

News

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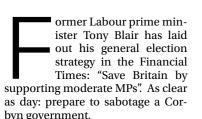
OUR TEAM **Editor of the Socialist** Sarah Sachs-Eldridge **Editorial staff** Dave Carr Scott Jones James Ivens Ian Pattison Circulation Chris Newby Editor of socialistparty.org.uk Judy Beishon

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"The philosophers have only interpreted the world, in various ways: the point is to change it.' Karl Marx



When asked what was her most important legacy, Margaret Thatcher, spearhead of anti-working class policies of neoliberalism, such as privatisation, cuts and deregulation, said "Tony Blair".

Blair became almost as unpopular as Thatcher as a result of the bloody war and invasion of Iraq, the horrific consequences of which are still being suffered by masses of people in the Middle East today.

Safe for big business

Even more significantly, he oversaw the decisive stages of the transformation of the Labour Party into a party safe for big business. through the eradication of its proworker policies and stripping out of democracy.

This achievement has enabled the bosses and bankers, big business and the super-rich, to vastly increase their already-obscene wealth while masses of working-class and middle-class people lost their jobs, pay, pensions and services without a political fight being waged.

In consequence, over the course of a decade. Labour lost around five million votes under his leadership.

Blair has retired to make his millions out of after-dinner speeches and advising dictators around the world.

Corbyn as Labour leader and the Brexit vote, he has periodically weighed into the debate in order to advise his acolvtes in the Labour Party on how they can best prevent a Corbyn-led government and represent the interests of big business. His first tactic - to remove Corbyn - has so far failed. The second - to prevent a general election while Corbyn is still Labour leader - has also failed.

But since the election of leremy

So now the next steps are to prepare to strangle a Corbyn government with a block of "moderate" MPs, laying the ground, if necessary, for a new centre party or cross-party coaltion

"The spine of British politics has always been a solid centre" he claims. Voters "fear" Mr Corbyn apparently. Corbyn is no better than Boris Johnson, or even Donald Trump. "Mr Corbyn's campaign launch speech, attacking 'dodgy landlords, 'billionaires' and a 'corrupt system' is textbook populism. It is no more acceptable in the mouth of someone who calls themselves left wing than in the mouth of Donald Trump's right".

So the solution: "There is a good core of good Labour MPs who will not be whipped into supporting policy they do not believe in. They deserve strong support even from those not inclined to vote Labour." But it is not just these anti-Corbyn Blairite Labour MPs who need support. "Parliament would be worse without the Conservative independents.

"We need to get into parliament many reasonable and capable politicians of all parties who will not spout populism. We need people who will put reasoned argument before ideology... If this parliament has shown anything it is that inde pendent-minded MPs can make a difference and work constructively together."

The reality is that this so-called centre ground has been abandoned by working-class, young, and middle-class people in elections and referendums around the world, again and again. Masses of people are taking to the streets in a vast rebellion in country after country, rising up against the real-life consequences of Blair's "reasoned argument".

If Corbyn fights for it, the appeal against the dodgy landlords, billionaires and corrupt system will be extremely popular.

But of course Blair knows this. His aim is not to argue that a Labour government is more likely to win if it has moderate policies. His aim is to defend capitalism and construct a political vehicle capable of doing that

Two parties in one

So the lesson from this article must be: no more attempts at compromise with these class opponents embedded in the Labour Party - no compromises on the manifesto. No more talk of 'unity' with the Blairites. Fight as boldly as possible for socialist policies.

And heed Blair's warning: "After this election, the real battle over the future of British politics will begin."

The capitalists and their representatives in the Labour Party are preparing to apply enormous pressure to prevent even modest promises of Corbyn being implemented. So we must do all we can to not

only win a radical manifesto but to build the working class and youth movement that will be necessary to counter that pressure and win a government that acts in our interests.

> was no-evacuation strategy available to firefighters and refute the idea that it, "would have been possible or safe to evacuate more than 150 people via a narrow smoke-logged stairwell with just 30 firefighters."

Ministers failed to act on findings of inquiries into earlier fires before Grenfell, such as the fire at Lakanal House

As London mayor, Boris Johnson was responsible for a £29 million cut in fire service funding in 2013 and the loss of ten fire stations. 14 fire engines and 552 firefighters. When challenged about this in a committee meeting, he angrily told his chal lenger to "get stuffed".

After Grenfell, thousands still live in unsafe buildings while the government still fails to act, and some landlords - including housing associations - still fail to share fire risk assessments with residents.

Labour councils should act now to ensure safety and demand that the government coughs up. And, in the general election campaign. La-





work is funded. the Tories learnt?

building and its management.

regulations other tower blocks.

firefighters."

election campaign

Grenfell fire inquiry spin deflects blame from establishment

Press coverage of the Grenfell Tower inquiry's first report emphasised criticisms of the fire brigade rather than the important fact that it found that the cladding on the tower breached building regulations.

This finding opens the way for future prosecutions of building firms. These irresponsible outfits should be nationalised.

The press spin deflected opinion away from the establishment on the actually acknowledges that there bour should pledge to ensure safety

basis of a leak, while some of the bereaved and survivors were bound by a non-disclosure agreement, and others had not had the chance to read the report.

Grenfell United, representing survivors and the bereaved, has expressed disappointment at the "lack of respect." Unfortunately, lack of respect is a repeated feature of the inquiry, adding still more pain for the community

The firefighters' union, the FBU explained, "It's disgraceful that over two years since the fire there has been no major review or assessment of the 'stay put' policy. This could have been done with-

in months of the fire and we have raised this with government ministers on numerous occasions.

Concerns about the 'stay put' policy were raised with central government years before Grenfell. The government must stop dragging its heels and recognise the urgent need to act."

The FBU points out that the report

the Socialist Tony Blair launches manifesto to sabotage a Corbyn government

Paula Mitchell Socialist Party

London regional secretary



Torv's NHS emergency

The Tories have finally woken up to the fact that there's an emergency in the NHS

But they're not concerned about the 78,981 people who have had their operations cancelled in the last year, an increase of 4.811. Nor are they bothered that waiting lists are at record levels, with over 660,000 having to wait more than 18 weeks.

All they are worried about is that an "unprecedented" winter crisis (in the words of the BMA) will happen in the middle of the election campaign and expose their hypocrisy on the NHS.

The real emergency is that the under the Tories the NHS has suffered its longest ever period of austerity. Now Johnson is trying to pose as a friend of the NHS.

But people are not stupid. They can see through his lies. Especially when he has refused to rule out handing more of the health service to the private profiteers.

Opinion polls show that the NHS is the most important issue facing the country, not Brexit. Corbyn has pledged to increase spending on the NHS and end privatisation.

Alongside promises to end aus terity in public services, immediately increase the minimum wage to £10 an hour, scrap tuition fees and the other policies in favour of working-class people (see front page) this can be a winning programme for the general election

Childcare is a key election issue

The cost, availability and quality of childcare will be important issues in this election.

Almost one in five parents quit their jobs because childcare is too expensive. 20% are unable to work for the same reason.

60% work fewer hours than they would like because they can't afford to pay for someone to look after their kids. And, of course, most of those will be women

Parents earning up to £100,000 a month are currently entitled to 30 hours of free childcare for 3-4 year olds. But most of that provision is in the private sector, and 500 childcare providers are closing their doors everv week.

Only 50% of local authorities have enough childcare available for fulltime parents. Half of families are forced to pay extra.

Labour has pledged to invest £4.8 billion in childcare and radically expand universal, free, high quality provision. 30 hours free childcare would be extended to all two year olds, with additional free hours for those on the lowest income.

It has also promised £500 million for Sure Start children's centres, over 1,200 of which have closed down.

This would make a huge difference to thousands of struggling working-class families. But clearly, relying on the private sector to meet childcare needs is not working.

Provision should be fully funded through the public sector, guaranteeing quality care for children and decent wages and conditions for childcare workers.

Tory cuts kill

Tory election candidate Francesca O'Brien has declared that people on benefits should be "put down". The comments of an extremist? Far from it! More than 17.000 sick and disabled people have died while waiting for the welfare benefits they desperately needed.

This is the fatal consequence of the Tories hostile and punitive benefits system which Jeremy Corbyn has promised to end. He has said that Labour will suspend the sanctions regime. lift the benefit cap and two child limit and scrap Universal Credit.

These are welcome reforms. But as we have previously explained (see 'What if you're not able to work?' at socialistparty.org.uk), anyone who is unable to work needs benefits set at levels that genuinely lift people out of poverty.





he 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 ransform society.

As capitalism dominates the globe, the struggle for genuine socialism must be international. The Socialist Party is part of the Committee CWL

No to ALL cuts in jobs, public

No to privatisation and the Private all privatised utilities and services, with

Fully fund all services and run committees that include representatives

Free, publicly run, good quality Abolish university tuition fees now academies and 'free schools'!

everyone's health needs - free at the control. Kick out private contractors!

Keep council housing publicly with low rents.

ORK AND INCOME

Trade union struggle for an immediate increase in the minimum wage to £12 an hour without exemptions as a step towards a real living wage of at least £15 an hour. Fo an annual increase in the minimur wage linked to average earnings. Scrap zero-hour contracts

All workers, including part-timers, temps, casual and migrant workers to have trade union rates of pay, employment protection, and sickness and holiday rights from day one of employment

An immediate 50% increase in the state retirement pension, as a step towards a living pension

Scrap Universal Credit. For the right to decent benefits, education, training, or a job, without compulsion

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WHAT WE **STAND FOR**

Scrap the anti-trade union laws! For fighting trade unions, democratically controlled by their members. Full-time union officials to be regularly elected and receive no more than a worker's wage, Support the National Shop Stewards Network.

A maximum 35-hour week with no loss of pay.

ENVIRONMENT

Major research and investment into replacing fossil fuels with renewable energy and into ending the problems of early obsolescence and un-recycled

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

Oppose discrimination on the grounds of race, gender, disability, sexuality, age, and all other forms of prejudice

Repeal all laws that trample over civil liberties. For the right to protest! End police harassment,

Defend abortion rights. For a woman's right to choose when and whether to have children.

For the right to asylum. No to racist immigration laws.

For the right to vote at 16

MASS WORKERS' PARTY

For a mass workers' party drawing together workers, young people and activists from workplace, community, environmental and anti-racist and anti cuts campaigns, to provide a fighting, political alternative to the pro-big business parties.

Fight for Labour to be transformed into such a party: deselect the Blairites.

SOCIALISM AND INTERNATIONALISM No to imperialist wars and

occupations. Tax the super-rich! For a socialist government to take into public ownership the top 150 companies and the banking system that dominate the

British economy, and run them under democratic working class control and management. Compensation to be paid only on the basis of proven need.

A democratic socialist plan of production based on the interests of the overwhelming majority of people, and in a way that safeguards the environment. No to the bosses' neoliberal

European Union and single market. For a socialist Europe and a socialist world

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The report questions the fire brigade's ability to learn, but what have

by the fire service must be placed in the context of the failures of the

While focusing on criticisms of the fire brigade, the mainstream media have not placed emphasis on the reports finding that the building was not compliant with existing

Jeremy Corbyn commented: because of the government's failure to remove similar cladding from

That must be translated into concrete campaign pledges during the

Residents must be guaranteed

country

Any criticism of decision making

"Thousands of people are still at risk

"Given the huge strain on our fire service after years of Tory cuts. the next Labour government will increase resources going to the fire service and recruit additional



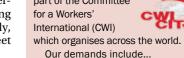
Labour should also commit to a revamped inquiry, led by the local community and labour movement,

to reveal the underlying reasons for the terrible events at Grenfell and the roots of the fire safety crisis that has been revealed nationally. Grenfell showed the depth of

class inequality in Britain and the contemptuous way that the Tories deal with working-class housing. North London Socialist Party

Jacob Rees-Mogg's insensitive. insulting and callous comments about it being "common sense" for Grenfeel fire victims to ignore advice and flee the burning building shows the Tories utter contempt for ordinary people.

These out of touch, arrogant representatives of the elite and privileged have no understanding of the lives of the working class. We need to boot them out



UBLIC SERVICES

services and benefits. Defend our pensions.

Finance Initiative (PFI). Renationalise compensation paid only on the basis of proven need.

them under accountable, democratic of service workers and users.

education, available to all at any age and introduce a living grant. No to

A socialist NHS to provide for point of use and under democratic

owned. For a massive building programme of publicly owned housing on an environmentally sustainable basis, to provide good quality homes

FIGHTING TO KICK OUT THE TORIES ND TRANSFORM SOCIETY

Extracts from the speech by Hannah Sell, Socialist Party deputy general secretary, at the main rally of Socialism 2019

In the Communist Manifesto Karl Marx and Frederick Engels explained that we have to "fight tenaciously for the attainment of the immediate aims, for the momentary interests of the working class: but in the movement of the present, we also have to represent and take care of the future of that movement."

In 2019 we have intervened in important strikes; against low pay, casualisation, bullying bosses. We have taken part in the magnificent, predominantly young, mass protests against climate change. We are involved day to day in campaigning to scrap Universal Credit, to stop evictions, to stop the council cuts being carried out by both Labour and Tory councils.

There have been victories in a whole number of important local struggles. And with the magnificent CWU and UCU ballot results there is the prospect of more victories.

The dominant mood in societv is a deep-seated anger against the existing order. No different to the anger we are seeing on the streets in Chile, in the Lebanon, in Iraq, in other countries. But it hasn't had an outlet. There's a kind of sullen anger, but lack of confidence that it's possible to change anything.

Many workers who agree with us on Universal Credit, on Grenfell or the CWU strike, do not at the moment agree with us about the possibility, or the positive character, of a Corbyned government.

We live in a capitalist society, where the capitalist politicians including those in the Labour Party - and the capitalist media, rain down insults and attacks on Corbyn. They are bound to have an effect. Above all, because of the failure of the left leadership of the Labour Party to effectively answer them.

Corbyn's election did not transform Labour into a workers' party, but changed it into two potential parties. A potential anti-austerity party around Jeremy Corbyn, and a pretty fully formed pro-capitalist party around the Blairites

And Corbyn and the Labour leadership's strategy of attempting to pacify that capitalist wing of the Labour Party, to compromise with them - is never going to work. Eleven Labour MPs voted against a general election. 100 of them didn't bother to vote! The arch



Blairites are determined to wreck Corbyn's chances of winning general election

This is not the most favourable terrain for Corbyn to fight a general election. But in 2017 Labour began on 25% in the polls, the same as today. They went on not to win, but to win an extra 3.5 million votes.

We argued that if Corbyn came out fighting, on a socialist programme, he could win the general election. And nobody believed us. Everybody thought we were heading for a Tory landslide.

If Corvbn builds on his election launch (see front page) and puts a fighting, socialist programme, workers will start to think: 'we have a chance of a government that might get me a council house. That might get me a decent wage. That might mean I don't have to work on a zero-hour contract anymore. And therefore, it's worth coming out to support them.

We will be out on the streets, in the workplaces, in the university campuses, fighting for the election of a Jeremy Corbyn-led government on 12 December. But it's not our job just to do that. We also have to prepare for what comes beyond 12 December.

If Johnson manages to wangle himself a small majority, that would be an extremely weak government coming to power against the background of a growing economic crisis - ripping up the few workers' rights that we have, opening up of the NHS to the US private companies, and so on.

If they do that, though - they will face massive opposition. In Brazil the right-wing populist Bolsonaro thought he was a mighty, powerful ruler. And then we saw a 47 million-strong general strike against him within months of being elected.

If Corbyn is able to win the election that would just be the beginning. I don't think we should underestimate how far Corbyn's modest programme terrifies the capitalist class. Why? Firstly, they don't want to give up a penny. But there's a second and more fundamental reason. They're frightened that the election of a Corbyn-led government could raise the confidence of the



working class in this country to conduct a class war. Unlike the one we've got at the moment where the rich are winning.

The only practical way to build a society "for the many not the few," is to take the commanding heights of the econ omy into democratic public ownership, and to break the power of the capitalist class.

Corbyn has to absolutely sticl by the position that him and Mc Donnell have put so far, that they will not enter a coalition govern ment. They will not govern to gether with capitalist parties.

Does that mean we're say ing that if Corbyn doesn't get a majority, he has to step back, and just be the opposition? Absolutely not. He would have to fight for his programme, and call on the working class to back nim

Even if Labour wins a majority, it will be a minority government for the anti-austerity part of the Labour Party, because they will be surrounded by pro capitalist MPs.

Nearly six weeks before a gen eral election, it's not possible to predict how events are going to develop. But if Corbyn comes out fighting, he will get an echo from the working class, and from sections of the middle class.

The working class, in Britain and internationally, remains the most powerful force - the only force - capable of fighting for the fundamental transformation of society

The Socialist Party will go from this hall today, and tenaciously build a mass, revolution ary party that fights for every immediate step forward for the working class. But also, always, puts central the need for the overthrow of capitalism, and the socialist transformation of society, in order to build a new democratic order that can mee the needs of all humanity

ELECTIONS, **STRIKES AND** REVOLUTIONS **SOCIALISM 2019 DARING TO FIGHT**







James Ivens

general election.

staff; McDonald's strikes."

ing the election (see page 13).







Feature 🛨

4 4 ust two words: at last!" This year's Socialism event Socialism 2019, on 2 and 3 November - came as the parliamentary logjam finally burst apart into a

As Paula Mitchell told the opening rally, the Rally that Dares to Fight for Socialism, from the chair: "We could be squaring up for quite a hot winter. With not only an election, but the potential for a massive battle of postal workers; the strike action by university lecturers and

And our class enemies have taken note. The reactionary Daily Mail rebuked Communication Workers Union rep and Socialist Party Scotland member Gary Clark - for telling the rally that posties will strike dur-

700-800 workers and young people piled into the Institute of Education in London, contributing to 34 open discussions and debates on the major issues facing the working class today. They heard closing rallies on the climate fightback. fall of the Berlin Wall, and building international Trotskvism.

There was a moving tribute and standing ovation for the late Tony Mulhearn, a leader of the socialist Liverpool Council's 1983-87 struggle against Thatcher.

And in a fantsatic show of working-class sacrifice and resolve, the opening rally's financial appeal raised at least £40,755 - over £5,000 more than last year.

Now the fight is on. To boot out the Tories and reverse austerity. To help the revolutions erupting across the planet to win. And to build mass parties of the working class to found a new, democratic, socialist world.

INTERNATIONAL PROTEST W/ **IS JUST THE BEGINN**

The youth are now grappling with the problems of organisation and leadership, which was absent in the 'Arab Spring'. This is a precondition for those workers to be victorious



photo Mary Finch

The Kurds have been abandoned, as we predicted, by Trump and by American impe rialism. We say to our Kurdish brothers and sisters: don't rely on any of the exploiters, rely on your own strength. And the world working class is the only force that can guarantee you your demands and the granting of your legitimate national rights.

It was the youth who were to the fore in the 'Arab Spring' of 2011. They are now grappling with the problems of organisa tion and leadership, which was absent in 2011, and accounted for the temporary defeat of the revolution. This is a precondition for those workers to be victorious in the next period itself.

It is therefore entirely false to direct the energies of the youth and the working class to the narrow field of identity politics, and not to class politics. Mass waves of struggle are inevitable on the basis of the contradictions of this system.

Make no mistake about it: this is one of those moments, a eureka moment in history, when the scales drop from the eyes of the working class and the youth, and sections of the middle class, and they cast around for an organisation and a leadership that can show a way forward. Not just a change in consciousness is taking place, but leaps in understanding.

And we say to the capitalists: you've had your day. You are incapable of managing the world economic and social situation. You cannot even grant a piece of bread to the starving million throughout the world.

You have enormously wors ened, through your unplanned system, the environmental and economic catastrophe. Climate change, which provoked the young, in a marvellous movement worldwide, to rise up against you and your rotted system.

This is just the beginning! We are with the youth on this move ment, linked to a change of system, against capitalism itself.

There is an organic crisis of capitalism, which cannot be solved on the basis of a rotted system.

How marvellous it is for our generation to see the Chilean workers - who in our lifetime, under the iron heel of Pinochet were crushed by reaction, with an element of fascism - rising to their feet and moving against the remnants of the Pinochet regime.

The only reason they've not succeeded already is a lack of organisation, and a lack of consciousness. In the next period, they will build independent organisations of the working

Look at the Hong Kong youth. How marvellous it is that they've struggled so tenaciously against the Chinese regime. And all they're asking for is democracy. Well we say, you'll only gain that creating a revolutionary constituent assembly which can change society in Hong Kong, and appeal to the masses in China itself.

Many of these young work ers carry their own wills in their pockets, because they expect to be shot on the streets of Hong Kong. That's an indication of the marvellous spirit that exists.

You, the capitalists, have presided over a failed economic and social system. Throughout the world the working class, and sections of the middle class, are rising against you. Enough is enough.

Because of the extreme volatility, and the situation in Britain, there will be colossal movements that will take place. The \$64,000 question is: will we be able to take advantage of this? It's not guaranteed in advance.

Exciting times lie ahead, and capitalism cannot solve the problems of working people. We intend to seize every opportunity to build our forces.

Forward to the building of a mass workers' party, which the Socialist Party can become, as part of the reorganisation and the regeneration of the mass movement in Britain.

On that basis we'll be able to create a democratic and socialist world. That's what this meeting today is all about. Of a democratic and socialist Britain, leading to a united socialist states of Europe, and a united socialist federation of the world

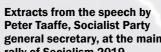
This is not utopian. It's a practical objective, grounded in the reality of a failing system, and of the working people on the move

Go to it! Join our ranks! Join with the wave of the future!





photo Mary Finch



The world, including Britain, is in the midst of turmoil. Like the European continental revolutions in 1848 - but also with a touch of the Russian revolution of 1917 - an angry wave of revolutionary movements involving a new, fresh generation, has spread like a prairie fire, leaping from one country to another.

One rotten regime after another has been shaken to its oundations by the movement of young people and the workng class. We predicted this nighty wave would develop, and it's happening now before our eyes.

Latin America, Chile, Bolivia Ecuador are on the move. In the Lebanon the movement i brushing aside the sectarian symbols and flags which have pedevilled the mass movement in the past. The revolution has been driven by young people and the working class. A colossa movement shakes all the 'pow ers that be' to their foundations

They are now seeking to adopt the traditional method of the working class - of struggle, of strikes, of solidarity nagnificent united action the working class.

Increasingly, the same appening in Iraq, of all places After the bloody experience of Iragi workers and peasants.

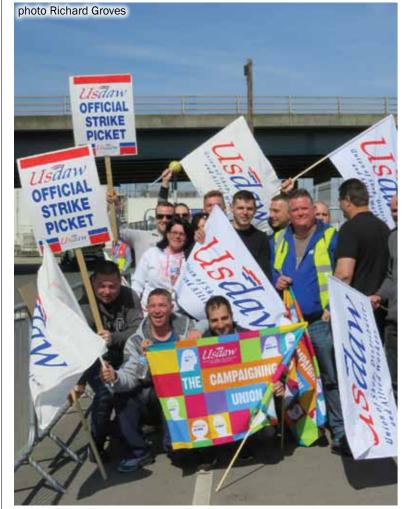
rally of Socialism 2019

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Reader's opinion

Minimum wage debate: what should we be demanding?

The Socialist is running a debate. How we can end low pay and what minimum wage level should we be fighting for? In this issue, readers share their thoughts. If you've got a view, email editors@socialistparty.org.uk. You can read what's been written so far at socialistparty.org.uk



In my working life we could afford homes and holidays. now its horror without end

Clive Walder

Birmingham South West Socialist Party

The articles on the gig economy in the Socialist are interesting and worthy of further comment. (See Film reviews: Sorry We Missed You by Ken Loach' at socialistparty.org.

Í too enjoyed 'Sorry We Missed You'. It made me glad that I'm at the end and not the beginning of my working life

My working life spanned a period when strong trade unions negotiated half-decent pay and working conditions and we could afford to buy houses and have holidays.

The film's message - that work for far too many people is horror without end - came over very well. It made me think that I couldn't cope with the modern world of work.

Sorry We Missed You's main weakness was that there was no mention of trade unions. The film would have had even more resonance if there was a scene where Rickv ioined a union and tried to get

photo Roger Blackwell/CC

-

his fellow deliverers to do likewise. Uber Eats and Deliveroo workers have already started to do this in real life

Chris Parry's article about his life as a taxi driver raised some interesting points. (See 'Life in the gig economy' at socialistparty.org.uk).

Like many people, I have had to fork out for expensive taxi fares when I have missed my last bus and cursed how much I've had to spend. Chris explained the money doesn't go to the cabbie, but in expenses and to the company owner's profit.

Taxis are the only form of public transport that receives no public subsidy. They should be integrated into a publicly owned transport system.

In my job - a customer-relations advisor for a bus company - I often have to write letters to customers to say we won't provide the bus service they think is necessary, because it wouldn't be commercially viable.

A bus service literally for two or three people wouldn't be an efficient use of resources, in many cases. But a publicly owned taxi network could provide taxis to meet those needs.





Pay up and bring us back in-house

A Unite the Union local government rep in Londo

We are launching a £15-an-hour claim with Apcoa Parking in Hackney. Following previous campaigns, they already pay the London Living Wage of £10.55 an hour.

But the Living Wage Foundation s about to announce a higher rate. I know that Camden traffic enforce ment get £11.48 already.

As well as increased pay, it's about restoring collective bargaining rights. Like many other contractors, Apcoa stopped pay bargaining and fell back to the London Living Wage

We call for parking services to be brought in-house. We couldn't legally put this to a ballot. But this is the underlying demand of the campaign.

The plan is to promote this demand among Unite the Union mem bers and publicly pressure local-authority employers. We've had some success already. School cleaners in Hackney have won the London Living Wage and ended term-time-only

The contractor, Kiers, has now decided to pull out of the contract. because it is not making money. The connection is obvious. We are demanding that Hackney Council now take the service back in-house.

McDonald's striker Lindon, who will be walking out on 12 November spoke in the '£15 an hour minimum wage - is this what we need to fight for?' session at Socialism 2019. Below are extracts from his speech about why he is fighting for £15 an hour.

" respect.

us is appalling.

Connor O'Farrel Warehouse worker and Usdaw union member

Management at my warehouse uses shopfloor.

we reject this 'deal'.

Meanwhile, Tesco management is increasing the use of wearable technology - arm-mounted computers on warehouse workers. Bosses say this is for 'increased productivity'. Of course, that means tracking workers every minute we're on shift.

dation and bullying.

chamber of the warehouse

The trade unions can do it

John Merrell Leicester Socialist Party

The National Living Wage for workers aged over 25, was set at £7.20 an hour in April 2016 with a proposed increase to £9 by April 2020. Introduced by the Tories, if that transpires it will be a 25% increase over four years.

The proposal by Tory chancellor Savid Javid is £10.50 a hour by 2024. It is a worse deal, 17% over four years. Nevertheless, these increases far exceed the pay rises of many other workers under the Tories.

Alistair Tice, writing in the Socialist, pointed out: "There are now two million workers on the minimum wage compared with 700,000 when it was first introduced." This explains the anguish expressed by Band-3 health workers to Socialist Party member Ion Dale. (See 'Minimum wage debate: how can we end the scandal of low pay?' at socialistparty.org.uk).

What if the trade unions - representing the most-organised workers - achieved better pay without youth exemptions, and the reinstatement of differentials reflecting skills and expertise based on 'equal pay for work of equal value'?

That would be a benchmark for trade unions to campaign among

less-well-organised workers to achieve the same. Especially where there is a relationship between two sets of workers, for example, the motor industry and its parts suppliers or local authorities and their oviders of goods and services.

What should the minimum wage be? I agree with Jon Dale. "£12 an hour should be the headline figure." What should it be in London? Most if not all national pay agreements include a London uplift. In my former industry, it was the London Weighting Allowance.

If there is a consensus across national union agreements on the percentage uplift, it could inform our minimum wage amount for London workers.



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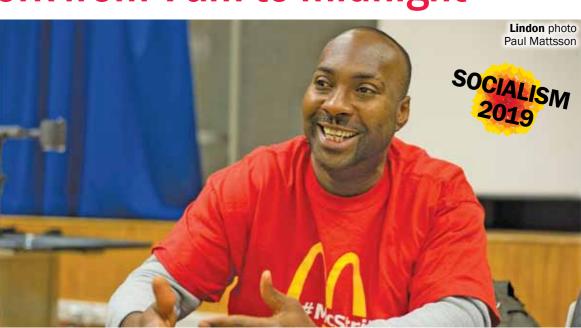


'I'm fighting for £15 an hour now because I have to work from 7am to midnight'

'm a father of three and we're going on strike on 12 November. Being a worker for McDonald's for the past seven years I know it doesn't treat people with

Managers talk to you anyway they want to. The way McDonald's treats

In the run up to this strike I was



talking to my colleagues about joining the campaign for £15 an hour and I was called in by my manager and told that I must not talk to any body about the strike.

He said if I respect him then I should not talk to anybody about the strike. I told him it's going to benefit me, benefit my kids and everybody inside the store. If we get £15 an hour it's going to benefit

Fighting for £15 an hour means a lot to me. It would mean I don't have to do two jobs. Currently I'm full time at McDonald's and part time at Sainsbury's. I start at Sainsbury's at 7am and then at McDonald's at 3pm until 11 or 12 at night I basically only sleep 3 hours in the week.

If we won £15 an hour then 1 would have enough time to spend with my kids, enough money to save up to go on holiday, and I would basically have enough money to look after myself and my family. We are in this to win this. We are fighting together to win £15 an hour and together we will win and be able to live a comfortable life.

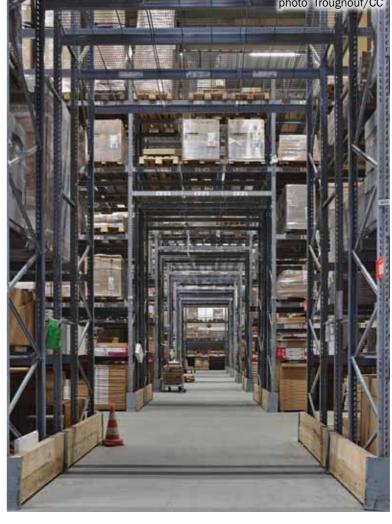
A day in the life of a warehouse worker **INCOMPETENT BOSSES** USE TECH TO BULLY US Now they're after our Christmas bonus too

new technology to harass the workers - and has even proposed a new pay deal which includes scrapping Christmas bonuses for most of the

Rather than every worker getting £100, five managers would draw lots for a bonus for one worker each! The managers themselves would all still get bonuses, of course. Our union, Usdaw, has rightly recommended

But management can also use the guided picking software to keep certain workers deemed 'trouble' away from new recruits - and for intimi-

For example, in my workplace, there is heavier lifting involved with produce such as bananas or bread trays. The shift-planning and rotation software has an override function, so managers can have the same staff bear the brunt of this workload on every shift - in the non-chilled



Up until recently there wasn't even a water cooler in there. Management only put one in begrudgingly after a worker fainted.

And if 'productivity' is their only aim, why slow down the training of workers? Many workers, including myself, have been waiting almost a year since finishing contracted probation for training on other positions in the warehouse.

The selective memory - and often outright incompetence - of management has led to this not happening. They also find petty reasons to keep new workers in their probation period, meaning they have to work the same job for less money.

New Tesco contracts have workers doing seven days on, four days off. This rota bypasses the unsociable hours bonus won in previous contracts!

Why claim we are given 30-minute breaks when in reality it is 25? Why not pause our productivity measures on our registered lunch, toilet and smoke breaks? Why refuse to have label printers on each truck, instead forcing us to go back and forth between just one or two?

Workers regularly get told family illness and childcare problems are irrelevant to the Tesco budget.

'Productivity'

It's not about maximising our 'productivity'. It's about management keeping workers overworked, underpaid, and toeing the line - maximising profit productivity, not the efficiency of the job.

I was called in for a meeting re garding my 'productivity' - even though my performance was not the issue, my 'still time' was. After refusing to have the meeting without a union rep present multiple times, they gave up trying as they had nothing on my conduct or performance.

But I was unjustly fired in 2017 from my first precarious warehouse job at Tuffnells for arguing against being underpaid and ignored.

Ironically, during my 'still time

at the current workplace, I was engaged in discussion with an agency worker. She had not been paid her full wages, and at the moment Usdaw only seems to want to organise contracted staff.

So I had to put her in contact with the Independent Workers Union of Great Britain - and within a week and one meeting, her pay had been restored. A minor workplace victory that made my shift bearable!

Invasive management technology is becoming widespread across firms. Further attempts to stifle freedom of association in the workplace should be anticipated.



Rather than every worker getting a £100 Christmas bonus, five managers would draw lots for a bonus for one worker each! The managers would all still get bonuses. of course

But while management seems clueless about how to run the workplace efficiently, relying on snooping and bullying, the expertise shown by workers on the job and together on strike begs the question: could we not run our workplaces ourselves?

This collective control is the basis of a real socialist society. We have both the labour power, and the knowhow. Currently we are only outorganised - not outnumbered



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30 years after the fall of the Berlin Wall HOW A MASS REVOLUTIONARY MOVEMENT FOR GENUINE SOCIALISM WAS DIVERTED

Robert Bechert Committee for a Workers International (CWI), and Berlin resident in 1989

ile, for millions, the 1989 opening of the Berlin Wall was rightly celebrated as a great victory for democratic rights, the build-up

to the official celebrations to mark its 30th anniversary have, as before, been dominated by anti-socialist propaganda.

Around this anniversary, against the background of a looming economic crisis and increasing questioning of capitalism, there is an emphasis on arguing that the former East Germany was an economic failure that 'proved' that a planned economy does not work.

Some pro-capitalists go further and argue that it is the 'legacy of socialism' which is blocking economic growth in east Germany today.

There is a widespread feeling in the east that they were, in many ways, taken over by the western Germany elite and remain sidelined to this day. This is against the background that, nearly 30 years since the reintroduction of capitalism into eastern Germany, there is not the widespread "booming landscape" which the then West German leader Kohl promised



The official downgrading of 4 November is simple - its demands were not just for free elections, and so forth. but also for 'democratic socialism'

Today GDP (total output) per person in the east is 20% lower than in western Germany, the same proportion as 15 years ago. Wages are also generally lower. Eastern Germany's decline is reflected in its falling population: today it is the same as it was in 1905, 13.6 million compared with 16.4 million in 1989.

Many easterners' 1989 hopes have not materialised while capitalism's return brought insecurity back. One result today is the ongoing dramatic fall in support in eastern Germany for the western-based traditional ruling political parties.

In the face of this critical mood the German ruling class continually seeks opened their western borders.

to hide the fact that, initially, the revolutionary movement that opened the Wall was generally pro-socialist and that it was only later that hopes and illusions in capitalism came to dominate the protests in East Germany. They fear a rebirth of a movement struggling for socialism.

Of course, no-one can escape the fact that it was a mass, revolutionary movement of the East German people that won the right to travel the world if not necessarily the money to do so.

But the official propaganda buries the initial revolutionary and prosocialist character of the movement in autumn 1989 and makes it seem that, almost from the outset, the protesters' aim was to bring back capitalism via uniting with West Germany.

The Wall

The monstrous border, with its killing zones, that the the German Democratic Republic (GDR), the then east German regime maintained, alienated millions and allowed the western powers to paint a horrible picture of a 'socialist' country which used force to keep its population inside.

The GDR, while not having a capitalist economy, was not a socialist democracy. Its regime was modelled on that of Stalin's Soviet Union and run by an elite group of bureaucrats. something seen in the brutal crushing of the 1953 workers' uprising and the continuing suppression of any serious criticism or dissent.

This led to increasing numbers moving to the west and, in 1961, the regime began building the Berlin Wall to complete the sealing of the inner-German border.

For some decades the GDR economy developed but then, like in other Stalinist states, top-down bureaucratic methods began to strangle the economy.

Crisis of Stalinism

Internationally this led to the crisis which gripped many Stalinist states in the 1980s, especially in the then Soviet Union where Mikhail Gorbachev's attempts at reforms helped stimulate movements from below.

This development had a big impact in the GDR and other countries. Increasingly in the late 1980s the changes in the Soviet Union, especially the greater toleration of open debate. were seen in other Stalinist states as an example to follow, something which the totalitarian GDR leadership tried to resist.

One of the sparks that led to the 1989 movement was the rigging of the Protests began, but also there were suddenly opportunities to leave the country - first to Hungary, and later

For those living in the GDR a crucial difference with other Stalinist states was that West Germany would immediately grant citizenship and full welfare benefits to any East German citizens who arrived there.

As increasing numbers left the GDR many started to discuss whether they should try to leave the country or whether they should try to change it. The majority decided to stay.

Protests begin

This was the background to the regular protests that first began in Leipzig on 4 September and rapidly gained strength, particularly after clashes around the celebration of the GDR's 40th anniversary at the beginning of October.

Soon a tremendous momentum developed. Despite attempts at repression the protests kept expanding. As the authorities began to back down from using force, the protesters grew in confidence. The numbers participating in the 'Monday demos' in Leipzig jumped from 70,000 on 9 October to 250,000 on 23 October.

The largest single protest was the demonstration of up to one million people in Alexanderplatz, east Berlin, on 4 November. This was a huge proportion of the GDR's 16.1 million population.

However, this protest is downplayed in the official story, even though it played a key role in the events that led, five days later, to the opening of the Wall.

The fundamental reason for the official downgrading of 4 November is simple: its demands were not just for free elections, free media, the freedom to travel, to criticise, and so forth, but also for 'democratic socialism

Speaker after speaker at the 4 November demo spoke about this and there was no opposition from the crowd.

This was not accidental. Opinion polls at that time showed majority support in the GDR for socialism in some form, sometimes expressed vaguely in the idea of a 'third way' between capitalism and Stalinism.

The very first leaflet issued by Democratic Awakening (DA), the group that current German Chancellor Angela Merkel joined, called for "a socialist society on a democratic basis". despite the DA being the most rightwing of the new groups and parties then emerging in the GDR.

Taken together, these popular demands had much of the programme for a 'political revolution' which Trotlocal elections held in May that year. sky and his followers first advocated in the 1930s against Stalinist rule in the then Soviet Union.

In the GDR, the small number of to the then Czechoslovakia, which | CWI supporters - the socialist international organisation to which the



Socialist Party is affiliated - advocated concrete steps to achieve that socialist goal which would have had great appeal to workers and youth in the other Stalinist countries, and in the capitalist west.

Airbrushing history

But now this 'socialist' period of the movement has been buried and official history concentrates on 9 November then jumps to the end of November and early December when East German support for a rapid unification with west Germany soared.

The reasons for this change in popular opinion in the GDR were various. There was no force that was proposing the concrete steps that were needed to build 'democratic socialism'. The opening of the border made many East Germans see the strength of West Germany and they questioned what future the GDR would have on its own. In addition, joining west Germany was increasingly seen in the GDR as the quickest way to get rid of old GDR elite.

At that same time. West German leaders saw both a threat and an opportunity. In mid-October 1989 Schäuble, then interior and now October. German finance minister, told the

Financial Times of the danger of "uncontrolled events" in East Berlin and a threat of the "destabilisation" of the GDR. But also the German capitalists saw the chance to reunite the country under their control, as well as strengthening their international position by throwing off the last of the restraints imposed on them after World War Two.

Events sped up as protests against the GDR leaders continued and more and more GDR citizens voted with their feet. Soon, tens of thousands were leaving the GDR for West Germany, by early November the rate was 9,000 a day.

On 13 November, the first calls of "Germany, Fatherland" were heard on a 200,000-strong Leipzig demo. However, a month later, a poll in the West German magazine Der Spiegel showed 71% wanted a democratic GDR and not unification.

Calls for unification were getting more and more support, and the West German leaders decided to seize the opportunity to campaign for unification. This won massive support in the March 1990 GDR election that paved the way for unification the following

In many ways this was, in effect, a

takeover. The clause in West Germanv's 'Basic Law' that, should Germany be united, it should be replaced by a "constitution freely adopted by the German people" was dropped.

The German capitalists feared that in any public debate on a new constitution there would be demands for guarantees on trade union and social rights, like jobs and housing, plus possible attempts to restrict capitalists.

Instead of unification, what took place was a German version of 'shock therapy' - the rapid and brutal reintroduction of capitalism seen in many other former Stalinist states.

mantled, the former GDR's industrial production dropped by two-thirds between 1989 and 1991. Enterprises which were seen as potential competitors were sold off cheaply to their West German rivals, and sometimes then closed. The result was mass unemployment and an extremely rapid de-industrialisation of what was. before 1939. Germany's industrial heart

But the difference between the experience in East Germany and the other former Stalinist states was that the German ruling class also pumped

Feature

As the planned economy was dis-

huge amounts of money into the area to buy social peace. Nevertheless, the loss of jobs, the

shock of the introduction of the market that ended guaranteed jobs and housing and, later, the introduction of some cuts, resulted in different waves of protests in eastern Germany. This was especially the case in the early 1990s against job losses, and in 2004 05 against the 'Hartz IV' social cuts.

This is the background to the east ern German resentment that has un dermined the western German par ties in recent elections.

Legacy

Initially, it was Die Linke, the Left party, which reflected easterners' disenchantment, but this support was not utilised in building a socialist movement to change society. Repeatedly, Die Linke leaders have made clear that they are prepared to operate within capitalism.

This has given opportunities to the far right, most recently the Alternative for Germany (AfD) to campaign on a combination of nationalist, racist and populist slogans, and gain significant support. The resulting polarisation has sharpened the social situation. Implicitly, there is the possibility society

Instead of unification what took place was a German version of 'shock therapy' - the rapid and brutal re-introduction of capitalism

of new movements. But from the be ginning there will be a struggle over which direction such movements take. Part of this struggle will be over the legacy of 1989-90.

The revolution of 1989 is both an inspiration, showing how a repressive regime can be overthrown, but also a warning of how a revolution's original aims can be subverted. To avoid this there needs to be a political party which can show how achieving working peoples' objectives is linked to establishing a workers' democracy that can lay the foundations for the development of a genuinely socialist

Berlin Wall timeline

1945: After the defeat of the Nazis, occupied Germany is divided between Western Imperialism and the Stalinist USSR. Start of the Cold

1948-49: Antagonism between the two blocs leads to Stalin imposing a blockade of West Berlin. The West drop air supplies to the enclave.

1949: In May the USSR lifts its blockade. Also in May the western capitalist Federal Republic of Germany (West Germany) is declared followed by the establishment of the German Democratic Republic (East Germany) in October - a mirror image of the Soviet Union.

1953 June: Building workers in East Berlin strike against draconian working conditions and low pay. It quickly develops into a widespread revolt across East Germany against Stalinist rule. Soviet tanks crush the rebellion. Hundreds are killed and the workers' leaders executed.

1952-1959: 4.3 million East Germans move from the GDR weakening the eastern economy while 430,000 move from West to East Germany

1961 August: East German troops are ordered to seal off the border crossings between East and West Berlin. Construction of the concrete wall begins. In response the US moves 1,500 troops through East Germany to West Berlin

1963 June: US President John F Kennedy delivers his 'Ich bin ein Berliner' speech in West Berlin as a policy statement to the USSR confirming US defence of West Germany and West Berlin.

1980s: Decades of bureaucratic rule drive the nationalised economies of the USSR and Eastern Bloc countries into an impasse. In response, 'Perestroika' - political and economic reform - is introduced by Soviet leader Gorbachev.

1989: Rigging of local elections sparks off protests followed by East Germans attempting to reach West Germany through the then Czechoslovakia and Hungary.

October: East German leader Erich Honecker resigns and is replaced by Egon Krenz.

4 November: One million people attend a pro-democratic socialism

9 November: The Wall is breached when the East German government announces that all GDR citizens can visit West Germany and West Berlin. In the absence of a democratic workers' alternative, East Germany began to collapse, support for unification grew and the German capitalist class seized the opportunity to take over east Germany on its terms.

1990 3 October: East and West Germany are formally unified as a capitalist state.

SOCIALISM TODAY

Magazine of the Socialist Party

November 2019 special issue on the 30th anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall: 1989 - The collapse of Stalinism and its consequences



When the Berlin Wall was dismantled in 1989 capitalism declared itse victorious. The collapse of Stalinism was used in a global ideological offensive against socialism, which was unjustly equated with that dictatorial, bureaucratic system, to drive through brutal, neo-liberal capitalist policies worldwide. In an abridged version of the introduction to the 2009 special anniversary edition of Socialism Today on the fall of the wall, Peter Taaffe looks back at 1989 and its consequences.

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w Workplace

Socialist Party members in UCU

The University and College Union (UCU) has decisively voted to back strike action in two separate ballots over pensions, pay and conditions in higher education.

The union announced last week that 79% of members backed strike action over changes in contributions to the USS pension scheme. Meanwhile, 74% supported strike action in the ballot over pay, casualisation, equality and workloads.

It was a disaggregated ballot, meaning the votes for each branch were counted separately. Over one million students would be hit if all the branches that achieved a yes vote on a 50% turnout for either ballot came out in action.

On the issue of pensions, 41 institutions surpassed the Tories anti-trade union law requiring a 50%

During the pension strike of 2018, UCU members launched a bold campaign of 14 days of strike action. This successfully halted the pension attacks and forced management to set up a joint expert panel to investigate the pension scheme.

Since then, the scheme managers have opted to ignore the recommendations in favour of making staff pay more, with member pension contributions rising from 8% before the last strikes to 9.6% of their salary now

Can't trust management

This shows that management can't be trusted, and that sustained struggle is needed, especially as further increases are currently on the cards from 2021.

UCU estimates up to 30% of teaching is done by casualised, hourly-paid workers. Like all workers on these contracts, they struggle to pay rent and provide for their families

On workload, UCU research found, on average, academic staff were working two extra days a week on top of their contractual hours, unpaid. On top of this, even on employers' own calculations, real-term pay has been reduced by 17% since

The successful ballot on these issues represents a clear indication of a massive effect, not only for curthe growing mood in higher educa- rent and future workers in higher

University and College Union vote for pay and pension strikes



tion to fight back over worsening pay and conditions.

Last year, when balloted over similar issues, only seven branches beat the 50% threshold for action. This year, 53 branches beat the threshold with a higher Yes vote than ever before.

Victory in this dispute could have

education but for other sectors facing attacks to pensions, low pay or facing the misery of casualisation, excessive workloads and inequality at work.

But to do this, the union needs to outline what this victory will look like. It cannot just mean empty promises from the employers, but meaningful action: no detriment in pensions, scrap zero-hour

contracts, introduce overtime pay, above-inflation pay rise now!

The UCU higher education committee has met to discuss the next steps. While we wait for details, there is a likelihood that action may coincide with the general election campaign and postal workers' action. The Tories will not want to see national strikes during the general election

We think that co-ordinated strike action on the two issues is the best way of uniting the two campaigns, of bringing staff affected by different problems together and building a stronger campaign capable of push ing the bosses back. UCU has announced 8 days

of strikes at 60 universities from Monday 25 November to Vednesday 4 December

£1 million cuts plan: Peabody housing workers announce strike ballot

Nick Auvache

Peabody housing plan £1 million of cuts to housing management budgets by March 2020, with potentially devastating consequences to residents and workers. Unite members have voted overwhelmingly to start a formal strike ballot.

In the spring, management launched a brutal restructure and have already deleted the entire community safety team. This important team dealt with high level anti-social behaviour including

drug crime

The number of neighbourhood managers is to be slashed from 80 to 65 - a loss of 15 posts.

Management defends this restructure by claiming it would "augment service improvement." Cuts, loss of specialist expertise and increased workloads to improve services!

The real reason is Peabody's stated aim of achieving a saving of £1 million by March 2020 as part of their so-called 'efficiency plan'.

The reality of this 'efficiency plan' is more work to be done by fewer

workers. The current workload is now unmanageable.

Unite are now balloting for strike action as Peabody do not appear to be moving on any of the substantial points. Notice of the ballot will be given on 29 October.

Unite has also approached Unison which has now agreed to ballot its members as well. Given the strength of feeling on this issue, Unite believes that there will be an overwhelming majority in favour of action. The indicative response in favour of action has been around 95%

Forbo Flooring Derbyshire strike

Ian Hunter Derby Socialist Party

The strike at Forbo Flooring UK in Ripley Derbyshire has entered its third week. The strike by over 70 production workers follows seven months of fruitless and frustrating negotiations with the Swiss-based company.

The workers rejected a paltry 2.1% pay offer and voted for strike action. which began on 15 October.

The workers are striking every Tuesday and Wednesday which means that production has been reduced by around 40%. The

union, Unite, is also concerned about allegations of bullying and harassment by management in the workplace.

Forbo have factories in several countries in Europe as well as in Russia and the USA. The UK factory is profitable (£9 million last year) and there was a further investment in productive capacity of £4.1 mil lion in January of this year.

Support and solidarity on the picket lines has come from Derby Socialist Party, Derby Trade Union Council, Chesterfield Trade Union Council, the National Education Union, and Derby Unite Community branch

Socialist Party member Marion Lloyd, who is standing for general union PCS, spoke at the Below are extracts from her fighting speech.

"

ment.

per-exploited workers.

their offices. like they don't mean a thing.

well will!

Corbyn and Labour

simply not enough.

implementing his manifesto

We need general secretaries and leaders that state life as it absolutely is. The Labour Party is two parties in

they so wish.

members are suffering from. We do not need cheerleaders for blank cheque.

We say to them: we want you to implement the policies of our union. And if you don't, we will unite together, and we will struggle.

We need to be absolutely clear. If it's a Labour government, or a government of any colour, that the role of the trade union is to pressure them into conceding our demands. PCS members can wait no longer. One in ten civil servants earn less

than the living wage.



secretary of the civil service main rally at Socialism 2019.

t would be right in every way to start off by recognising the courage and inspiration of workers up and down the country struggling against this Tory govern-

The equal pay dispute in Glasgow, the bin workers in Birmingham, the McDonald's workers. The battles in PCS - the recent victory that we've had winning the living wage for su-

And it would be remiss of me not to mention our brave members in HMRC in Ealing, balloting again to try and save their jobs and to save

And then, of course, the postal workers. What admiration and solidarity we must send to them. Wiping away the Tory trade union laws

The trade union movement has taken a battering. But these inspirational disputes, and the disputes that are to come, show that under the right leadership, workers are prepared to fight, and fight we damn

The attitude of the current PCS leadership to dealing with the reality that our members face is to cross their fingers and hope for the return of a Labour government. And that is

Even if a Corbyn government is elected, and even if the Labour Party was united, we know that the capitalist establishment will do everything in its power to try and stop him from

In the left corner, we've got socialists. And in the right corner, we've got pro-business, pro-austerity, people who will stop at nothing to stop Corbyn, and also remove him if

And let's not forget that many of these Blairites voted for the cuts, the closures, and the pay freeze that our

the Labour Party. We give them no

Thousands of workers in DWP and HMRC are claiming the ben-

efits that they administer. We've got record numbers of members in personal debt, struggling to pay the bills, make ends meet, and some are



"UNDER THE RIGHT LEADERSHIP WORKERS ARE PREPARED TO FIGHT"

even using food banks.

So to sit back and simply wait for a Labour government is not only something we can't wait for, it's a criminal dereliction of our duty as a trade union movement.

Our job is to join up struggles. Our job is to give members the confidence that with the proper strategy, and effective leadership, we can win. We need to replace the current leadership. It is spent, and it is worn. They have no faith in our members to struggle. We do.

I notice there is no reference to 'Step Aside, Brother' in Mark Ser- struggle: for socialist change.'

wotka's campaign for general secretary. Maybe that's because he is being challenged by two women.

But I call on you, Mark Serwotka to step aside, brother. Not because of your gender, but because you have failed our members. It's time for you to go.

We must learn - I have learnt, all of my working life, by being a member of the Militant and now the Socialist Party - that our struggle is to win the best candidates for our members on the best programme. But I understand as well that it's part of a wider

UCU strike

Speaking to the Socialist Marion added "Congratulations to members of the University and College Union (UCU) who voted overwhelmingly for action on pay, pensions and terms and conditions (see opposite page) The UCU used a disaggregated ballot strategy and 41 of the branches individually balloted beat the statutory strike ballot threshold.

This result shows that we were

right to argue in PCS for an open debate on tactics including the possibility of a disaggregated ballot which would have meant 21 employer areas could have taken action this year on pay.

Myself and other comrades were publically attacked and vilified by Mark Serwotka and his supporters for auestioning his single ballot, single issue strategy As a consequence of losing the ballot there has been no real fight on pay again this year - a failure for which Mark Serwotka has to take full responsibility.

Review/Workplace

TV: Crime and Punishment THIS BRUTAL WATCH IS A DAMNING INDICTMENT OF CUTS AND CAPITALISM



Chris Newby Hackney Socialist Party

This compelling six-part documentarv. filmed over two years, really underlines the deep crisis throughout the criminal justice system. It mainly centres on HMP Winchester, one of the most overcrowded prisons in Britain, but also covers other aspects, such as parole and probation.

The documentary is made up of interviews with prisoners, prison and probation officers, the governor, and parole board members. At times it really is a tough watch, with graphic examples of self-harm, such as a prisoner who opens up his leg with a piece of sharp metal.

The chronic levels of underfunding are starkly borne out. The prison service, along with all other parts of the public service, has seen a slashing of its funding - £410 million since 2011. This resulted in 7,500 experienced prison officers losing their jobs.

There has been a recent increase in officiers in some prisons. But, in the case of Winchester prison, in some wings on some shifts there are no prison officers with more than a vear's experience.

Prison officer cuts mean that in Winchester, prisoners are only allowed out of their cells for 45 minutes a day. You can see the pressure that builds up from this, with the filming of a riot that takes place there

The programme highlights the burden on prison officers. During a riot. reps for the workers' POA union explain to the governor that - if the riot escalates - they will withdraw their members to a place of safety. That burden is shown with the resignation of two officers, both fearing for their continued safety. One is an experienced officer who has just had enough, while the other is a new recruit. He gets assaulted and resigns after coming back to work.

Boris Johnson's recent call for 'tougher sentencing" is an example of how prison policy is a reaction to public opinion - and an attempt to shore up political support - rather than a long-term strategy to improve the situation.

Sentences

One such measure highlighted in the first episode is the introduction of Imprisonment for Public Protection (IPP) sentences in 2005 by Labour Home Secretary David Blunkett - part of Tony Blair's claim of being "tough on crime and tough on the causes of crime."

These sentences have no fixed maximum term. Prisoners are only released after convincing the parole board that they are safe to be released.

Originally, the sentence was for a maximum of 900 prisoners. But at its height, 8,711 prisoners were sentenced on the scheme. Despite being abolished in 2014 as a failure. 3.429 prisoners are still held under this policy.

Crime and Punishment shows the devastating effect on prisoners' mental health, as they have no clear idea of when they'll be released.

The programme does not shy away from the brutality of the crimes of the prisoners that they interview. But it is clear that for a lot of these people, rather than being in prison. they need proper access to good mental health services.

Rehabilitation is regularly mentioned by the prison officers and the governor, but they are constantly coming up against the brutal reality of austerity cuts. Some of the officers say, when cuts are being made everywhere else in public services, why would the public support an increase in funding for the prison service?

This programme serves as a damning indictment of the criminal justice system under capitalism, despite the best attempts of many workers involved in it.

Crime and Punishment was shown on Channel 4, and is available at channel4.com until

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West Midlands Trains guards to strike



Tom Woodcock

89% of senior conductors (guards) have voted for strike action over West Midlands Trains plans to downgrade the role and remove key safety responsibilities.

RMT members smashed the To-ries' undemocratic ballot threshold,

Double-dealing Hackney council bosses face renewed strike action



returning the vote on a 78% turnout An indication of the mood to fight was at a packed-out Birmingham rail branch meeting in August when members unanimously supported a resolution which called for the union leadership to deliver a straightforward ultimatum to the company: guarantee a fully trained senior conductor on every train with control

over the doors or we will ballot our members for action. The company failed to provide

fence of the grade.

franchise in 2026.

as has happened elsewhere?

end of the year.

west midlands.

else was offered nothing.

Hackney council bosses have reneged on an agreement with drivers and passenger escorts. members of the Unite union, on school buses for disabled children. Unite said that Hackney's coun-

pute over payments for working split leave days for the training days.

said: "We reached a settlement that action

training - they are paid leave days.

dispute.

appalling opportunism.

including strike action."

this reassurance so the members were balloted and delivered a crys-tal-clear mandate for action in de-

Management promise that al-though guards will lose the door controls and their crucial role in train dispatch there will be a guard on every train until the end of the

However, the majority of guards can see through this smoke screen. After losing control over the movement of trains how are guards to defend themselves industrially when attacked by the employer in the future? What is to stop the company scrapping guards entirely, particular ly if Abellio, the franchisee, decides to walk away early from the contract

Conductors will be on strike every Saturday from 16 November to the

Socialists and trade unionists should visit picket lines across the

RMT members in the stations and engineering grades are also being balloted for strike action from 7 November over specific grades at the company being paid additional premium rates over the summer to encourage overtime working to cover gaps in the roster while everyone

cil's u-turn for its 38 members now meant that future industrial action was very much back on the table. The workers called off their strike on 9 October in a long-running dis-

shifts. But now the council is insisting that the staff use contractual Unite regional officer Onay Kasab

agreed the training and development sessions would take place during paid work time. This was a vital component that paved the way for our members to call off their strike

"However, when we met council officers to discuss implementation of the agreement, we were told that staff would need to use their 'inset days' for training as part of the arrangements. For clarity, the inset days for these staff are not used for

"Clearly, the council is unhappy that staff receive paid inset days which are, in effect, contractual leave days. But this is a completely different issue and not linked to this

"The employer's actions in this case do not just demonstrate bad faith as far as negotiated agreements are concerned - they demonstrate

"Unless the employer abides by what was clearly understood, negotiated and agreed then we will restart the industrial action campaign, Socialist Party Scotland member Gary Clark, who is the branch secretary of the Scotland Number Two CWU branch spoke at the main rally at Socialism 2019. Below are extracts from his speech about the upcoming national Royal Mail strike.

e're standing on the brink of a major industrial dispute, which we've probably not seen in Britain

for a number of years. We have just seen the result of a 97% 'yes' vote in the whole of the Royal Mail Group and a 95% 'yes' vote in the Parcelforce group, with a 76% turnout, which smashed all the anti-trade union laws to smith-

But I'll tell you what - the mood is so strong in the workplace right now, we've got activists who were disappointed with that result! That's how strong the mood is!

Getting the members out for strike action was like kicking at an open door, because the culture in Roval Mail is disgraceful. Every week of the year, there's some unit out on strike. And 99% of the time, because of the bullying and the harassment you get off management.

We've been preparing to strike for five years now, because we knew, when privatisation happened that this battle was going to occur.

A couple of years ago, we had the four pillars' dispute, with a massive 'ves' vote, and we never had to take strike action, and it was viewed by the vast majority of postal workers as a major victory.

150,000 angry posties

Since then they've brought in Rico Back, a horrible anti-trade union manager, to take us on. But he's taking on 150,000 angry posties, and he'd better be prepared for a fight here.

He wants to bring us into the gig economy, and bring us down to the owest terms possible. So this is the fight of our lives.

, He wants to break up Royal Mail into small sections, and sell us off to the capitalist vultures.

He wants to change the package strategy, and ditch the letter strategy. What that'll mean: overnight, anything over shoebox size will be taken by some other drivers. Overnight, 20,000 postal jobs go.

Six-day service: he has refused to give a commitment to actually defend it; another 20,000 jobs will go.

So what we're fighting for here is 40,000 reasonably paid jobs, and a public service which people want.

And then the strike hallot hanpened and had a 97% 'ves' vote, so under the rules and agreements we had to go to mediation. Two weeks of mediation: they were not interested.

Mediator's report comes in: there's another week for us to review the mediator's report. We ask for weekong talks with them. They refuse on the grounds it was mid-term and the kids were on school holidays! That was the answer of Royal Mail

Workplace **ROYAL MAIL STRIKE: "THIS IS GOING TO** BE THE BIGGEST BATTLE WE'VE SEEN IN BRITAIN FOR A NUMBER OF YEARS"

7-13 November 2019 the 50





So then they wrote to us on 29 October, asking for urgent negotiations with no strings, they said. Well, hang on, there are strings there. They said we won't discuss Parcelforce, and you must take strike action off the table until the new year!

And that coincided - it was the same day - as the general election was called. So I strongly believe Boris Johnson's tipped them the wink and said, 'I don't want any fights on the streets. I don't want any strikes when the general elections on'.

And to make it clear: we will take strike action during the general election.

This is going to be the biggest battle we've seen in Britain for a number of years. We have called a special postal executive committee meeting on 13 November, where the strike dates will be announced.

They're recruiting 5,500 casual labourers as we speak, to deliver packets between eleven in the morning and seven at night.

I'll tell you something: 14 days after 13 November, that weekend coincides with Amazon 'Black Friday' and 'Cyber Monday'. I'm just guessing here, but I reckon we'll be out over that whole weekend, for fiveday strike action.

We are now faced with a battle. We need every individual in this room to get round and visit your Royal Mail workplaces, get involved with support groups. We're in for a fight to the finish. We need support from every single trade unionist and socialist in this country.

International 🏈

Donal O'Cofaigh is the CWI's first elected councillor in Northern Ireland and is pioneering the struggle for independent working-class political representation in the North. Below we print extracts of his speech at the evening rally of Socialism 2019 (see pages 4 and 5).

orthern Ireland is a very divided society. When we're young we're divided. When we're old, we're divided. Every single facet of life - housing, schools, churches, sports; everything is divided. They have walls they're getting higher, in the big cities, the 'peace walls'. They even put walls between you when you die, in the cemeteries.

But there's one place where workers are not divided - and that's the workplaces. The one place where Protestants and Catholics come together daily and socialise and get on. And because of that they're also unified in the trade union movement. So it is natural that if you really want to change Northern Ireland's situation you're going to have to build on the politics of the trade union movement, on the politics of the labour movement, and on the politics of socialism.

Like many other people my age, grew up with a really rough upbringing, and I grew up with a lot of hate. I became a Marxist very young. I was inspired by Malcolm X, reading his works. I joined Sinn Féin to try and change things. I spent 12 years in the organisation before I finally gave up on it. I was a councillor, and I resigned my seat.

Socialism

I was won over [to the CWI] on the basis of a revolutionary party, [of] socialism, of the unification of the working class, and the need to build a real, militant movement, grounded in the trade union movement, grounded in the politics of the socialist movement going back for decades.

I built a support base of people in the union movement, became the secretary of the trades council. We built a movement in Fermanagh that defeated the very first instance of fracking. We built a mass movement that mobilised.

I stood as a Fermanagh Against Fracking councillor and eventually as a Cross-Community Labour councillor, and we got elected on the third time. And it's an historic moment, because it's a validation of the politics of the CWI that says: you can transcend division, you can unite working-class people.

We're 1,020 days, or something like that, without a functioning government in Northern Ireland, We're really in a lot of crisis. We've a health service falling apart. Lowest pay rates for the NHS workers anywhere in the NHS. We've a manufacturing

We've got the border poll, which is basically a poll of coercion, offering nothing but a capitalist united Ireland on the one hand, and partition under capitalism on the other the



Donal supporting the posties' strike with

Marion Lloyd - Socialist Party candidate for the

general secretary of civil service union PCS

NORTHERN IRELAND: UNITING THE WORKING CLASS TO TRANSCEND DIVISION



hand. That's no hope for anyone That offers no way forward. We've a rising tension from demographic change

We've the Brexit situation: a strike of capital. And you've got imperi-alist blocs on either side playing politics with that, to the extent that we've had car bombs. The killing of Lyra McKee - the CWI comrades, were the people who organised the rallies that opposed that. In the 1970s, it was our activists out there trying to stop the descent into civil war which was on the cards.

It's real. It's always implicit in the situation where you've such divisions. Unless you get leadership from the trade union movement, unless you get a labour alternative, unless you get cross-community, socialist politics - it will always eventually go back to that. The [sectarian] parties will always take it back to that because that's the position of strength that they can rely upon. But their votes have decreased for the last five elections. Their power to divide the working class - it's actually not as strong as it was.

DUP and Sinn Féin

The DUP propping up the Tory party. Sinn Féin pushing PFI, Sinn Féin pushing a 12% corporation tax rate. These things have broken the link. Sinn Féin and the DUP voting to implement the Tory Universal Credit. This is the reality that's out there.

It's the trade unions who have stepped up to the plate. 20,000 public sector workers have been on strike in the last month, on and off, under Nipsa. Unite has had the ten-week occupation of a shipyard, and a 'Titanic' struggle! We had the Wrightbus - the biggest rally in the history of Ballymena, I think, in 52 vears - a Cross-Community Labour rally. I was proud to be on that. And I want to send a particular shout-out to the meatpackers in Lurgan who are going to go out in a real hard strike.

So there is a possibility of a trade union, a labour alternative coming forward; a real socialist politics in the middle of that. It's not certain that we have to face conflict. It's not certain that we have to face the possibility of a vicious, brutal civil war, and a repartition - which is possibly what you could see happening in the worst-case scenario. That does not have to be our future.

There's a hope for a progressive alternative. And that hope is lit up by the CWI. We stand against individual terrorism. We stand against state repression. We

stand against sectarian division. We stand for a socialist Ireland and a socialist fed nmittee for a Worker eration of national (CWI) is the world England socialist organisation which the Scot Socialist Party is affiliated to. land and The CWI is organised in many countries ind works to unite the working class and Wales essed peoples against capitalism and a socialist Euand to fight for a socialist world. rope, and alistworld.net a socialist world. And it isn't

> a utopia. It's the only way forward



Lindsey Morgan Leicester Socialist Party

national (CWI).

for socialism.

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Revolutionary wave

correct ideas and programme.

in seconds

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International 🏈





Fiona O'Loughlin, CWI Ireland

Preparing to shape events internationally

The packed international rally at Socialism 2019 was a display of the strength and determination to build the Committee for a Workers' Inter-

In a time of intense capitalist crisis, this is dependent on the strength of our ideas and uniting the working class and young people in struggle

Comrades from sections across the CWI spoke passionately and determinedly about what needs to be

With revolutionary waves in Ecuador, Lebanon, Chile, Haiti, Hong Kong and elsewhere, it is of crucial importance to be armed with the

Laura Rafetseder (CWI Austria) spoke of the upsurge in collective bargaining agreements from retail, metal and brewery workers, in a country previously seen as a "traditional safe haven for the capitalist class", where time lost to strike action had previously been measured

She spoke of the collapse of support for right populists after they had exposed their true nature through enabling austerity and im-

Fiona O'Loughlin's (CWI Ireland) powerful and emotive contribution spoke of how capitalism cannot even guarantee the basics of survival.

Brexit fog is also prevalent in Ireland and used as an excuse by the Irish establishment to push through incredible amounts of damage to working-class people.

This is demonstrated by a severe housing crisis in Dublin. She spoke about a homeless man, living in a tunnel, being eaten by rats, such is the degradation that the working class is suffering.

Fiona demonstrated the determination of the CWI in Ireland to build a genuinely revolutionary party based on the working class to fight back and end all oppression.

Peluola Adewale (CWI Nigeria) talked about the collusion between state forces and Sumal foods to persecute Abbey Trotsky with multiple arrests, trumped up charges, and intimidation.

Armed with Trotskyist ideas the CWI's high profile in the country is based on having correct Marxist methods and a clear orientation to the working class.

Michael Koschitzki (CWI Germany) opened with details of an attempted massacre at a synagogue in Germany and the vacuum that is created when left organisations do not use a class programme to cut across the far-right, especially with the AfD being seen as a 'voice to air economic issues.

US Trotskyist Jai spoke in depth of the failures of the US school system. with large class sizes and a severe lack of resources leading to wildcat

strikes by teachers.

He spoke of the US working class being the "sleeping giant which needs to wake from decades of slumber" and is beginning to stir.

The energetic and determined rally ended with a closing speech by Tony Saunois (CWI Secretary). He summed up the situation in ternationally of capitalist crisis and the "vast accumulation of grotesque inequalities embodied in oliberalism".

Bury neoliberalism

Tony spoke of the potential recession looming and the surges forward in consciousness of the working class in the recent period; the the use of identity politics in the US to divide the class and the upsurge in revolutionary actions in Chile. After 30 years of neoliberalism, Tony said, it is in the birthplace of neoliberalism (Chile) that it could also be buried.

The failures of the new left after the 2008 crash resulted in the coming to power of a series of right populist. With a new recession looming the potential economic impact of Brexit, the failures of social democrats, the period offers renewed opportunities for our revolutionary party

Small forces intervening correctly can shape events. With our determination, programme and ideas, we are excellently placed to be a factor in future upheavals.

We have never been more confident in the CWI.



End repression in Chile Freedom for soldier David Veloso

The following statement was issued on 4 November by members of **Socialismo** Revolucionario, CWI in Chile, and the Committee against repression in Chile

On October 18, the Chilean people began a generalised social uprising, triggered by a rise in passenger transportation in the capital Santiago, and violent repression of secondary students demonstrating against the increase by massively evading payment.

This was the final straw for the Chilean people, after thirty years of abuse and neoliberal capitalism administered by the civil governments that succeeded the Pinochet military dictatorship.

On October 19, President Sebastián Piñera, imposed a state of emergency in the city of Santiago. An army general was placed in charge of the city, and a curfew

Army on the streets

For the first time since the end of the dictatorship, the armed forces were brought on to the streets to join the police in repressing social protest. This measure was also quickly applied in most regions of the countr

Despite this, the demonstrations were growing in number and size, and people bravely challenged the curfew and repression. Just one week after the popular protest broke out, there was the most massive demonstration in the history of Chile

On October 25, two million protested in Santiago alone, as well as protests in other regions of the country. Protesters had four demands

Removal of the armed forces from the street

Piñera's resignation, Withdrawal from Congress discussion of all laws against the people

Convening of a constituent assembly to achieve a new constitution that replaces that of 1980 implemented under the dictatorship and still in force

On October 28, Sebastián Piñera was forced to lift the state of emergency and curfew which had not brought an end to the popular protest, despite the serious violations of human rights, the dead, the missing and the injured. On the contrary, the state of emergency and the curfew revealed the inability of the government.

It was in that context that soldier David Veloso Codocedo (21), refused to embark from Antofagasta to Santiago to participate in the repression and threw his weapon to the ground.

The military prosecutor Cristián Ramírez, ordered the arrest of David who, under military law, could even be sentenced to 10 years in military prison. He has been imprisoned since his arrest.

Given this we have formed a committee against repression and consider David Veloso as a conscien tious objector.

We request your support for the campaign demanding his freedom by sending letters to President Sebastián Piñera, demanding the immediate freedom of this brave voung man.

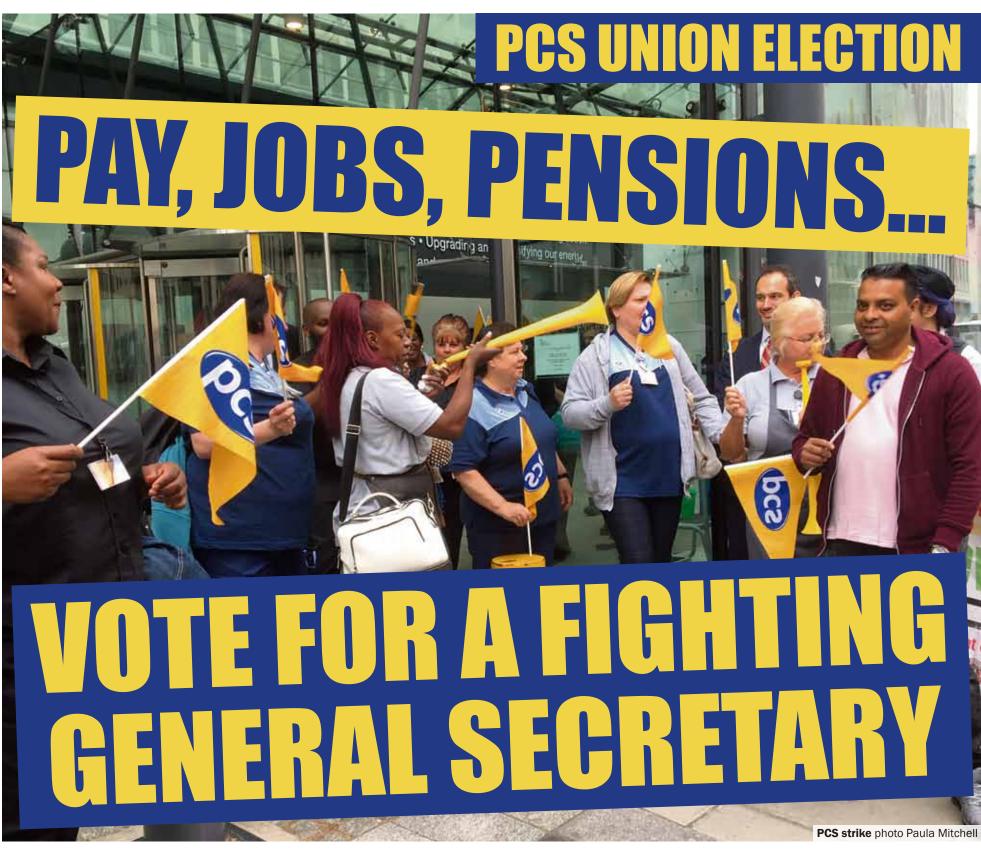
You can write to President Piñera through the website: escribenos.presidencia.cl Copy your mail to contrarepresionchile@gmail.com

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Marion Lloyd photo Mary Finch

n Thursday 7 November, ballot papers go out to 180,000 PCS members in the election for general secretary. The ballot closes on 12 December.

Socialist Party member Marion Lloyd is standing in the election against two other candidates.

Marion told the Socialist, "The support that we've had is overwhelming. We came into the race late. 39 nominations in the space of a month! 62 for the incumbent Mark Serwotka, who has been preparing for this election for months, and 17 for Bev Laidlaw.

This election comes at a crucial

time for PCS members and the working class. We have lived through years of austerity. Seeing our standards of living absolutely devastated.

And now, at last, after weeks of dithering, we've got a general election, and the possibility of electing a Corbyn-led government on an antiausterity programme.

That will be a great breakthrough. But it is in this context that it is crucial to have a general secretary that understands the political situation under which we live, and the role of the trade union in that context.

We must cut through the growing bureaucracy that exists inside PCS. We must reclaim the union, and make it democratic and accountable. A union that recognises and uses its collective powers.

We must rebuild the left on the basis of a political strategy, an industrial strategy, and one that at the heart of it is democracy, and respects discussion and debate.

I will not take the general secretary's wage. I have been active in this union for more than 40 years, and I am not in it for my own personal gain. I have confidence in the preparedness of our members to fight and win."

We call upon activists to unite behind Marion's candidacy for a union democratically controlled through its elected lay structures, and a leadership which will actively coordinate across the union the fight on pay, jobs, pensions and office closures.

 If you can help or want more information contact marion4GenSec@gmail.com
Facebook: 'Marion Lloyd for PCS general secretary'

Twitter: @
marion4gs
Marion's
speech at

Socialism

2019 see

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