We say...

■ No trust in pro-austerity politicians
■ General election now
■ Left union leaders should initiate the organising of mass protests
■ Corbyn can win with socialist policies
■ No to the bosses’ EU
■ For an EU exit deal that defends jobs and workers’ interests

Parliament is closed but there’s still open warfare in the Tory party. Meanwhile, in the real world, working-class people continue to suffer from austerity and exploitation at work.

Hospitals, schools and local services are collapsing under the strain of years of cuts and under-funding. Recently we were told we work some of the longest hours in Europe.

Yet, at the same time, thousands of young people face the nightmare of zero-hour contracts and precarious jobs. Others are having to work more than one job just to keep their heads above water.

More people might be in jobs but real wages are £5 a week less than they were eleven years ago. And if an acrimonious no-deal crash out happens, it will be working-class people who pay again through higher food prices and job losses.

Cuts

Johnson promises an end to austerity. But after a decade of vicious cuts we can’t believe a word that he and the Tories say. They are the party of the 0.01% who have seen their share of income triple since 1995; the 1,000 richest people whose wealth increased by nearly £48 billion last year.

In 2017 Corbyn inspired millions with his anti-austerity programme - his pledge to scrap tuition fees, introduce a minimum wage of £10 an hour and promote workers’ rights. These are the kind of policies we need. Corbyn and the unions who back him should be energetically campaigning for a general election around such a programme.

Corbyn must not let the Blairites in the Labour Party drown that message out with their calls for unity with pro-austerity MPs who do not speak for working-class and young people. We need to make sure that our voices are heard above the Brexit/Remain parliamentary racket.
TRADE UNION MOVEMENT MUST PUT ITS STAMP ON SWIRLING EVENTS

The stated dread of the bosses and their representatives is of a return to the 1970s about workers' rights, not to the 1970s but to intense class struggle.

The struggle to increase a socialist NHS to provide for everyone’s health needs - free at the point of need and receive no more than a worker’s wages. Not to decrease state aid to the private health care industry, nor to privatize the NHS.

The struggle to increase a maximum 35-hour working week with no increase in workload, to no increase in work pressure and to no further work intensification. The struggle against the wave of workers’ struggles, mass strikes and the other forms of trade union struggle in Britain and in other countries, to prevent a return to the 1970s.

The struggle to prevent the return of the bosses’ offensive and Tory policies that have brought us to the edge of a new recession.

The struggle to stop the cuts and defend public services and benefits. Defend our pensions against cuts.

The struggle for a nationalisation of the key industries. No to nuclear power stations! No to nuclear weapons! No to the profits of a few. We also oppose fighting trade unions, democratically elected leaders and the trade union movement itself.

The struggle to prevent the government, in alliance with the bosses, taking our powers away.

The struggle to have our trade union rates of pay, our social security and pension rights. Scrap the anti-trade union laws! For a wage increase linked to average earnings. Scrap zero-hour contracts.

The struggle to resist the bosses’ counter-revolution against the organized working class. Not only for the rights of workers, but for democracy, for the unity of the workers. As long as the bosses’ counter-revolution remains untapped, there will be no workers’ struggle.

The struggle to prevent the return of the bosses’ offensive and the Thatcherite policies of privatization and “non-interference” in the workplace.

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As university campuses reawaken for a new academic year, we ask Socialist Students national organiser Theo Sharifff about the major issues facing students - and how to fight back.

Cuts and marketisation in higher education are greatly reducing the quality and availability of courses and support. How can we fight back?

Workers in the University and College Union (UCU) led the way two years ago when they took strike action on hundreds of university campuses against management’s attacks on their pensions. The UCU is now preparing a coordinated strikeworking across the country having launched emergency meetings on campuses, and led local campaigns. We say that students flocked to support those strikes because they could see a fightback taking place, and understood that it’s the workers who have the biggest potential power against campus cuts and marketisation. That’s why Socialist Students calls for the building of joint student and worker campaigns, locally and nationally, to defeat cuts to campus services and courses.

The way to end cuts and marketisation on our campuses is to link this to the fight for an anti-austerity government that will properly fund our education, unlike the Tories!

Housing is a defining social crisis for the younger generation. What does Socialist Students have to say about it?

The housing crisis is particularly bad for students and young people. At university, students pay extortionate levels of rent to landlords who only provide dilapidated housing and cramped living conditions. Students’ average rent in halls totals £130 a week, while the average maintenance loan students receive is just £138.85 a week. But of course, it isn’t only at university we suffer the housing crisis.

One recent study looked at people aged between 20 and 35. The number living with their parents has now climbed to one in four! It illustrates this isn’t the youngest, but the working class more generally which is suffering.

Socialist Students has a proud record of campaigning on the issue of student housing, with our members across the country having launched and led local campaigns. We say that universities should provide decent and affordable student housing for all students, and that students’ unions should be leading campaigns for universities to provide such housing.

If local councils used their reserves and borrowing powers to launch mass programmes of council house building, and introduced rent controls for private tenants, the situation for students and workers alike would be transformed.

Tuition fees and student debt are crushing burdens for students and graduates. Is free education achievable?

The Tories are in the midst of a historic political crisis and are splitting apart in parliament. Unelected prime minister Boris Johnson has even managed to lose the Tories’ majority in parliament!

They are of course split over the matter of what to do about Brexit in order to best protect the interests of the capitalist class. But they’re also split over how to take their system of capitalism forward, which is still in crisis over a decade after the 2007-08 economic crash.

This presents an enormous opportunity to launch a fightback to demand a general election and kick the Tories out of government. Jeremy Corbyn put the demand for free university education central to his anti-austerity manifesto in 2017 - which includes free education, extending public ownership in rail and energy, a mass programme of house building, and a £10-an-hour minimum wage for workers of all ages - saw young people queuing round the block to vote for it.

But we say he needs to fight for those policies!

That means not only calling students and workers out onto the streets, and demanding that the trade union leaders organise a like struggle to defeat the Tories. It also means kicking the pro-capitalist MPs out of Labour - the Blairites, who are determined to sabotage Corbyn’s anti-austerity promise.

Students, alongside workers, could build an outright movement that not only kicks out the Tories but pushes a Corbyn-led Labour government further left than it initially intends to go.

Jeremy Corbyn has good policies in many of these areas, but also needs to go further in others. How can students make it all happen?

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Socialist Students marching for free education

Socialist Students, for example, demands not only the scrapping of tuition fees, but also the cancellation of all outstanding student debt. If Corbyn nationalised the banks and top corporations as well as the railways and energy companies, this could let him fund such a programme and prevent sabotage by the billionaires.

So do students have the power to create social change alone?

Students can play an important role in building movements to change society. But we think the key role is played by the working class.

Because it’s the working class that really runs all of society - from manufacture and transport to retail and nursing - the working class holds the power to grind the economy to a halt, and with it the bosses’ profits.

The trade unions have huge potential power. A united movement of workers, with students fighting alongside them, could transform society.

Meanwhile, students’ own union, the National Union of Students (NUS), is in crisis. How can students build the kind of national campaigns - and links with the workers’ movement - you’ve mentioned?

At its last annual delegate conference in Glasgow, the right-wing leadership of the NUS forced through a package of ‘reforms’. These are pushing the NUS in the direction of being reduced to the status of a think tank, rather than an organisation that leads serious struggle for students’ rights and conditions.

Socialist Students calls on all students’ unions this year to convene emergency meetings on campuses, to allow students to discuss the events inside the NUS, and what the way forward is for the student movement.

Out of these meetings could come a strategy to refound the NUS itself, on fighting and democratic lines, or a plan for a national meeting of students to discuss building an entirely new national students’ union.

Regardless of which of these two outcomes emerges, the he all and end all for us is that students need a fighting, national students’ union to organise students in the fight to get rid of this rotten Tory government.

جریمی کوربنیت دارد برخی از سیاست‌های خوبی در این زمینه‌ها دارد، اما همچنان نیاز دارد به راهبردهای دیگری نیز. چگونه می‌توانند اجرای این سیاست‌ها را کامل کنند?

مکاتبه با زیرساخت‌های آموزشی در ۲۰۱۹ - که شامل آموزش رایگان، وسایل عمومی راه‌آهن و انرژی است - جدیدی که موجب شد خیابان‌ها یاد بگیرند. جریمی کوربنیت پیشنهاد ضرایب جامعه عمومی را در سال ۲۰۱۷ که شامل آموزش رایگان، وسایل عمومی راه‌آهن و انرژی است - جدیدی که موجب شد خیابان‌ها یاد بگیرند.

اما ما می‌گوییم او نیاز دارد به نیاز به مبارزه برای این سیاست‌ها!

این معناست که همچنان نیاز به مبارزه است. در سال ۲۰۱۷ - که شامل آموزش رایگان، وسایل عمومی راه‌آهن و انرژی است - جدیدی که موجب شد خیابان‌ها یاد بگیرند.

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WHAT WE THINK

Climate protests: Which way forward after 20 September?

Josh Asker
Southampton Socialist Party

The 20 September ‘Earth Strike’ marks an important new stage in the Youth Strike 4 Climate protests. These began over a year ago and have mobilised millions of young people around the world. They are an expression of anger at governments that preside over a system which creates inequality, injustice and destruction, and is unable to provide youth with a future. The capitalist politicians are incapable of solving the climate crisis and the misery of low pay, unemployment, debt, poverty and homelessness.

Now, on 20 September, students are linking up with workers in protests and strikes. In this country many workers are following the call from the university and college union, UCU, for a 30 minute lunchtime stoppage. Locally, many different trade unions are collaborating in the protests. This is an important development because of the potential power that workers hold. Mass protests like those organised by Extinction Rebellion can block the streets, but coordinated action by workers can grind whole cities to a standstill. The trade unions have six million members and these workers are potentially a colossal force in the fight to kick out the Tories and to save our planet.

Students’ unions

An important part of this struggle is also the formation of school students unions, so that no one takes action on their own, and students can organise to defend each other and their right to protest. These could link up with students at other schools and colleges in a local area and eventually at a national level. They could act to democratically decide how to take the movement forward, as well as fighting on other issues such as school funding. Links need to be maintained between students’ unions and workers’ unions beyond the 20 September protests.

The fight to save our environment is intrinsically linked to the fight to improve all aspects of our lives. The same capitalist politicians that are unable to solve the climate crisis are also unable to give us a future with decent jobs, pay and services.

The climate strikers have raised the slogan ‘system change, not climate change’. There is no way that climate change can be stopped while the capitalists continue with their drive for profits worldwide. We believe that system change must be socialist if it is to be capable of solving the environmental catastrophe we face (see pages 8-9).

Fighting for a socialist alternative to capitalism’s austerity and climate change requires building a mass movement of workers’ and young people in this country and internationally. And as part of that process we need a political voice. Kicking out the Tories in a general election would be just the first step.

To guarantee a decent future for working class and young people a Corbyn-led government would have to dismantle the control that the big corporations exert over the economy. This would mean taking them into public ownership, democratically controlled and managed by working class people.

In that way it would be possible to draw up a plan of investment to provide jobs, homes, services and the resources we need, while at the same time ensuring that the environment is protected.

But pollution and environmental destruction don’t stop at national boundaries. Only international socialist cooperation can save our planet and this is what the Socialist Party and our sister organisations in the Committee for a Workers’ International are fighting for here and around the globe.

Members of Unison in Surrey will be holding a rally – ‘a Picket for the Planet’ on 20 September. We are in full support of the action these courageous young people have been taking.

Month after month, across the world, school students have taken strike action against climate change inspired by Greta Thunberg. This time, they are asking for the trade unions, the workers of the world, to come out and support them - calling for a Global Earth Strike. We are calling on all our members to come and support a one-hour protest rally on the day in their lunch breaks or by taking annual leave etc.

School students will be walking out of (or picketing outside) a number of schools in Surrey, marching through Guildford to the Borough Council offices to deliver letters to the councillors, before marching up to the train station to join with the Unison rally at 12pm.

We need a government that will take this issue seriously and take over those huge, profit-hungry companies which are destroying our planet. We need socialist change – not climate change.

Currently politicians are arguing over deal or no-deal, Brexit or Remain, but in the real world the Amazon is burning, our oceans are dying, energy companies continue to profit from fossil fuels, and so on. In Surrey our airports continue to expand, incinerators are being brought online and fracking is causing earthquakes.

I hope that the energy and commitment of these young people can be a spur, part of a massive movement of the trade unions and working people to transform society in the interests of the many, not the few.

London earth strike

On the day of the ‘earth strike’ thousands of young people are expected to descend on central London. Additionally many trade unionists, including Socialist Party members, have been organising in their trades councils, union branches and workplaces for local actions to link together workers and young people.

London Socialist Students member Ellis Mulholland led a lively discussion and debate at Southwark trades council. The workers there are protesting at the council offices at 12.30 on Friday, to be joined by campaigners from local colleges.

In Camden, trade union members are rallying at lunchtime and then joining the central London protests. Similar rallies are happening in Hackney.

In Waltham Forest, the trades council has campaigned for protests by workers inside or at the front gates of their workplaces, as well as a local gathering in the town square. Socialist Students member Lily Douglas spoke at Redbridge trades council to encourage the members there to take action.

These are just a few of the examples where Socialist Party trade unionists and young members have been involved in organising action - there will be similar events in many boroughs, including Lewisham, Wandsworth, Newham and many more.
intricate system of local and national negotiations. The PCS strike was one of the most significant in recent years, involving some 100,000 members across the UK.

Corbyn gave his support at the recent TUC congress. Three PCS members have been on strike for a national issue. Health visitors have now been on strike 26 times in just 19 months. When you come out on strike in your own branch, you are taking action to achieve the 45% cut in their collective power for decisive change. These teams' last day of strike action will be on 28 July (UCU's 'Day of Dissent').

However, alongside his offer to 'consider striking' the government has as yet not been put to the membership for a vote. This is the best way to unite workers in the workplace, on the shops floor and in the community.

The PCS strike at the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA) is another example of the power of the union to defend its members' interests. The DVSA is an agency of the Department for Transport, responsible for enforcing road safety laws. The DVSA has been at the centre of a series of strikes in recent months, with PCS members involved in a strike at the agency's site in Nottingham, where they are demanding a living wage.

The DVSA strike has been supported by PCS branches who have called for a general strike on 20 September. The PCS is asking its members to take one of three key actions: a 12-hour strike on 20 September, a 24-hour strike on 30 September, or a rolling strike action of one week on strike and one week off.

The DVSA strike is part of a wider campaign by the PCS to defend the rights of its members, who are employed at the DVSA by Aramark. PCS members have as many good reasons for the DVSA as any other section of the working class. This is why, at the PCS National Executive Committee meeting prior to the TUC, the PCS motion called for a “mobilisation through mass protest and demonstrations for a general strike and for a government to be elected with a clear and sure anti-austerity policy.”

Union members must mobilise to fight back

The PCS strike is one of the most significant in recent years, involving some 100,000 members across the UK. When you come out on strike in your own branch, you are taking action to achieve the 45% cut in their collective power for decisive change. These teams' last day of strike action will be on 28 July (UCU's 'Day of Dissent').

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The climate change picture was once again highlighted at the United Nations climate talks in Bonn this summer. The recognition of the urgency of the situation is a positive development, but the road ahead is fraught with challenges.

The Stern report in 2006 highlighted the scale of change required to avoid disaster. At the height of the crisis, one of the United Nations reports stated that the earth’s climate was changing in ways that could be catastrophic.

Current greenhouse gas (GHG) abundances and global temperature increases are a result of human activities. Indeed, it is estimated that the vast majority of the increase in recent decades is due to human activities, with the exception of a small portion that is natural in origin.

The Kyoto Protocol, signed by 110 countries in December 1997, committed these countries to cut their greenhouse gas emissions by 5% below 1990 levels by 2012. The protocol was intended to be a first step towards global efforts to reduce emissions of GHGs, which cause global warming.

However, the protocol has not been implemented effectively. By 2015, only 37 countries had ratified the protocol, and only 33 had provided information on their intended actions to reduce emissions.

The Paris Agreement, adopted in December 2015, aims to keep the rise in global temperatures below 2°C above pre-industrial levels and to pursue efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5°C. The agreement entered into force on November 4, 2016.

The agreement sets out a process for long-term global action on climate change. It is intended to provide a framework for future international cooperation on climate change, and to encourage countries to reduce their emissions and adapt to the impacts of climate change.

While these agreements are a positive step, they are not enough to meet the challenges that climate change poses. The urgent need for action requires a transformation of our economic and social systems.

The capitalist system, with its profit motive, is fundamentally opposed to the idea of putting public interest above private profit. Capitalists invest to profit, and they are not interested in spending money to protect the environment.

A transition to a sustainable, equitable, and just society is possible, but it requires a fundamental transformation of our economic and political systems. This transformation requires a shift in the balance of power from corporate interests to the needs of the planet and its people.

The struggle for a sustainable future is a fight against the forces of capitalism. It requires a commitment to collective action, and a determination to challenge the power of those who stand in the way of a just, equitable, and sustainable world.
Help us move our press by October: pay in your building appeal pledge!

London: packed public meeting discusses crisis

A packed public meeting on the national in British politics and the Conservative Party was hosted by the Socialist Party London on 12 September. Over 100 people attended. The meeting was opened by Socialist Party national treasurer Ken Douglas.

Pay the f**kback to Boris

The Socialist Party demands that the government at Peterloo 200 years ago. There was working-class support from independence campaigners by Sam from West Papua, who spoke at Oxford Socialist Party’s meeting on 12 September. In London, there was working-class support from the Socialist Party through our half-century of work for the right of West Papuans to self-determination, and support the people’s movement to end the Indonesian administrations of West Papua.

Worcestershire campaigners plan march to save Bewdley Fire Station

The Socialist Party South West Midlands Region’s Worcester Socialist Party continues this Sunday to save Bewdley Fire Station. The level of cover to the area is going to be reduced which is a huge blow to the community. The station continues to build, with a new training tower and accommodation to be centralised in the West Midlands Fire and Rescue Service. There are also attacks on the level of cover, and on the training and education of existing firefighters and new recruits.

London Socialist Party national treasurer Ken Douglas

Socialist Party treasurer Ken Douglas proposed that the £26,000 in outstanding costs of this move. It will cost up to £4,000 to move our press alone and without us even getting sight of it. Boris Johnson visited South Yorkshire to speak to self-determination, and support the people’s movement to end the Indonesian administrations of West Papua. The need to end austerity and ar -...
The Socialist

Do you have something to say?

Socialist Review, PO Box 24967, London E1 3YD

NORTHERN IRELAND: CAMPAIGN MOUNTS OVER HISTORIC SEXUAL ABUSE ALLEGATIONS COVER-UP

19-25 September 2019

Greta Thunberg’s 2019 publication ‘No Going Back’ is not the book for you. If you want an out, detailed socialist analysis of how capitalism drives climate change, this ‘movement for the luxuries of the few.”

The chapter about addressing the profit motive and the divine right of ownership and workers to retain control rather than stopping the profits of the many and putting the interests of the few in the fire safety assessment. We cannot allow these fires to keep happening.

A local medium

Operation Yellowhammer

Why has the government to publish the Operation Yellowhammer documents? ‘If Yellowhammer is nothing more than a very weak and cosmetic exercise, then it is a network of social media and youth support groups, all linked with challenging the culture of secrecy facilitated the abuse of boys at Kincora boys’ home, in Belfast, in the early 1970s, which was used as a front for and an attempt to kill police and army personnel, and a number of Or- member) and a number of Or- sex abuse - like domestic violence - facilitated the abuse of boys at Kincora boys’ home, in Belfast, in the early 1970s, which was used as a front for an attempt to kill police and army personnel, and a number of Or- members of the Executive were in positions of power and authority.

Violence facilitated the abuse of boys at Kincora boys’ home, in Belfast, in the early 1970s, which was used as a front for an attempt to kill police and army personnel, and a number of Or- members of the Executive were in positions of power and authority.

A common feature was that victims were stigmatising sex abuse - like domestic violence. The survivors and their supporters who are dealing with this campaign come from all walks of life and deal with their own personal traumas and grief facilitated the abuse of boys at Kincora boys’ home, in Belfast, in the early 1970s, which was used as a front for an attempt to kill police and army personnel, and a number of Or- members of the Executive were in positions of power and authority.

The apparent inaction by police members of the Executive were in positions of power and authority.

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When I met Robert Poole, the author of ‘Peterloo: The English Uprising’, at the recent bicentenary commemorations, he asked me if he had taken too long in getting to the actual events of 16 August 1819. Certainly, eleven of the 15 chapters of this book deal with the prelude to the massacre.

However, these chapters are crammed with detail of the economic, social and political circumstances in Manchester and the surrounding districts in the late Regency period, and particularly after the Battle of Waterloo in June 1815.

The book thoroughly describes the position of the different class forces at the time. The ruling class - in Manchester mainly the biggest manufacturers, but nationally also the landed aristocracy and financiers - was clear that movements for reform had to be crushed. It would drive no truck with concessions to the leaders of the Radical movement and did everything to prevent them gaining a mass base in society.

Movement

In the chapter entitled ‘Conspirators’, the author describes the state of the radical movement. In some towns, its ‘unions’ and ‘societies’ reached sizeable numbers. But, “in Manchester, spies and informers had penetrated the radical network from top to bottom.” Infiltration was organised not just directly by the Westminster government but also by local magistrates who ran networks to gather information about the radicals’ intentions.

This was aided by the methods of the leaders of the radical organisations. On the one hand they talked about general political demands, but nationally also the landed aristocracy and financiers - was clear that movements for reform had to be crushed. It would drive no truck with concessions to the leaders of the Radical movement and did everything to prevent them gaining a mass base in society.

When the spinners took strike action, they organized against ‘knobsticks’ (scabs): “Four or five hundred or perhaps one or two thousand assembling from different factories and at the hour of work, viz. 4 or 5 o’clock in the morning go to a factory at the other end of town where they are not known, and so carry off by force or intimidation, though without any violent breach of the peace, the hands who might be disposed to go to work.”

The strike wave was commonly believed to be a failure. But Poole has uncovered evidence that the master spinners gave secret concessions to reduce the working day and widen the higher rates of pay for smaller pieces of work, a settlement announced factory by factory.

Even the Home Secretary, Lord Sidmouth, considered this agreement ‘judicious, but the disclosure of it at this moment would have an appearance calculated to produce very injurious effects’ - to the bosses, not the workers!

The authorities were worried that industrial unrest would merge with the Radicals resulting in serious consequences for their position. Manchester stipendiary magistrate James Norris wrote: “I cannot think that the trades are at all organized for a general turn out [strike]... but the idea necessarily acquires strength amongst the lower classes... and some are no doubt ripe for it at this moment.”

Similarly, Bolton magistrate Colonel Fletcher was worried: “The danger of a committee dictating what wages must be paid, is manifest, and if [it] should be submitted to, a worse than universal suffrage would succeed. It would introduce a mob oligarchy, bearing down on all the better orders of society, and would quickly be succeeded by universal anarchy”.

When the strikes were over, with unsatisfactory endings for some, workers did turn to the political field in 1819 to continue the struggle. Poole writes about the massacres in the book’s subtitle. The author deals with the day itself in two chapters. In the first he describes the semi-festive atmosphere of those who marched into Manchester to hear Henry Hunt. In the second he writes about the massacre itself.

Brutality

Poole shows the cold brutality of the forces of the state, not just in carrying out the massacre, but in denying that there had been one! This was contradicted by the reports of journalists present, even those considered generally pro-Tory or anti-reform, who were disgusted and shocked by the brutality meted out.

Soon, the true nature of the day’s events came out, causing mass revulsion and anger. But then, and subsequently, the government and its apologists attempted to cover up and lie about the extent of the violence.

Peterloo: The English Uprising, by Robert Poole, Oxford University Press, 2019, £25

Kevin Parslow
Waltham Forest Socialist Party
VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IN SOUTH AFRICA: HOW SHOULD ORGANISED WORKERS RESPOND?

Under capitalism, women are frequently paid less than men, concentrated in low-paid sectors such as cleaning and retail and precariously or casually employed by contractors or as domestic workers. Women are also most likely to be the main carers for children and the elderly and perform the majority of domestic work in the home. They look to work with big business, the capitalist politicians and the state. Protests are to pressure them but not to challenge their control of society and the unequal capitalist class structure they defend.

In the Marxist Workers Party we argue that the many women and young people radicalised by the struggle against gender oppression and gender based violence should look towards a united movement of the working class. It is only the working class which has the power to fundamentally transform society, abolishing capitalism and the class inequalities that gender oppression is rooted in.

Workplace role

In June, mine workers at the LanXess chrome mine in Rustenburg - members of the Numsa union - organised a strike and occupation in protest against the sexual harassment of a woman minerworker. Her manager was demanding sexual favours in exchange for a permanent job. Women have the power to force the removal of perpetrators from the workplace.

But crucially, because of their position in the economy, workers have the power to improve the position of women in society more generally. Every workplace demand and struggle for equal pay, higher pay, against gender discrimination in promotion and job opportunities, for housing allowances, transport allowances and longer parental leave, increases the independence and choices available to women. Wider working-class movements on healthcare, housing, social services, childcare and schooling do likewise.

A mass working-class movement can lay the real social foundations upon which gender equality can be built.

The struggle for women’s liberation is part of the class struggle and needs to be re-written on the banner of the workers movement.

Strategy

Protests have been mobilised under the banners #AmINext, #TheTotalShutdown and others. Young people and students have played a central role. Significantly, protests are being called using appeals to working-class methods of mass struggle, eg shutdowns and stay-aways.

This poses the emerging movement in the right direction. However, at this stage, this language is symbolic, and not based on a conscious strategy to mobilise the working class.

#TheTotalShutdown’s 2018 call for women to stayaway from work was not linked to appeals to workers and their trade unions for the mobilisation and shutdown of workplaces, ie united strike action.

One of the main demands of protesters outside parliament was for the government to declare a state of emergency. While this was a demand for a gesture from the government that it ‘gets it’, it was nevertheless incorrect. It would be suicidal for the movement to support increasing the repressive powers of this ANC government and the state in general.

Outside the recently held World Social Forum, protesters against gender based violence were attacked by police with tear gas, rubber bullets and water cannons. The last time a state of emergency was declared was in the 1980s by the white-minority regime, used to suppress the mass movement against apartheid.

At this stage it is the middle class, especially the NGOs, which are setting the ideological tone of the movement against gender-based violence.

A workers’ programme to end gender based violence:

- For working-class unity and leadership against gender based violence! Build a class-independent trade union Campaign Against Sexual Harassment, Domestic Violence, Rape and Femicide. United workers’ action to end sexual harassment in the workplace. Build links with working-class community organisations.

- For gender equality in the pocket! Equal pay for work of equal value.

- Expose and fight against the bosses’ gender equality hypocrisy! Place on the table in every negotiation the question of employer subsidised healthcare, longer paid parental leave, increased housing allowances, safe employer provided transport to and from work, and free workplace childcare facilities.

- Follow the example of the LanXess workers - an injury to one woman is an injury to all workers! Make gender based violence a real cost to the bosses’ bottom line. Strike and walkout to picket police stations and courts in defence of all colleagues who are made victims of gender based violence. Organised trade union participation in Community Policing Forums to fight for community oversight and control of policing and ensure all reports of gender based violence are taken seriously and dealt with professionally and quickly.

- End the class foundations of gender inequality. Nationalise under democratic working-class and community control the banks, the mines, the commercial farms, the big factories and big businesses. A publicly owned and democratically planned socialist economy to meet the needs of all and not the profits of the capitalists.

Build the fighting unity of the working class in a party of mass struggle. Build a socialist mass workers’ party to unite the struggles of the workplaces, the communities and the youth as a vital step toward the creation of a mass revolutionary party to lead the struggle for socialism.

The CWI is the world socialist organisation of the Socialist Party is affiliated to. The CWI is organised in many countries and works to unite the working class and oppose all forms of oppression. www.socialistworld.net

The ‘Total Shutdown’ demonstrations in August 2018 mobilised thousands of women against the widespread abuse, rape, violence and murder of women across South Africa. photo: MWP

Marxist Workers Party members

South Africa

The rape and murder of Cape Town student Uyinene Mrwetyana was the final spark that lit a new wave of protests demanding an end to violence against women. She was killed by a Post Office employee who, alongside 300 others, failed a vetting process because of their criminal records. He had a previous rape charge but the case had been withdrawn. However Post Office employers sat on the report for more than a year and Uyinene’s killer used his position to identify and target her.

Uyinene’s murder followed a slew of reports of murdered women. In 2016, out of every 100,000 women and girls in South Africa, 12.5 were violently killed. This was twice the global average of 2.6. In 2017-18, this increased to 15.2 - 2,930 murdered women; the slain bodies of an additional 291 women and 29 girls.

A mass memorial for Uyinene at the University of Cape Town, on 4 September, showed the depth of feeling and anger among women and young people. Memorials and vigils took place on other campuses and solidarity marches in other cities and towns.

On 5 September, more than ten thousand protested outside parliament in Cape Town, demanding that President Cyril Ramaphosa come out and tell them what his government planned to do to stop gender based violence.

While men are five times more likely than women to be murdered, itself a social crisis, it is the fact that so many women are being murdered by men who feel entitled to control and possess women, treating them like personal property, that has led to the outpouring of anger.

Gender inequality is rooted in class inequality and emerged with the rise of the middle class, especially the middle class women. The foundation of capitalism and the class inequalities that has the power to fundamentally transform society, abolishing capitalism and the class inequalities that gender oppression is rooted in. A mass working-class movement can lay the real social foundations upon which gender equality can be built.

The struggle for women’s liberation is part of the class struggle and needs to be re-written on the banner of the workers movement.

For working-class unity and leadership against gender based violence! Build a class-independent trade union Campaign Against Sexual Harassment, Domestic Violence, Rape and Femicide. United workers’ action to end sexual harassment in the workplace. Build links with working-class community organisations.

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SOCIALIST CHANGE NOT CLIMATE CHANGE

Build workers’ action to save the environment - p5, 8-9

photos Mary Finch, Paul Mattsson, Elaine Brunskill