

Issue 74:  
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# theActivist

the bulletin of  members in *Usdaw*

## JOIN US TO BUILD A SOCIALIST, FIGHTING USDAW



### Join us

We urge you to join the Socialist Party today. Visit [socialistparty.org.uk/join](http://socialistparty.org.uk/join) and contact us at [usdawactivist@gmail.com](mailto:usdawactivist@gmail.com)

We have a great opportunity to continue the campaign to give Usdaw a bold, fighting, socialist leadership that stands up to the major retail companies and fights for Usdaw's 430,000 members.

### Fighting approach

The election of Amy offers a chance to advance the union in a new direction, working with Broad Left members on the executive council and ensuring Usdaw takes a fighting approach in a sector that desperately needs it.

The many Usdaw members and shop workers we met during the campaign who expressed support for Amy and her policies will be delighted by this massive step forward.

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**Come along to a Socialist Party meeting in your area:**

**T**esco worker and Socialist Party member Amy Murphy has been elected president of the shop workers' union Usdaw.

Amy won on a campaign based on giving Usdaw a fighting and democratic leadership, and fighting for policies such as a £10 an hour minimum wage, an end to zero-hour contracts, supporting members who wish to take industrial action and standing up to companies' attacks on jobs and terms and conditions.

Amy says: "I would like to thank everyone who supported me, so, so much, from the bottom of my heart. Your support has been immense. The time has come to stand up to the companies we work for. As president I will continue to challenge the union leadership and the bosses and be 100% behind the members."

During the campaign over 11,000 leaflets were distributed by Socialist Party members, Usdaw Broad Left activists and other supporters. Amy spoke at meetings

and toured the country speaking to union members.

Usdaw will also have a new general secretary after current deputy general secretary Paddy Lillis was elected unopposed.

It is welcome that in speeches at Usdaw divisional conferences Lillis has been much more positive towards Jeremy Corbyn and the radical policies that were in the most recent Labour election manifesto - many of which have been passed as policy at Usdaw conferences. However, Lillis was also chair of the Labour national executive committee during the 2016 leadership election that went to court to deny many Labour Party members a vote in that election.

And alongside outgoing general secretary John Hannett, he has presided over large-scale attacks on Usdaw members' terms and conditions and the loss of jobs through the approach of 'partnership' - working with the bosses in Tesco and other large retailers.

## Usdaw elections round-up

Apart from the stunning victory of Amy Murphy as President, Broad Left candidates made some modest progress in the EC elections, with two Broad Left members elected to the EC in the Midlands and Scottish divisions. Broad Left members stood on a wider basis than 2015, with candidates in every division except South Western and Wales.

One near miss was Rachel Goodwin in the Southern division, who missed out on the second seat by just 15 votes.

Other candidates won respectable votes in their divisions, but campaigns will require a further step forward in future with active campaigns mobilising and bringing together Broad Left members in local areas and visiting reps in local stores as was done in the Presidential campaign.

With many of the Broad Left candidates standing for the first time for EC positions, this shows the growing basis of support in the union which can be built from under a left-wing union president.

## Support Dave McCrossen for DGS

With Paddy Lillis' impending elevation to General Secretary, nominations are currently ongoing for the vacant DGS position. With 3 candidates throwing their hats in the ring, his replacement will face an election unlike Paddy Lillis who was elected to both posts unopposed. The Activist favours the introduction of regular re-election of the position. The Activist is recommending branches nominate and vote for Broad Left member Dave McCrossen who is currently Eastern Divisional Secretary.

### Nomination details:

- Name; Dave McCrossen
- Address: 113 Gordon Road, Little Paxton, Cambs. PE19 6NB
- Nominee's branch: Associated Eastern Sata C065
- Membership number: 313265
- Trade in which employed in: Trade Unionist
- Occupation: Divisional Officer
- Name and Address of Employer: Usdaw, 188 Wilmslow Road, Manchester, M14 6LJ

## John Hannett's legacy - alright for some!

### From Activist No 2, December 2007

In the September edition of Arena it gives the Usdaw General Secretary's salary has £78,050 and employer's contributions in respect of national insurance and superannuation of £10,053 and £15,172 respectively and the value of the car as £5,494. But it does not say what car he drives. Does he drive a Ford Focus like the Area Organisers?

The Activist: The GS drives a jag. PS. It is reported that the GS's 4.5% salary increase was agreed at the recent EC and when objections were raised by some EC members they were ignored and rise was nodded through without even a discussion. The 4.5% increase means a

£3,512 yearly increase - for a 21 year-old worker on the minimum wage of £4.60 an hour it is equivalent to nearly 40% their yearly salary. It's alright for some!!!

### 2017 arena

The General Secretary if the union was paid £104,294 in respect of salary and £46,009 in respect of benefits including employer National Insurance contributions, employer pension contributions and the provision of a union car. (Arena, Winter 2017)

**Compare this with the average increases in Usdaw members' pay and conditions in the same ten years!**

## Toys R Us, Maplin: worsening retail crisis claims more jobs



Big high street retailers Toys R Us and Maplin have gone under, with a number of other familiar names like Mothercare rumoured to follow.

5,500 jobs could go as a result of these companies entering administration. This puts thousands more shop workers, mostly women, on a scrap heap which already includes - among others - thousands who lost their jobs after wholesaler Palmer & Harvey and department store BHS went under in 2017.

The BHS collapse meant the loss of a high street icon, and the jobs of many members of retail and distribution union Usdaw. Following this, Usdaw conference passed a resolution calling on the government to bring companies in a similar situation into public ownership.

But where the union has made statements, they have included no call for public ownership and no firm commitment to fight to save every job.

Consumer spending fell last year, including a 5% fall in high street spending. This is having an effect on retail companies, many of which are in debt. Austerity has left workers with little money in their pockets.

But at the same time millions of pounds are paid out to shareholders at these companies. And despite the debts of some, others who have made staff cuts - such as Tesco, Sainsbury's and Marks & Spencer - make huge profits.

Retail workers should not pay the price for austerity, or the bad management of retail companies like Philip Green's dodgy control of BHS.

We need combative trade unions to confront this slaughter of retail jobs. The brilliant election of class fighter and Socialist Party member Amy Murphy as Usdaw president is a sign that shop workers agree.

An end to austerity and a plan to stop the retail crunch is needed to safeguard jobs.

Corbyn-led Labour should adopt Usdaw's policy of taking these companies into public ownership to save the jobs if it comes to power, and make demands on this government before it does.