This brutal, broken Tory government is limping. May’s premiership hangs by a thread.

Her party is locked in what could be the deepest crisis in its history. As workers gather outside parliament to protest against the public sector pay cap, it’s clear that the time for the trade union movement to act is now.

The uprising that took place on 8 June - when millions defied the solemn warnings and sneering dismissals of the capitalist establishment by voting for an alternative to austerity - has dealt a potentially mortal blow to May, as well as the whole Tory regime.

Weakened, the prime minister now faces what is, from the point of view of Britain’s capitalist class, a nightmare task. She is attempting to negotiate a deal on Brexit while simultaneously holding her party together. Achieving both aims is likely to prove impossible.

But while this situation is a disaster for the Tories and their super-rich friends, for our class it presents an opportunity. Faced with mass mobilisations of workers and young people, this government can crumble and fall.

Leadership

This means the leadership of the Trade Union Congress (TUC) must immediately break with its current policy of ‘wait and see and hope for the best’, and instead seize the initiative. It should start by calling a huge national demonstration. This could be used to build up to widespread, nationally coordinated strike action to break the pay cap.

Among working class people there is clearly appetite for action. This was demonstrated over the summer in the many disputes that broke out on a local level - among the Birmingham bin workers, Barts Trust hospital staff, and BA cabin crew, for example. More recently, it has also been shown in the overwhelming vote to strike by postal workers - action currently being frustrated by an outrageous anti-union legal injunction (see back page).

If a lead was given, whether by the leadership of the trade union movement or by Jeremy Corbyn calling people to the streets, Britain could rapidly erupt in mass protest.

A crisis for the Tories is a crisis for the class they represent - the super-rich 0.1%. But for working class people, this provides a fresh opportunity to build a movement to kick them out and to bring an end to the hated austerity agenda.

- Continued on page 2

October 1917 ★ 100 years since the Russian revolution ★ Pull-out feature and poster inside

WHEN WORKERS TOOK POWER
Continued from front page

The malaise May’s party faces is not really about the antics of Johnson or other Tory mega-egos. Its causes are far more fundamental. It is a result of the profound crisis facing the capitalist system on an international scale. But it is also a symptom of the specific crisis faced by British capitalism.

Four months ago, Theresa May stood on the steps of Downing Street to announce her intention to call a general election. In a speech brimming with hubris, she declared that through securing an (inevitably) increased majority, it would be possible to “remove the risk of uncertainty and instability [posed by Brexit] and continue to give the country the strong and stable leadership it demands.”

In saying this, she unwittingly hinted at reality. May called the election because she was in an already weakened position. This was not a personal weakness as such. It was a weakened position for her party and the capitalist class which it exists to represent.

Because the revolt of 8 June 2017 was in fact the second of two major electoral revolts that took place within a short space of time. The first came just under a year earlier in the form of the vote to leave the European Union.

The Leave vote was not an endorsement of Johnson, Gove or Farage, or of their divisive and racist campaign. First and foremost it was an expression of raw class anger. It was, at bottom, a protest aimed at the austerity agenda, at the capitalist establishment and at the EU as an institution which fundamentally works in the interests of the small, rich few.

May has emerged from “unscheduled” talks with president of the European Commission Jean-Claude Juncker on the Brexit deal looking more vulnerable than ever. There is a reason why, when asked how she would vote in an EU referendum were it held again today, she dodged the question. It is in the interests of British capitalism - of bankers, big business and the rich - that Britain remains within the EU, particularly within the single market and the customs union.

Yet May is being forced to face both ways. Every attempt she makes at a conciliatory approach to the EU can be seized upon by the so-called ‘hard-brexiteers’ in the Tory party. Meanwhile, the heads of capitalist governments around Europe, who make up the European Council and who appoint the European Commission, are anxious to ensure that there is no “easy exit” for Britain - fearful of the potential for the project’s unravelling.

Workers’ concerns

Understandably, many working class people in Britain feel worried about the economic instability that could result from what’s termed a “hard Brexit” - not to mention the continued uncertainty over the future status of EU citizens living in the UK. But the reality is that Johnson, Gove, Juncker and May have no genuine concern for the lives and wellbeing of working class people, either in Britain or elsewhere.

The true face of the European Union has been shown in the last month, by their backing of Spain’s right-wing government in its attempts to brutally suppress the right of the Catalan people to self-determination. It was shown in 2015 when, as working class people in Greece voted overwhelmingly for an end to punishing austerity, the EU used all its strength to impose a crushing defeat on the Syriza government, whose leadership outrageously capitulated to their demands.

What kind of Brexit?

That’s why the real debate must not be about a hard versus a soft Brexit, but a workers’ versus a bosses’ Brexit. During the election campaign, Corbyn correctly hinted at this, and gained a wide echo from working class people. But any attempt by the Labour leadership to correctly use the Tory divisions to hasten the end of the government must not miss the central point, that any ‘deal’ done by May (or any other representative of the capitalist class) will fundamentally be about protecting the interests of big business, at the expense of working class people.

The ruling class are increasingly looking to the Blairites - the representatives of the 1% within the Labour Party - to exert pressure on the Labour leadership to soften their position on various issues, particularly those surrounding the Brexit negotiations. This is a symptom of the concern among the ruling class about their lack of reliable political representation, as well as their fear of a Corbyn-led government that could further awaken the appetites of working class people for radical change.

Rather than retreating under this pressure, Corbyn must instead stand up to the right, and outline the case for a socialist Brexit. This would be based on protecting the interests of working class people in Britain, which ever country they were born in, and on international solidarity with working class people fighting back across Europe and the rest of the world.

That would mean exiting all EU treaties that act against the interests of working class people. It would include, for example, abolishing all those rules which outlaw nationalisation and which allow for the super-exploitation of workers through agreements like the posted-workers directive.

It would mean being prepared to meet the blackmail of the capitalist class, whose threats of economic Armageddon are creating fear and confusion, with socialist measures. Being prepared to nationalise not just a few selected industries but the banks and the major monopolies that dominate the British economy.

This would pave the way for working class people to democratically plan production to meet the needs of everyone. It would provide the opportunity to use the vast wealth, currently concentrated in the hands of the tiny few, to provide healthcare, education, jobs and housing to all who need them. It would provide the opportunity to build a socialist society for the many, not the few. Such an approach would be popular not just in Britain, but across Europe, and could be a first step towards a socialist confederation of the continent as a whole.
Nationalise to save jobs at BAE Systems

The decision to ballot follows the union’s correspondence to the prime minister after the general election demanding an immediate end to the 1% cap.

Damian Green, minister for the cabinet office, in a complacent and dismissive response to the union, claimed that “the civil service offers an exceptional package of benefits which are among the best available”. Despite 120,000 jobs cut, there is a “trade-off” between pay and jobs, he added.

PCS wants to send a strong, clear and united message to the government, to scrap the pay cap and fund inflation-proofing pay increases. PCS is demanding a rise of 5% or £1,200, whichever is greater.

Ballot

The ballot consists of two questions:

- Do you agree that the pay cap should be scrapped; and that funds should be made available to provide you with an above-inflation pay rise?
- If the government refuses to scrap the pay cap, are you prepared to take part in industrial action? PCS is urging members to vote Yes to both. The ballot ends on 6 November.

The government should step in to nationalise BAE systems to defend jobs. On the one hand, the Tories promise investment in manufacturing and skilled jobs, particularly outside of London as part of the ‘Northern Powerhouse’.

But on the other, they are willing to stand by and watch thousands of jobs disappear.

PCS is pressing the unions fighting these job losses. The government could move to nationalise the company, defend jobs and look at a way of using the skills workers have in socially useful jobs, instead of manufacturing weapons that are sent to be used in dictatorships.

The Socialist Party opposes fighter jets, like the Typhoon jet manufactured in Lancashire, being sold to countries like Saudi Arabia to be used in bombing innocent civilians in Yemen.

But it is not the workers involved in the production who should be made to suffer either. That’s why, as part of a socialist plan of production, people could be put to work on manufacturing and engineering items that actually benefit society.

Alternative

For example, in the 1970s Lucas Aerospace workers drew up a plan of production which included producing kidney dialysis machines and hybrid petrol-electric cars. Workers in BAE should go through the same process and democratically draw up an alternative plan.

We give our full support to the unions fighting these job losses. The company is stating that there will be no compulsory redundancies, but it seems unlikely that they will be able to cut so many jobs purely through voluntary ones. A mass campaign of all the sites affected should be launched with protests and strike action to defend jobs.
Schools “can’t go any further” - stop the cuts: set deficit budgets now

The Trade Union Congress must act on its resolution to coordinate an offensive against all remaining pay caps - and if it won’t, willing unions should.

Popular anger, helped by the threat of possible industrial action by nurses, has forced the partial government minority government into partial retreat. Labour has pledged to end the NHS pay cap and increase funding. Pay caps cost waits for Corbyn’s support.

There is a danger that conservative union leaderships, as in the RCG, will tell their members there won’t be a big push for this. The Trade Union Congress must act on its resolution to coordinate an offensive against all remaining pay caps - and if it won’t, willing unions should.

Tories scrap the NHS pay cap: now fight for real-terms pay rises!

Public sector workers have scored another victory against the Tories. The NHS pay cap will be scrapped. Health Secretary Jeremy Hunt confirmed the change on 10 October following a summer of protest headed by the Royal College of Nursing (RCN).

But as with police and prison guards’ pay cap removed last month, funding for the increase is likely to come from the existing NHS budget.

The NHS pay cap has been an offensive attack against NHS workers. It has hit back at the RCN, will see Hunt’s concession taken up.

Health unions should rally with the RCN, will see Hunt’s concession taken up.

Health unions should rally with the RCN. Hunt made his announcement on World Mental Health Day. In some countries, the RCN, will see Hunt’s concession taken up.

People power has taken us this far, but super-rich bosses, who are to lose their jobs when the Tories’ infamous ‘dementia tax’ comes in, will not make a dent - as now owe about £6,000. As you can see, health unions should rally with the RCN. Hunt made his announcement on World Mental Health Day.

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Representative of the university would be secured by an academic freedoms. They argued that this changes would impact on academic management sent out a communictions from dismissal.

University's charter to remove provocative attempts to amend Leeds response to management's pro-

College Union members gave their attending a rally, University and over 100 strikers and supporters

Iain Dalton Leeds Socialist Party

Across 16 separate picket lines with over 100 strikers and supporters attending a rally, University and College Union members gave their response to management’s pro-

The dispute revolves around attack on university staff.

The campaign involves lodging a mirror 5% claim with employers such as Greenwich Leisure Limited and others. Workers employed by OCS/Babcock to clean schools under a Hackney council contract have already agreed to ballot for strike action after the employer refused to consider the claim.

What this shows is just how easy it really is to coordinate a campaign across different employers and different sectors. The motion highlighted how the Tories are trying to divide workers by offering pay rises to the emergency services while still attacking workers in local government. This makes a joint campaign all the more vital.

The majority of Labour Party councillors have been silent on the issue. Ending the pay cap would need to be fully resourced and not paid for by cuts to jobs and services. A resolution to be heard at Green-

The dispute revolves around changes such as introducing a catch-all dismissal criteria as well as removal of medical and legal independent specialists on some panels.

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NO CUTS - HANDS OFF KING GEORGE A&E!

Scott Jones
East London Socialist Party

People queued up outside Ilford town hall to sign the Socialist Party’s petition to save King George A&E in east London on 14 October as campaigners marched to voice opposition to its closure.

The plans would mean the loss of 240 acute beds, which would be a disaster for the one million people in the area.

Kicking off the day of action in Central Park, Dagenham, an ex-Ford Dagenham worker said there needed to be marches like this everywhere to save the NHS. In contrast the Labour leader of Barking and Dagenham council summed up the attitude of the local Blairites saying: “This isn’t about politics”!

In reality, the decision is definitely a political one. A combination of the Tory government’s £22 billion cuts through so-called ‘sustainability and transformation plans’ (STPs) and private finance initiatives (PFIs) - expanded under the Blair/Brown Labour governments and carried on by successive Tory-led governments - are bleeding the NHS white.

The cost of building the nearby Queen’s Hospital in Romford through PFI has bankrupted the NHS trust and that’s why King George’s A&E is being axed.

We need a mass movement of health workers and communities linked to a political alternative to save the NHS.

The Socialist Party put forward these demands on the day and was supported by campaigners and the public alike.

Our placards were snapped up, we sold 55 copies of the Socialist paper and raised over £80 in fighting fund.

At a meeting in Redbridge Town Hall at the end of the march the organisers thanked us for our support.

North London hospital workers fight cuts and job losses

Paul Kershaw
North London Socialist Party

Porters and domestics - members of the GMB union - at the North Middlesex hospital, facing the threat of redundancies and pay cuts, organised a spirited protest with a barbecue outside the hospital on 12 October.

Following the takeover of their service by profit-hungry contractor Medirest (healthcare division of the Compass group) in June, the firm’s ‘efficiency measures’ include reducing the number of porters from 71 to 61 and cutting wages by £1,000 a year.

Workers look to the recent example of the ground-breaking strikes of porters, domestics and other low paid workers at the Barts hospital trust, and they have been joining the union.

They point out that patients will be left with fewer porters to assist them: “We know that patients can wait a long time for a porter when we are busy, but how can reducing our numbers say that this will not happen in the future? I have three young children and cannot afford to lose £1,000 a year from my wages,” said a union member.

Who can? But, the corporate giant now seeks to make more profit by reducing pay and workers’ much-needed breaks.

Protesters gave an indication of the massive support that hospital workers would get for industrial action in defence of jobs, conditions and services.

Local councils should call in the management of the crisis-ridden health trust to question their failure to ensure that Medirest behaves responsibly. Moreover, all outsourced services should be brought back in-house with workers receiving decent pay and full workplace benefits.

The North Middlesex chief executive, Libby McManus, was forced to resign in September following reported concerns over poor performance.

Local councils and the labour movement must demand that the trust gets a grip and staffs services properly through the winter.

Uprising to save the NHS!

Heather Rawling

An NHS ‘uprising’ took place in Grantham, Lincolnshire, on Saturday 14 October! A determined 800-strong demonstration wound its way through the town. People are fighting against the night time closure of Grantham A&E and the systematic downgrading of services in their local hospital.

But this was more than just about Grantham A&E. Campaigners in Louth created a banner around the theme of an NHS uprising against cuts, closures and privatisation.

After their local protest they took it to a Lincoln protest against the closure of a walk-in centre and then Grantham. Their plan is to take it around elsewhere where there are threats to the NHS as a way of helping to build links between campaigns.

Fiery speeches from many campaigners, including NHS staff, explained the impact of losing services. This included a speech from Socialist Party member Steve Score, representing the Save Glenfield Children’s Hospital campaign.

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‘Dazzling’ Bad Art show points to socialist future

Paul Good
Socialist Party National Treasurer

Skipper is a quiet market town better known as the Gateway to the Yorkshire Dales than as a centre for socialist activity. As usual, this month, a socialist exhibition was due to grace that setting, and underpinning this was the finance that enabled them to gather their finds. Fonda, their chief and other material. This was hard won and desperately needed – as soldiers at the front would write “we are living only on the rumours of your papers.”

The world is not the same as in 1917 but one hundred years have seen the working class stronger than ever and capitalism still doesn’t know where to turn.

Bad Art?

‘Bad Art’ is not a school or genre, but an international campaign which recognises that art can inspire us in our struggle for socialism, and that imagination must be part of the DNA of a socialist future. Several of the leading exponents of socialist ideas also attended.

The Bad Art exhibition is on at the Mill Bridge Gallery in Skipton until 4 November. For more about art and the struggle for socialism, and further Bad Art shows across the world, visit badartworld.net

HUNDREDS TURN OUT FOR RALLY AIMED AT REMOVING WEST WALES TORY MP

Dave Myers
Llanelli and West Wales Socialist Party

Rhiwbina is a small market town in south west Wales and is the marginal Powys Ballymore constituency of Tory MP and honory secretary of Wales Stephen Crabb (Li 14 October, the event was planned to coincide with the launch of his book, which he was working on to win the constituency for Labour.

That is all well and good but lanes do not measure the back of support for Crabb prior to the general election. It is only because of the constituency policies represented by Crabb that Labour have not been in a position to win the constituency for Labour.

You can help the work of the Socialist Party and the CWI. Can you go to assist our sister parties in the international campaign which recognises that art can inspire us in our struggle for socialism, and that imagination must be part of the DNA of a socialist future. Several of the leading exponents of socialist ideas also attended.

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Don’t miss out

For more about art and the struggle for socialism, and further Bad Art shows across the world, visit badartworld.net

What do you think? Please let our members know how you think decisions have been made. You can also contact your local Socialist Party branch or the National Office. Visit socialistparty.org.uk/branches

Socialist Party

For more about art and the struggle for socialism, and further Bad Art shows across the world, visit badartworld.net

Sheffield Labour council threatens peaceful protesters with prison

Calvin Payne
Sheffield town councillor

Two months have passed since Sheffield’s Labour council cut announced a High Court injunction against peaceful protesters aiming to prevent the felling of thousands of street trees in the city. The council proposes to remove more than 9,000 tree from the city centre in order to make way for HS2. The local council is following the example of the High Court decision of the Carmarthenshire County Council in Wales.

That is all well and good but lanes do not measure the back of support forCrabb prior to the general election. It is only because of the constituency policies represented by Crabb that Labour have not been in a position to win the constituency for Labour.

You can help the work of the Socialist Party and the CWI. Can you go to assist our sister parties in the international campaign which recognises that art can inspire us in our struggle for socialism, and that imagination must be part of the DNA of a socialist future. Several of the leading exponents of socialist ideas also attended.

The Bad Art exhibition is on at the Mill Bridge Gallery in Skipton until 4 November. For more about art and the struggle for socialism, and further Bad Art shows across the world, visit badartworld.net

What do you think? Please let our members know how you think decisions have been made. You can also contact your local Socialist Party branch or the National Office. Visit socialistparty.org.uk/branches

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Socialist Party
Powerful picture of the Port Talbot steel workers’ struggle

Theatre: We’re Still Here

Geoff Jones
Swansea Socialist Party

The future of Port Talbot steelworks, the last big steel-making plant in Wales, is hanging by a hair. A year ago owners Tata Steel threatened to close the plant, destroying the only large employer in Port Talbot and throw 6,000 out of work. Their main complaint was the size of the retired workers’ pension fund.

Under the threat of closure, the steel workers - but not the pensioners - were forced to vote for one of two options, either of which meant a cut in pensions. ‘We’re Still Here’ dramatises the effect of this threat on the workers.

It is like no other play. For a start, there is no theatre with comfortable seats facing a stage. The action takes place in a huge, aircraft hangar-sized shed, part of the old steelworks, lit only by spotlights.

The audience is ushered in, and stands around or moves while the action takes place around and among them. Some parts are played by professionals, and others by actual steelworkers themselves.

Most of the action consists of monologues.

An old ex-worker describes the first few days of unemployment - first the feeling of freedom to stay in bed in the morning, soon the gaping hole in his life. A group of workers pushing a machine through the crowd talks about the comradeship of working together.

The performance ends with a feeling of ‘well, what’s to be done?’ ‘We’re still here’ - the anthem of Welsh nationalism - sounds more like a cry for help than one of defiance.

The whole experience gave a powerful picture of the feelings of steel workers. It obviously hit home with the audience, a mixture of local people - including present and former steel workers - and regular theatre-goers.

Sadly there was no talk of the wider picture of the economy - or of the only permanent solution: the nationalisation of steelmaking, and the heights of the wider economy, under democratic workers’ management and control.

Conference on state spies and sabotage: who’s watching who?

‘John Smith’
PCS union rep, Coventry

It is clear undercover surveillance of trade unionists and left activists has taken place - contrary to the myth that it couldn’t happen in Britain.

Coventry Trade Union Council and the local Tom Mann branch of general union Unite held a conference in Coventry on 14 October. Entitled ‘Who’s watching whom - justice, trade union and democratic rights’, the event drew 115 people throughout the day.

Ricky Tomlinson, known by millions for his role as Jim Royle in the BBC hit ‘The Royle Family’, was one of the main speakers. He described his victimisation for trade union activism which saw him receive a jail sentence! He gave a passionate speech which received a standing ovation from the entire room.

Dave Smith, author of ‘Blacklisted’, spoke about the blacklisting of trade unionists in construction.

Helen Steel spoke about her experience of abuse by an undercover policeman who started a false relationship with her before disappear- ing - all part of a spying operation targeting activists.

Chris Baugh, assistant general secretary of civil service union PCS, spoke about surveillance and attempts to sabotage unions by the state. He highlighted the need for action on public sector pay.

The state actively works to undermine unions. This includes the CPSA in 1980s - predecessor of the PCS - following the election of John Macreadie as general secretary. John was a supporter of Militant (now the Socialist Party).

And the Socialist reported in 2016 on the activities of one ‘Carlo Neri’, who the police had placed at the 2016 general election as a mole in the PCS - following the election of John Macreadie as general secretary. John was a supporter of Militant (now the Socialist Party).

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The event was illuminating and inspiring for all who attended. It helped remind us what we are up against in trying to build fighting, democratic trade unions - and ultimately, get rid of capitalism. However, the speakers were not pessimistic.

On the contrary, all who attended left the conference fired up and with a greater understanding of how the capitalist state works and the lengths it will go to. The state can be defeated by a mass movement armed with a socialist programme to change society.

Watch the main speakers at tinyurl.com/WhosWatchingWhom
Protesters gathered outside China’s embassies and consulates, as well as the Hong Kong government’s economic and trade offices, in 22 cities across 20 countries on 12-13 October. The protests were part of a newly launched international campaign, ‘Global Solidarity - Stop Repression in Hong Kong.’

Protesters in Bangalore, India, defied a police ban in order to go ahead with their demonstration, while in the Russian capital Moscow anti-democratic laws that severely limit freedom of expression meant that only one brave young woman was permitted to take part in the protest outside the Chinese embassy.

The protests and the campaign statement from Stop Repression in Hong Kong were presented at a press conference in the Legislative Council on 13 October.

Speeches from three TDs (MPs) in the Irish parliament - Socialist Party members Paul Murphy, Ruth Coppinger and Mick Barry - were shown on video. It underlined that this was not a one-off protest but the start of a campaign to increase international pressure on the unelected Hong Kong government over its recent attacks on democratic rights.

Sally Tang Mei-ching of Socialist Action (CWI in Hong Kong), a coordinator of the campaign, described the recent repression in Hong Kong as unprecedented. “Left-wing councillors, labour activists and union representatives of different countries have recently helped to launch this campaign, organising through it a series of international solidarity actions,” she explained.

When asked by the media if the international protests would achieve anything, she stressed that it was only the beginning of the campaign and the government should have every reason to be worried that their policies were arousing concern and criticism around the world.

The international solidarity from grassroots organisations and ordinary people can encourage further mass resistance against the repression inside Hong Kong and also in China against the CCP (so-called ‘Communist’) dictatorship, she said.

Political prisoners

Also in attendance at the Hong Kong press conference were ousted legislator ‘Long Hair’ of the League of Social Democrats (LSD), who is a prime victim of the government’s undemocratic purge, and four legislators, including Fernando Cheung Chiu-hung of the Labour Party and Shui Ka Chung, an independent pan-democrat.

The campaign is demanding the release of political prisoners in Hong Kong. This is a term the CCP-controlled Hong Kong government hotly rejects. However, the use of the courts to impose harsh jail sentences on democracy activists, including many youngsters and prominent representatives of the 2014 ‘Umbrella Revolution’, is widely seen as a politically motivated attack on the democracy movement and an attempt to criminalise mass protests.

A new trial of 20 activists was held on 13 October. They were accused of defying a court order to clear the Mongkok occupation site during the Umbrella protests, and all 20 were found guilty. This outcome was expected.

The use of the courts to impose harsh jail sentences... is widely seen as a politically motivated attack on the democracy movement

The government’s political purge is particularly targeting the more radical and struggle-orientated sections of the democracy movement such as the LSD and student-led party Demosisto.

Full article and more reports see chinaworker.info
Workers’ anger increases after Royal Mail bosses block strike

A Royal Mail worker

The public has a right to be protected from unsupported disruption being caused by a small proportion of union members and that’s exactly what the Trade Union Act will do.” That was according to Tory business minister Margot James speaking on the introduction of the Trade Union Act 2016.

But the true nature of the legislation was thrust into the open on 12 October when the judiciary came to the rescue of Royal Mail bosses in defying a democratic strike ballot result.

It was the first national ballot for strike action since the act’s introduction. 72,877 Communication Workers Union (CWU) members voted to fight back against Royal Mail’s attack on their pension rights and refusal to engage seriously over pay, working hours, future job security and the need to improve the service.

Those members would surely be forgiven for expecting that an 89.1% yes vote, on a 73% turnout, is no “small proportion”, especially given that it smashed through the thresholds outlined in the Trade Union Act.

But the Royal Court of Justice ruled in favour of Royal Mail’s claim that the full ‘external mediation process’ hadn’t been exhausted, despite around 18 months of negotiations and the company having already informed workers about the changes to pensions.

Plans for a 48-hour strike from 19 October have been “postponed” with the union forced to enter mediation with the company.

The company’s motivation - far from wanting to meaningfully engage in mediation - was revealed by a press release stating: “We expect the process to take close to Christmas to be completed, and maybe longer.”

The anger already felt by members against the actions of the company has been added to by this court decision. Unofficial walkouts are possible and these must be supported by the union leadership.

This is an attack on all workers’ right to strike and take action. Unions must recognised the implications of the new trade union laws. Members must pressure their leaders to create mass resistance, demanding TUC-organised support including solidarity action if necessary.

It is important that we fight this weak Tory government. These archaic anti-union laws can be put into the dustbin of history and Royal Mail can be placed into democratic public ownership for the benefit of workers and society.