Some of the richest people in the country are getting huge government handouts because of coronavirus. Meanwhile, millions are poorer as a result of the economic crisis triggered by the pandemic.

Certainly we aren’t “all in it together” when it comes to wealth. Top of the 2020 Sunday Times Rich List - the wealthiest 1,000 individuals or families in Britain - is James Dyson, who increased his personal stash by £3.6 billion last year to £16.2 billion.

At the same time, unemployment has rocketed. Official figures went up in the month of April by nearly 900,000 to 2.1 million. Millions more are ‘furloughed’ on 80% of their wages - while our bills don’t go down!

Young people are hit hardest - one in three earning less than a few weeks ago. 35% are earning less than they did before the pandemic outbreak. The Sunday Times says the combined wealth of the 1,000 richest people has fallen for the first time in a decade, by 3.7%. But it still leaves them about three-quarters of a trillion pounds to play with!

On the other hand, as the Rich List compiler points out: “Ever since the financial crisis of 2008-09, Britain’s wealthiest people have become richer and richer.” During which time working-class people have suffered drastic real-terms wage cuts and austerity.

The Tories, like governments around the world, have been forced to intervene massively into the economy in an attempt to prevent an unprecedented collapse. Driven by the fear of the reaction of working-class people, they have handed out huge loans to companies, and introduced the furlough scheme to try to stop unemployment levels rising higher than the Great Depression of the 1930s.

But the Sunday Times shows that many Rich List billionaires are claiming government loans, demanding company bailouts, and taking taxpayers’ money to furlough staff - while sitting on their personal fortunes, often refusing to top up workers’ pay. These include the likes of Richard Branson, Mike Ashley, Wetherspoon’s boss Tim Martin, and ex-BHS owner Sir Philip Green. Five of the top ten richest are claiming furlough money to pay their workers.

And who will pay for the huge debt the government is racking up in this crisis? The super-rich certainly don’t think they should!

If the Tories get their way it will be us - the very working-class people who have suffered years of austerity to pay for the last capitalist economic crisis in 2008-09. A Treasury document leaked to the Telegraph details ways the government could start to claw back the cash. It suggests tax rises, reversing Tory election promises. It proposes another pay freeze for public sector workers - who have suffered years of it already - including health workers and others the government lauds as heroes! It also suggests cutting state pensions by £8 billion a year.

This isn’t yet government policy - but they haven’t denied it’s possible either! However, they will have to tread carefully in squeezing the working class. There will be no mood to accept the punishing of ‘key workers’ after this pandemic. They may try to be sneaky in the way they steal it off us.

The only guarantee that the burden won’t be loaded onto our backs yet again is building a mass movement, led by the trade unions, to defend living standards and jobs as well as the immediate issues of safety at work.

Moreover, we must permanently end the obscenity of wealth inequality by fighting for the socialist transformation of society, where big business is publicly owned and democratically planned for all.
If those workers fighting today for health and safety were to discuss standing candidates in future elections, that would mark an important step towards building political resistance during the working class. To prevent economic governance by the government and capitalists, it would introduce capital controls and undermine the banks and financial institutions.

The capitalists fear that this crisis would damage confidence in their system at a level much greater than after 2008-09 - pushing people, especially the young, to seek other solutions. The crisis shows that economic growth at too high levels will always need to end up running into a wall of solid opposition. Nationalization of the utilities and major banks is needed as a matter of urgency.

Workers’ party
At this critical juncture, a workers’ party, if it was established, would seize the opportunity to organise the working class on the basis of the coalitions of both the time and the economic crisis. For the PCB, like many sections of the capitalist class, is in a crisis of confidence and a necessary role to be played by fighting workers in the PCB, the situation is no laughing matter. Instead, we have an opposition party led by Stu Keir Stamm and his appointed shadow ministers who are draining their budgets as a pair of hands for the capitalist class. In response, they are in a position to be exposed to the workers’ movements, but the PCB is now an important step towards building political resistance during the working class. To prevent economic governance by the government and capitalists, it would introduce capital controls and undermine the banks and financial institutions.

To prevent economic governance by the government and capitalists, it would introduce capital controls and undermine the banks and financial institutions.

The capitalists fear that this crisis would damage confidence in their system at a level much greater than after 2008-09 - pushing people, especially the young, to seek other solutions. The crisis shows that economic growth at too high levels will always need to end up running into a wall of solid opposition. Nationalization of the utilities and major banks is needed as a matter of urgency.

Workers’ party
At this critical juncture, a workers’ party, if it was established, would seize the opportunity to organise the working class on the basis of the coalitions of both the time and the economic crisis. For the PCB, like many sections of the capitalist class, is in a crisis of confidence and a necessary role to be played by fighting workers in the PCB, the situation is no laughing matter. Instead, we have an opposition party led by Stu Keir Stamm and his appointed shadow ministers who are draining their budgets as a pair of hands for the capitalist class. In response, they are in a position to be exposed to the workers’ movements, but the PCB is now an important step towards building political resistance during the working class. To prevent economic governance by the government and capitalists, it would introduce capital controls and undermine the banks and financial institutions.

The capitalists fear that this crisis would damage confidence in their system at a level much greater than after 2008-09 - pushing people, especially the young, to seek other solutions. The crisis shows that economic growth at too high levels will always need to end up running into a wall of solid opposition. Nationalization of the utilities and major banks is needed as a matter of urgency.

Workers’ party
At this critical juncture, a workers’ party, if it was established, would seize the opportunity to organise the working class on the basis of the coalitions of both the time and the economic crisis. For the PCB, like many sections of the capitalist class, is in a crisis of confidence and a necessary role to be played by fighting workers in the PCB, the situation is no laughing matter. Instead, we have an opposition party led by Stu Keir Stamm and his appointed shadow ministers who are draining their budgets as a pair of hands for the capitalist class. In response, they are in a position to be exposed to the workers’ movements, but the PCB is now an important step towards building political resistance during the working class. To prevent economic governance by the government and capitalists, it would introduce capital controls and undermine the banks and financial institutions.

The capitalists fear that this crisis would damage confidence in their system at a level much greater than after 2008-09 - pushing people, especially the young, to seek other solutions. The crisis shows that economic growth at too high levels will always need to end up running into a wall of solid opposition. Nationalization of the utilities and major banks is needed as a matter of urgency.

Workers’ party
At this critical juncture, a workers’ party, if it was established, would seize the opportunity to organise the working class on the basis of the coalitions of both the time and the economic crisis. For the PCB, like many sections of the capitalist class, is in a crisis of confidence and a necessary role to be played by fighting workers in the PCB, the situation is no laughing matter. Instead, we have an opposition party led by Stu Keir Stamm and his appointed shadow ministers who are draining their budgets as a pair of hands for the capitalist class. In response, they are in a position to be exposed to the workers’ movements, but the PCB is now an important step towards building political resistance during the working class. To prevent economic governance by the government and capitalists, it would introduce capital controls and undermine the banks and financial institutions.

The capitalists fear that this crisis would damage confidence in their system at a level much greater than after 2008-09 - pushing people, especially the young, to seek other solutions. The crisis shows that economic growth at too high levels will always need to end up running into a wall of solid opposition. Nationalization of the utilities and major banks is needed as a matter of urgency.

Workers’ party
At this critical juncture, a workers’ party, if it was established, would seize the opportunity to organise the working class on the basis of the coalitions of both the time and the economic crisis. For the PCB, like many sections of the capitalist class, is in a crisis of confidence and a necessary role to be played by fighting workers in the PCB, the situation is no laughing matter. Instead, we have an opposition party led by Stu Keir Stamm and his appointed shadow ministers who are draining their budgets as a pair of hands for the capitalist class. In response, they are in a position to be exposed to the workers’ movements, but the PCB is now an important step towards building political resistance during the working class. To prevent economic governance by the government and capitalists, it would introduce capital controls and undermine the banks and financial institutions.

The capitalists fear that this crisis would damage confidence in their system at a level much greater than after 2008-09 - pushing people, especially the young, to seek other solutions. The crisis shows that economic growth at too high levels will always need to end up running into a wall of solid opposition. Nationalization of the utilities and major banks is needed as a matter of urgency.

Workers’ party
At this critical juncture, a workers’ party, if it was established, would seize the opportunity to organise the working class on the basis of the coalitions of both the time and the economic crisis. For the PCB, like many sections of the capitalist class, is in a crisis of confidence and a necessary role to be played by fighting workers in the PCB, the situation is no laughing matter. Instead, we have an opposition party led by Stu Keir Stamm and his appointed shadow ministers who are draining their budgets as a pair of hands for the capitalist class. In response, they are in a position to be exposed to the workers’ movements, but the PCB is now an important step towards building political resistance during the working class. To prevent economic governance by the government and capitalists, it would introduce capital controls and undermine the banks and financial institutions.
JOHNSON’S RECKLESS ‘BACK TO SCHOOL’ PLANS THREATEN EVERYONE’S SAFETY

Education staff and parents organise the fightback

Maths Powell-Davies
Socialist Party national committee
and NEU national executive committee (personal capacity)

T he government is on course for a direct confrontation with both school staff and their unions over its plans for a summer under opening of primary schools on 1 June. It’s vital that unions now give a decisive lead to ensure that, rather than numbers feeling they have to accept putting their heads in the sand and making sure they don’t cause any issues in danger, it is Johnson that has to face the music.

On Monday 10 May, as many as 20,000 individual NEU members logged into a Zoom meeting to hear three joint general secretaries (JGS) explain how members can resist the demands to return to unsafe workplaces. As JGS Kevin Courtney explained, any agreement on safety would first de- pend on the government agreeing to a full and proper risk assessment for every workplace. But the growing pressure on schools to return will see healthservice workers and teachers unsure that there should be one-to-one ratio in settings to ensure every union member is informed of those that have to distance from colleagues, classes and at home, or at home, together.

Worker’s meetings

Union members must meet online regularly to raise their awareness and across employers to ensure their legal rights are met and the need to be made clear and direct that these task groups should be an ongoing effort from day one, and that school staff still right to be just about to go on to ensure that we have a chance to work in the way that is just that important to them, and to one that is still impossible to get things done in danger.

The existence of a union means that members should have the right to refuse to work if they feel they are in any danger, and that they should be protected by Section 44 of the Employment Rights Act (1996) and other legislation giving workers the right to refuse work if they feel it is unsafe. The government’s plan, and the potential safety risk it poses to communities, is confirmed that the vast majority of parents share these concerns, and that the government’s plan is having to give up a significant amount of political capital to echoing concerns about the government’s plans, and the potential safety risk it poses to communities, is confirmed that the vast majority of parents share these concerns, and that the government’s plan is having to give up a significant amount of political capital to the NEU members emphasises the need for a full and ongoing joint risk assessment of all workplace. The government has agreed that the risk assessment must prioritise the health and safety of all workplace.

The force of numbers will prove the strongest argument - and the threat of a mass refusal to cooperate by staff and parents

Hull: new members get active

Mike White
Joint secretary, Hull NEU

More than 70 new members have joined Hull NEU in the last few weeks, and 10 have since joined Johnson’s announcement. A feature of those joining is that they are quickly volunteering to be active reps. We have held regular meetings of reps and reps to keep members in touch and put our regular horizons in place. Our new members have attended our online NEU meetings.

At the same time, in the last few weeks, Hull NEU has been forced to respond to campaigns to ensure that all schools return to school in a way that is safe and sustainable. No one is left in Hull for the first time in the government’s unsafe back-to-work strategy.

The following three-page feature shows how they are organizing and fighting for safety together with parents and local communities.

Jenny Colston
Coventry local government
and NEU national executive committee (personal capacity)

Teachers and education staff all welcomed the announcement by Bri-

The government publishing its modelling finding that its plan won’t be a risk to public health – and that the advice and data are not a sufficient scientific evidence.

Testing, tracing and isolation systems being properly in place

SLFs debates insist schools in a tough low have to allow these systems to be able to function correctly. The teachers and students in schools are becoming less and less able to function correctly. The teachers and students in schools are becoming less and less able to function correctly.

Do nothing, wait and see what the government does

The fears of education staff have led to the government’s unsafe back-to-work strategy.

We had 100 in the virtual meeting and urgently increase the capacity of

We were asked by the union na-

We have been asked by the union na-

All reps need to understand that this local checklist is part of one of the safety tests - and it’s certainly not one that can be met by a single measure. If ever it is possible to argue that the education staff will wait and see if the government does nothing, wait and see what the government does.

The government may do nothing, wait and see what the government does.

We have been asked by the union na-

We were asked by the union na-

Jenny Colston
Coventry local government
and NEU national executive committee (personal capacity)

Teachers and education staff all welcomed the announcement by Bri-

The government publishing its modelling finding that its plan won’t be a risk to public health – and that the advice and data are not a sufficient scientific evidence.

Testing, tracing and isolation systems being properly in place

SLFs debates insist schools in a tough low have to allow these systems to be able to function correctly. The teachers and students in schools are becoming less and less able to function correctly. The teachers and students in schools are becoming less and less able to function correctly.

Do nothing, wait and see what the government does

The fears of education staff have led to the government’s unsafe back-to-work strategy.

We had 100 in the virtual meeting and urgently increase the capacity of

We were asked by the union na-

We have been asked by the union na-

All reps need to understand that this local checklist is part of one of the safety tests - and it’s certainly not one that can be met by a single measure. If ever it is possible to argue that the education staff will wait and see if the government does nothing, wait and see what the government does.

The government may do nothing, wait and see what the government does.

We have been asked by the union na-

We were asked by the union na-

Jenny Colston
Coventry local government
and NEU national executive committee (personal capacity)

Teachers and education staff all welcomed the announcement by Bri-

The government publishing its modelling finding that its plan won’t be a risk to public health – and that the advice and data are not a sufficient scientific evidence.

Testing, tracing and isolation systems being properly in place

SLFs debates insist schools in a tough low have to allow these systems to be able to function correctly. The teachers and students in schools are becoming less and less able to function correctly. The teachers and students in schools are becoming less and less able to function correctly.

Do nothing, wait and see what the government does

The fears of education staff have led to the government’s unsafe back-to-work strategy.

We had 100 in the virtual meeting and urgently increase the capacity of

We were asked by the union na-

We have been asked by the union na-

All reps need to understand that this local checklist is part of one of the safety tests - and it’s certainly not one that can be met by a single measure. If ever it is possible to argue that the education staff will wait and see if the government does nothing, wait and see what the government does.

The government may do nothing, wait and see what the government does.

We have been asked by the union na-

We were asked by the union na-

Jenny Colston
Coventry local government
and NEU national executive committee (personal capacity)

Teachers and education staff all welcomed the announcement by Bri-

The government publishing its modelling finding that its plan won’t be a risk to public health – and that the advice and data are not a sufficient scientific evidence.

Testing, tracing and isolation systems being properly in place

SLFs debates insist schools in a tough low have to allow these systems to be able to function correctly. The teachers and students in schools are becoming less and less able to function correctly. The teachers and students in schools are becoming less and less able to function correctly.

Do nothing, wait and see what the government does

The fears of education staff have led to the government’s unsafe back-to-work strategy.

We had 100 in the virtual meeting and urgently increase the capacity of

We were asked by the union na-

We have been asked by the union na-

All reps need to understand that this local checklist is part of one of the safety tests - and it’s certainly not one that can be met by a single measure. If ever it is possible to argue that the education staff will wait and see if the government does nothing, wait and see what the government does.

The government may do nothing, wait and see what the government does.

We have been asked by the union na-

We were asked by the union na-

Jenny Colston
Coventry local government
and NEU national executive committee (personal capacity)

Teachers and education staff all welcomed the announcement by Bri-

The government publishing its modelling finding that its plan won’t be a risk to public health – and that the advice and data are not a sufficient scientific evidence.

Testing, tracing and isolation systems being properly in place

SLFs debates insist schools in a tough low have to allow these systems to be able to function correctly. The teachers and students in schools are becoming less and less able to function correctly. The teachers and students in schools are becoming less and less able to function correctly.

Do nothing, wait and see what the government does

The fears of education staff have led to the government’s unsafe back-to-work strategy.

We had 100 in the virtual meeting and urgently increase the capacity of

We were asked by the union na-

We have been asked by the union na-

All reps need to understand that this local checklist is part of one of the safety tests - and it’s certainly not one that can be met by a single measure. If ever it is possible to argue that the education staff will wait and see if the government does nothing, wait and see what the government does.

The government may do nothing, wait and see what the government does.
Safety first: parents, carers, school staff and students together

The following is the text of an advice leaflet for parents produced by the Socialist Party.

Who does the government want back in school on 1 June?
Most schools have stayed open to safely care for small numbers of children. But now the government wants primary schools to open on 1 June for all nursery, reception, Year 1 and Year 6 children, as well as all existing priority children. That’s over half the school back together.

But won’t schools make sure they teach my child safely?
Schools simply can’t open safely yet to more children. Young children sneeze and cough, they want to run and play together. It will be impossible to keep them safely apart. Shared surfaces and equipment will be infected. The virus will inevitably spread between children and staff.

Why are the government’s plans so dangerous for all of us?
Infection levels in our communities are still too high. There is still no proper testing and tracing system in place. Nobody will know who is carrying the virus into school, especially as most children don’t show symptoms.

Nobody will know which children and adults are then taking the virus back to their families and their vulnerable relatives. A ‘second wave’ of the virus will spread – that means more danger and more deaths.

Will this make my child unwell?
The government is trying to trick parents into thinking this can all be done safely. It can’t. They say most children can’t get seriously unwell with Covid-19. That’s true – but some can. For example, while rare, there’s a growing concern about an inflammatory syndrome in children linked to the virus. The virus can also won’t the happy. They will be told to keep apart from friends and teachers. Schools will be strange and confusing places. Emotional and wellbeing support also needs to be securely in place before schools open safely.

Why does the government want schools to open when it’s not safe?
Their plans are not based on safety. If they were, you wouldn’t start with the youngest kids who will find it hardest to keep apart. For them, it’s all about chidminding - so employers can tell us we should all be back in our workplaces, whether we think it’s safe or not.

Of course, parents need pay and help with childcare. But safety comes first, not employers’ profit margins.

When will it be safe for schools to open?
We can’t trust ministers to know what’s safe for our children. It’s their failure to get infection rates down, and to make sure testing and tracing systems are in place, that are to blame for schools not yet being safe to open further.

Doctors understand health, not politicians. Their professional association, the BMA, says “until we have got case numbers much lower, we should not consider reopening schools” and that government plans are “too fast, too confusing and too risky”.

They agree with staff trade unions that schools must have testing and isolation protocols securely in place first so that any outbreak can be controlled.

Parents and unions should make the decision together about what’s safe for children and staff, not the politicians who have failed us.

It’s hard for me to look after my child at home. What can I do?
It’s been hard to have children off school for this long. But schools are doing what they can to support families with online learning and teaching small numbers of children in school itself. Contact your school if you need more help or if your child is struggling with work they have set. But, again, it’s the government that needs to act.

They haven’t delivered on their promise to provide laptops and broadband to families who can’t afford them. They should be making sure every parent who has to look after children is fully supported financially, and telling employers that they can’t force parents back to work before schools can reopen safely.

I agree it’s unsafe. What do I do now to make sure we all refuse?

Tell everyone you know - our children must not go back until schools are safe

Contact other parents at your school and get organised together. Reassure them that the government has confirmed there will be NO fines if you keep children off school

For example, while rare, there’s a growing concern about an inflammatory syndrome in children linked to the virus.

If you aren’t happy. They will be told to keep apart from friends and teachers. Schools will be strange and confusing places. Emotional and wellbeing support also needs to be securely in place before schools open safely.

Schools are making at-risk children suffer, pointing to those in violent households in particular. These are the same Tories that have overseen the turning away of two out of every three women who attempt to flee to a refuge, the decimation of youth services, a crisis in Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (with a frequent two year waiting list), and the infliction of a decade of austerity on these self-same families. How dare they?

If they cared so much about vulnerable families, why were they so slow to act when it came to free school meal vouchers? The rush to open schools is because getting parents back to work to earn profits is a higher priority than the safety of our communities. Thousands of teaching staff have joined the NEU in the fight for their lives and safety for all.

Lindsey Morgan
Leicester Socialist Party

Solidarity is as important as ever in the wake of the latest attacks on teachers by the capitalist press. After demanding that students return to school when it is safe to do so they have been accused of being lazy, hysterical, and worse.

This is despite teachers already working to teach keyworker children and provide online resources, marking, and teaching for the majority of their students.

This is as well as ensuring that at-risk children are supported with resources, and encouraged to attend school. In a particularly obscene use of emotional manipulation the government has stated that teachers are making at-risk children suffer, pointing to those in violent households in particular.

These are the same Tories that have overseen the turning away of two out of every three women who attempt to flee to a refuge, the decimation of youth services, a crisis in Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (with a frequent two year waiting list), and the infliction of a decade of austerity on these self-same families. How dare they?

If they cared so much about vulnerable families, why were they so slow to act when it came to free school meal vouchers? The rush to open schools is because getting parents back to work to earn profits is a higher priority than the safety of our communities. Thousands of teaching staff have joined the NEU in the fight for their lives and safety for all.

Parent group
After reading material that I had written in the Socialist on free school meals, a number of parent friends reached out to me about it, and I suggested setting up a parent group. Quite quickly after came the announcements that children will be asked to return on the 1 June. So we created a group called ‘Safety First: Parents, Carers, School Staff and Students Together.’

The Leicestershire campaign group is mainly made up of working-class parents who want to fight. We have forged stronger links locally with the NEU, which has been possible due to the work of Socialist Party members within the union. The aim of our campaign is to provide solidarity and support for all engaged in struggle for safety at school, and to boost the confidence of education workers in struggle.

We will be contacting schools, local authorities, MPs and multi-academy trusts to say that our children will not return until the NEU’s five tests are passed. We are sensitive to the fact that parents are worried about losing their jobs if they don’t send their children to school.

The government must make assurances that the choice for parents to send their children back is a real choice by providing them with the financial support they need.
Contract tracer speaks out: Tories’ plan is outsourced chaos

An NHS contact tracer

The government’s new contact tracing scheme is outsourced to Serco - which subcontracted recruitment to Capita. Both big companies have banked huge sums of public money for years, running public services for profit.

In 2012, Serco was found to have falsified records 252 times at the Cornwall out-of-hours GP service it ran. Capita archived 148,000 patients’ medical records instead of sending them to GP practices in 2015. Despite their record of commerce, bungling and profiteering, the Tories are rewarding them with even more contracts during this crisis.

Testing large numbers of people is the vital first step if Covid-19 is to be controlled without mass vaccination. Medical and practical support is needed for those testing positive.

Contact tracing is then essential, to test people who may be infected but don’t yet know it. If a contact tests positive they can isolate instead of spreading the virus.

An effective contact tracing scheme needs local knowledge and local services. Years of austerity cuts have stripped these bare.

Without detailed local knowledge, their task will be more difficult. The intensity of the outbreak varies from place to place, even within the same city.

GP’s fear these contact tracing results won’t be passed to them as the new service is outside the NHS structure. Results from the Deloitte-run drive-in testing centres and ‘Lighthouse Laboratories’ separate from NHS laboratories, have also not been shared with local authority public health departments or GPs.

This leaves them in the dark instead of coordinating the response in their area.

This scheme follows a pattern - the government announces large sums of money to fight the virus, most of which is then funnelled to big business. As well as Serco, Capita and Deloitte, G4S has had contracts at Nightingale hospitals built by Interserve, and pharmaceutical, biotech and medical supplies companies have all had big payments from public funds.

All these big corporations should be nationalised and integrated into a democratically run, well-funded NHS, meeting every local community’s needs.

More car caravacades have taken place to protest against Tory mis-handling of the Covid-19 crisis and cuts, with the latest in Southwark and Newham [pictured]. The Socialist Party first participated in socially distanced protests on 7 May (see News 21-27 May 2020) followed by more the following week, including in Sheffield and Haringey.

Josh Askew
Southampton Socialist Party

A £10 billion financial black hole
Ten years of austerity

Crisis in council services: Labour must fight on - and side...

Furlough cut-off could force millions back to unsafe workplaces

Josh Askew

100% furlough for all until workers say it’s safe

Full protection for vulnerable people

James Ivens

Will my boss starve me back to work this summer? It’s a question that might start keeping 7.5 million furloughed workers up at night under the terms of Chancellor Rishi Sunak’s extension. Even those workers most vulnerable to Covid-19 will be pushed to return, Sunak has confirmed.

The headlines focused on the Tory Treasury chief prolonging the subsidy to October - a relief to many. Ominously, however, he also said bosses would have to ‘share with the government the cost of paying salaries’ from August.

Bosss are already meant to be ‘sharing the cost’. The subsidy only covers 80% of your wages. But in many cases, the cost of the missing 20% has been ‘shared’ onto workers, not paid out of bosses’ profits! Who can afford a 20% pay cut?

At the very start of this, Sunak signals the subsidy could fall even lower come late summer. But there’s no safe exit strategy in place for the lockdown! Workers could face a choice between a further pay cut, unemployment, or risking your life to patch up the billionaires’ profit machine.

And then, responding to questions from third sector employers, the government says that in effect vulnerable and disabled workers will be bullied back in at the same time! In fact, the government’s ‘shredding’ category is ‘vulnerable’. Open the furlough scheme to new starters!

You can’t believe a word that Johnson says is true. In his drive to end lockdown, the prime minister has reassuringly told anxious workers that construction sites, manufacturing workplaces and food outlets will all be ‘Covid-compliant’.

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) will be enforcing that, and we will have spot inspections to make sure that businesses are keeping their employees safe.

However, according to the HSE, it has ‘paused all proactive inspections at this time to reduce any risk posed to our own staff and the public.’

So there you have it! Companies will not be checked, but instead will ‘self-police’.

Johnson claims workplaces safe but HSE cancels inspections

Crisis in council services: Labour must fight on - and side...
Lack of funding and safety

Transport workers and passengers must not pay the price

Jared Wood
IMF union executive committee member (personal capacity)

The London mayor Sadiq Khan, Transport for London (TfL) have accepted a financial settlement with the government only made one offer and refused to improve on it. TfL needed funding - with no strings attached. The government demands. Faced with a braking pandemic, this dangerous situation has been exacerbated by London Mayor Sadiq Khan’s passive acceptance of a totally inadequate funding package from the government for Transport for London. This comes with strings attached that will compromise safety and jobs, and increase fares for passengers and commuters. The government and the mayor is now finding out that he must defend all current jobs, terms and conditions for all workers, no matter what the cost. No passenger or employee should ever have to pay the price for government failure and cost-cutting. The government and the mayor must defend all current jobs, conditions and terms – and refuse to go into a private sector arrangement that means TfL will be run by and for the profit of shareholders. TfL is a public service – it is essential to ensure that TfL is run on a non-profit basis to deliver positive outcomes for Londoners.

We say that to maintain social distancing on the tube, buses should be reduced by 50%. There’s no chance of social distancing at that number. Their instruction then they should follow that and find themselves in an unsafe environment – the company’s position is 50%.

We’re giving advice to members that whatever your managers can’t make themselves to reduce social distancing, 2m is a place of safety. And if that means losing the workplace, then so be it. And the RMT has said that if many employees can’t manage themselves to reduce social distancing, the company’s position is 50%.

There has been a lack of consultation and a lack of communication between the RMT and transport workers. What do the RMT and the companies need to say? We are currently running on a piece of elastic to twang back to capacity as it suits the management to have us find ourselves in an unsafe environment. The government and the mayor must defend all current jobs, terms and conditions – and refuse to go into a private sector arrangement that means TfL will be run by and for the profit of shareholders. TfL is a public service – it is essential to ensure that TfL is run on a non-profit basis to deliver positive outcomes for Londoners.

[The rest of the article continues with details about the situation and the RMT's position.]
Trade unionists organise to fight for workplace safety in big NSSN meeting

Isai Priya
Waltham Forest Socialist Party

Trade unionists called for workers’ safety to be put before bosses’ profit, and for trade union and workers’ control over workplace safety, in a valuable and inspiring National Shop Stewards Network (NSSN) meeting on 16 May.

The public zoom call took place at a time when the Tories are spearheading plans to lift the lockdown - when the safety of workers is not guaranteed.

More than 200 took part - an even bigger participation than the excellent NSSN meeting organised three weeks before. There were some new activists and trade unionists, as well as local shop stewards and reps, and trade union officials.

Rob Williams, NSSN national chair, introduced the session, saying: “To belong to a union, to be or- ganised, to act collectively, is the key to the particular times that we are living in - when workers are facing a life-and-death situation.” Speakers expressed the concerns of workers, and explained how they have organised successfully on health and safety.

The unsafe reopening of schools was prominent in the discussion. Teacher Martin Powell-Davies and parent Lindsey Morgan are both involved in organising boycotts of 1 June school reopenings. They spoke about this completely unsafe move by the government, and the need to put children’s and teachers’ safety first (see p4-6).

Transport workers are also in the firing line right now. We heard from Jared Wood, the London transport member of transport union RMT’s executive committee, in a personal capacity. Moe, a bus driver, also spoke. They outlined the volatile situation on London’s transport. There has been an increase in commuters, but with no proper risk assessment, and still no sufficient PPE for workers (see p8-9).

General union Unite’s assistant general secretary Howard Beckett gave his solidarity and support to the NSSN, Royal Mail workers’ union CWU, and teachers’ union NEUT. He outlined Unite’s position that workers come first, and workers are entitled to leave if their workplace is not safe.

Many more workers and union activists spoke - including a new care home worker; Iain Dalton, chair of retail union Usdaw’s Broad Left; Kathy Smith, chair of Bromley Unite; and Suzanne Muna from the Unite housing workers’ branch.

Rob Williams concluded by saying: “This means the government has failed to protect key workers. Over 100 healthcare workers and over 30 transport workers have sadly lost their lives.

We cannot trust the Tories with our health or safety. Workers should only return to work when the trade unions and workers themselves decide it is safe to do so. It is workers’ control that will put safety before bosses’ profit.

Contact the NSSN if you want more info on how to organise in your workplace, and to build coordinated, collective workers’ action - visit shopstewards.net.

Postal workers are celebrating seeing the back of Rico Back, capping what has been an amazing few weeks at Royal Mail.

Postal workers are seeing the back of Rico Back, capping what has been an amazing few weeks at Royal Mail. And let me make it clear, he was sacked.

Back took over Royal Mail two years ago - drawing £100 million pounds in salary, pension and so on. His brief on joining was to take on and smash the CWU, to facilitate greater returns for the big shareholders who now own the company.

I’ll put this development into context. At the end of last year, the CWU balloted (97% majority to strike) after Royal Mail reneged on a national deal over jobs and conditions. After a politicised court injunction dismissing this ballot, we won a strike ballot in the New Year by a massive 94.5% vote.

Many members have requested Royal Mail bosses the confidence to ‘suspend’ the USO. This was against the backdrop of Rico Back saying he would never speak to the CWU during the pandemic.

This executive action, in suspending USO, was designed to ridicule postal workers, and was a clear statement this was going to be a fight to the finish with the CWU.

Between this announcement and 1 May we launched a consultation campaign. We also asked all our union reps not to enter in talks with Royal Mail, and to adhere to the existing duty structures. What we anticipated was unfailingly well-publicised - of up to 90,000 postal workers on May Day, in advance of Royal Mail implementing its plan.

Facing this workers’ uprising, Royal Mail crumbled, and announced on 1 May that the postal workers, and was a clear statement this was going to be a fight to the finish with the CWU.

We understand that 95% of the office walked out. Many went home rather than return to an unsafe workplace. Royal Mail bosses say a ‘deep clean’ has taken place. Many members have requested they be tested too. One worker reports at least three more staff have tested positive, and delivery workers exposed to the manager in question have been tested.

The Socialist Party supports any collective action that workers at Royal Mail and elsewhere take in defence of their members against unsafe conditions.

Postal workers have already died as a result of this horrific coronavirus pandemic. It shows how the private sector is incapable of running vital public services such as Royal Mail. We stand for bringing those services back into public ownership.

But to finally solve all the problems, they should be run under democratically control and management, and as part of a planned, socialist economy. Then the safety and needs of workers and wider society can replace the search for big business profits at our expense.
Universal Basic Income

NOT A SOLUTION TO INSECURITY AND POVERTY UNDER CAPITALISM

Tessa Warrington
Leicester Socialist Party

ew could have imagined when the Tories won the 2019 general election that five months later they would be carrying through measures of state intervention beyond the scale even of Jeremy Corbyn’s Labour manifesto.

With tens of millions now pushed into insecurity overnight by the Covid-19 lockdown, Chancellor Rishi Sunak’s furlough scheme has effectively already seen the government take the step of temporarily ‘nation-alising’ 7.5 million wages.

Following on from this, the spectre of a wave of deep, protracted global economic recession coming hot on the heels of lockdown has led to some discussion in the mainstream media on the possible value of a Universal Basic Income (UBI). Even the Pope in his Easter address suggested that “this may be the time to consider a universal basic wage”.

An ‘Eupinions’ survey showed 71% of EU and UK citizens in favour of introducing UBI, and over 100 MPs and peers across seven parties (none of them Tories) signed a letter in April by the think-tank Compass calling for a “recovery basic income” that would be “sufficient to provide economic security”. A parliamentary Early Day Motion discussing the issue also gained support from almost 100 MPs.

Many people have already fallen through the cracks of the government’s present schemes and are unable to get financial help. Beyond that, receiving 80% of a wage is simply insufficient, especially for the low paid.

While opinion polls currently show high approval ratings for the government’s actions, largely due to the furlough payments, the scheme is under the control of employers, not workers, and big business is desperate to restart the economy.

UBI importantly raises the idea of a fundamental right of everyone to have an income that meets their basic needs. But would it do this?

The millions claiming Universal Credit and the soaring demand on food banks are just two indicators of the mounting social crisis and anger it is creating.

Socialists would support any improvements in living standards for the poorest in society - and for the overwhelming majority. But internationally, none of the schemes with elements of UBI provide a decent level of income for the recipients.

Neither are many of them ‘universal’; for instance, a scheme being planned in Spain wouldn’t even apply to every household that is in poverty.

A genuine UBI of a decent level isn’t on the agenda of any of the mainstream pro-capitalist parties because it would cost a great deal more than a targeted benefits system. So most capitalist representatives oppose the idea, including Sunak.

Blairite Labour and Tory governments have over the years moved in the opposite direction, reducing the level of present benefits.

Child benefit - previously a fixed standard payment for parents - became means-tested, with its value falling in real terms. People were squeezed off their benefits by arbitrary changes to Work Capability Assessments.

A genuine UBI of a decent level wouldn’t on the agenda of any of the mainstream pro-capitalist parties because it would cost a great deal more than a targeted benefits system. So most capitalist representatives oppose the idea, including Sunak.

Child benefit - previously a fixed standard payment for parents - became means-tested, with its value falling in real terms. People were squeezed off their benefits by arbitrary changes to Work Capability Assessments.

Some UBI advocates argue that a form of UBI would be more effective than the complex system of schemes devised by Sunak.

However, the huge drop in pay swallowed by many workers under lockdown conditions, and the drops that are still to come through businesses closing or downsizing, would not be compensated for by a UBI.

 Rather, we must demand that there are no job losses, the available work is shared between workers, and all workers stay on 100% of their previous pay. Along with those measures, benefits should be increased to the level of the national minimum wage, and there should be no delay in paying them.

Proposals for variants of UBI can be found among supporters of right-wing ideology, as well as from some on the left.

A UBI test study under a right-wing coalition government in Finland, led one of the study’s researchers to say: “Some found the guaranteed income increased the possibility for them to do things like providing informal care for their family or their neighbours”.

Clearly, the bosses could see UBI as a means to push the burden of domestic labour even more onto working-class people.

Among other dangers is that UBI could really be welfare for capitalists rather than workers. In free-market capitalism employers would have less incentive to pay their workers a wage they could live on if they knew those workers were being paid a UBI.

Ultimately, if welfare remains in the domain of the capitalist state then it will continue to be used to service the interests of the capitalist classes and their governments, i.e the transfer of wealth from the poorest to the richest in society.

Programme

A socialist programme, on the other hand, calls for every person’s needs to be met through taking the major industries and services into public ownership under democratic workers’ control and management.

This would allow for the collective planning of the economy and use of the vast wealth currently hoarded in private hands, to meet the needs of all.

Automation could be used to reduce working hours without loss of pay.

Necessary work could be shared out among everyone who is able to do it, and the wealth created could then be used to provide a good standard of living for all - including those unable to work, studying or retired.

The coronavirus crisis may have exploded the level of insecurity in our society, but the underlying conditions flow from capitalism itself. Without building a working-class movement to break with this system of profit, inequality and oppression, then it will not be possible to solve the problems faced by the millions struggling against poverty and destitution.

Proposals eventually offered up by capitalist governments reflect attempts to be as ‘revenue neutral’ as possible, i.e to avoid significantly hitting the wealth of the 1%.

A genuine UBI of a decent level isn’t on the agenda of any of the mainstream pro-capitalist parties because it would cost a great deal more than a targeted benefits system. So most capitalist representatives oppose the idea, including Sunak.

Child benefit - previously a fixed standard payment for parents - became means-tested, with its value falling in real terms. People were squeezed off their benefits by arbitrary changes to Work Capability Assessments.

Some UBI advocates argue that a form of UBI would be more effective than the complex system of schemes devised by Sunak.

However, the huge drop in pay swallowed by many workers under lockdown conditions, and the drops that are still to come through businesses closing or downsizing, would not be compensated for by a UBI.

Rather, we must demand that there are no job losses, the available work is shared between workers, and all workers stay on 100% of their previous pay. Along with those measures, benefits should be increased to the level of the national minimum wage, and there should be no delay in paying them.

Proposals for variants of UBI can be found among supporters of right-wing ideology, as well as from some on the left.
Eric Segal
Kent Socialist Party

Upton Sinclair, in his book The Jungle, described the meatpacking factories in Chicago in 1906 in the following way: “It was the incarnation of blind and insensate Greed. It was a monster devouring with a thousand mouths, trampling with a thousand hoofs; it was the Great Butcher - it was the spirit of Capitalism made Flesh.”

The free market of America in the late 1800s and early 1900s wasn’t free. It was controlled by a handful of corporations which conspired together to set prices and wages, and smash the rising labour movement - under the comforting name of the ‘Trusts’.

There was the Railway Trust, the Beef Trust, the Steel Trust, the Sugar Trust, the Coal Trust, and so on.

The so-called free market meant that the Trusts were free to employ children in factories; free to make people work 60 or 70 hours a week; free to pollute rivers and streams; to hire private armies and to bribe; free to sell what they wanted at whatever price they liked.

The exploitation of the working classes grew - creating a dramatic increase in the gap between rich and poor.

Workers not meat

Upton was not primarily drawn to write The Jungle out of concern for the horrible contamination and corruption of meat that workers consumed and fed to their children. His main concern was the horrific condition of meatpacker workers following the failed strike of 1904, when 18,000 union members in Chicago walked off the job to win higher wages.

Upton met, and was inspired by, socialists to become an activist in the rising socialist movement. He joined the newly formed Workers’ Party at the age of 26, and sold the rights to a book on the conditions of workers in the meatpacking industry to the editor of Appeal to Reason, a socialist weekly newspaper.

He travelled to Chicago to do research for the book, and lived among the meatpacking workers. There he met Adolph Smith, a founder of the Social Democratic Federation in England, who influenced Upton’s socialist conclusion to The Jungle.

For seven weeks he eats with the meat packers, breathes the same air, and lives with them in squalor - all in preparation for his book, which follows the Lithuanian immigrant Jurgis and his family who come to America yearning for a better life.

The book was first published in instalments in Appeal to Reason, boosting the papers circulation to 175,000. But the book was rejected by five publishers who were fearful of its powerful socialist message.

However, with the backing of activists in the socialist movement, including the famous author Jack London, he raised $4,000 in advance sales, and as a result the book was finally published.

Upton’s descriptions in the book of rampant disease, absence of health and safety protection, violence, prostitution, alcoholism, drug addiction and the desperation of children driven to work in all weathers under poisonous conditions to help their parents cover the costs of shelter, warmth, clothing and food, are incomparable.

The Jungle’s graphic account of the presence of chemicals, diseased meat and rodent excrement in sausages incensed the president who decided to call for an investigation into the meatpacking industry.

This resulted in two important pieces of legislation: the Pure Food and Drugs Act and the Meat Inspection Act which, were passed in Congress.

However, Upton was disappoint ed by the impact of The Jungle which had been written to help meatpacking workers rather than improve the quality of meat. Upton later wrote: “I aimed for the public’s heart, and by accident hit it in the stomach.”

Mass queues for work, strikes and scab labour all figure in this book. But the remorseless demands of capitalism are the same across the world.

Ben Tillott, the dockers’ leader in England, described the ‘call-on’ of workers desperate for work in the docks in the late 1800s: “We are driven into a shed, iron-barred from end to end, outside of which a foreman or contractor walks up and down with the air of a dealer in a cattle market, picking and choosing from a crowd of men who, in their eagerness to obtain employment, trample each other under foot, and where like beasts they fight for the chance of a day’s work.”

This is similar to the sight that confronted Jurgis when he started work at the meatpacking plant in Chicago.

The conditions in slaughter-houses gradually improved for meatpacking workers in the years following The Jungle, because workers organised in unions and fought to improve their lives. By the late 1930s, most of the industry was unionised. And by the mid-1950s, meatpacking workers had one of the highest-paid manufacturing jobs in the United States.

However, once again under the dark cloud of Covid-19, low-paid migrant workers are being forced back to work in the meat processing plants where high rates of infections are reported. The United Food and Commercial Workers International Union (UFCW) reckons that 72 workers have died and 5,322 are directly affected by Covid-19.

The result is that workers are afraid to return to work, with reports that some plants have slowed production or closed because of worker ‘absenteeism’ amid legitimate fears of infection.

Among the closures is the Smithfield Foods pork plant in Sioux Falls, South Dakota. Some 853 of its 3,700 employees were infected with the coronavirus, resulting in indefinite closure at the request of state and local officials.

But a leap of imagination is not necessary to see the similarity of the hand of capitalism in the vast business empires of the couldn’t ‘care’ less homes like HC-One. With 300 UK care homes, only one in six of its staff were tested for Covid-19, and one in three of its residents.

According to the Health Foundation: “In the week ending 1 May 2020, there were 2,423 COVID-19 related deaths recorded in care homes, 3,214 recorded in hospitals and 254 recorded in private homes.”

Where are the books?

Where are the books written about this army of care workers, many from immigrant families, desperate to pay rent, feed their families and find transport costs to and from work? The workers who are heroically looking after our parents and grandparents in their old age, many of whom are infirm and now sick with Covid-19?

Sinclair’s harrowing descriptions of the degrading, filthy, dangerous, exploitative and near slave working conditions in the meatpacking factories in the early 1900s - conditions that are being replicated in workers lives today - will drive you to fight for workers’ rights and socialist change.

I challenge you to read Upton Sinclair’s masterpiece and walk away untouched by the mental pictures he weaves. But beware, this is no book for the weak of heart, it will burn in your memory till your memory is no more.
# Going viral

**Socialist comments and letters on the corona crisis**

The Covid-19 pandemic is a world social crisis which touches every aspect of life. The injustices and failings of the capitalist system are being exposed, and workers and communities are organising in response.

Send us your comments, reports, anecdotes and thoughts, in not more than 200 words (we reserve the right to shorten letters), to editors@socialistparty.org.uk.

- **NHS already overwhelmed**
  What counts as “not overwhelmed”?
  Hospitals are still cancelling procedures that are not Covid-related, no doubt causing huge distress and potential dangers to health.
  And now it seems it’s going even further than that. We received two cancellation letters for my partner — one cancelling a CT scan at his chest and one cancelling an appointment with the haematology clinic.
  He has been suffering from pneumoconiosis as a result of Covid and these appointments were both follow-ups because of Covid. I’m not sure what callous ivory-tower Tory think counts as overwhelmed, but I’d say this one pretty close.
  Anonymous
  London

- **School student protest**
  All 600 sixth formers in my daughter’s school refused to go into the assembly hall. This was mid-March, one parent had tested positive with Covid-19, just one week before the lockdown.
  They were told that they were being insubordinate and were breaking school rules. They were threatened with detentions and other sanctions, but they held their ground. Eventually school reformed and the assembly hall was cancelled.
  It is a what 600 students did on their own, imagine what the labour movement, with six million trade unionists could have done. Strike action could have shut down schools, public transport, airports and other unionised workplaces.
  The labour movement could have imposed a shutdown in early March, a few weeks before the government finally moved, and in this way saved tens of thousands of lives. This would have taken preparedness to break the Tory anti-strike line.
  Annon Cohen
  Haringey, London

- **Anti-lockdown protest**
  I gave into curiosity and watched some footage of the very small anti-lockdown protest in London on 28 May. I have absolutely no political agreement with Peter Coberly and co — the pandemic is real, SARS is not the real virus, climate change is real, and a vaccine would be a positive thing. Clearly sighted elements were present on the protest.
  Marx does explain that under capitalism, society is “run behind the backs of the producers”. There have been very real lies and conspiracies about the virus, testing, public sector resources, profiteering and many other things in this crisis.
  One of the main things I am struggling with in this pandemic is the increased powers the authorities have. The behaviour of the police does serve as a serious warning to socialists and trade unionists about the new normal.
  Protesters were grabbed for standing around with their signs, which contravenes “health protection”, and arrested under the powers of new coronavirus legislation. You can easily imagine the same tactics being used to deal with workers picketing or occupying.
  Matt Dobson
  Glasgow

- **Free technology from profit**
  When I was in the hospital, the young doctor told me that the CT scan can detect Covid in the lungs. Imagine what we could do with that technology, and how much more advanced it would be if it was free to the letter of capitalist profiteering!
  Mobile scanners could check workers’ health for free. Many, many times working-class people can’t get the scans they desperately need due to cost. You could find cancers before they became malignant and untreatable.
  Although I didn’t present with Covid symptoms, I was seen in the “red zone”, but still wasn’t tested because they only test if you are admitted.
  I think people are praising Nicola Sturgeon because in comparison to Boris, he has been suffering from pneumoconiosis as a result of Covid and these appointments were both follow-ups because of Covid. I’d say this one pretty close.
  Linda McEwan
  West Dunbartonshire

- **Tories don’t give a damn about poor kids**
  Former Tory MP Amber Rudd is foaming at the mouth to release the lockdown — her only concern is the summer exams for rich kids. It’s all about childcare, so she will exclude 180,000 EU nationals in the UK if we can’t have our own, imagine what the labour movement would do if the Tories tried to exclude their own, imagine what the labour movement would do if the Tories tried to exclude their own, imagine what the labour movement would do if the Tories tried to exclude their own.
  They voted against pay rises for nurses. They voted for the shut down of schools, hospitals, and the assembly was cancelled. Eventually school reformed and the assembly hall was cancelled.
  This was mid-March, one parent had tested positive with Covid-19, just one week before the lockdown.
  They were told that they were being insubordinate and were breaking school rules. They were threatened with detentions and other sanctions, but they held their ground. Eventually school reformed and the assembly hall was cancelled.
  It is a what 600 students did on their own, imagine what the labour movement, with six million trade unionists could have done. Strike action could have shut down schools, public transport, airports and other unionised workplaces.
  The theatre movement could have imposed a shutdown in early March, a few weeks before the government finally moved, and in this way saved tens of thousands of lives. This would have taken preparedness to break the Tory anti-strike line.
  Annon Cohen
  Haringey, London

- **Labour fails renters**
  Despite the threat of mass evictions, Labour’s shadow housing secretary has said it would be “run on labour” to suspend rents.
  Rollover banks at eye-watering rates is realistic politics. Supporting renters threatened with poverty and eviction isn’t.
  That’s what Debbie Abrahams’ reasons tell a story — some people would get their rent suspended who weren’t supposed to be tested. Are universal benefits “run on Labour”?
  She says landlords go bust people would be made homeless. No reason to allow landlords to evict with the linked proposal for mortgage payments to be suspended.
  Why not take over homes to landlords overcome? She says if landlords go bust people would be made homeless. No reason to allow landlords to evict.
  Paul Kershaw
  Enfield, London

- **Care homes: Tests and pay**
  Care workers Fear being tested in case they have the virus and go from £400 to £694 a week sick pay. It’s a disgrace.
  Privatized care homes are at the epicentre of infections and Covid-19 deaths. All workers must be entitled to roll pay if sick for any reason.
  Care homes and the Scottish and Welsh national executives must ensure all staff are financially protected, with no loss of earnings. These homes must be brought under public ownership with all workers paid a fair wage under local authority terms and conditions.
  Philip Stott
  Glasgow

- **Unskilled?**
  They voted against pay rises for nurses. But they say you are, standing outside their mansions clapping their hypocrisy, blood-soaked hands for NHS staff, carers and other key workers.
  The Tories have failed these workers — they desperately need due to cost. You could find cancers before they became malignant and untreatable.
  The majority of frontline workers are low-paid and undervalued. Without them society would fall apart.
  And now the Tories rushed immigration legislation is slamming the door shut on “low-skilled” immigration and will exclude $100,000 EU nationals in the NHS and care sector alone. I can’t imagine what impact that will have.
  Perhaps the Socialist could run a campaign to allow a million EU citizens to stay.
  We could get one of these names to stick in the minds of millions.
  Perhaps the Socialist could run a competition for a favoured name? £20 book token price for the winner! Yes alright I’ll pay for it.
  Personally I’ll stick with the Tory Flu. Stay Safe.
  Kevin Wilson
  Leeds

- **Rob Crabb obituary**
  A nurse who fought with strength and dignity

  Adrian O’Malley
  Unison Mid Yorkshire Health branch secretary (personal capacity) and Socialist Party

  Wakefield Socialist Party members are saddened to hear of the untimely death of our longstanding comrade Rob Crabb at the age of 60 on 30 March. Rob joined our party in the 1990s after becoming a shop steward in the Unison union branch in Wakefield hospitals.
  He was a coronary care unit nurse at Pinderfields Hospital for many years, before he was forced to take ill-health retirement when he was diagnosed with cancer. Rob fought his terrible disease for over a decade with great strength and dignity.
  Prior to his illness Rob stood as a Socialist Party candidate in the 2004 local elections, and was a regular attender at Socialist Party campaign stalls and events. In the latter years, when he was unable to attend activities, he maintained his financial and political support for the party. He was always interested and supportive of our activities, when he was unable to take part himself.

  The Socialist Party members send our heartfelt commiserations to Rob’s family and friends. He was a good comrade and friend, and will be missed by all who had the pleasure of knowing him. Rest in power Rob.
Recent calls by the Sanders campaign to create a permanent guaranteed income, which puts people before profit, have an administration and society that puts profits before people. The Sanders campaign has failed to live up to its promises, to work hard for the still-employed, innovate in their field of work and to keep up with new technologies. The Democrats are not the 'recession-proof' industries like health care that Amazon will likely monopolise. In the short term, it has no guarantees for those who have lost their jobs, no path to a living wage, no job security, no guaranteed income, no systemic change. In the long term, putting profits over people, the billions of stimulus funds wasted precious early response funds to look at the bailouts of the big banks and 'gig' alternatives. We only have the anger of Sanders supporters and those who have been thrown on the scrapheap. Sanders supporters are not only those who voted for him in the mid-term elections, but also those who were divided by the leadership and those who have lost their jobs through no fault of their own. The Democrats have not put forward anything resembling a comprehensive programme to deal with the crisis. The Sanders campaign has failed to live up to its promises, and the Biden campaign has not broken with the nationalorganisation and sided with self-interest over policy space by opposing agreements with workers, supporting ‘recess-proof’ industries and pushing for more stimulus funds. If the current union leadership want to see a fight, they must join the Sanders movement; a fight for a people's party that can win millions of votes. The Sanders campaign has failed to live up to its promises, to work hard for the still-employed, innovate in their field of work and to keep up with new technologies. The Democrats are not the 'recession-proof' industries like health care that Amazon will likely monopolise. In the short term, it has no guarantees for those who have lost their jobs, no path to a living wage, no job security, no guaranteed income, no systemic change. In the long term, putting profits over people, the billions of stimulus funds wasted precious early response funds to look at the bailouts of the big banks and 'gig' alternatives. We only have the anger of Sanders supporters and those who have been thrown on the scrapheap. Sanders supporters are not only those who voted for him in the mid-term elections, but also those who were divided by the leadership and those who have lost their jobs through no fault of their own. The Democrats have not put forward anything resembling a comprehensive programme to deal with the crisis. The Sanders campaign has failed to live up to its promises, and the Biden campaign has not broken with the nationalorganisation and sided with self-interest over policy space by opposing agreements with workers, supporting ‘recess-proof’ industries and pushing for more stimulus funds. If the current union leadership want to see a fight, they must join the Sanders movement; a fight for a people's party that can win millions of votes. The Sanders campaign has failed to live up to its promises, to work hard for the still-employed, innovate in their field of work and to keep up with new technologies. The Democrats are not the 'recession-proof' industries like health care that Amazon will likely monopolise. In the short term, it has no guarantees for those who have lost their jobs, no path to a living wage, no job security, no guaranteed income, no systemic change. In the long term, putting profits over people, the billions of stimulus funds wasted precious early response funds to look at the bailouts of the big banks and 'gig' alternatives. We only have the anger of Sanders supporters and those who have been thrown on the scrapheap. Sanders supporters are not only those who voted for him in the mid-term elections, but also those who were divided by the leadership and those who have lost their jobs through no fault of their own. The Democrats have not put forward anything resembling a comprehensive programme to deal with the crisis. The Sanders campaign has failed to live up to its promises, and the Biden campaign has not broken with the nationalorganisation and sided with self-interest over policy space by opposing agreements with workers, supporting ‘recess-proof’ industries and pushing for more stimulus funds. If the current union leadership want to see a fight, they must join the Sanders movement; a fight for a people's party that can win millions of votes.
Income, jobs and workplace safety

- Full pay for all workers. Workers, especially those on low pay, cannot afford to lose 20% of their income. Any worker who has to self-isolate or cannot go to work should receive full pay for each day and notice that they will receive annual leave. Pay should be paid directly to the worker, not via the employer.
- No return to work unless adequate safety measures are agreed with trade unions and the workforce.
- Increase benefits to the level of the national minimum wage immediately to at least £12 an hour, £15 in London.
- Workers asked to work from home.
- Free school meals. Vouchers must be paid directly to the worker full pay from day one and not be reduced.
- Any worker who has to self-isolate is entitled to full pay and not be reduced.
- Emergency increase in funding for the NHS and other public services. Emergency funding to take on any debt immediately.
- PPE for all NHS and frontline staff.
- Tests and full pay for all.
- Nationalise the big pharmaceutical companies to guarantee research, production and supply of medicines, vaccines and treatments.
- Nationalise the biggest pharmaceutical companies to guarantee research, production and supply of medicines, vaccines and treatments.
- No profiteering. Prices to be controlled by democratically elected committees of workers and consumers. No trust in the Tories and other pro-capitalist politicians who are responsible for the crisis in the NHS and other public services.
- Reintroduce full student nurse bursaries, and waive their student payments. End profit in social care payments. End profit in social care.
- End profit in the PFI. Remove the privateers and cancel all private sector emergency measures taken to contain the virus.
- No profiteering. Prices to be controlled by democratically elected committees of workers and consumers. No trust in the Tories and other pro-capitalist politicians who are responsible for the crisis in the NHS and other public services.
- Reverse a decade of austerity so that free, accessible testing can be available for all. Free school meals for all children.
- Compensate only on the basis of proven need.
- No trust in the Tories and other pro-capitalist politicians who are responsible for the crisis in the NHS and other public services.
- Nationalise the banks, of the majority in society. Take control of the PFI to meet the needs of the majority in society. Take control of big business accounts of big business.
- End profit in social care.
- No return to work unless safety can be guaranteed.
- Socialist planning not capitalist chaos.

This charter is for discussion and debate in workplaces and communities so that we can organise to defend our health, safety and rights during the crisis.

Get in touch if you would like to join a Socialist Party online meeting.

**Income, jobs and workplace safety**

- Full pay for all workers. Workers, especially those on low pay, cannot afford to lose 20% of their income. Any worker who has to self-isolate or cannot go to work should receive full pay for each day and notice that they will receive annual leave. Pay should be paid directly to the worker, not via the employer.
- No return to work unless adequate safety measures are agreed with trade unions and the workforce.
- Increase benefits to the level of the national minimum wage immediately to at least £12 an hour, £15 in London.
- Workers asked to work from home.
- Free school meals. Vouchers must be paid directly to the worker full pay from day one and not be reduced.
- Any worker who has to self-isolate is entitled to full pay and not be reduced.
- Emergency increase in funding for the NHS and other public services. Emergency funding to take on any debt immediately.
- PPE for all NHS and frontline staff.
- Tests and full pay for all.
- Nationalise the big pharmaceutical companies to guarantee research, production and supply of medicines, vaccines and treatments.
- Nationalise the biggest pharmaceutical companies to guarantee research, production and supply of medicines, vaccines and treatments.
- No profiteering. Prices to be controlled by democratically elected committees of workers and consumers. No trust in the Tories and other pro-capitalist politicians who are responsible for the crisis in the NHS and other public services.
- Reintroduce full student nurse bursaries, and waive their student payments. End profit in social care payments. End profit in social care.
- End profit in the PFI. Remove the privateers and cancel all private sector emergency measures taken to contain the virus.
- No profiteering. Prices to be controlled by democratically elected committees of workers and consumers. No trust in the Tories and other pro-capitalist politicians who are responsible for the crisis in the NHS and other public services.
- Reverse a decade of austerity so that free, accessible testing can be available for all. Free school meals for all children.
- Compensate only on the basis of proven need.
- No trust in the Tories and other pro-capitalist politicians who are responsible for the crisis in the NHS and other public services.
- Nationalise the banks, of the majority in society. Take control of the PFI to meet the needs of the majority in society. Take control of big business accounts of big business.
- End profit in social care.
- No return to work unless safety can be guaranteed.
- Socialist planning not capitalist chaos.

This charter is for discussion and debate in workplaces and communities so that we can organise to defend our health, safety and rights during the crisis.

Get in touch if you would like to join a Socialist Party online meeting.

**Income, jobs and workplace safety**

- Full pay for all workers. Workers, especially those on low pay, cannot afford to lose 20% of their income. Any worker who has to self-isolate or cannot go to work should receive full pay for each day and notice that they will receive annual leave. Pay should be paid directly to the worker, not via the employer.
- No return to work unless adequate safety measures are agreed with trade unions and the workforce.
- Increase benefits to the level of the national minimum wage immediately to at least £12 an hour, £15 in London.
- Workers asked to work from home.
- Free school meals. Vouchers must be paid directly to the worker full pay from day one and not be reduced.
- Any worker who has to self-isolate is entitled to full pay and not be reduced.
- Emergency increase in funding for the NHS and other public services. Emergency funding to take on any debt immediately.
- PPE for all NHS and frontline staff.
- Tests and full pay for all.
- Nationalise the big pharmaceutical companies to guarantee research, production and supply of medicines, vaccines and treatments.
- Nationalise the biggest pharmaceutical companies to guarantee research, production and supply of medicines, vaccines and treatments.
- No profiteering. Prices to be controlled by democratically elected committees of workers and consumers. No trust in the Tories and other pro-capitalist politicians who are responsible for the crisis in the NHS and other public services.
- Reintroduce full student nurse bursaries, and waive their student payments. End profit in social care payments. End profit in social care.
- End profit in the PFI. Remove the privateers and cancel all private sector emergency measures taken to contain the virus.
- No profiteering. Prices to be controlled by democratically elected committees of workers and consumers. No trust in the Tories and other pro-capitalist politicians who are responsible for the crisis in the NHS and other public services.
- Reverse a decade of austerity so that free, accessible testing can be available for all. Free school meals for all children.
- Compensate only on the basis of proven need.
- No trust in the Tories and other pro-capitalist politicians who are responsible for the crisis in the NHS and other public services.
- Nationalise the banks, of the majority in society. Take control of the PFI to meet the needs of the majority in society. Take control of big business accounts of big business.
- End profit in social care.
- No return to work unless safety can be guaranteed.
- Socialist planning not capitalist chaos.