers fighting poverty pay and deterioration of their living standards!

The NSSN conference can be a platform to help build a campaign for action. It is through workers' coordinated struggle that we can get results such as decent pay, hours and conditions.

The Birmingham workers' victories show us a glimmer of what could be achieved, and should be used as inspiration in the workers' movement!

>>Why you should come to the NSSN conference: more views on p10

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stewardsnetwork

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
shopstewards.net